

# Objections Answered.

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*Paper 20 of 20 'Plain Papers on Prophetic and Other Subjects'.*

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To the outline of prophetic truth presented in our last it is often objected, "that while our Lord and His apostles do indeed lay great stress on the subject of His coming, *the death of each individual is virtually the Lord's coming to him*; and that therefore the passages which treat of the one may with equal advantage be understood of the other." By some this objection may perhaps be regarded as obsolete; and it has undoubtedly been relinquished by some of our anti-millenarian brethren: but there are numbers by whom it is still urged; and for the sake of numbers more on whose minds it may have influence, as one of the oldest and commonest objections to prophetic truth, we would not pass it by unanswered.

## Answer

1. There is no instance in the New Testament in which death is spoken of as "the coming of Christ," or "the coming of the Lord." If there be such passages, let them be produced.

2. Instead of identifying these two subjects, Scripture pointedly distinguishes between them. True, that as death is the limit of an individual's continuance here, the Lord's coming will be the terminus to all those who are alive and remain to His coming; but, with this single exception, the two events have nothing in common. At death the believer *departs* to be with Christ. When the Lord comes, *He brings the departed with Him*. By death, the believer is *separated* from his fellow Christians on earth; at the coming of Christ, all believers are *gathered together* to Him above. However the sting of death may be withdrawn, and however complete may be the saint's triumph over death, it is, nevertheless, that to which our bodies have become subject *by reason of sin*; the coming of Christ, on the contrary, is that in which His *perfect triumph over sin* will be displayed *in the resurrection of the body*.

3. So entirely contrasted are "death" and "the Lord's coming" in Scripture, that when our Lord said of the beloved disciple, "If I will that he tarry till I come," etc., the disciples, losing sight of the "if," and understanding their Master to say absolutely that this was His will, immediately concluded that "*that disciple should not die*." They knew quite well that for a disciple to tarry till Christ comes is to be exempted from death.

4. The Apostle Paul, in a passage in which he treats of both subjects, declares that, however blessed it may be to be "absent from the body, and present with the Lord," what he and his fellow Christians desired and groaned for, was, "not to be unclothed" or disembodied, "but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. 5: 4.) This will surely not be till the Saviour, for whom we look, shall appear, and change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body. Thus evidently are death and the coming of Christ not only *distinguished*, but *contrasted*, in the word of God.

Nor is it to be regarded as a matter of indifference, whether the actual future of our hopes be the same as that which God holds out to us in His word. People may say, "If we are only ready for death, we shall be ready for Christ's coming also;" but in what sense do those who use this language speak of being *ready* for either? Are not their thoughts limited to the single point of their own personal safety? No doubt that which constitutes our readiness to stand before God, whether *now*, or *at death*, or *at Christ's coming*, is the one accomplished work of Christ, the whole efficacy of which is God's gift to every poor sinner who through grace believes in Jesus. But is our individual safety the *only* or even the *chief* end of God's wondrous grace, and of the precious sacrifice of Christ? Have we no thought beyond that of personal security? Has the grace manifested towards us in the gift and in the sacrifice of Christ established no relations between that blessed One and ourselves? Are there no affections flowing from such relations? When the hope is set before us of beholding Him who became man, and died on the cross, to accomplish our redemption; when He who is not ashamed to call us "brethren"-nay, more, who owns us as His bride, "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" — when He says, "Surely, I come quickly," is no response elicited but such as is expressed in the remark; "that if we are ready for death, we are also ready for Christ's coming?" The readiness for which He looks is the readiness of true and single-hearted affection, and of diligent, devoted service: a readiness to which the hope of His appearing directly ministers: a readiness, moreover, which is greatly hindered by such low apprehensions of His love as would make us satisfied with merely knowing that we are safe. The true readiness is that of the wise virgins, who, with oil in their vessels, with lighted and well-trimmed lamps, and with girded loins, *went forth to meet* the Bridegroom.

*Obj. 2.* "Admitting that the Lord's coming is the true hope of the Church — that for which she is left to wait and watch and long — is it not quite possible for her to do this, though certain all the while that events of great importance and a period of long duration intervene? In a word, may we not be longing and watching for our Lord, although we know from Scripture that the whole Millennium must pass ere the moment of His return arrives?"

*Ans.* This is an objection urged by some who do now concede that the coming of Christ is the proper hope of the Church, and that good service has been rendered in calling attention to the prominent place which this doctrine holds in the word of God. Some who take this ground go so far as to dwell on the desolate condition of the Church during the absence of her Lord; affirming it to be her place to "refuse to be comforted" with anything short of His personal return. "But, then," say they, "may not all this comport with the knowledge of intervening events and a long intervening period?" Their theory is, "that the heart alternates between two different and apparently opposite views of the interval between its own day and the day of Christ's appearing. Now," they say, "it seems *long*, and anon it seems *short*. To faith and hope it seems near, even at the doors; to love and longing desire it seems far, far away: to the one it is but a day, and then He will be here; to the other it is a thousand years-dreary period!"

The best reply to this objection, and to the theory on which it is founded, is furnished by facts. The supporters of this theory urge that their view admits of an unfettered and unmodified use of Scripture language on the subject of Christ's coming; but that is not the question. The question is, whether Scripture language on that subject would ever have suggested such an interpretation as the one before us. Who can be unaware, that until the recent revival of prophetic

truth, within the memory of the present generation, the coming of the Lord as the hope of the Church was an almost unheard-of doctrine; while its collateral doctrines, of the distinct resurrection of the saints, and the change to pass on such as are alive, were equally neglected and forgotten? That which has in some measure recalled the attention of Christians to these confessedly important subjects, is the doctrine of Christ's coming, not at the close of the Millennium, but at its commencement — not with the certain intervention of more than a thousand years, but as an event which may be regarded with habitual expectancy. Facts testify that as Christians imbibe the thought of the certain intervention of a thousand years, they lose sight of Christ's coming as an object of present expectation and hope: and, further, that where in any measure this attitude of soul with regard to Christ's coming is regained, it is by the perception that no such events or periods necessarily intervene as had been supposed to do so. The admissions of those who urge the objection under review abundantly establish this conclusion.

How could it, indeed, be otherwise? We are asked if it be not possible to look, and watch, and long for our Lord's appearing, well knowing that the Millennium must necessarily intervene? Unhesitatingly we answer, No. Had it pleased God thus to order events, and to make this order known to us, we might have understood that Christ would come, that at His coming such and such things would be accomplished, and that both His coming and these attendant events were of great importance. His coming might thus have been the ultimate object of our hope; its proximate object it never could have been. We should have known as certainly that we should die and be in our graves for centuries, as that, after the lapse of these centuries, Christ would come. We should necessarily in that case have looked for death as the end of our individual course; and for the occurrence of, the predicted intervening events, while our bodies slumbered in the grave and our souls were present with the Lord. Nay more, if God had revealed that Christ would not come for more than a thousand years of blessedness on earth, it would be wrong for us to be expecting His coming until these years had rolled away. Whatever faith and hope might have to say in such a case, they *would not* and *could not* contradict God's word, but be subject thereto. Those who maintain the theory under consideration do not, as matter of fact, look for Christ in any such sense as to use the words "we who are alive and remain," with regard to it. They know quite well that if their views be correct, they will not be alive and remain; and their very anxiety to show that the whole Millennium is to pass ere Christ returns, demonstrates their conviction that really to be expecting Him is wrong; and on the ground supposed it would be so. If the Millennium ought to be expected first, in the way so many contend, it would clearly be the Christian's place to be labouring diligently to hasten its introduction. This is a very different work from that of warning the world of approaching judgment, seeking to deliver souls therefrom by turning them to Christ, and seeking to keep ourselves, and stir up our brethren also to keep themselves, separate in spirit from the world, in the steady, patient expectation of our Lord's appearing. The latter is the service really assigned us in God's word; but in order to it, our expectation of Christ's return must be a real one. Our post and service would be different, if the world had first to be converted, and the Millennium to transpire, before the coming of Christ takes place.

One other view we must take of this theory and of the objection founded upon it. It merges the present and the millennial period in one, as that of the Lord's absence, and of the consequent sorrow and widowhood of the Church. The Church, according to this theory, is in its mortal state on earth throughout the Millennium; and as it regards the Millennium as the period of the

Church's greatest purity and prosperity, its faithfulness to its absent Lord and Bridegroom may be supposed to make it more eager than ever for His personal return. Accordingly, it is asked by supporters of this theory, "What, to them that love His appearing, are *falls of Antichrist*, and bright *latter days*, and whole *Millenniums* of refreshing in His absence?" Now we put it to every christian reader, conversant with Scripture predictions of the Millennium, whether such an element as *sorrow for the Lord's absence* and longing for the close of the Millennium, *to bring the joy of His presence*, can have a place therein! The Millennium, the scene of the Church's widowhood and sorrow! We have been wont to anticipate it even for this earth as "the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds:" but this theory would overshadow it with the tears of a widowed Church, rightly bemoaning the continued absence of her Lord! Absence! Why, instead of being *absent* from His Church, as now, it is *His presence* that will then fill creation itself with gladness, and cause every shore to re-echo with His praise! The very anticipation of it unseals the lips of the Psalmist and causes strains of holy triumph to flow from his pen. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad. The hills melted like wax *at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth!*" "Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together *before the Lord: for he cometh* to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity." (Psalm 97 and 98) A theory which confounds this period of bounding exultation and universal gladness *in the Lord's presence*, with the period of the tears and fastings of the Church *because of His absence*, cannot have any strong claims on the adhesion of those who search the Scriptures and abide by their decisions.

This *is* the period of the Church's sorrow: not, strictly speaking, of her widowhood, for the marriage of the Lamb is not yet come, but of her sorrow, in the deferring of her long-cherished hope, to behold and to be with her Lord. Nor will the sorrows and fastings of the Church terminate till her Lord returns. They ought not to cease till then. Alas! that as matter of fact she should so seek to content herself with other objects in the absence of her Lord! But when He comes, it is to usher her into heavenly, bridal joys, and into the endless blessedness of the Father's house. Then will follow (when judgments shall have cleared the scene) the peaceful glories of the kingdom. In that kingdom — the true Millennium of the Scriptures — will Christ and His heavenly Bride enjoy that inheritance of all things which is the reward of His humiliation, obedience, and death. All that psalmists have sung, and prophets penned, of the blessedness of the earth during that joyous period, is but a feeble reflection of the Church's joy, as sharing the affections, the home, the inheritance of her Lord. But of all this the theory we have been considering would deprive us, merging, as it does, the millennial period with the present, as one long, dreary season of the Church's sorrows; and really restricting God's wondrous and varied revelation of His glories in Christ, in all the successive dispensations He has established, to the one thought of what is needful for the salvation of all the elect from Abel to the end of time.

*Obj. 3.* "When Christ comes, the Church will be absolutely and numerically complete, admitting of no subsequent accessions. If, then, all that are to be saved will be brought in before Christ comes, how can any be brought in afterwards? And if not, what becomes of the lower department of the millennial kingdom?"

*Ans.* This is an objection which we should not have noticed, (as it evidently does not in the least apply to the views unfolded in the preceding pages) but that it is somewhat confidently urged as a decisive argument against millenarian views in general. It is based on the assumption that "the Church," and "all that are to be saved," are terms of identical signification. This is a pure assumption. It has, no doubt, like many others equally baseless, obtained a kind of popular currency, which leads numbers who have never examined the subject for themselves, to take for granted, that by "the Church" is meant "the whole company of the saved from the beginning to the end of time." If this were true, the objection before us would be unanswerable. If by "the Church" be meant in Scripture "all the saved," and if the Scriptures teach, that at Christ's coming, the Church will be complete, the thought is evidently and undeniably excluded of there being whole nations and generations of saved persons after the coming of Christ. With many who never think of questioning the popular idea of the Church, this argument will, of course, be decisive; but with such only. Let any Christian take his Bible, and patiently and prayerfully examine all the passages in which the term is used, and he will find that in no single instance does it mean in Scripture the whole of the redeemed, or saved, from the beginning to the end of time. If the reader thinks that it is otherwise, let him try the experiment. He will find that, besides its use in respect to local churches, which has evidently no bearing on our present question, and its application to professing Christians in their responsibilities as God's house or dwelling-place, the word "Church" is always used in Scripture\* to designate *believers, gathered into unity with Christ and with each other, by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, in virtue of Christ having ascended on high; and that it has its existence on earth between the day of Pentecost and the descent of the Lord Jesus into the air.* The proof of this in detail has been already presented to the reader, and need not be repeated here.

\* Acts 7: 38, and Acts 19: 32, 39, 41, where it is the same word in the Greek, are no real exceptions. The latter is evidently not, as shown by the translators using another word; and there is no reason whatever for their not using the same word in the former. Singularly enough, in employing the word "Church," they deviated from the example of five earlier versions — those of Tyndale, Coverdale, and Cranmer, the Genevan, and Anglo-Rhemish.

The Church is truly to be complete at the coming of Christ. It is for its completion that His coming waits. But when completed, it is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; it is to come with Him when He comes to execute judgment on the wicked; and when He reigns over the earth, His glorified Church is to be the partner of His throne. He does indeed come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. But how? Who are to be the admirers? Let the apostle answer. "When he who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory." Let the reply of our Lord Himself be heard. "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; *and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.*" When the world sees the Church in the glory which the Father gave to Jesus, and which Jesus has given to the Church-when Christ and the Church are glorified together" — *then the world* will know, not only that the Father sent the Son, but also that He has loved the Church with the same love with which He loves the Son. The revelation of the Church in the same glory with Jesus will prove *to the world* that she is the object of the same love. But, then, there must be a "world" before which these wonders are displayed; and the objection we have been examining leaves no place for this.

*Obj. 4.* "Scripture teaches that Christ is already seated on the throne of His father David, and that His kingdom is already in existence in the only sense in which it will exist prior to the end, when He will deliver it up to God, even the Father, when the everlasting kingdom of Christ and of God will commence."

*Ans.* This objection introduces us to a subject which it may be well somewhat fully to consider. The statements frequently made as to the kingdom of Christ are such as to perplex sincere inquirers after the truth. The subject itself, moreover, is one which requires, and will amply repay, the patient examination of God's word respecting it.

The objection amounts, in other words, to the assertion, "that Christ is now reigning as King in His own proper kingdom; and that this kingdom formally commenced on His ascension to the right hand of God, and continues unchanged, both in character and form, till the judgment of the great white throne." Before considering the passages by which this objection is supposed to be supported, we would rapidly sketch what seems to us to be the doctrine of Scripture touching "the kingdom."

It may be well to explain here, that we are in no wise disposed to censure the thought so commonly entertained by Christians, and expressed, one may say, throughout the psalmody of Christendom, "that Christ reigns in the hearts of his believing people." Undoubtedly He does; but the figurative use of the word "reign," in such an application of it as this, is no authority for displacing the true, Scripture doctrine of Christ's kingdom; nor can this be ascertained, save by a diligent and prayerful examination of the copious testimonies concerning it, with which Scripture abounds.

There can be no dispute as to the great mass of passages in the Old Testament which treat of "the kingdom," or of Christ's glory *as King*, that they do so in inseparable connection with Israel's restoration and supremacy, and with the blessing of all nations:- in a word, with the Millennium. Most of these passages, be it remembered, were penned before the Babylonish captivity. During that captivity, when the throne of God had been removed from Jerusalem, Daniel was inspired to write the prophetic history of the Gentile power to which Israel and Jerusalem had become subject. Four great empires were to succeed each other; the whole to be succeeded, on the destruction of the fourth, by "the kingdom" which "the God of heaven should set up," and which was to be the final, universal kingdom. The prophet sees in vision the divine investiture of the Son of man with the authority and glory of this kingdom, amid scenes of pomp and majesty, such as Scripture alone portrays; and this investiture, mark, is connected with the judgment by which the fourth empire, in its last form, is overthrown and destroyed. Our readers are aware that we refer to Daniel 7.

That the kingly character of Jesus, and in connection too with Israel, was recognized by the Holy Ghost, and those by whom He spake, at the epoch of the Saviour's birth, admits no question. "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Towards thirty years after this, the Baptist began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus Himself took up the same cry; and it is remarkable, that the passage quoted by Him

from Isaiah in opening His commission in the synagogue at Nazareth, is one which, in the prophecy itself, stands connected with predictions of Israel's restoration, and of the full blessedness of millennial days. Compare Luke 4: 16-21 with Isaiah 61 throughout. Thus no intimation is as yet given, of "the kingdom" being any other than that, which, from the testimony of the prophets, might be expected to be set up.

Soon was it manifested, however, that the Jewish nation, on whose repentance, according to the prophets, hinged every prospect of blessing under Messiah's reign, were very far from being thus prepared to welcome Him. When an infant, His death was sought by Herod. His forerunner, the Baptist, was put to death; and though the common people, the publicans and sinners, had received John's mission, the heads of the nation had refused his testimony, and rejected the counsel of God against themselves. Jesus entered not on His public ministry till John had been cast into prison; and at the close of His first discourse in the synagogue at Nazareth, they sought to cast Him headlong from the brow of the hill. As He proceeded in His work, His rejection became more and more decided; until, in Matthew 13, He opens to His disciples "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" — mysteries, which it is given to them to know, while they are hidden from the nation at large. It was the rejection of Jesus by His own people, the Jews — His rejection, in fact, by the world — that gave occasion to the kingdom existing in mystery, before it exists in manifestation. *This* is the period during which it exists in mystery; *the Millennium* is the period of its manifestation.

The doctrine of the New Testament is not the substitution of another kind of kingdom for that of which the Old Testament could not fail to awaken expectations, *but the postponement of the expected kingdom* because of Israel's unpreparedness to receive it; and the existence meanwhile of an anomalous state of things, expressed by the phrase "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." Christ was presented as king to Israel — "Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass," — but Israel rejected Him, and in consequence the sentence was pronounced: "Therefore, say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matt. 21) Just as in Luke 19 we read, "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, *and because they thought that the kingdom of God would immediately appear.*" It was to correct this expectation of the *immediate appearing* of the Kingdom, that our Lord spake of Himself under the figure of "a certain nobleman" who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." Now, could any one say, that the state of things during the absence of the nobleman on this errand, was the nobleman's "proper kingdom," "commencing formally" as soon as He went away, "and continuing unchanged, both in character and form,"\* alike through the period of His absence, and when, having received the kingdom and returned, He rewards His servants according to their conduct while He was away, and puts down His rebellious citizens by power? What greater perversion could there be, than thus to confound an authority, unacknowledged by its lawful subjects, and unenforced by its rightful possessor, with the effectual establishment of this authority by power, and its open, triumphant exercise in the overthrow and destruction of all by which it is questioned or resisted? The one, is the kingdom of heaven, in mystery, as at present: the other, is the kingdom of Christ as openly established in the Millennium. To say that in its transition from the one state to the other, "the kingdom is unchanged both in its character and form," is to say what needs no refutation. Can any two things be more contrasted in "character" than the patient endurance of evil, and its righteous repression

by power? And as to "form," what resemblance is there between an absent nobleman's authority over the servants of his household, who serve in prospect of his return, and a monarch's vindication of his long-outraged rights, in the dethronement of the usurper who has reigned, and the punishment of that usurper's followers, who have rebelled, during the absence of the true king?

\*Brown on the Second Advent."

But another point demands attention. Why the patience, and why the delay, which characterize the present state of things? Can any of our readers be ignorant of the answer? "The long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." The interval between the rejection of Christ below, succeeded by His immediate exaltation above, and His return in glory to set up the kingdom which He has gone into heaven to receive, is occupied with the gathering by the Holy Ghost of those who are His co-heirs. who are to reign with Him in that kingdom, as His bride. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Christ, though He presented Himself to Israel as their king, well knew that they would reject Him, and that the little band of disciples, gathered around Him by the Father's grace, were to become, after His ascension to heaven, the earliest members of that Church which had really been chosen of the Father in Jesus before the world began, and the formation of which, by the Holy Ghost, was to fill up the interval between His ascension and His return. Knowing this, a vast portion of our Lord's intercourse with His disciples regarded them prospectively as filling the place in which the Church is now found. These communications abundantly evince that the Church is more precious in Christ's eyes than the kingdom. Hidden, as a treasure, in the field, which is the world — the scene of the kingdom - *it was the treasure the field contained* which was Christ's motive in parting with all, that He might possess Himself of it. True, His death was the purchase-price of the field; and by and by His rights over the field will be established, when the kingdom is manifested: but it was to possess Himself of the Church-the treasure — the pearl — that was His motive (next to the Father's glory, we need hardly say,) in giving up all and laying down His life. He "loved the church, and gave himself for it, . . . . that he might present it to himself." Wondrous the place thus given to the Church! We know not that Christ is anywhere spoken of as king of the Church or king to the Church. He is Head of the Church, and Head over all things to the Church, *which is His body*; she owns Him reverently and joyfully as her Lord, and as Lord of all, but nowhere, that we remember, is He spoken of as her king.\* The Church is not - "the Kingdom," but the body now forming and training under the care and by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to be the Bride of Christ, and to reign with Him in the kingdom, when the kingdom comes.

\* Rev. 15: 3, in which we have "king of saints," is no exception. In the margin it reads "king of nations"-and waiving this, - "king of saints" is not "king of the Church." There are many saints of former dispensations, and of the coming one, who form no part of the Church.

One word as to the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. God is most long-suffering and rich in mercy; and nothing can be more touching than to observe in these chapters, how His mercy lingers over Israel and Jerusalem, as though unwilling to give them up. They had indeed rejected Christ, crucified the Prince of life, and desired a murderer in preference to Him. But He, the vine-dresser, had prayed for the barren fig-tree; on the cross He had implored mercy on His

murderers; and what doubt can there be, that the ministry of Peter and others, as recorded in those chapters, was God's gracious answer to His prayers? They had crucified their king — but God had raised Him up, and exalted Him to His own right hand; and even now, if they would but repent and be converted, they should be forgiven — *nationally forgiven* — and God would again send Jesus Christ, by whose return from heaven, the oft and long-predicted times of refreshing and restitution should be ushered in. But this testimony failed also. Israel had no more heart for an ascended Christ when proclaimed by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, than for a humbled and incarnate Christ when present among them on earth. Stephen convicts them of having always, as their fathers, resisted the Holy Ghost; and by Paul, who is then forthwith converted and called, the mystery of the heavenly place, portion, and calling of the Church, as one with a rejected Christ in heaven, is fully brought out. Christ's relations to Israel and the earth as *king* are all for the present left in abeyance and the formation of the Church (along with the ministry of reconciliation to the world) forms the one work of the Holy Ghost on earth, until Christ's return.

Let it not be supposed, then, that we would question for a moment, the kingly glory of Christ. Undoubtedly He is king: *but He is rejected as such by the world*, and this is what our brethren forget. His claims and titles are acknowledged in heaven, and witnessed there by His being enthroned at the right hand of God; but heaven, as yet, puts forth no power for the establishment of those rights, and will not till the co-heirs have been gathered in by grace. All on earth who have been so gathered, acknowledge the lordship of Jesus, and rejoice in the assurance, that He shall one day reign in undisputed power. Vast numbers there are, moreover, who own Him nominally, but not in truth; and by means of this nominal acknowledgement of Christ, Satan, the usurper, succeeds in putting deeper dishonour upon Christ's name and character than by anything besides. *And he is permitted for the time to succeed in doing this*. The wheat and the tares are permitted to grow together till the harvest. Such is one of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. But will it be so when the kingdom appears? No. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.*"

We may now turn to the passages which are supposed to teach, that Christ's proper kingdom exists at present, and will exist unchanged in character and form till the judgment of the great white throne. 1. Peter's sermon to the Jews in Acts 2 is quoted to prove this. Peter, after quoting David's words in Psalm 16, explains that "being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his (David's) throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption: this Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." These are the apostle's words; and it is affirmed, that in them he declares, "as explicitly as words could do it, that the promise to David of Messiah's succession to his

throne *has received its intended accomplishment*. — that God HAS raised up Christ to sit upon that throne, in the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, as the fruit of David's loins, to the right hand of power: and that His *first exercise of regal authority from the throne of Israel* was to send down the Spirit, as had that day been done." Now however confidently this may be affirmed, as it sometimes is, the reader has only to compare Peter's words with what he is represented as saying, to perceive that he *says* no such thing. *He does not say*, "that the promise to David of Messiah's succession to his throne had received its intended accomplishment." *He does not say*, "that His first exercise of regal authority *from the throne of Israel* was to send down the Spirit as had that day been done." If the objector infers these things from Peter's words, it does not authorize him to put his inferences into Peter's lips, and affirm that Peter said these things. The reader may see for himself that the apostle did not say these things. He says that David knew that God had sworn to him, of the fruit of his loins to raise up Christ to sit on his throne; and he refers to this, and to David's being a prophet, to show that when he (David) said in Psalm 16, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," etc., he did not speak it of himself, but of "the resurrection of Christ;" that *His* soul was not left in hell, neither *His* flesh did see corruption. He then gives his own and his fellow-apostles' testimony to the fact, "This Jesus hath God raised up;" but he does *not* say, "and placed upon David's throne." So far from this, he declares the exaltation of Jesus to a seat, *which he does tell us David never occupied!* "For David is *not* ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool" How David's throne can be meant by a seat in the heavens, whither, we are carefully told, David has not ascended, it must be left for those to explain who lay any stress upon such an argument.

2. Rev. 3: 7 is another passage referred to in connection with Isaiah 22: 22, as proving "that when Christ claims to have the key of David's house, His meaning is, that He has that anti-typical authority in David's house which Eliakim's robe, girdle, and key faintly shadowed forth; that He is *now* exercising this power of the key; and that *the house of David* - as Christ is ruler in it, at least - *can be none other than the Church of the living God, under the Redeemer's regal administration.*" To this argument we need only reply that at the end of Isaiah 22 we find that "the nail fastened in a sure place" (Eliakim) was to be removed, and to be cut down, and to fall;" "and the burden that was upon it," says the prophet, "shall be cut off: for the Lord hath spoken it." Understand this of Christ's relation to the literal Israel, *as king*, and it is easy to understand. Messiah, the king of Israel was "cut off, but not for himself." (Daniel 9) "The burden" of Jewish hopes and prospects which hung upon that nail, was "cut off" along with it; though in resurrection, as we all know, the whole is yet to be made good. "The key of David" is in the hand of His risen Son; but it is still "the key of David," and it is *as such* that it is seen in the hands of Jesus in Rev. 3: 7-12. It is as opening into a new dispensation, in which He will be known in this character, that He addresses the church of Philadelphia, promising to keep them from "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth;" and assuring and exhorting them, "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." These are evidently points in the address to Philadelphia, which can only find their place, if we regard that address in its prophetic character; and then, Christ's possession of the key of David, as opening into that Dew dispensation in which His glory as David's son, and the heir of David's throne, will be displayed is in perfect harmony with the whole. But this affords no proof of Christ's "*now* exercising" the power of which "the key of David" is the distinctive symbol and expression.

3. The title, "Prince of life," given by Peter to Christ, (Acts 3: 15,) and his declarations, (Acts 5: 31,) "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," are both quoted, in support of the idea that Christ now sits upon David's throne, and that His kingdom, in the proper, full, and only sense of it, now exists. But is it not remarkable, that these titles should only be found in these discourses to the Jews in the early chapters of the Acts? Have we not already furnished a sufficient explanation of this? It was God's mercy lingering over that beloved but unbelieving nation, and still setting Christ before it in the relations He was specially to sustain to them. He will yet, as all who believe in Israel's restoration must agree, "give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." He was offering them these blessings by the apostle then. Their continued unbelief left, for the present, no more space for repentance; they were nationally given up to blindness and to judgment; and while this sentence remains upon them, God is gathering by His grace, as we have seen, a body, in relation to which Christ is never spoken of as King, but which is to share with Him His regal authority over Israel and the earth, when the moment for assuming it arrives.

4. The quotation by the apostles of Psalm 2 in their prayer recorded in Acts 4: 26-28, is adduced to prove that they applied the psalm as a whole "*to the present sovereignty and rule of Jesus in the heavens.*" That the confederacy against Christ to be judged at His second appearing was formed at His first, and that it exists in principle throughout the intervening space, we have no doubt. That the former of these facts is recognized by the apostles in the passage under review is also sufficiently clear; but that there is anything in their words to confound "the heavens" where the Lord now sitteth, laughing at the puny rage of His adversaries, with God's holy hill of Zion, on which in purpose He is said to have set His King, is more than we are able to perceive. Neither can we see anything in this prayer of the disciples to identify the present period of perfect grace with that in which, according to Psalm 2, "the Lord will break the nations with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel." The fact is, that all these arguments are based on the fallacy of supposing, that because a psalm or prophecy of the Old Testament is quoted for any given purpose by New Testament writers, the whole psalm or prophecy must therefore be identical in its subject with that of which the New Testament writer treats. The unsoundness of such a principle must be manifest to all.

5. Finally, the apostolic quotations of Psalm 110: 1 are produced as proofs of the same doctrine — that the kingdom of Christ in its proper form was to subsist from the moment of His session at God's right hand. Let us turn, then, to the psalm itself, and to the quotations from it, which are alleged to bear this sense.

And first, as to the psalm itself, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." That this is a prediction of Christ's session at the right hand of God, until a given epoch described in the latter part of the verse, all are agreed. but what is the epoch specified? "Until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And is this what is now being done for Christ? Are souls, when they are subdued by grace, made the footstool of their Conqueror? We have always understood that when men are converted they are united to Christ — made one body and one spirit with Him — members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones! But, no, if the interpretation contended for is to be admitted, they are made His footstool, to be trodden under His feet! Then, besides the essential incongruity of such an explanation of this first verse of the psalm, it is utterly inconsistent with the following verses: "The Lord shall

send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." Now when Zion becomes the earthly centre of Christ's royal power, prior to His enemies being completely subdued, it is sufficiently obvious that He will be ruling in the midst of His enemies. But how, "in the midst of His enemies," now, while He is seated at the right hand of God? Then we read further of "the day of his wrath," and of His striking through kings, judging among the heathen, filling the places with dead bodies, wounding the heads, or chiefs, over many countries. All this is sufficiently intelligible, if the psalm be understood as predicting Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God, there to wait in patient grace till the moment He receives commission to tread down His enemies, placed for Him as a footstool under His feet; Zion becoming thus the centre of His power, whence, in "the day of his power," and "day of his wrath," His conquests proceed. And is it not remarkable, that while the psalm dates, so to speak, from the moment at which the word proceeds from Jehovah, "Sit thou at my right hand, until," etc., and while Christ's priesthood is spoken of as present, "Thou *art* a priest," etc., all else of which the psalm treats, is spoken of as *future*? "The Lord *shall* send the rod of thy strength out of Zion." "Thy people *shall* be willing in the day of thy power." "The Lord at thy right hand *shall* strike through kings," etc. "He *shall* judge among the heathen — *shall* fill the places with dead bodies — *shall* wound the heads over many countries." Can anything be more obvious, than that these lets are not characteristic of Christ's present, expecting attitude at the right hand of God, but of the state of things which will follow upon His rising up from that exalted seat? During His session there, the kingdom is in mystery, as we have seen in so many passages: when His session there terminates, the kingdom is made manifest and established by power.

But, secondly, the references to this psalm in Acts 2: 34, 35, and in 1 Cor. 15: 25-28, are alleged as contrary to the interpretation we have just given. As to Acts 2: 34, 35, the whole passage has been already considered, and needs no further discussion: we have seen that the reference there to Psalm 110 is rather adverse than favourable to the construction put upon it by the objector. For a full examination of 1 Cor. 15 we must refer our readers to the Paper "The First Resurrection". We would only repeat here, that the apostle as evidently alludes to Psalm 8 as to Psalm 110; and that he markedly distinguishes between God's putting all things under Christ, and Christ's actually subjecting all things by His own power. There are two contrasted periods, in the one of which Christ sits at the right hand of God, in the divinely acknowledged title of universal supremacy, but waiting till, at the close of this period, His enemies are made His footstool; while, in the other, He Himself actively subdues His enemies by power, and, as matter of fact, subjects them to Himself. Now it is of this latter or millennial period that Paul says, "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." The whole passage harmonizes entirely with the views we have been endeavouring to unfold, and it is greatly confirmatory of them.

We would not leave this subject of "the kingdom," without asking our brethren who urge the objections which have been reviewed, to ponder the following considerations.

1. Dan. 7 incontestably associates the investiture of the Son of man with the kingdom, with the awful judgment that destroys the fourth Gentile monarchy. That judgment, all agree, is yet future.

2. Our Lord Himself connects His reception of the kingdom with His return. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, *having* received the kingdom" etc. (Luke 19: 15.)

3. In His last conversation with His disciples, in which we know He had spoken of all power being given to Him in heaven and on earth, and in which He promised that they should, not many days thence, receive power from on high, they asked Him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" His reply was, not that they were wrong in expecting that such an event would ever take place, but — "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." Who would imagine, from such a reply, that their question had reference to something which at no time, and in no season, was ever to take place?

4. The salvation of all Israel, which must be, in order to the kingdom being restored to them, is foretold by the Apostle Paul in Rom. 11 with the utmost clearness and decision. But it is to be at the close of the present Gentile dispensation, when the wild branches are broken off, and the natural branches grafted in again to their own olive tree. How entirely all this accords with Old Testament predictions of the kingdom, we need not point out.

5. Our Lord in Matt. 13 while avowedly unfolding the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, foretells a solemn moment of transition, from the patience which has suffered wheat and tares to grow together, to the open exercise of power, in gathering out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.

6. In Rev. 10: 7 we hear the mighty angel proclaim, that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." Mark here, first, no one disputes that this is future, and yet pre-millennial; secondly, what change can there be more momentous than that "the mystery" of God should be finished? Thirdly, nevertheless, this is not some vast change, unheard of till the angel makes it known, but the fulfilment of God's word "declared to his servants the prophets." In other words, it is the great change from *mystery* to *manifestation*, of which the prophets so largely speak.

7. When the seventh angel does begin to sound, what is it that the heavenly voices proclaim? It is this — "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. 11: 15.)

Here we pause, leaving our readers to consider whether Christ's kingdom can be "unchanged in character and form," from His ascension to heaven till the judgment of the great white throne, when, at a yet future day between these two epochs, a change so vast and wondrous as those scriptures testify is to take place. The Lord give to us unfeigned subjection to His word, and a good understanding in all things.

*Obj. 5.* "Is there any sufficient Scripture proof of this union of the earthly and heavenly scenes — of the corporeal and resurrection states — in the Millennium? Have you not, in order to prove it, to pick disjointed passages from various parts of the Bible, and put them together as they were never designed to be? Where are the passages which present, in the same scene, the higher and lower departments of the millennial state?"

*Ans.* 1. It is not for us to dictate to God the order in which His truth should be communicated in His word. If it has pleased Him in one class of passages to reveal the divine glory of the Lord Jesus Christ — the glory of His Godhead and of His oneness with the Father; while in another class of passages He reveals the depths of His humiliation as man — the woman's seed — the virgin's son — if these truths be thus, we say, distributed in God's word, are we, because of this, like the Socinians, to reject the one and only abuse the other to aid us in this unholy work? Shall we not rather reverently receive them both, and adore "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich?" Let the same principle be applied to the passages which treat of the Millennium, and no such questions will be asked as in the objection under review.

But, 2ndly, God has not limited Himself to one mode of instruction in His gracious revelation of Himself and of His ways. If He had, reverent, thankful, adoring submission and acquiescence would have been our only befitting response. But He has not. On the subject above-named, while in general the proofs of Christ's Godhead are to be gathered from passages distinct from those in which His manhood is set forth, there are texts which blessedly set forth both. "The Word was made flesh" - "God was manifest in the flesh" - and kindred texts, must at once occur to the mind. In like manner, while *in general* the earthly blessedness of the Millennium is foretold in one class of prophecies, and the heavenly glories of the rule of Christ and His risen saints in others, there are passages of exceeding clearness and surpassing beauty in which both subjects are combined. Of this class is Isaiah 25: 6, etc., "And in this mountain (Mount Zion, mentioned in a previous verse as the scene of the reign of the Lord of hosts) shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. *He will swallow up death in victory*; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it." As to the whole of this passage, except the words printed in italics, there can be but one thought - that of its application to the earthly glories of the Millennium; while, as to the excepted clause, the words of the apostle in 1 Cor. 15: 54, leave as little possibility of mistake in understanding it of the heavenly resurrection-glory. "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." The apostolic comment on the prophetic declaration is no less authoritative than clear.

Rom. 8: 17-25 is another passage of the same description. "The manifestation of the sons of God," when we, who now suffer with Christ, shall be glorified together with Him, - a manifestation which ensues on "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body" - forms the heavenly part of the millennial scene, as here depicted; while a creation, no longer "groaning and travailing in pain together," as at present, but "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory (see the Greek) of these manifested "sons of God," forms the lower department. Have we not both together here? And on what principles, save those of the outline of prophetic truth presented in a previous number, can this passage be interpreted at all? Ephesians 1 presents both the heavenly and the earthly glories of the millennial period: declaring that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, all things *both in heaven and on earth* are to be gathered together in one, even in Christ. It speaks of the Church as the body of Him under whose feet all

things are put, and who is made Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, and which has obtained an inheritance in Him — that is, which shares His inheritance of all things. Colossians 1, in like manner, treats of the reconciling of all things, "whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." It treats of this as a yet future, unaccomplished object of Christ's death on the cross; while of our reconciliation thereby it speaks as already complete. "And you that were sometime alienated . . . . yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death." Hebrews is, moreover, while declaring that not to angels, but to man, the habitable earth to come (*he oikoumene he mellousa*) is subjected, proceeds to show that not only is it subjected to Jesus — the glorified Son of man — but that there are also "many sons" who are being brought to glory. And surely if the Captain of our salvation "is not ashamed to call us brethren," we may rest assured that He will not enjoy this future sovereignty alone. But why need we multiply passages? Do not Rev. 20, 21, 22, present both the heavenly and the earthly departments of the millennial kingdom, and present them in their combination with each other? Surely they do. The doctrine of their being thus united under the glorious headship of Christ, who associates His saints with Himself in His glory and His reign, would not have been less sure had God been pleased to reveal it in detached portions only. But He has not done so. Numerous passages do treat of the separate details in their distinctness from each other: but we are left at no loss for passages in which the several parts are combined, and presented to our faith as a glorious whole. Would that our faith were more conversant with these transporting prospects!

*Obj.* 6. "But how can this mixture of earthly and heavenly beings, of earthly and heavenly things, take place? It seems so strange, so unlike anything that has ever existed, that we find it difficult, not to say impossible, to give credence to it. "

*Ans.* 1. There were certain persons of whom the apostle once inquired, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Such a question is surely the best reply to the former part of this objection. When GOD has revealed what HE intends to do, there can be no question so out of place as that of how it can be accomplished. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures *or the power of God*," was our Lord's reply to a similar difficulty in His day. 2. As to the strangeness of the union of heavenly and earthly things in the millennial state — as to its being so different from any previous state of things — our answer is this: We do not suppose the millennial state to be a perpetuation of that which has existed previously. On the contrary, we believe that Scripture represents it as an entirely new dispensation. And though we do not suppose that the passing away of the physical, corporeal heavens and earth will take place till after the Millennium, the Millennium itself is represented by Isaiah *under the figure* of new heavens and a new earth. (See Isaiah 65: 17-25; Isaiah 66: 22, 23.) Could anything more clearly indicate the immense difference between the period thus represented and any previous period? 3. By "any previous period" is, of course, meant *any since the fall*: for it will not be disputed that in the world's primeval state there did exist union and intercourse between heaven and earth. And what are we to understand by the expression "the times of restitution of all things," but the renewal of such a state? Are all other things to be restored, and shall this blessed union of heaven and earth be the alone exception? What mean our Lord's words, when, speaking of Himself as the second Adam, the Son of man, He says, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man?" 4. We are by no means sure, however, when an objector speaks of "this mixture of heavenly and earthly beings, of heavenly and earthly things," that he does not. greatly exaggerate the views which we maintain to be taught by

Scripture on the subject. Many who use such language have most distorted conceptions of the doctrines they reject. They suppose us to teach that glorified saints, and those still in unchanged bodies, will familiarly and habitually mix, if not absolutely dwell together, on this earth. But who is there that maintains such a thought? Heaven and earth will no more be *confounded* than than now; but neither will they be *sundered*, as at present. Heaven will surely be the abode of Christ and His glorified saints, as earth will be the dwelling-place of Israel and the nations. But heaven and earth will be *united*, not *confounded*, under the glorious manifested headship of Christ, with whom the Church will also be manifestly associated. As to the degree, mode, and manner in which the manifestation will take place, we know not that Scripture informs us. But may we not, on the testimony of God Himself, believe the fact, while leaving to His infinite wisdom the manner and mode of its accomplishment? Some things are sufficiently clear. That *at His coming in judgment on the wicked*, Christ, as well as His saints, will be visible, there can be no doubt. "Every eye shall see him." "When Christ shall *appear*, then shall ye also *appear with him in glory*." Then, with regard to *the period* which succeeds, while we are not informed how often, or on what occasions, the heavenly company will be visible to eyes of flesh and blood, it is unquestionable that their power will be in continual exercise to secure the blessedness of the earth and its inhabitants. Satan and the evil angels having been banished from the scene, their evil agency will be replaced by the beneficent, heavenly rule of Christ and of the saints: besides which, even the ministry of the unfallen angels, which has marked every previous dispensation, will then give place to that of man — "to the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak." The ministry of angels, though generally invisible, has often been perceptible to the senses; and if numerous cases of this kind are recorded in Scripture as having occurred in the past, why should it be deemed incredible that, in the coming dispensation, the agency of Christ and His glorified saints should be much more frequently matter of sight and sense to the happy subjects of their rule? We presume not to define where Scripture speaks in general terms; but faith will be content to receive what God has been pleased to make known, and leave it with Him to fill up the outline according to the counsel of His own will.

*Obj. 7.* "Are we not told by the apostle that Christ, 'after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, *for ever* sat down at the right hand of God?' How can this be reconciled with His descent from heaven at the commencement of the Millennium?"

*Ans.* The declaration of the Apostle no one can dispute: but does not the objector himself believe that Christ will descend from heaven at the end of the Millennium? How does *he* reconcile with this expectation the words "for ever sat down!" The explanation which will serve for one will serve equally for the other. All Christians believe in a second coming of the Lord Jesus, Christ, either at the commencement or the close of the Millennium; but any argument from the words "for ever" to disprove His coming at the one epoch would equally disprove His coming at the other, or, indeed, His coming again at all. The truth is that the words have no such sense as that of our Lord's being locally, physically restricted to a particular seat. The idea would be derogatory to Him beyond expression. It is either as having finished His own sacrificial work, or in contrast with the Jewish priests who stood to offer, or in token of the honour put upon Him, that He is said to have "for ever sat down at the right hand of God;" and not one of these divine thoughts thus expressed is in anywise affected either by His standing to receive Stephen's spirit, as we know He did in the past, or by His descending, as we now He will ere long, to meet His saints in the air.

*Obj. 8.* "Does not the Apostle Peter teach that the universal conflagration of the earth takes place at the coming or day of the Lord? And how does this accord with the prospect of a subsequent period such as the Millennium is described to be?"

*Ans. 1.* The objection takes for granted that "the coming of the Lord" and "the day of the Lord" are identical terms; and that when Peter says that the conflagration is to take place IN "the day of the Lord," he affirms that it will be AT "the coming of the Lord." Now this is the very point to be proved from Scripture, instead of being assumed; and it is a point, moreover, which Scripture, instead of establishing, absolutely disproves. "The day of the Lord," as Zech. 14 and other scriptures amply show, is a lengthened period — another term, indeed, for the period which commences with His coming in the clouds of heaven, in flaming fire, with His holy angels, but which extends to the moment at which He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. Now what 2 Peter 3 affirms is, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in *the which* (but without defining in what part of the period so designated) the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." No doubt this vast, wondrous, universal conflagration will take place *in* or *during* "the day of the Lord." That day, moreover, will come suddenly, as a thief; and at its very commencement it will burst upon the world of the ungodly with judgments altogether overwhelming. But it is quite evident from other Scriptures that the millennial heavens and earth are the same as at present. Revelation 20 describes their passing away after the close of the Millennium, and predicts the creation of the new heaven and new earth of the everlasting state which is to succeed.

As to Peter's words, "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," they evidently refer to Isaiah 65 and 66 the only passages in the Old Testament, where such a promise is recorded. In Isaiah, the promise is unquestionably accompanied by statements which refer, not to the everlasting state, but to the millennial period. Building houses and planting vineyards, can have no place in the everlasting state. Sin and death, moreover, to however limited an extent, are found in the state of which the prophet testifies; and these, as all admit, have no existence in the new heavens and new earth of Rev. 21. Two solutions of this difficulty have been suggested, both of which we shall present to our readers. It has been judged by some that Isaiah 65: 17, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind," refers to the actual new heavens and earth which are to succeed the conflagration of the present, and that in the succeeding verses, the prophet reverts from this final prospect to that which boars the nearest resemblance to it — the millennial state. Others judge that Isaiah has no eye to the literal, post-millennial heavens and earth, but speaks only of the millennial state: the Apostle Peter, according to the wisdom given to him, using the figurative language of the prophet in reference to literal facts, to which the prophet could have no idea that his own language referred. Either of these views would materially tend towards clearing up the difficulty arising from a comparison of the passages before us.

*Obj. 9.* "Do not many passages of Scripture teach, that immediately upon Christ's coming, a simultaneous and universal judgment will take place, embracing both the righteous and the wicked of all ages? and, if so, how can the views unfolded in the preceding pages be maintained?"

*Ans.* Before considering the passages alleged in support of this objection, we would remark, First, that there is no question as to the universality of the judgment. That all must appear before God for judgment, no one questions for a moment. Nor is it fair to represent us as "admitting" this. We more than "admit" — we *earnestly maintain* and *would solemnly press* it upon all. Passages, therefore, which simply teach that all will be judged, are beside the question. They only prove what we maintain as earnestly as those who urge the objection. Secondly, all are agreed, that it is the second coming of Christ which introduces this judgment. The judgment of all men ensues upon the coming of Christ. Passages, therefore, which simply represent Christ as coming to judgment — to the judgment both of righteous and wicked, are — equally with the former class — apart from the question. The question is, *as to the simultaneous judgment of the whole race of mankind immediately on Christ's coming.* Where are the passages which declare this? Thirdly, while there are many passages which affirm the judgment to be universal, there are others which unequivocally testify that in *one sense* — that of being called in question as to eternal life or eternal death — believers have already passed through judgment in the person of Christ, and, that *in this sense* no judgment remains for them. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, *and shall not come into judgment, (kai eis krisin ouk ercetai)* but is passed from death unto life." (John 5: 24.) Accordingly, in the context of this passage, our Lord divides the resurrection itself into "the resurrection of life" and the "resurrection of judgment." (*anastasis kriseos.*) There are those who will rise to be judged; and there are others who will rise by virtue of a life which places them beyond the reach of judgment as to life or death. Evidently *the possessor of everlasting life* needs not to be judged, and cannot be, as to whether everlasting life is to be his or not. Heb. 11: 27, 28, gives expression to the same truth. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Men, as such, in their natural state of sin and condemnation, have before them death and judgment. The believer has death and judgment behind him, substitutionally borne by Christ on the cross; and he has before him as his blessed hope the second appearing of Christ, for whom he looks, His appearing without sin unto salvation. Believers are, as to their persons, accepted in Christ; their security therefore can no more be called in question than that of Him in whom they are accepted. Fourthly, the works of believers must all nevertheless be brought into judgment. 1 Cor. 3 shows us that there will be those who, because builded on the one only foundation, will themselves be saved, whose works will, as unable to bear the test of the fire of that day, be burned up. Beyond question, we must, in this sense, "all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." But, finally, the way in which believers are placed before that judgment-seat, demonstrates more than anything besides, that they are not there to be tried for life or death. How is it that the saints reach that solemn tribunal? *By being changed or raised at the very moment of Christ's descent, and by being caught up to meet Him in the air!* Whether the coming of Christ be pre or post-millennial — all must agree that the very first — the *immediate* effect of His coming is the resurrection, the change, and the translation into the air of His own people. It is thus, and only thus, that they are placed before the judgment-seat of Christ. And shall they appear there, in bodies fashioned and made like unto Christ's own glorious body, to have the question tried whether they savingly belong to Christ? Impossible! Nay, more; where Christ is represented as being manifested, or as coming in judgment on the wicked, His saints are represented as coming with Him. "When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all." Are these saints who thus accompany

the Lord, to take their place among those on whom the judgment is to be executed, and only be afresh separated from among them, as the result of a judicial process? Incomprehensible as is such a thought, this, and much worse than this, is necessarily involved in the doctrine of a simultaneous judgment of all mankind, from Adam downwards, immediately to ensue on the coming of Christ. But if there are passages supposed to support or to teach such a notion, let them by all means be examined.

Matt. 10: 32, 33, is sometimes produced in support of the objection we are considering. But let the reader turn to it and he will find only a statement of the most general character, that Christ will confess those who confess Him, and deny such as deny Him, "before his Father which is in heaven." As to these acts being *at the same time*, or *immediately upon His coming*, the passage says not one single word. And if Mark 8: 38 be brought forward to help out the argument, there we have mention made by our Lord of His coming "in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" — and He does say, of any who are ashamed of Him and of His words, that He will then be ashamed of them. but there is nothing in the passage to mark this as simultaneous with any other act; and even if there were, is it not proof sufficient of His being ashamed of those who have been ashamed of Him, to leave them in the grave during the whole period in which the confessors of His name reign with Him over the earth? Besides, there will assuredly be a most solemn fulfilment of this threatening in what Scripture calls the judgment of "the quick." Among those living on earth when Christ comes to judgment, how many, alas! will be found who have been ashamed of Him and of His words, and how certain that He will then show Himself ashamed of them. But how does this prove that there are not others who will meet a similar doom when raised to stand before the great white throne? or what evidence do the passages afford that the judgment of the quick and of the dead are at the same time?

2. Rev. 21: 7, 8, is adduced in support of the same theory, of a simultaneous judgment of all mankind at Christ's coming. but a mere glance at the passage shows, that it is a declaration of the final results of what all agree in admitting to be the last judgment — that of the great white throne — and therefore proves nothing, for or against the doctrine in question. So of Rev. 22: 12-15, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work is." No one doubts that such is the object and result of Christ's coming; but as to proof that all men receive the reward of their works *together*, and that *immediately upon* the coming of Christ, the passage affords none. The same remark applies to Matt. 16: 27. Doubtless it is at Christ's coming that the period commences in which He will "reward every man according to his works," and this the passage declares. But it declares nothing as to the order in which the rewards shall be distributed, and that is the question at issue.

3. Some even produce the parable of the virgins in Matt. 25 in support of the same idea. But what resemblance can be discovered between the entrance of the five virgins into the marriage, while the others have gone to procure oil for their lamps, and know not that the Bridegroom has come, till they return and find that the door is closed upon them — what resemblance, we ask, is there between this and the arraigning of the whole human family together before the judgment-seat? If language could express, or figures illustrate, a difference between two events, contrasted in almost every respect, it is surely here that such are employed.

4. Acts 17: 31 assuredly testifies, that God "hath appointed a day, in *the which* he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;" but it is a mere popular delusion, unsupported by Scripture and contradicted by it, to suppose that "the day" here spoken of is a day of twenty-four hours, and if it he allowed that the phrase expresses a lengthened, indefinite period, "in the which" the world is to be judged, it is impossible to prove by this, that all classes of mankind will be judged together.

5. It is sought to identify 2 Thess. 1: 6-10, with Rev. 20: 11-15, and to prove from the alleged coincidence, that the final judgment of the righteous and the wicked, at one and the same time, is the subject of which both passages treat. But 2 Thess 1: 6-10 it so plainly and simply sets forth a revelation of the Lord in person *to this very earth*, and *instantaneous* execution of fearful vengeance upon the ungodly persecutors of His people, *alive and in the flesh*, that it is astonishing how any should suppose it to set forth a judicial process at all. It is indeed an awful, solemn visitation of which 2 Thess. 1 treats; but it is not the slow solemnity of formal judgment, as in Rev. 20. *Here* the Lord is at once revealed in flaming fire; *there* there is no mention of fire till the judgment is over. *Here* it is bright consuming fire encircling the Lord; *there* it is the lake of fire. *Here* His appearing is for the instant destruction of His enemies, without any mention of trial at all; - *there* it is to put them upon solemn trial before either sentence or punishment. *Here* there is not even an allusion to the dead; — *there* there is as little allusion to the living; the only agreement between them being that in neither are the righteous said to be judged. 2 Thess. 1 represents the Lord Jesus as coming to take signal vengeance upon ungodly *living men* — the troublers of His people: it does not represent Him as coming to judge "at once" "all the human race" "the living and the dead — the righteous and the wicked. It speaks of *a* terrible judgment *upon* wicked men, but not of *the* judgment *of* the whole human family. It does witness of the Lord's coming "to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe;" but that is surely not in their being arraigned along with the wicked, before one common tribunal, but in their being manifested with Him at His coming, in that glory to which they will have previously been received.

6. The great argument, however, in support of a simultaneous judgment of all men at Christ's coming, is supposed to be derived from a comparison of Matt. 25: 31-46, with Rev. 20: 11-15. All being agreed, that the judgment of the great white throne embraces all generations of men who have not been previously judged, and Matt. 25: 31-46 confessedly treating of a judgment to take place at the coming of the Son of man, it is sought to identify these, and thus to show that both passages describe an absolutely universal and simultaneous judgment immediately ensuing on the coming of Christ. It requires, however, but a slight examination of the passages, to see that this argument is wholly without foundation. Neither passage describes an absolutely universal judgment; and so far from both passages describing the same scene, they have scarcely a circumstance or a feature in common with each other. The two scenes are entirely distinguished from each other, as to antecedent circumstances, time, sphere, subjects of judgment, and character of proceedings.

As to *antecedent circumstances and time*, it requires but a glance to perceive that neither passage can fairly be considered apart from the connection in which it stands. That in Matthew is the close of a connected discourse commencing with Matt. 24; that in Revelation is part of an equally connected strain of prophecy commencing with Rev. 19 and extending to Rev. 21: 8. Our

Lord's words, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory," are not the introduction of a subject then mentioned for the first time, but intended to shed further light upon an event which is the prominent subject of the whole discourse. Read Matt. 24 and 25 and say, if "the coming of the Son of man" be not the great, the main subject of the entire prophecy. The disciples hear of certain marks by which it was to be known that the end was not yet. They are next told of signs which would prove it to be at hand — the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel, and the time of unequalled tribulation also foretold by him. They are cautioned against the idea of Christ's having come, and of His being concealed in the desert or in the secret chambers; and He tells them, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also *the coming of the Son of man be.*" Here is the first occurrence in this discourse of this all-important phrase. We then read, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see *the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.*" We next read of His sending forth His angels to gather His elect from the four winds of heaven; *the coming of the Son of man* is compared to that of the flood in the days of Noah; and a variety of illustrations and parables are employed, the moral repeated at the close of each being — "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein *the Son of man cometh.*" It is after all these references to the event, and in evident connection with them all, that our Lord says, "*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.*" That is, the scene which He thus begins to describe, is one which will quickly ensue on that "coming of the Son of man" of which He had already so largely spoken. Now in Rev. 20: 11-15, *there is no mention of Christ's coming at all*; and for the best possible reason, namely, *that the context of the passage proves it to have taken place upwards of a thousand years before.* Rev. 19 treats of the coming of the Son of man, while chapter 20 proceeds to unfold its results, the binding of Satan, and the reign of the risen saints with Christ for a thousand years. On the expiration of the thousand years, a little season ensues in which, Satan being loosed afresh, a rebellion takes place, and fire comes down from God out of heaven and destroys the wicked, while Satan, who deceived them, is cast into the lake of fire. Then it is that the final judgment takes place, the description of which is thus introduced — "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." Thus, as to *time* and *antecedent circumstances*, no two events could be more widely distinguished, than the acts of judgment respectively portrayed in the passages before us.

Nor are they less distinct as to *sphere*. All the earlier part of our Lord's discourse in Matthew, as well as His quotations from the Prophet Daniel, associates "the coming of the Son of man" with Judea and Jerusalem; and the words, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, he shall sit on the throne of his glory," necessarily carry the thoughts back to numerous Old Testament passages, which speak of *Jerusalem* as "the throne of the Lord," and of "all nations being gathered to the Lord, to *Jerusalem.*" See especially Jer. 3: 17, Jer. 23: 5; Joel 3: 1, 2, 9-16; Isaiah 66. But in Rev. 20 the earth and the heaven have fled away from before the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, before the judgment begins, or the books are opened.

As to the subjects of the judgment, Matt. 25 speaks only of *the living* — Rev. 20 only of *the dead*. "Before him shall be gathered *all nations*," is the language of the one: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God," is that of the other. Assiduous efforts are made to show that "all nations" includes the dead of all generations, and that "the dead, small and great," absolutely means all mankind. But the expression rendered "all nations," literally rendered, is "all the Gentiles." The word rendered "nations,"\* with the article, occurs, if we mistake not, 132 times in the New Testament. It is rendered "the Gentiles" ninety-two times — "the nations" ten times — "the heathen" five times — and simply "nations" twenty-five times only; but it is never, in any instance, (unless it be this,) applied either to the dead or the raised. The very expression indicates a present existence and locality upon earth. Nor is there any mention in the passage of "the opening of the graves," or "the sea giving up its dead," or any reference whatever to resurrection. It is the judgment of the Gentiles at the coming of Christ. Nor could anything be in more perfect keeping with the whole discourse. Matt. 24: 15-41 gives the judgment of Israel; Matt. 24: 42 to 25: 30, the judgment of Christendom; Matt. 25: 31-46, the judgment of the Gentiles.

Rev. 20: 11-15 is the judgment of "the dead," or what our Lord terms in John 5: 29, "the resurrection of judgment." There is not a word in the passage of any but "the dead." "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." "The rest of the dead," who "lived not again till the thousand years were finished," doubtless form the vast majority in this wondrous scene. Any who may in the course of the thousand years be cut off for sin, as well as the rebels of the little season which succeeds, will also be among the number. There are those who urge the expression "small and great" as at least so far expressive of universality as to indicate that all the dead, both righteous and wicked, will be included in this judgment. No argument could be more unfortunate. Where it is said in Rev. 11: 18, on the sounding of the seventh trumpet, that "thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto them that fear thy name, *small and great*," do the objectors themselves regard the phrase as including all of all ages who fear God's name? Of course they do not; for they are obliged to acknowledge that the whole Millennium succeeds the epoch to which these words refer. So in Rev. 13: 16, are we to understand by "all, *both small and great*," that literally every person on the face of the globe will receive the mark of the beast in his right hand, or in his forehead? Or, again, in Rev. 19: 18, does "the flesh of all men, both free and bond, *both small and great*," intimate that not one of the human race will survive the carnage? How, then, should these words in Rev. 20: 12 prove that all the dead, of all generations, righteous as well as wicked, are to stand before the great white throne? All who are dead *when the throne is set* will doubtless be raised to stand before it; but the righteous dead will have been raised more than a thousand years before; and as to the righteous during the Millennium, there is no scripture proof that they will die, but strong presumptive evidence to the contrary. In any case, to identify a passage which treats only of *the judgment of the dead*, with another which treats as exclusively of *a judgment on living nations*, death and resurrection not being mentioned in it at all, is a remarkable instance of confounding things which essentially differ, and affords but little support to the doctrine sought to be based thereon — that of the simultaneous judgment of the whole human race at the coming of Christ.

With regard to the *character* of the judgment, the passages differ just as widely. That in Matt. 25 is not, strictly speaking, so much a trial by a *judge*, as a calling up for sentence, and an award of punishment or reward by a KING, to *rebellious* or *obedient* subjects. It is as KING that Christ speaks and acts; and His very first act, after taking His seat upon "the throne of his glory," is a division of the gathered ones into classes, in a way which supposes their previous guilt or innocence. His first words are the *sentence* of the righteous, which, as well as that subsequently pronounced on the wicked, assumes, without any process of trial or opening of books, the obedience or rebellion of the sentenced ones. How different from the judgment of the great white throne, where the books are opened, and another book, which is the book of life; the dead being judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. Could two scenes of judgment be well described in more dissimilar terms?

It has been supposed, from the mention made of "the book of life," that there must be some in the judgment of the great white throne, whose names are found there. But why this necessity? Without supposing this at all, there is most important meaning in this solemn act. "We need scarcely say, that previous to all investigation God knows that the names of the wicked are not there, even as without any trial he knows the character of their works. But according to His gracious dealings with men, none are *necessarily* condemned for evil works, pardon being offered to the guilty. For this reason, there are two solemn stages in this judgment — first, a reference to the *other books*, to show that the works of the wicked deserve death — secondly, the opening of '*the book of life*,' to show that by unbelief they have rejected life. And then, their names not being there, the execution of the sentence follows, — which is 'the second death.'"

The last verse of Matt. 25 is sometimes urged as showing that the judgment cannot be at the commencement of the Millennium, but must be identical with that of the great white throne. But let the reader compare Isaiah 66: 24; Rev. 14: 10, 11; and Rev. 19: 20, which all confessedly refer to pre-millennial judgments, and the difficulty will vanish at once.

Here we close. We are not aware of any other objections, of even apparent weight, to the views unfolded in this volume. The Lord grant us to weigh all things in the balances of the sanctuary — to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.

"Brethren, the time is short." "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." If there be one lesson more solemnly taught by prophecy than another, it is that of God's estimate and judgment of "the world." The momentary duration of its pleasures, is the lowest ground on which we can be exhorted to stand apart from it. *It lies under the condemnation of having crucified, and of still rejecting, the Son of God's love.* All who through grace believe on Jesus are delivered by His death from this condemnation. But is deliverance from the world's condemnation all that results to us, as believers, from the death of Christ? No; He "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us *from this present evil world*, according to the will of our God and Father." The union with the world of that which professes to be the Church, is that which constitutes the very core of Christendom's apostacy, and which is rapidly bringing on the judgments by which the world, both professing and profane, will be overwhelmed at the coming of the Lord. From these judgments the true Church will be preserved by being caught up to meet the Lord in the air. May this hope, while it cheers and comforts us amid the desolation around, be of practical power in separating us from everything that will not

bear the light of Christ's coming glory! May Christ Himself be everything to us — everything, not only as the foundation of our hopes, but for our life, our walk, our joy — the alone object of our hearts!