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W. Henry Green

Philadelphia

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E S S A Y S

ON THE

COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

BY

PHILO-BASILICUS.

PHILADELPHIA:

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ESSAY I.

For behold the kingdom of God is within you.—LUKE
17: 21.

THE whole passage runs thus: “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said: The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say Lo! here; or Lo! there; for behold the kingdom of God is within you.”

Upon this passage Mr. Fry remarks: “I confess after all that has been written in explanation of this passage, some difficulty remains. I cannot think with Dr. M^cKnight, Christ meant to correct the mistaken notions of the Pharisees, respecting the nature of the Messiah’s kingdom—that it was not to consist of an outward form of government to be erected in that particular country; because we do not know that in their conception of the grand outline of the predicted kingdom, they were mistaken; and notwithstanding what Dr. Campbell has said in his note, I cannot conceive that in speaking of his kingdom, as the development of a holy and vital principle in the hearts of men, he would say to the Pharisees when addressing them distinct from his disciples: “The kingdom of God is within you.” The translation of “among you,” Dr. Campbell has very properly discountenanced.

“I incline to a much more simple interpretation of the passage. The Pharisees mean to ask concerning the glorious kingdom of the Messiah, and our Lord in his answer meets that question,” &c.

Mr. Fry might have added, that the stress of the question lies upon the word *when*. The Pharisees could not have doubted that it was the purpose of God to establish a kingdom, although they did call in question our Lord’s claim to be the Messiah and the king of that kingdom. If the question be considered in connexion with our Lord’s preaching, and that of his disciples, or with that of John the Baptist, it will be seen, that the *mere fact* of asking the question, was virtually a denial of the truth of our Lord’s doctrine.

John the Baptist began his preaching in the wilderness, saying: Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,

(ἤγγικε proximè abest has come nigh)* Matth. 3: 2. Our Lord himself began preaching the same doctrine, Matth. 4: 15, or as it is recorded in Mark 1: 15, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (ἤγγικε has come nigh.) In Matth. 11: 13, it is said, "for all the prophets and the law prophesied until John," that is, the prophets who preceded John, and the law announced the kingdom of God *as future*, but since the days of John the kingdom of God is preached, *εὐαγγελιζέται* (that is,) is announced *as come nigh*, (for such was the tenor of John's preaching, Matth. 3: 2, and of the preaching of Christ and his disciples,) Matth. 4: 17—10: 7. Luke 10: 9) and not as a *thing future*.† The same doctrine was declared by our Lord when he was accused of casting out devils by Beelzebub: "But if I, by the finger of God, cast out devils, then the kingdom of God *is come upon you*, ἀγα εφθιασεν εφ' ἑμας ἡ βασιλεια του θεου, Matth. 12: 28. Luke 11: 20. The twelve disciples were commanded to preach the same doctrine, that the kingdom of heaven had come nigh, Matth. 10: 7, and so were the seventy disciples when they were sent forth, Luke 10: 9.

In an important sense then, the kingdom of God had come nigh to the Jewish nation, when our Lord entered upon his public ministry, and began to preach that the kingdom of heaven had come nigh, or as it is expressed in Luke 11: 20, had come upon them or reached them, and the Pharisees by asking *when it should come*, assumed that it had not *already* come, which we have seen, was the great doctrine which our Lord and his disciples were employed in preaching. The reader will have no difficulty, it is presumed, in conceding to us, this position, and we proceed to remark that it furnishes a clue by which we may determine what portion of our Lord's reply is to be considered as the answer to the question.

The question was, "*when* the kingdom of God should come."

* Dr. Bloomfield remarks upon this verse, that the word ἤγγικε here signifies *instare*, for *Messiah had not yet appeared*, and John was baptizing, (*αὐτὸν ἐβαπτίζων*), into him *who was coming*. When, however, he comes to Matth. 4: 17, this reason fails; for Jesus himself was the preacher. On this verse Dr. B. says "the address was much the same as that of John the Baptist," (it was identical—yea, the very words which John used) "and little was said, because our Lord did not yet choose to publicly announce his Messiahship." By what text of scripture can it be proved that our Lord said but little when he began to preach for the reason here suggested? We have only a part of his first discourse at Nazareth recorded, as appears by Luke 4: 21, 22. The fact is, the words "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," mean the same thing, when uttered by the Lord Jesus as by John the Baptist, his forerunner.

† Probat præstantiam Joannis ministerii præ prophetarum ministerio, quod illi modo de Christo prophetarant, id est, *venturum* prædixerat; Joannes vero Christum *præsentem* indicavit. *Cartwright's Harmony in loco*. Jam, planius explicat ab effectis cur Joannem cæteris prætulit: scilicet quod illi omnes de *rebus futuris* prædicebant, hic vero *rem præsentem* indicavit, *etc.* *Cartwright* ubi sup.

The import of the answer (as we shall endeavour on a future occasion to shew) is, "you inquire of me *when* the glorious kingdom of Messiah will be established, and appear in outward manifestation. This is a subject upon which you will receive no information, nor will you discern its approach by any observation which you can make, either of the efflux of time, or by any external indication whatever."—In effect our Lord told them they asked for information which they would not receive. Even when inquired of by his disciples concerning his coming, and the outward manifestation of the kingdom of God, the information was uniformly withheld. At one time he told them, that of the day and the hour knoweth no man, no, nor the angels, nor the Son, but the Father only; at another, he said, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in his own power. Mark 13: 32. Acts 1: 7. If then the stress of the question rested upon the time *when* the glorious kingdom of the Messiah should come,—or *when* the Messiah should appear in his kingdom with great power and glory, and if our Lord intended in his answer to meet the stress of the question, he would do it by denying to them the information they asked for. Surely he would not reveal to his enemies, that which he not only concealed from his friends, but which he declared that angels would not be informed of, beforehand.

The answer then consists of two clauses: viz. "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation," "neither shall they say Lo! here, or Lo! there."—These two remarks answer the question pointedly, plainly and fully; and having done this, he adds a reiteration of the great doctrine he had been and still was employed in preaching, "but indeed the kingdom of God has already come to you"—for such, it is suggested, is the meaning of the words translated, "for behold the kingdom of God is within you." The reasons for this translation will be given hereafter.

This third clause then is not properly a part of the answer to the question. The question had respect to the actual outward manifestation of the Messiah's kingdom, and this was a matter upon which all information was denied. In what sense then, had the kingdom of God come at that time? for if the Pharisees intended the glorious kingdom of the Messiah, that kingdom had not come, in the sense of *being already established in manifest glory*, nor has it yet come in that sense. Our Lord, therefore, when he reiterated the doctrine of *the kingdom of God come nigh*, must be understood in a sense different from the intent of the question. Daniel informs us of a kingdom, which shall be established upon the ruins of the fourth

monarchy, and that kingdom is symbolized by a stone. The fourth monarchy, as almost all commentators agree, still subsists in its divided state. This future kingdom, represented by the stone, is the Messiah's glorious kingdom, and was the subject of the question put by the Pharisees. That kingdom will not come in a manner which can be observed—but it will come like the lightning's flash—as our Lord afterwards told his disciples. Yet this very kingdom had come nigh to that nation, in such a sense, that it might be taken away from them if they rejected it. This is proved by Matth. 21: 43. In a discourse with the chief priests and elders of the people our Lord quoted Ps. 117: 22, 23, and applied it to himself. He had just foretold his own rejection and crucifixion by the nation under the parable of the householder and his vineyard, and then adds “did ye never read the stone that the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the comer, this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes: *therefore*, say I unto you, the kingdom of God *shall be taken from you* and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

Well then, when Christ preached that the kingdom of God *had come nigh* to the Jewish nation, (as he undoubtedly did, Matth. 4: 17) he must be understood to intend that it had really and in truth come nigh; otherwise it would be impossible to suppose or say that it might be and would be taken from them.—Certainly it had really come nigh in some sense, for so it was announced; and this fact constituted the great distinction between John's preaching and that of Malachi and the prophets who preceded him. And there is a sense also in which this kingdom, which had come nigh to the Jewish nation, was taken from them, because our Lord expressly declared it should be taken from them, and given to another nation; by which other nation we are to understand the mystical body of Christ—the church of the first born, or the body of true believers, as Peter teaches, 1st Epist. ch. 2: 9.

What then is this sense? for that is the next inquiry—Did our Lord mean by *kingdom of God*, the Gospel dispensation,” or the “Christian Church,” “or his spiritual reign,”—as it is sometimes called—“begun in the church on earth and completed in heaven.” The kingdom, in this sense, was not taken from the Jews and given to another nation in exclusion of them: On the contrary, the gospel dispensation was opened at Jerusalem,* and by the express direction of our Lord was

* “It must be observed that this was an ancient prerogative, granted to the city by the Almighty, among many other privileges. This Schœntgen illustrates from numerous Rabbinical writings “God will bestow no benefits, blessings or consolations on the Israelites, except from Zion.” Dr. Bloomfield, *Reccns. Synop.* on Luke 21: 47. But the kingdom, though first

offered *first of all* to the Jews, Luke 24: 47. Acts 13: 46. Rom. 1: 16—15: 27. Acts 3: 19, 21. The gospel and repentance and remission of sins in the name of Christ has, ever since the day of Pentecost, been as freely offered to the Jews as to the Gentiles. It is nothing to the purpose to say that they will not believe in Christ or receive his gospel. That only proves, that they exclude themselves; but that they were invited and urged with great tenderness and earnestness, by the apostles, to embrace the faith of Christ, is most evident to every reader of the book of the Acts, and of Paul's epistles. In fact the first Christian church was composed of converted Jews; and Peter declared (Acts 2: 39) that the promise was to them and to their children, as well as to those afar off. If then the kingdom of God, which John the Baptist and our Lord and his disciples preached to the Jewish nation, as *come to them*, or as *come nigh*, to them be the same kingdom that was taken from them, it follows, that that kingdom was not the present dispensation of the gospel, or the Christian church, because the gospel is proclaimed to them as freely as to the Gentiles, and the church is as truly open to their admission.

The conclusion then seems to be this, that the kingdom of God had come nigh to that nation, and was offered to them in a sense which has not yet been realized on earth, but which the church is looking forward to, in the millennial state, and it failed of being realized at that time, in consequence of the unbelief of the Jews. This is taught in the parable of the marriage supper: Matth. 22: 1-14, "The kingdom of heaven," said our Lord, "is like to a certain king, which made a marriage for his son: And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, and they would not come: Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, tell them which are bidden, behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: Come unto the marriage; but they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm and the other to his merchandise," &c.

There can be no doubt that this parable represents the preaching of the gospel to the Jews, their rejection of it, the destruction of their city by the Romans, and the subsequent preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles. It represents the *kingdom of heaven* as a prepared feast or dinner, ready to be partaken of by the invited guests. Had the invitation been

promised to them, and preached to them, *was taken away* while *they retained*, according to these authors, the prerogative of having the present dispensation of the Gospel opened at Jerusalem, which shews that the kingdom which was taken away, was not the "Gospel kingdom," as it is improperly called, meaning by it, the present dispensation of the gospel.

accepted by the Jews—the marriage would have taken place, but their rejection of it created a new exigency, that, *namely*, of calling in other guests in place of those first bidden, who were not worthy. This second bidding represents the present dispensation of the gospel, in which the Gentiles are invited equally with the Jews. Here then we see the feast, which was at first designed and offered exclusively to one class of persons, was taken from them and actually bestowed upon another class; and thus corresponds with the declaration of our Lord to the Jews before quoted, “therefore, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

The nation to whom the kingdom was first offered, was an *elect* nation, and the nation upon whom it will actually be conferred, is also an *elect* nation. To Israel, after the flesh, God said by Moses, “if ye will obey my voice, indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation,” Exod. 19: 5, 6. “To the strangers scattered, &c. elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,” God says by Peter, “ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar (or a purchased) people,” 1 Pet. 1: 1, 2; and 2: 8, 9.

This elect nation, upon which the kingdom will ultimately be conferred, is the mystical body of Christ. It is not yet completed, and the dinner, though long since prepared, is still waiting for the complete ingathering of the substituted guests. Meantime the Jews who rejected the invitation, have involved themselves in long continued and dreadful national calamities, which will not cease during the entire period which is represented by the bidding of other guests, (verse 10th of Matth. 22.)

That Christ would have conferred upon the Jewish nation the kingdom which is in the parable represented by the marriage, and which he and his disciples, also John the Baptist preached as come nigh, is evident from Matth. 23: 37. “Oh Jerusalem,” &c. “how often *would I have gathered thy children together,*” &c. “*but ye would not.*” Behold, your house is left unto you desolate; for I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye say blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” This passage certainly teaches that the dispersion of the Jews and destruction of their city, came through their own fault. See also, Luke 19: 41, 44. God was faithful to offer them the kingdom.—Christ was sincere in urging them to accept it—he wept over their obduracy and

unbelief, but their infidelity did not nullify or diminish aught from the faithfulness of God, as Paul declares in reference to this very particular, in Rom. 3: 3.

The question recurs again: In what sense was the kingdom of God nigh to the Jewish nation? The answer is, it was *relatively* nigh, not absolutely so. The time was fulfilled—the 70 weeks spoken of in Daniel 9: 24, had elapsed.* Nothing was wanting on the part of God, in order to the actual establishment of the kingdom in manifest glory. But the Jews not seeing the glory of Christ, discredited the message. They wanted, in fact, the heart to receive the kingdom, and wanting that, every thing was wanting on their part. Speaking after the manner of men, the second advent of Christ was made necessary by his rejection at the first advent. The writer is aware that there are deeper reasons, and very deep and mysterious purposes involved in this matter, and these will come up for consideration presently. Hypothetically, however, and with a view to a clearer development of the subject, we may say, that if the nation of the Jews had cordially received the Lord Jesus Christ, and yielded to him the obedience of faith, (Rom. 1: 5—16: 26) he would have established his kingdom immediately,—they would have continued to be the elect and favoured nation, and no other would have been called or gathered to take their place. We may say also; that the unbelief of the Jews and their rejection of Christ, was instrumentally the cause or occasion of postponing the establishment of that kingdom, or if we may accommodate the popular language of the church to the idea, if the Jews had closed in nationally with the offer of Christ, the millennium which we expect would have commenced at the first advent of Christ, and the world, instead of the present gospel dispensation, would have long since enjoyed that blessedness, which the prophets foretell, will be realized in the millennial economy.

But why did not the Jewish nation receive Christ? Turn to John 6: 44, for the answer. “No one can come to me,” said our Lord to the Jews, “except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” And whence was this inability? It arose from the total corruption of human nature. The Jews rejected Christ and his kingdom, for the same cause that thousands among the Gentiles now reject him. It was the

* The time here spoken of, is that which, according to the predictions of the prophets, was to intervene between their days, or between any period assigned by them, and the appearance of the Messiah. This had been revealed to Daniel, as consisting of what, in prophetic language, is denominated seventy weeks, that is, (every week being seven years) four hundred and ninety years, reckoning from the order issued to rebuild the “temple of Jerusalem.” Bloomfield, *Recens. Syn.* on Mark 1: 15.

purpose of God to allow the Jews to reject and crucify their king. Nay, this thing was done, as Peter says, (Acts 2: 23) "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," not that God had any pleasure in their sinful conduct, (Deut. 5: 29) but as Paul says, that through their fall and rejection, the offer of the gospel might be made to the Gentiles, Rom. 11: 11, 12. It was, in part at least, for the cure of this depravity, that the method of atonement, by the death of Christ, was designed; so that the depravity of the Jewish nation (which was no greater than that of the Gentiles) carried into execution the very plan which God had designed for its cure.

While, therefore, the kingdom was urged upon the Jewish nation with the sincerity of tears, (Luke 19: 41, 44,) God still left them free to reject it. He thus gave the world an example of what depraved human nature would do under an economy of law; and the fearful ruin and long continued desolation, which have rested upon that people and their country, shew us that something more than a national election, to the benefits of an economy of law, is necessary to secure to fallen men, the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, *to wit*: a personal election unto the obedience of faith. God foresaw the issue of that economy, and his plans and purposes were framed with a view to it. Paul says, (Gal. 3: 8) the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen, preached before, the gospel unto Abraham, saying, "in thee shall all nations be blessed."—The permitted fall of the Jewish nation, was the appointed means of attaining objects of immeasurable magnitude to the whole human race. Paul calls it the riches of the world—the riches of the Gentiles—the reconciling of the world, Rom. 11: 12, 15. When we consider the doctrines which rest upon the atonement of Christ, we cannot fail to see, that there was a divine necessity for his sufferings. "Ought not Christ"—was it not needful, that Christ should "suffer these things, and to enter into his glory," Luke 24: 26.) How then could the Jewish nation accept the kingdom offered to them by Christ? And if they could not, why was it offered to them? Herein is a mystery. Paul himself says, the mystery of godliness (which is great,) consists partly in this, that God manifest in the flesh, should be preached to the Gentiles, 1 Tim. 3: 16. The Jew cannot understand this mystery without believing in Christ, and the sin of his nation in rejecting him, and that their fall and judicial blindness, were permitted of God, both as a punishment to them, and as a means of extending the benefits of the kingdom of God to the Gentiles.

On the other hand, the Gentile church sees no mystery in the extension of the gospel to them. They judge, that the

event which has occurred, was primarily and unconditionally purposed. Yet God no more decreed the fall of the Jewish nation, than he did the fall of Adam. As Adam, if he had stood, would have received the reward of the covenant, under which he was placed, so the Jews, if they had fulfilled the condition, upon which the promises were made to them, (Exod. 19: 5, 6) would have inherited the blessing.* Yet God foreknew that they would not fulfil them; nay, more, the depravity of the human heart is so great, that no mere man since the fall has kept perfectly the commandments of God. No man can do so, no man can come to Christ without divine grace. But this fact did not render it any the less proper for God to deal with the Jews as with moral agents. That he did so deal with them, is evident, from the fact that he gave them a law. He made promises to them upon a condition which he foreknew would be broken by every one of the people to whom he gave it, and yet upon the basis of the performance of that condition, or law, he promised to them the blessings of the kingdom of heaven. The Jews stumbled at this. "What advantage then has the Jew? What profit have we by submitting to the seal of the covenant? Rom. 3: 1. The apostle replies briefly to the inquiry, specifying, however, only the benefit of being made the depositories of divine revelation. But he immediately adds, that the unbelief of the Jews, which lost them this kingdom, was no ground of objection. The Lord Jesus Christ was faithful and sincere in offering it to them, and his faithfulness was none the less because they rejected the offer. "Shall your unbelief make the faith (fidelity) of God without effect or nullify it?" Rom. 3: 1, 3. But says the Jew, still objecting, in reply—"God foresaw all this—he knew, according to your doctrine, that we should not believe—he knew that we should reject and crucify him whom you call the Messiah, and he makes use of this conduct of ours, to magnify and commend in a more glorious way, his own righteousness.—How then is it consistent with God's righteousness to take vengeance on our nation for performing acts which thus minister to His own glory?" Paul replies, by asserting that such an argument would deprive the world of a moral governor, and of a sovereign. God alone can govern the world, and he must and he will govern it by his own law, and if that be not deserving of punishment at the hand of God, which is

* If the reader should object to this hypothetical way of presenting the subject, it may be replied that we have a scriptural warrant for it. Paul adopted this method in 1 Cor. 2: 8. And the Lord Jesus Christ in effect does the same thing in Luke 19: 42, 44. Math. 23: 37. See also Deut. 5: 29. Ps. 81: 11, 16. Acts 13: 27. Such passages are perfectly consistent with such as the following, Acts 15: 18—2: 23. Rom. 8: 29, 30.

really blame-worthy, if God makes it the means of a greater display of his glory, it follows, that God must either give up his right as a judge to condemn and punish the guilty, or the exercise of his power as a sovereign in overruling the wickedness of men, to the advancement of his glory and the good of his creatures. God will do neither. He will condemn the violators of his law, while he overrules their sin to the praise of his wisdom, his power, and his grace. Such, it is conceived, is the scope of the first eight verses of the 3d chap. of Rom.

The case may be stated thus: God elected the natural posterity of Abraham and Jacob, as his peculiar people. Like the rest of our race, they were depraved and rebellious without exception. He gave them a law to which he annexed the promise of the kingdom, in case of obedience. The promise of the kingdom contained, in itself, the glories of the millennial kingdom—it was indeed that kingdom—it contained in fact, every thing which God will bestow upon believers at the resurrection and the glorious epiphany of Christ. Yet so wicked were the nation, (and we may add, so wicked are all to whom the gospel is preached) that if left to themselves, not one would have obeyed or accepted the proffered blessings. What then was to be done? Ought God to have foreborne to command, because he knew they would disobey? That would be to give up his right to govern them. Ought he to have given *simply* the command, without annexing the promise of reward, which he would bestow upon the nation in case of their *national* obedience, because he knew they would still disobey, notwithstanding the allurements of the promise, and thereby greatly aggravate their guilt? That would not have exhibited his government in its true character, nor himself in the benign attribute of his abounding love. The command, without the promise of reward in case of obedience, would not exhibit fully the motives which his government furnishes to obedience. Nor can it be said, without impiety, that the promise of reward was not made with the purpose of bestowing it in case of obedience. Nor could the Jew say that there is any inconsistency in asserting, that God fully intended to bestow the kingdom upon his nation, in case of the performance of the condition on their part; because, God foreknew that the condition would not be performed. The father of a profligate family may, with entire sincerity, promise to divide his estate among them, if they will reform their lives and be obedient to his authority, though he may at the same time be morally certain, that the force of their depraved nature and vicious habits will countervail the motive annexed to his promise, and he may, in view of that certainty, coterminously purpose to

bestow his estate upon the poor of the parish. But such a secondary purpose would be no ground of impeaching the sincerity of the offer, because the breach of the condition on their part must precede, in the order of the father's acts, the execution of the purpose in favour of the poor, and so the loss would come to them through their fault, and not through the unfaithfulness of their parent.

It is impossible, however, by human analogies to exemplify fully the dealings or the purposes of God, but this illustration may enable the reader to apprehend how it could be, that God should offer the kingdom at first exclusively to the Jewish nation, and how it was necessary that the Jews should reject it, and stumble and fall as a nation, in order to *make it possible* to offer the gospel of the kingdom to the Gentiles. This illustration too, may enable us more clearly to explain what the reader may consider a contradiction, between the different clauses of our Lord's answer to the Jews, as the writer conceives its import: *First*, he tells the Pharisees in reply to their question, "*when* the kingdom of God should appear?" You ask for information which will not be revealed to angels or men; men will know when they see it, but not before; *and then* he tells them, that the kingdom of God has already come to them. That is to say, the kingdom has not come, and yet it has come; and this is affirmed of the same kingdom, *to wit*, of the glorious kingdom of Christ. The carnal Jews could not understand this to be any thing but a flat contradiction. But the meaning of our Lord may be paraphrased thus: The time is fulfilled—the kingdom of God which was promised to your fathers has come to you. It is ready to be established. But I know you will not believe me, nor receive the kingdom which I offer; therefore, although it is freely offered to your nation, yet it will not now be established, because it is not the purpose of God at this time to pour out his spirit upon your nation, and bring you to receive me and my Gospel. More than this, the spirit will not be given till I be glorified, and I must suffer many things at your hands, and be rejected of your nation, before I enter into glory. This will open a new dispensation, the benefits of which will be shared by the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and under the administration of the Spirit, elect persons out of all nations will be gathered into one body, and made a truly holy nation, which will be substituted in your place. When this nation shall be completed, the kingdom of God will come, but of the day and of the hour of its completion, knoweth no man nor angel. This kingdom of God cometh not with observation; you will have no means of noting its progress, or its distance from completion, and consequently it

will come as a snare upon all that dwell on the earth. Yet if ye will receive it, that kingdom about which you inquire since the days of John the Baptist is truly come, and is sincerely offered, and will fail of its establishment only through the fault of your nation.

Some suppose that God had no especial reference to the natural posterity of Abraham, in the promises he made to that people of the kingdom of heaven—that when he spoke of the children, he did not intend children according to the flesh in any sense, but that he meant merely that he would raise up to Abraham from among the Gentiles a numerous posterity, who should be heirs of his faith. Yet the apostle Paul tells us in Rom. 15: 8, that “Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises unto the fathers.” The Jew on the other hand cannot perceive how the Gentiles can, in any sense, or in any order, come in for a share of those promises, (Matt. 3: 9.) In fact, even the apostles did not believe it, till they saw God actually conferring the gifts of the Spirit upon the Gentiles, without first aggregating them to the Jewish commonwealth, Acts 15: and 11: 14, 18, and this error of the Jews, even of some who professed faith in Christ, was a cause of great trouble in the apostolic churches. Yet both Jews and Christians err in these particulars. The promises were first made to Israel according to the flesh, Rom. 9: 4, 5. Exod. 19: 5, 6. The gospel of the kingdom was first preached to them exclusively as a nation, and as the *elect nation*. Our Lord even forbade his disciples to go into the way of the Gentiles, and so firmly were the apostles persuaded that they ought to confine their ministry to the Jews, that a divine vision and the command of the Spirit, were necessary to persuade Peter to go to the Gentile Cornelius. In this respect the gospel was enforced upon the Jews by peculiar motives; to no other nation is it offered in its *national* capacity. It is now preached to *individuals* among all nations, but not to the nations *as such*. Let us not be misunderstood: What we mean is this: To no other nation is it promised, that, upon a national and universal reception of the gospel with the obedience of faith, God will immediately reveal and establish his kingdom in outward manifestation upon earth; yet such was the purport of the offer to the Jewish nation. Christ came (*τα εις*) to his own* (things,

* The Jews (as Wetstein observes,) were the peculiar people of God, and the temple of Jerusalem the temple of God, and therefore, also, the inheritance of the Son of God, (Mal. 3: 1,) moreover, Christ's coming had been predicted by the prophets to the Jews, was eagerly expected, and John had pointed the Lord Jesus out to them as the Messiah. Yet they received him not, though born in Judea, a constant frequenter of the temple, and one who disseminated instruction throughout the country: nay, his very relations had little or no

kingdom) and (*in idiom,*) his own (people, subjects) received him not, John 1: 11. Had they received him he would have made his abode with them, and exerted his power in the expulsion of Satan and of sin, and the curse from the earth. But his visit was not without effect for good, to some of that people, Rom. 11: 5, 7, for to as many as did receive him, to them gave he power (which he came to confer upon all, and would have conferred upon all, if they would have received him,) to become sons of God, John 1: 12. But the promise to them *as a nation*, was lost by their obduracy and unbelief, while individuals, through the especial grace of God, were drawn to Christ, and sealed by the Holy Spirit of God, unto the day, when Christ will return to redeem their bodies from the power of the grave, Luke 21: 28. Eph. 4: 30. Rom. 8: 19, 23. Thus the result, as it respected the nation, (notwithstanding the peculiar promises made to it,) was the same as that which attends the preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles, to whom it is not offered in a *national* capacity—individuals believe, while multitudes reject the gospel of the kingdom, and those who do believe, receive the spirit of adoption and power to become the sons of God, while the promise of establishing the kingdom of God on earth in manifested glory, still depends, so to speak, upon the national repentance of the Jewish nation. But when will this be? We know not, it is a secret unrevealed. It is not for us to know the times and the seasons, upon which the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, depends, Acts 1: 6, 7. The Father has reserved these in his own power. But we know that it will not occur, till the period of mercy allotted to the Gentiles shall have elapsed, (see Rom. 11: 30, 31, in the original.) Till then Jerusalem shall be trodden down by her enemies, and her children shall remain dispersed among all nations, as witnesses for God, of his just judgment against them for rejecting the kingdom which the Lord Jesus came to establish over them. But God will at length visit them with his mercy, for his gifts and calling are without repentance. They are still beloved for their fathers' sake, Rom. 11: 28, 29. But now the kingdom of heaven is no longer at hand to them as a nation, their place is taken away, and their nation is destroyed, though their race remains, and will be preserved, that it may be gathered again, when the long suffering and patience of

faith in him. See John 7: 5. Euthymius refers to Matt. 15: 24. "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The expression *τα ιδία* is elliptical. We must supply *οικουμένην* or *δύρατα*. It denotes "what any one inhabits or occupies as his own, or the place of his birth." Bloomfield *Recens. Synopt.* But see Deut. 32: 9—26: 18, 19. Exod. 15: 16—19: 5, 6. 1 Sam. 10: 1. Ps. 135: 4. Is. 43: 21. Jer. 10: 16—51: 19. These places leave no doubt as to the meaning of this expression.

God towards Apostate Christendom, shall be exhausted. Then will he suddenly turn to the dispersed of Israel, and the nation shall, when gathered again, be born at once, (Isaiah 66: 8,) and the present dispensation will close. Zion shall then arise and shine, for her light will then have come, and the glory of the Lord will have risen upon her, and the kingdom of God will be established on earth, (Luke 21: 31.)

But this essay is already too long, we shall add only a few critical remarks upon this portion of the verse, in anticipation of a more extended examination hereafter. The words translated “for behold the kingdom of God is within you” are the following: *ιδου γαρ η βασιλεια του θεου εντος υμων εστιν.*

Dr. Macknight tells us (after Phavorinus,) that *γαρ* has sometimes the adversative sense of *δε* and should be translated *but*, *yet*, or *although*. He refers to 1 Pet. 4: 15. Mark 7: 28. Luke 22: 2. Rom. 10: 3—15: 2, 18. 1 Cor. 10: 29. 2 Cor. 5: 2—12: 1. Heb. 12: 20. And such, it is submitted, is the sense in this place. Certainly if the general view taken of the Saviour’s answer be correct, the word will not admit of any other than an adversative sense. The word *ιδου* *behold*, is used for the sake of emphasis. Its office is to add intensity to the affirmation, or it may be considered as an appeal to the evidence of their senses for proof of the truth, that “the kingdom of God was among them.” These evidences were his numerous miracles which were of a kind especially appropriate to his doctrine. Whether the word be translated *behold* or *indeed*, is not important. The phrase *εντος υμων εστιν* is equivalent to *εφθασεν εφ’ υμας* in Luke 11: 20, or to *εφθασεν εντος υμων*. In Luke 11: 20, our Lord said to the Pharisees, “the kingdom of God has come upon you,” “has arrived at, or by lapse of time has reached or attained to you.” The kingdom of God therefore was among them; as if he had said “the time is fulfilled,” Mark 1: 15—the kingdom of God is no longer announced as *future*, but as *come*, (not to all nations) but to you, and is within you. The word *you υμων* cannot be understood of *the individuals* addressed; they were unbelievers in the Saviour and his doctrine, as is proved by their asking the question. They were addressed as a part of the nation, and the meaning is, the kingdom of God was *within their nation*—it had come to them as a people, and the offer of it was restricted to them, Matt. 10: 5. “Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles,” said our Lord to his disciples. Hence the peculiar significancy of *εντος* *within*. The kingdom of God had come—it had reached the world, not the world at large, but only one nation; nor was it preached, except (*εντος του εθνου των Ιουδαϊων*) within and among the Jewish people.*

* The only other place in the N. T., where the word *εντος* occurs, is Matt. 23: 26. Cleanse first (*το εντος του ποτηριου*) *the within* of the cup, that is the inside

In the next essay this subject will be resumed, and some observations will be made for the purpose of shewing more clearly the bearings of it upon other doctrines.

ESSAY II.

For behold the kingdom of God is within you.

LUKE 17: 21.

In the preceding essay, it was suggested that the kingdom referred to, in this passage, is the glorious kingdom of the Messiah. It was proven that there is a sense in which the kingdom of God had come nigh to the Jewish nation, from the time that John the Baptist began to preach, Matt. 3: 2—4: 17—10: 7. Mark 1: 15; or as it is expressed in Luke 11: 20, the kingdom of God from that time had come upon that nation. It was also proven, that there is a sense in which the kingdom of God was taken from the Jews, (Matt. 21: 43,) and that the present dispensation of the gospel, cannot be the kingdom which was taken from them, because it was preached after our

of it, and it is used in contrast with (το εστος) *the without*, or outside of the cup. It occurs in the following places in the Septuagint, Ps. 38: 3—108: 22. Cant. 3: 10. My heart was hot *within me*, εντος μου,—my heart was greatly disturbed *within me*. King Solomon made himself a chariot . . . and *its inside*, (εντος αυτου,) was carpeted with love. In other places it is used with τα, for the inside or things within, as in Ps. 102: 1. Isaiah 16: 11. Dan. 10: 16; and twice in the Apocrypha, Eccles. 19: 26. 1 Mac. 4: 48, (and all *that is within me*, τα εντος μου, bless his holy name, τα εντος αυτου, Eccles. 19: 26; τα εντος του σικου, 1 Mac. 4: 48.) See Dr. Campbell's note on Luke 17: 21. The word therefore properly signifies *within*, and the question is within what? The true answer is within the Jewish nation, which was the elect. But it was not within that nation in the sense, that it was heartily received, or embraced by the people; in fact it was not even discerned by the many. But the kingdom of God was preached within the nation, and nowhere else. It was offered to that nation exclusively, and in that sense it had come to them, was within them, and among them, and would have been established had not the nation rejected it. When the dispensation of the Gospel was opened, the kingdom was no longer *within* the Jewish nation, nor was it *within* any other nation in particular. The kingdom of God was no longer *nigh* (or at hand) to any nation in the sense in which it had been nigh to the Jews. Cornelius á Lapide, makes the following gloss, regnum Dei intra vos est, id est in vestra potestate est; si videlicet Christi fidem et gratiam amplecti, illique cooperari velit, quia ut ait Titus in voluntatis arbitrio positum est accipere regnum Dei. *Tertio*, "regnum Dei intra vos est," quia Christus Deus, et rex hoc regnum prædicans et largiens inter vos versatur, &c. He cites Theophylact.

Lord's ascension as freely to the Jews as to the Gentiles—nay more, it is clear that in some sense, the Jews still had the priority, Luke 24: 47. Acts 1: 8—13: 46. Rom. 1: 16—15: 27. The kingdom thus taken from them, was that which was from the first offered to them, but having been rejected it remains, so to speak, in abeyance, waiting the completion of another nation, also elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, and which will be gathered under the administration of the spirit. Upon this nation the kingdom of God will be conferred, and this is the same kingdom which was rejected by the nation of Israel according to the flesh.

Those who maintain that our Lord referred by this expression, to the present dispensation of the Gospel, do in effect extend this dispensation backward, so as to make it commence during the Levitical economy; which certainly existed at the time of this conversation of our Lord with the Pharisees.—They forget too, that the Holy Spirit, by whose agency this dispensation is carried on, was not given at the time in question; and although some were drawn of the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ during his personal ministry, (John 1: 12—6: 44,) yet the representation which the Scriptures give us of the state of that people during our Lord's ministry, does not justify the expression of Dr. Scott, that the kingdom was set up in the hearts of *many* whom the Pharisees despised. No doubt God had an elect number among that people, who were *afterwards*, when the Holy Spirit was given, converted to the faith of Christ—thousands were converted on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2: 41, and before the destruction of the nation, Acts 21: 20, among whom were a great company of priests, Acts 6: 7, but the largest number of believers before the ascension is mentioned in 1 Cor. 15: 6. It is often said that although the Lord Jesus spake as never man spake, yet his preaching was much less successful than that of his apostles. The reason is, the Spirit was not given till Jesus was glorified, John 7: 39, and it was needful that he should be rejected, and suffer death before he should enter into his glory, Luke 24: 26. But other reasons concurred with these, as we shall see presently, touching the trial God was making of human nature, in the example of the Jews.

Nor can it be objected, that what is predicated of the kingdom of God, in the former clause, (*viz:* that it cometh not with observation,) is inapplicable to the glorious kingdom of Messiah.

Without stopping now to inquire into the meaning of the phrase (*μετα παρατηρησεως*) *with observation*, it may be remarked, that coming, as it will, at the close of this dispensation, there is no

other possible means of determining its approach, than by denoting the progress of the present economy, and the advancement of that spiritual building, which the Holy Ghost is now employed in erecting. But who can tell the number of the elect? It is a great multitude, whom no one can number, of all nations and kindreds of people and tongues, Rev. 7: 9. Who can tell *out* of how many generations of the race of the elect church shall be gathered? The problem involves the details of the economy of grace, which have not been revealed, and which perhaps no finite mind could comprehend. Hence as we can neither mark the progress, nor see the end of this work of the spirit, the kingdom, which will suddenly be developed upon the completion of this work, (of which indeed it will be the fruit,) will come without observation. None will have opportunity to say to his fellow, lo! here, or lo! there it comes, as if it were a material object slowly approaching from a distance, but suddenly as a snare shall it fall upon the world of the ungodly, while in a twinkling, the sleeping dust of the departed saints shall be reanimated; the living saints be changed, and both be caught up together, to meet their eternal king coming in his glory and his kingdom, 2 Tim. 4: 1. 1 Thess. 4: 15, 17.

But if such be the sense of the first clause, it was needful to reiterate the doctrine which our Lord had all along preached to the nation. "But indeed the kingdom of God has come to you." Had he replied to them simply, as he did to his disciples, (in Acts 1: 7) "it is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power"—or if he had said, "the day and the hour of the coming of the kingdom no man nor angel knoweth, no, nor the Son, but the Father only" (as in Mark 13: 32), the Pharisees might have replied, then the preaching of John, and of your own disciples, that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand," or "has come upon us," may not be true: For if none can know when the kingdom of God will come, how is it that it is preached as come? But our Lord guards against such a perversion of his answer: he meekly and mercifully cut off all grounds of cavil by adding the clause in question. First, he answers them according to the foreseen event, (for their question had respect to the event,) and then adds in effect, "but yet, my doctrine, and the doctrine of John is true. The kingdom of God has already come to you, and though it will fail of being actually established, yet it will be through your fault. The kingdom and all its glories are now offered to you, and nothing is wanting but a willingness on your part to receive them."

Before we proceed farther in the discussion, it may be satis-

factory to those readers who may think these views novel, to consider their bearing upon some of the fundamental doctrines of grace. If we are not mistaken, the most timid need feel no alarm upon this score. But of this, our readers must judge.

1. Our first remark is this: the views which have been submitted shew, that the doctrine of the entire depravity of the human heart is fundamental; perhaps we should say, that the history of the Jewish nation, and the results of the economy established over them, proves that doctrine as a fact, beyond all controversy.

The Jews are an example of what human nature would do—being left to itself—under an economy of law, just as Adam is a proof or example of what human nature would do—being left to itself—in its uncorrupted or unfallen state. Suppose that God had chosen instead of Abraham, the progenitor of some Gentile race, and had given him the same institutions, laws, prophets, prophecies, teachings, &c.—in short, had dealt with the individual so selected, and his posterity, just as he has dealt with the posterity of Abraham—would not the issue have been the same? Are we Gentiles better than the Jews? In no wise. When, therefore, God selected Israel and his posterity for his peculiar people, and gave to them, exclusively, the law, and the covenants, the service, the promises and the glory, (Rom. 9: 4,) upon the condition of obedience, (Exod. 19: 5,) and passed by all the rest of mankind, so that they could have no part in them, except by adoption into the commonwealth of Israel, He did no wrong to the rest of the race by this preference.—Any other race, if placed under the same economy, would have fallen as Israel did. The Jew, it is true, had the advantage, Rom. 3: 3—9: 4, 5, and it was given for good, but through the depravity of nature, it became to him the occasion of greater guilt and of a deeper fall; and the abiding chastisement which rests upon Israel, is what no Gentile would covet. God foresaw, indeed, the issue; and from the beginning, planned a dispensation of grace (Gal. 3: 8) which should be ushered in, when the dispensation of law should be proven by actual experiment, (so to speak,) upon a numerous race, to be ineffectual for the salvation of those who were its subjects. That nothing which was consistent with an economy of law, was wanting on the part of God, to make the trial perfect, is proved by Is. 5: 4, (see verses 1 to 7.) Israel, therefore, is, in one sense, the representative of the human race, because that people is an exhibition by way of many examples, of depraved human nature, under a legal economy of the most favourable kind.

2. The views submitted, supply the reason why the gospel of the kingdom was at first preached to the Jews exclusively, and in their *national* capacity [and thereby also to the Jewish people individually, John 1: 11, 12]. Israel was the elect nation, and the promises were made to the nation as such, and until the kingdom and the blessings of it were rejected by the voluntary act of the nation, the very faithfulness of God required that the offer of it should be confined to the Jews. But since it has been rejected, the gospel of the kingdom is preached to the Gentiles, not, however, as nations, for no nation but Israel has the promise of God that he will establish his kingdom in manifest glory over the whole earth, upon their national acceptance of it, although we may add, that if any other nation had succeeded to the place of the Jews in this respect, the same depravity of nature, if left to itself, would have rendered the promise abortive.—Hence, the kingdom of God came nigh to the Jews, in a sense in which it has not come nigh to any other nation—it continued to be nigh to the Jews, even after the ascension of our Lord, while their national existence continued. Hence, Peter exhorts them to repent, and urges his exhortation by the motive that God would, upon their national repentance, send Jesus Christ to them again, (Acts 3: 19, 20. See the original text.) But when God dispersed them among the nations, and gave their city to their enemies, they could no longer be addressed as a nation, and the kingdom being put, as it were, in suspense, will continue to be so, during the period of their dispersion, which will be commensurate (or nearly so) with their unbelief. The restoration of Israel, therefore, from their cast-off and fallen condition, is an event fraught with the most glorious results, Rom. 11: 15. Creation will groan while Mount Zion is trodden down by the Gentiles, and her children continue blind and hardened and dispersed. But when they shall be gathered again, and shall call him blessed, whom their fathers pierced and whom they have so long rejected,* what shall it be, but life from the

* Luke 17: 25. "But first he must (πολλα παθειν) suffer many things and (αποδοκιμασθηναι απο της γενεας ταυτης) be rejected of this generation." This is not perhaps an example of *hysteron-proteron*. The (πολλα παθειν) *many things* may include *all* that he suffered till he said on the cross "it is finished," and it may include his formal rejection by the nation in the person of their rulers before Pilate. The remaining clause, "and be rejected of this generation," may denote the perseverance of that people in rejecting him down to the day of Christ's coming. The word *αποδεικ*, does not, it is true, contain the idea of a continued or repeated action, but the idea of continuity is contained in the word (γενεας) generation. As this long *continued rejection* of the Lord Jesus, is to precede "the coming of the Son of Man in his day," it may be a standing sign while it continues, that he has not come; that is to say—so long as the Jewish race reject the Lord Jesus, the Son of Man will not have come. And although others should come, performing signs and wonders so as to deceive the elect, if

dead! Creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and the Israel of God shall be glorified, being redeemed from the power of death and the grave, while Israel, according to the flesh, shall be redeemed from their captivity among the nations. What glorious things are suspended (if we may so say) upon the fortunes of God's ancient people! Is it possible that the curse which has so long rested on the earth is, in a certain sense, prolonged by the unbelief of the Jews, and yet the Christian church be so indifferent to their conversion! What a mystery is involved in this matter! The church is permitted to lose sight of the relation which the Jews sustain to the rest of the world, and of the designs of God in respect to them—to become corrupt in doctrine—persecutors of the Jews, and so to fix them more obstinately, if possible, in their aversion to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus the church itself, to become a means of prolonging the dominion of Satan and of the curse over the world! Had the church always possessed a spirit like that of Paul, and followed the Jews, not with cruelty, but with kindness, who can say that Israel would not long since have been converted to the faith of the gospel, and the earth have been renewed before the glorious presence of the Lord Jesus, and covered as with a mantle of glory.

3. These observations illustrate and enforce the doctrine of election. Many persons admit the doctrine of the *national* election of the Jews to the privileges of the legal covenant, or to that of being externally the people and the church of God, while they reject the doctrine of the unconditional election of individuals to eternal life, as being consistent, as they suppose, neither with the goodness nor the justice of God. The radical error of such persons, consists in the inadequate estimate which they form of the blessings included in the covenant of the kingdom which God made with Israel, and which are briefly mentioned in Exod. 19: 5, (with which compare Matth. 21: 43. 1 Pet. 2: 9. Rev. 1: 6—5: 10—20: 6.) Did they entertain right conceptions in this behalf, they would perceive that their objections apply with equal, if not with greater force against the doctrine of the *national* election of Israel. This covenant, we have shewn, constituted that people conditionally the *saved* nation, while all others were passed by. It constituted them a nation of kings and priests—(κεριμενηλον *rem charam*) the cherished and precious thing in the family of God—in fact the covenant included all those blessings which will

it were possible, yet know for a certainty if the Jews reject Jesus, such wonder-workers are antichrists and deceivers. This may be the meaning of the place.

be conferred upon the church of the first born, at the advent of Christ in glory; so that if the nation had been obedient, they would have become, as it were, the royal family of the whole creation. If then, such were the privileges to which the posterity of Jacob was elected, wherein is this doctrine of a national election more consistent with the objector's views of the goodness and justice of God, than the doctrine of the personal election of individuals? The difference does not consist *in the nature* of the blessings to which the Jews were elected, and from which the rest of the race were excluded. The feast to which the Jews were bidden, (according to the parable in Matth. 22nd before referred to) is the *same* which was reserved for and bestowed upon the company which was afterwards gathered. Does the objection consist in this, that the election of individuals is unconditional, whereas that of the nation of the Jews was upon the condition of obedience? This was what the nature of the case demanded: Would the objector have the experiment repeated in the case of every individual, which had been found to be abortive in respect to an entire race, continued through many generations under the most favourable circumstances? That would be to ensure the universal fall and ultimate ruin of the entire race. Speaking after the manner of men, the national election of a portion of the race to the benefits of the covenant of law preceded, in the order of expedients, the personal election of individuals according to the covenant of grace, in order to shew the impossibility (through the depravity of human nature) of salvation by works of law, (Gal. 3: 21.) The fact therefore of the national election of the Jews, and the issue of the economy to which they were elected, proves that nothing short of an unconditional personal election of grace is adequate to secure the salvation of any of the race; for it rests upon the demonstrated insufficiency of a conditional election, such as that which God made of the natural posterity of Israel. When the Jewish nation fell, God might, if he had chosen to do so, have elected some other race or nation unconditionally to the benefits of a covenant of grace, and have passed by all the rest of mankind, but his wisdom and his goodness chose rather to throw open the door of salvation to the people of all nations without discrimination,* and accordingly he directed his apostles to proclaim every-

* This expression needs some explanation. The Rev. Mr. M'Neile remarks, that "God has divided his great proceeding with this world into four steps. 1. He took a nation circumcised in his name, and having an elect people within it, saved by his grace. 2. He has taken a number of nations (still a small number compared with all mankind) baptized in his name, having an elect people within them, saved by grace. *Here as yet he pauses.*" It is a remarkable fact that the gospel has not been permanently established, among

where the gospel of the kingdom which the Jews had rejected; yet this proclamation, through the hardness of men's hearts, is everywhere attended with the same mournful results as among the Jews, except so far as the Spirit of God inclines the hearts of men to receive it. Hence, those who believe, are called by Peter *elect*, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, *through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience*, and sprinkling

any of the nations situated beyond the limits of the Roman or fourth empire, predicted by Daniel—or beyond the geographical limits of these nations which are represented in the great image. We speak not now of the Americas, to which the gospel has been carried by emigration from the fourth kingdom, but not established by the conversion of the aboriginal inhabitants. In fact what we commonly call Christendom, lies within the geographical limits of the fourth empire, and this proves that God in his sovereign providence has seen fit to confer upon these few nations, lying within these limits, the peculiar privileges of the present dispensation. Here He has been making another trial of depraved human nature upon an election of Gentile nations. And what do we see? Why, even in the days of the Apostles we discern the secret workings of iniquity—soon after their days, we see increasing corruptions of the faith—the commencement of a falling away, and finally, open apostacy. Hitherto, these Gentiles have proved themselves to be no better than the Jews, and their progress is still downward. The Jews abused the privileges of an economy of law—the Gentiles have abused the richer blessings of an economy of grace, and the strivings of the Holy Spirit. The Jews fell upon the mystical stone, and were broken and dispersed. We still see fragments of their nation scattered among all nations. But a much sorer punishment awaits those apostate Gentiles, who have abused the gospel of grace—this mystical stone will fall on them and grind them to powder, Matth. 21: 44. This expression of our Lord refers perhaps to Dan. 2: 34, 35, 41, (See Gen. 49: 24. Micah 2: 13. Isaiah 8: 14, 15.) There may be also an analogy between the ending of the Jewish and the present Gentile economy in another respect. The Jewish nation was not destroyed immediately after it was given over to desolation. The Gentile dispensation was not substituted for the Jewish in a moment. But while the mass of the nation were permitted to wax worse and worse, and iniquity to abound, an election or portion of the nation, by successive and wonderful outpourings of the Spirit were separated from the corrupted mass, and made the ministers of salvation to the Gentiles. These had extended the gospel almost, if not quite, throughout the Roman empire before the worship of the synagogue was broken up, by the destruction of the temple and the nation. Near forty years elapsed between the day of Pentecost and the fall of the nation. So it may be in the rejection and destruction of apostate Gentiles at the ending of the economy. A warning note is to be given to God's people dwelling in mystical Babylon. "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and receive of her plagues." While increasing depravity may characterize the great body of society, great and wonderful revivals of religion may take place. The church will probably become missionary again, (perhaps too, persecution may be permitted in order to produce that change) and the gospel be published with rapidity and unusual success among the nations which lie beyond the limits of the fourth prophetic empire; just as the gospel was published beyond the limits of Judea and throughout the whole or nearly the whole of Christendom, a short time previously to the destruction of the Jewish nation: so that the gospel will be literally published among all nations for a witness before the end of this economy, and of the kingdoms of the image shall come. The present is pre-eminently the age of missions, and in this view of the subject, this fact is calculated to excite intense interest in the mind of a believer. Every one who loves the appearing of his Lord, should do what he can to send this gospel to the nations, kindreds and people among whom it has not yet been published for a witness.

of the blood of Jesus Christ, (1 Pet. 1: 2.) Still the work goes on, God is able of the stones to raise up children unto Abraham. The royal priesthood—the holy nation has long been a-gathering—it hastens to its completion, and the moment the last of God's elect shall be born and born again, the kingdom of God will suddenly be revealed.

4. We see a reason why Israel will be preserved as a distinct people, till the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled. In one sense those times were already fulfilled when our Lord began to preach, saying: "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of heaven has come nigh, Repent ye and believe in the good tidings," Mark 1: 15. Daniel, as the reader knows, had predicted four kingdoms, which were to precede the kingdom which the God of heaven should set up. The first three of these kingdoms, *viz.* the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian and the Grecian had appeared and been overthrown. The fourth of these kingdoms, *viz.* the Roman, had succeeded to universal power, and was in vigorous existence when John the Baptist appeared preaching the near approach of the fifth kingdom, that, *namely*, which the God of heaven should set up, which should break in pieces all its predecessors, but should itself stand forever and never be destroyed, (Dan. 2: 44.) Had the Jews (who are still the elect nation, Rom. 11: 29, 26, 25, 23.) received the Lord Messiah, he would have destroyed this fourth kingdom and established his own on its ruins, Ps. 81: 13, 16—Ps. 2: 8. Matth. 23: 37. Luke 19: 41-44. But not to dwell on this idea, we proceed to remark that the fourth or the Roman monarchy owes its continuance during the last eighteen centuries, in a certain sense, to the unbelief of the Jews. In fact, as it has been observed, the present dispensation owes its origin in the same sense to the same (Rom. 11: 11, &c.) cause. For to recur to the parable of the marriage in Matth. 22, if the first invited guests (that is the Jews) had come to the wedding, the occasion for sending out for other guests (which represents the present dispensation of the gospel to the Gentiles) would not have arisen. Now, if the unbelief and the fall of the Jews was necessary, by divine appointment, to the opening of this dispensation, the continuance of the same unbelief would seem equally necessary for the continuance of the dispensation, and we should conclude, therefore, that when their unbelief ceases nationally, this dispensation would come to an end. Whether the Jews will be converted nationally to the faith of Christ during their dispersion, or not until after they shall have been politically restored to their own land, is a question upon which we shall not now enter, (See Deut. 30: 1-5 and Zechariah 12: 10.) But some per-

sons do not believe that they will be restored. This is the opinion of the larger part of the Roman Catholic church, and many Protestants have retained and still hold to the same opinion; others, who believe that the Jews will be nationally and politically restored, entertain other opinions, which, upon examination, it is believed, will be found inconsistent with the scriptures bearing upon the question. They imagine that when Judah and Israel shall be restored, they shall take rank as a sister nation, with the civilized and Christian nations of Europe, and will exert upon them and upon the world at large a powerful religious influence. This is deemed a rational and sober minded view of the subject. But is it scriptural? Paul says in 1 Thess. 2: 16, "wrath is come upon them (*ὡς τῆς τέλος*) to the end"—to the end of what? we say of this dispensation. Our Lord said, (See Luke 21: 24) Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till *the times of the Gentiles* shall be fulfilled. The providence of God has interpreted, in a way that cannot be misunderstood, what we are to understand by the *treading down of Jerusalem*. By Gentiles (*ἔθνη*) we are to understand Romans, Saracens, Crusaders, Mamelukes, Turks. Whether Jerusalem is yet to pass under another Gentile domination we know not, but the common belief of those who expect an actual restoration of the Jews is, that when the Turkish power shall be dried up, the Jews will resume their possession of the land which God gave to their fathers. But however this may be, the scriptures teach that when the dispersed of Judah shall be collected, and the outcast Israel shall return, and both in union emerge into a political power, they will become again a *divinely constituted hierarchy* or theocracy, such as they always were, after their exodus from Egypt till their captivity and dispersion—and not a mere body politic, having a constitution of human invention,—(See Ezek. the last ten chapters.) Then also, the times of the fourth monarchy (which in one sense were long since fulfilled) will cease. The Lord Jesus Christ will then come again and fulfil upon the nations all that is written in Ps. 2: 8, 9. This will mark the commencement of a new economy—that of the glorious reign of Messiah, or of the kingdom of God come on earth.

The scriptural expectations of the church, therefore, are not that all Israel will be gathered into the Gentile church (as it is called) during the present economy; for could that result be attained consistently with what the scriptures teach, this economy would be brought to an end by that very event, and a new and more glorious economy would immediately begin. The last discourse, which our Lord delivered in the temple,

he concluded by saying, "ye shall not see me henceforth *till* ye say blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." This declaration intimates that the Lord's advent shall occur immediately upon the national conversion of the Jews. (See Matth. 23: 39, and also Acts 3: 19, 20 in the original.) Still the duty of Christians is, to carry the gospel to the Jews and urge it upon them, by all the motives which the scriptures and their condition and prospects furnish;* so that if possible they may save some of them. This was what Paul did; for although he, as the apostle of the Gentiles, might perhaps be expected and allowed to confine his ministry to the Gentiles, yet he desired to honour his office, by extending his ministry to the Jews, if by possibility he might with the blessing of God save some of them. Yet Paul was not ignorant that blindness in part had happened to Israel, until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled, and *then* (not before) all Israel should be saved, Rom. 11: 13, 25, 26. There is nothing peculiarly discouraging in this; for there is the same ground of hope during this economy of saving some of the Jews, as of saving some of the Gentiles. Not *all* among the Gentiles to whom the gospel is preached, believe. On the contrary, multitudes reject it, while here and there, one and another, but at most a few, yield unto Christ the obedience of faith; and experience shews us that thus much may be expected from preaching the Gospel among the Jews; and why should a Christian minister be disheartened, if he has the same hope of success among Jews as Gentiles? If he has any right views of the human character, he depends not on himself but on the Spirit's influences, and peradventure God may give him even greater success with Jews than with Gentiles; for although blinded and broken off from their own olive tree, they are still beloved for their father's sake. Yet if such should not be the result,

* Some persons object to this doctrine of the political restoration of the Jews, that it encourages them in their unbelief and rejection of the Gospel of Christ; but this objection is founded upon a misconception of the doctrine. We can no more assure the Jew, that he will live till the time when God will restore the kingdom to Israel, and so be restored to Judea, than we can assure a Christian that he will live till the day of the Lord's personal advent in glory, and so escape death. The times and the seasons of these events, though the same, are not revealed. But our doctrine is, that if the Jew should die before that time, without faith in Christ, he will die without any well founded hope of happiness in his future state. And even if he should survive till the time of his nation's restoration, still *he* may never reach the land of his forefathers. Like those who left Egypt, he may in his return fall by the way and perish without hope—and then again, what is the inheritance of earthly blessings—such even as in the renewed earth will be enjoyed by restored Israel, when compared with the glory of the inheritance of believers in Jesus?

his duty is done, while the event is left, as it should be, to the disposal of God.

5. These views should teach us to be humble and tender hearted to the Jews. There is a thought connected with a passage just now cited (Rom. 11: 25), which deserves to be mentioned, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of this *mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits.*" What is the mystery to which Paul refers? It cannot be the future conversion of the Jews, for that had been foretold in many places. That was no secret or mystery. Besides, the *motive* or reason which Paul had for communicating the secret, was to prevent the Gentiles *from being wise in their own conceits.* But the future conversion of all Israel would be no cause for humiliation to the Gentiles, rather of joy. It would be as life from the dead to the world. What then was the secret or mystery? Why, that which he had just hinted at in the former verses, under the image of breaking off branches. The Jews had suffered this, and would continue in a state of separation from their own olive tree, until the fulness of the (times of the) Gentiles should come in (i. e. elapse), and then all Israel would be (reingrafted into their own olive tree, *that is*) saved. Paul hinted to the Gentiles that they too would at some future time be broken off. He alludes more directly to the same mystery afterwards, (in verses 30, 32) where he asserts the alternate vocation and reprobation of Jews and Gentiles, showing that the one or the other must be (and each in turn) a striking example of God's mercy and justice. The infidelity of Israel gave occasion to their reprobation and the vocation of the Gentiles, and the ingratitude and infidelity of the Gentiles, will in like manner give occasion to their reprobation, and to the return of Israel and the restoration of God's favour to them.*

Thus God will shut up all in unbelief, in order to shew, that none can be saved but by his mercy. But there is this difference to be observed, when the Jews were cut off from the mysterious olive tree, in punishment for their rejection of Christ and his kingdom, the justice of God did not consign them merely to darkness of mind and hardness of heart, but it showered upon them floods of temporal evils of all sorts. Yet

* Verse 31 in the authorized English version, is not well rendered. There is no authority for the transposition of *ux* as is done in our translation. The true sense is fixed by the collocation of this word, and it has been transposed only for the purpose of supporting the theory, that the Jews are to be converted by means of the Gentiles, which is in opposition to the whole current of prophecy. In the Vulgate, the proper order of the words is preserved. Also in the versions of Fabricius, of Montanus and of Erasmus. On the other hand, Beza transposes this word as the translators of the English version have done.

God did not allow these judgments either to consume or to destroy them, because he has designs of mercy toward them, which at the appointed time he will execute. On the other hand, apostate Gentiles have only to expect an irrevocable reprobation. Paul gives no intimation that the graffs of the wild olive, if they shall be broken off, shall ever be graffed in again, Rom. 11: 21, 24; and the prophet Malachi foretells that the day of the Lord shall burn the proud and them that do wickedly—that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. Mal. 4: 1. Jer. 30: 11, 20, 24.

An old author, who lived in a very dark and corrupt age of the Christian church, makes the following beautiful and touching paraphrase upon Rom. 11: 17—21. “Oh, Gentile, if thou seest some of the Jews living estranged from the grace of Christ and from the faith of the patriarchs, and thyself in their place, and made a partaker of the faith of the fathers and of the grace of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, do not despise them, nor extol thyself, lest peradventure thou lose the grace that has been given thee freely. But if thou gloriest against them, who are fallen, be admonished, that thou dost not sustain the root, but the root sustains thee.” As if he had said, “If thou hast a mind to extol thyself, listen to that which should make thee humble; thou dost not sustain the root, that is, thou dost confer nothing upon the holy fathers who lived before thee, because thou art saved by their faith, for thou hast received from them; they have not received from thee. Or this may be the sense, thou dost not bear the root, that is Christ, to whom thou hast given nothing of thine own, but he bears thee, from whom thou hast received all the good thou dost possess.”

Vs. 19, 20, But thou wilt tell me, O Gentile, the branches, *namely*, the unbelieving Jews were broken off and cast away, in order that I, a Gentile, might be engrafted in their place. Thou sayest rightly. It is so—but consider the rest: the branches were broken off on account of their unbelief. Because the Jews would not believe in Christ, they are fallen into the death of condemnation—they are broken off from the favour of God, but thou standest by the faith of Christ, not by thy own merits, therefore, do not glory, be not high-minded, be not proud, but fear, lest thou shouldst fall. It is of God’s grace thou art called, not of thy own merits.

Vs. 21, O Gentile, consider that if God did not spare the Jews, who descended from the holy fathers, and in whose race he took flesh, much more will he not spare thee; if thou, who art of the wild olive, shall depart from the faith, or shall become proud and extol thyself by despising the Jew.

Does the reader envy restored Israel the glory of the unfulfilled prophecies? Let him consider again the purpose for which Israel was elected. It was, that God might through them make manifest to the world, that no privileges however great, no grace or favour however ample, consistent with an economy of *mere* law; no promises, no motives however glorious, are adequate to the wants of our fallen natures. To be made the medium of teaching such a lesson to the universe, is an awful distinction. The object required the bestowment of gifts the most precious, and the promise of the kingdom of glory as the reward of obedience. Paul enumerates the chief of their advantages—the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service, the promises, and add to these the honour which Christ conferred on their nation, by taking upon him the seed of Abraham and of David, when he came to them as their kinsman, their brother, their king. All these great and glorious advantages must be conferred, while the just and holy purposes of God required that the nation should be left to the freedom of their will, in order that by the rejection of them, which was both foreknown and foretold, they might shew how powerless they were as motives upon depraved human nature, although they would thereby draw down upon themselves and their posterity the wrath of Almighty God. Look back upon their history—survey their present condition: was ever a nation dealt with as Israel hath been, both in mercy and judgment? They are witnesses for God of the corruption of the human heart—of his indignation against sin—of his faithfulness in preserving while he punishes them—and they will hereafter be witnesses for him that his gifts and calling are without repentance.

Does the reader still envy the Jews their future pre-eminence among the nations? and does he call it Judaizing to interpret literally the prophecies which predict their pre-eminence? Let him attend to that which infinitely more concerns him,—the higher glories of his own vocation. God is now gathering a church out of all nations, upon whom he will bestow the higher glories of the kingdom which Israel rejected. This church, when it shall be completed, will be a glorious body, sons of the resurrection, sons of God, sharers of Messiah's throne, the ministers of his high behests, throughout all worlds. Their bodies will not be earthly tabernacles, like those of the dwellers upon earth, even in its renewed state—but they will be spiritual, glorious, powerful, indestructible bodies, yea, conformed to the body of the glory of Christ. They shall be the heirs of all things, and be forever with the Lord: Can he who hopes to inherit such glories, envy

restored Israel the pre-eminence among the nations of the earth, even in its renewed condition? No, rather let the sun envy the glory of the stars. No saint, when he shall be made like his Lord, and be associated with him in the government of his kingdom, will ever covet the glory and blessedness of restored Israel in the habitable earth to come, (*εικουμένην την μελλουσαν.*)

But as to those who have no part in Christ now, why should they envy Israel's pre-eminence in the coming dispensation? Had the world of the ungodly before the flood, and who perished by it, anything to do with the distinctions which God saw fit to make among the sons of Noah, and the nations which have sprung from them? During this present dispensation, all to whom the Gospel of the kingdom is preached, are invited to share in higher glories than any which Israel will possess in the renewed earth. If they reject the invitation as Israel did, when made by the lips of the Lord Messiah himself, they cannot expect or hope for any earthly restoration, like that which remains to a remnant of Israel according to the flesh. If they shall die before the coming of the Lord, they will have no part in the first resurrection. If they should survive until the day of the Lord's appearing, what can they hope for or expect but everlasting destruction from his presence, and the glory of his power, when he shall be revealed with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance upon those who obey not this gospel. (1 Thess. 1: 8, 9. Luke 19: 27.)

Several topics remain, which must be reserved for a future occasion.

ESSAY III.

“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.”

It is the common opinion of Christians at the present day, that the existing dispensation is the final one—that is, it will not (as it is supposed) end, until the earth shall be destroyed and the eternal state begins. Hence, it is inferred that if (as it is admitted) the kingdom of God, here inquired of, is a kingdom on earth, and in time, it must be the present gospel dispensation. This opinion, it is contended, is according to

the analogy of faith. "The wind bloweth," said our Lord to Nicodemus, "where it listeth, and thou hear'st the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit," John 3: 8.

It is another common opinion of Christians, that when this dispensation shall end, Christ will appear and a resurrection will take place. But at this point arises a difference: the larger part adopt the opinion, that all the dead, both the righteous and the wicked, will at that time be raised together, or nearly so, and after having been judged will enter immediately upon their eternal state. The righteous will ascend with Christ into heaven, while the wicked will be cast into hell, and this done, the earth itself will be destroyed. Others, however, adopt the opinion that at the advent, only the dead in Christ will be raised, and the living saints being changed, and united to them, will compose and complete the mystical body of Christ or the church of the first born. This event, they believe, will be the epoch of the establishment of a new and glorious economy on earth called "the kingdom of God," or "the kingdom of heaven." It was shewn in a former essay, that the kingdom of God in this sense, coming at the close of this dispensation, and as the development of it, would come *not with observation*, though the precise meaning of the clause in which these words occur was not investigated. Our object then, was rather to shew how the two views of the kingdom could be reconciled with what is here affirmed of the kingdom, than to enter into an inquiry about the nature of the kingdom itself. Before the inquiry concerning the nature of the kingdom can be made with advantage, it is necessary to examine the foundations of the opinion just mentioned: *viz.* that this dispensation is the last which God designs to establish on earth. What we propose, therefore, in the present essay, is to produce some proofs from scripture that the most glorious of all the economies which God has appointed to take place upon earth, is yet to come.

The reader will doubtless concede, without argument, that when our Lord began to preach, the kingdom of heaven had, *in some sense*, come nigh to the Jewish nation. The proof is that the Lord Jesus himself said so. See Matth. 4: 17. Mark 1: 14, 15. Luke 11: 20. Matth. 12: 28. This was said publicly to the people, and upon many occasions, during our Lord's ministry. At a much later period, perhaps we may say, quite at the close of his public ministry, he told his disciples, in effect, that the kingdom of God was not nigh, because he told them it would be nigh only after certain things occurred which he predicted should come to pass. The pas-

sage we refer to, is in Luke 21: 31. But how could it be, that the kingdom of God had come nigh to the nation, at the beginning of our Lord's ministry, and was not nigh at a subsequent period or at the close of it? If the present dispensation of the gospel be, *the kingdom of God* referred to,—its commencement was scarce two months later than the delivery of the prophecy on the Mount, in which the place just cited occurs, whereas there was an interval (as is commonly supposed) of near three years and a half, between the beginning of our Lord's ministry and the day of Pentecost, on which the Holy Ghost was first given, and the present dispensation opened. But if the kingdom of God which our Lord began to preach was afterwards *taken from the nation*, (and he said it should be in Matth. 21: 43) as was explained in a former essay, then we can understand how the kingdom of God *might be nigh*, at the beginning of his ministry, (before the nation had been tried whether they would accept it) *and not nigh* at the close of it, when the nation had virtually rejected it. But not to dwell on this topic, let us examine with some particularity the passage (in Luke 21: 31) just referred to. The passage runs thus, "So likewise, ye when ye see *these things* come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh (εγγυς εστιν) at hand." What were those things? Will the reader turn to the context of the passage and from it enumerate them in their order? Beginning at verse 9th, he will find, that nation was to arise against nation—ver. 10, there were to be earthquakes, famines, pestilences, fearful sights; (11) the disciples were to be persecuted, apprehended, imprisoned, and brought before kings: (12) Let us pause here a moment and inquire if any of these things occurred in the short interval between the delivery of this prophecy and the day of Pentecost; when the Holy Ghost was first given. Nobody pretends that they did, and yet these things were to come to pass before the kingdom of God would be nigh. The next event foretold, was the siege of Jerusalem, (ver. 20.) This event did not occur till A. D. 70, which was about thirty-six or thirty-seven years after the prophecy was uttered. In ver. 24 we read of the captivity and dispersion of the Jews, and the subjugation of their city, to Gentile power, during the times of the Gentiles.* The bur-

* Dr. Bloomfield cites two opinions upon the expression in ver. 21, of "the times of the Gentiles"—that of Rosenmuller, which is "even until the end of human things, when nations shall no longer exist," and that of Kuinoel, "until the time when they themselves (the nations) shall suffer the punishment of their impiety and vice," which latter opinion Dr. B. prefers. Yet when he comes to verse 28, he understands the words (απολυτρωσις υμων) "your redemption," to mean *redemption from the Jewish persecution*, because (as he says) after the suppression of the Synedrium, the gospel was far more extensively propagated. He admits that the apostles, except John, did not live to see this

then of this verse is not yet wholly fulfilled, although nearly eighteen centuries have elapsed since it began to be fulfilled. The prophecy proceeds, "and there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; and the crowning event of all, is the appearance of the Son of Man in heaven, coming in a cloud with power and great glory. At this verse the prophecy properly terminates, and these are the things which must come to pass, before the coming of the kingdom of God.

If it should be said, that by *these things* we must understand *some* of these things, the answer is, that would be adding to the scripture, not expounding it; besides, it would not remove the difficulty, because we have no evidence that *any* of these things came to pass before the commencement of the present dispensation. If it should be said (as it sometimes is) that all

utter destruction of the Jewish government. The expression in ver. 31, "the kingdom of God is nigh," he says, means the general spread of the gospel, which took place after the destruction of Jerusalem. On Matth. 24: 33, he says, "this must be understood of the event before spoken: *viz.* the coming of the Messiah to judge the Jews and establish his kingdom."

The word (*απαλυσις*) translated *redemption*, occurs in Rom. 8: 23, and Eph. 4: 30, where it undoubtedly refers to the resurrection. It is true, that in Heb. 11: 35, it signifies deliverance from the danger of death, but this is not its proper signification; and when we recollect that the destruction of Jerusalem did not occur till the year A. D. 70, and that two pagan persecutions occurred very shortly afterwards, even before the close of the first century: *viz.* one under Domitian, and another under Trajan, we can hardly believe that "redemption from persecution," either by Jews or Pagans was intended. Why should they be exhorted to rejoice in the prospect of an exchange of persecutors? Under Adrian in the beginning of the 2nd century, (A. D. 118) another persecution occurred, and others followed at short intervals, to the number, in all, of ten, before the year A. D. 303—Nor is it a fact that the most remarkable spread of the gospel, occurred after the destruction of Jerusalem. It was published throughout the Roman empire, and even beyond it, by the immediate apostles of the Lord. It would be strange indeed, that the immediate successors of the apostles, with fewer gifts, should be more successful propagators of the gospel, Rom. 15: 19. Gal. 1: 17, 21. James 1: 1. 1 Pet. 1: 1. 2 Cor. 11: 26. The treading down of Jerusalem, Dr. B. admits, will continue until the time when they themselves will suffer the punishment of their impiety and vice," and this we believe will be, when the time for the destruction of the nations represented in the great image (Dan. 2) shall have come; and this, says our Lord, is one of the things which shall come to pass before the kingdom of God, spoken of in Luke 21: 31, shall come. Dr. Bloomfield does not notice the expression, "So when ye see *these things* come to pass." Nor does he explain how the day of the destruction of Jerusalem came as a snare upon *all them* that dwell upon the face of the *whole earth*. Even Dr. Campbell admits, that "earth" does not mean in this place Judea, (see his note on ver. 26, where the word also occurs.) The coming of the Son of Man and the coming of the kingdom God refer to the same event, and both were to come as a snare upon *all them* that dwell upon the face of the *whole earth*. The fall or destruction of Jerusalem, did not come as a snare on the Romans, and the other nations which they had conquered, though it might have come as a snare on the Jews who were in Jerusalem. But as more than this is said, the interpretation which limits this prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem cannot be true.

these predictions relate to the destruction of Jerusalem, the difficulty remains, for certainly the present dispensation commenced long before that event. Not only had the gospel been promulgated throughout the Roman empire, but almost the whole of the New Testament was written before that event, and several of the apostles, among whom were James, Peter and Paul had suffered martyrdom. If it be said that (ver. 32 proves) these things must have been fulfilled within the life time of the men *then* living, the answer is, that this verse must be interpreted so as to be consistent with the facts of the case. The facts are, that Jerusalem is still trodden down by the Gentiles—the times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled, and the Son of Man has not yet appeared in a cloud with power and great glory. Besides, the word translated *generation*, signifies *race* in this place, as may be easily proved, and it was so understood by Jerome, who must be allowed to be a competent judge of the meaning of the Latin word *generatio*.

Waving, however, this question, we proceed to remark, that those who explain the advent of “the Son of Man in a cloud with power and great glory,” so as to signify his providential coming to destroy Jerusalem, do not make it sufficiently early to support their own theory. This has been said already. They must, therefore, to be consistent, interpret this advent of the Son of Man, to signify the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, which did indeed occur at the commencement of this dispensation.* But such an interpretation

* “This spiritual kingdom had its commencement, after our Lord’s resurrection and ascension, when he sent the Holy Ghost, and propagated the gospel by miracles throughout the world, (Rosenm.) Whitby, and Kuinoel and Wetstein on the other hand more accurately, I think, understand the words of Christ’s *first* advent, after forty years to the destruction of the Jewish nation, &c. and, therefore, not only St. John, but many standing there might see it.” Bloomfield, *Reccens. Synopt.* on Matth. 16: 28. We believe that these opinions are quite incorrect. Matth. 14: 28 refers, as we suppose, to the transfiguration: But that it cannot refer to the destruction of Jerusalem is evident from 2 Thess. 2. This epistle was written about eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem. The Thessalonian Christians were expecting daily an advent of the Lord, such as may be properly described by the words (τῆ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ) *the brightness of his coming*, which words import the splendour and glory of his personal appearance. Dr. B. admits that these words are especially suitable to the final advent of Christ to judgment. Certainly, it cannot be supposed that the Thessalonian church was absorbed in the manner here described, with the expectation of the supposed advent of Christ at the destruction of Jerusalem, which was many miles distant from them. If it be conceded then, that the Thessalonian church was at that early day expecting the personal advent of Christ to judgment, and if it be conceded that Paul had reference to the same event, we cannot admit the supposition, that the Jewish Christian churches (to whom he refers in 1 Thess. 2: 14, 15), were expecting as the next advent, the figurative or providential coming of Christ to destroy Jerusalem. No doubt there was a unity of belief and expectation upon this subject among the apostles, and consequently the like unity among their converts. Yet Paul makes no allusion to any such

would be inconsistent with the doctrine of the personality of the Holy Spirit, for it maintains, that the advent of the Spirit, is the advent of the Son of Man in a cloud with power and great glory, and such a notion, is also utterly repugnant to John 16: 7—Our Lord, it is there said, told his disciples, that if he went not away, the Comforter would not come to them, but if he went away, he would send the Comforter unto them,—that is to say, his departure and absence were indispensable to the advent and presence of the Holy Spirit. Why then, it may be asked, may we not believe the advent, here spoken of, to be yet future, and if future, as it is one of the things which must come to pass before the coming of the kingdom of God, it would follow that the kingdom of God here spoken of, is yet future.

If this point should be yielded, but it should be maintained that the kingdom of God here spoken of, is not on earth, nor in time, but the commencement of the eternal state; our next proof shall be taken from the 7th chapter of the book of Daniel. In this chapter the prophet foretells the rise and fall of four successive kingdoms under the symbols of four beasts. The vision was at first briefly interpreted to the prophet (in verses 17, 18) as follows: “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings (i. e. kingdoms) which shall arise out of the earth, but the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.” It was the fourth beast, however, which chiefly amazed the prophet (ver. 15 and 28) and about this he particularly inquired, (ver. 19

advent as these writers suppose. Yet if he had believed that the advent which was next to occur, (would be at the destruction of Jerusalem, when Christ would destroy the Jewish nation and scatter its inhabitants, among all nations, and thereby propagate the gospel more extensively,) he might simply have told them,—the personal advent of Christ which you are expecting, is not impending, for that event will not occur until after another advent, which will especially affect the Jewish nation. No doubt, Paul was aware of the impending destruction of the Jewish nation, 1 Thess. 2: 16. Yet he passes over that event, and some others which he knew must occur previously to the personal advent of Christ, and fixes upon the revelation of the man of sin and son of perdition as the sign, which they were to look for, as the precursor of the very advent, which the Thessalonian church was expecting, while Jerusalem was still standing. These intervening events, which were brought about by the providence of God, are not spoken of in the scriptures, as *advents of Christ*. The whole church, whether composed of Jews or Gentiles, was then looking out for only one,—and that the personal bodily return of Christ in power and great glory—an event which our Lord foretold would come as a snare upon all them that dwell upon the face of the *whole* earth, Luke 21: 35, and in which the interest of the Thessalonian church was, as they supposed, involved as well as that of the churches of Judea. The watchword of all the churches, which comprised the sum of the Christian hope was, *Maran atha* “Dominus noster venit.” Our Lord cometh. The figurative advent of the destruction of Jerusalem, so often spoken of, cannot be proven by any explicit text of scripture.

to 22.) He was then informed that "the fourth beast should be the fourth kingdom on earth," and this, by common consent, is interpreted to signify the Roman empire. "Ten kingdoms were to arise out of this fourth kingdom, and afterwards another, which should be diverse from the rest." These ten kingdoms are almost universally understood to signify, the states or kingdoms which arose out of the Roman empire, in the fifth and sixth centuries, and which continue with some modifications to the present time. This diverse king or kingdom is, by most Protestants, interpreted to signify the Papacy: but by the Papists, it is understood to foretell antichrist, which, in their opinion, is a power yet to arise, and will flourish towards the end of time, during three years and a half. Either of their opinions serves the present purpose, because according to both the power of this little horn, diverse from the first, *is not yet* destroyed. If the reader will now turn to the 11th verse and the preceding context, he will find it stated generally, that the *beast* (*viz.* this fourth beast) was slain and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. This destruction of the whole beast involved of course the destruction of the horns and of the little horn. But in verse 26th, where the explanation is given, this destruction is predicated especially of the little horn, to which the preceding (*viz.* the 25th) verse wholly applies. "But the judgment shall sit and take away his dominion, to consume and destroy unto the end, and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom *under the whole heaven*, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Now we say, this kingdom which is given to the saints, arises subsequently to the destruction of the little horn, because, in verses 21 and 22, it is said, that the little horn made was with the saints, and prevailed against them *until* the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. By turning to verses 9th, 10th, 11th, it will be seen, that the ancient of days came at the destruction of the fourth beast. It is to be observed too, that the kingdom which in verse 27th is said to be given to the people of the saints, is (in verses 13th and 14th) said to be given to one like the Son of Man, who came in the clouds of heaven. It is also called the kingdom of the Most High in ver. 27. It is, therefore, the kingdom of God as well as the kingdom of the Son of Man and of his saints. It is future, because it is not to arise till the destruction of the fourth beast and of antichrist. It is a kingdom on earth, because it is *under the whole heaven*, and because the subjects of it are

said (in verse 14th) to be *all people, nations and languages* which are earthly distinctions. And it is also the kingdom referred to in Luke 21: 31, because that kingdom comes nigh only upon the appearance of the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory, (compare Luke 21: 31 with Dan. 7: 13, 14.)

For another proof that the present dispensation is not the final one upon the earth, but that we must look for another, the reader may be referred to the form of prayer, commonly called the Lord's prayer:

"Our Father who art (*ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς*) in the heavens*—Hallowed be thy name—*Thy kingdom come—Thy will be done as in heaven* (*ὡς ἐν οὐρανοῖς* referring to that holy, happy place, where God's will is perfectly done) *so on earth*, Luke 11: 2. Matth. 6: 10. It has been observed, that the prayers of inspired men are prophetic of the things they are moved by the Spirit of Christ to pray for. This opinion seems reasonable; for, we are taught that in the case of common Christians, the Spirit helpeth their infirmities, and makes intercession for them, according to the will of God, Rom. 8: 26, 27. "He helpeth our infirmities," says one commentator, "for he teaches us to pray, dictating to us our petitions." &c. "The Holy Spirit," says another, "dictates those petitions and excites those desires, which are according to the Divine purposes." Now if this be so, can we doubt, that the petitions, dictated by the Saviour himself, are according to the Divine will? Does any Christian require argument to prove, either that the Lord Jesus Christ knew what is agreeable to the Divine will, or that he would not dictate petitions of larger import, than the purposes of God would authorize his followers to hope for and expect? Did any Christian ever doubt, that in uttering the Lord's prayer, he was putting up those petitions which are agreeable to the will of God? Can that man pray in faith, who doubts whether—rather we should say—who *believes* that it is not according to the will of God to grant these petitions? (James 1: 4.)

But before we proceed farther, we must notice an opinion which is maintained by some—perhaps many, and which, if well founded, would take away this ground of argument. It is this; that the Lord's prayer is not strictly adapted to the New Testament dispensation—that it was delivered while the Old Testament economy was still in force, and the setting up of the new prayed for as future. That this form of prayer was given

* Not *in heaven*, as it is in our version. Hereby we address God as Omnipresent, as filling all heavens,—all worlds, and therefore, as being present in this world and with us when we pray, "Our Father who art in the heavens."

while the O. T. economy was in force, is undoubtedly true, but the residue of this statement should be carefully examined before it is adopted. The kingdom prayed for, was a kingdom in which the will of God shall be done on earth, as it is heaven. How is the will of God done in heaven? Has the present dispensation realized a state of things on earth, even remotely approaching to the exalted righteousness of heaven? We shall leave these questions for the reader to answer. The apostle Peter's expectations were, no doubt, in harmony with the import of this prayer when he said, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise,"—and may we not add according to this prayer too—"look for new heavens and"—mark it—"a *new earth*, wherein *dwelleth righteousness*." Those who maintain the opinion, that the present dispensation was prayed for, by the words "Thy kingdom come," (understanding the kingdom to be really the present dispensation,) find herein a *literal* fulfilment of the petition,—and understood in this sense, it was fulfilled in a short time after our Lord's ascension; for then, this dispensation *literally* came: But why should not the following petition, also be literally fulfilled. Be it, for the sake of argument, that "the kingdom of heaven" or "the kingdom of God" spiritually, means the Christian Church or the present dispensation, so that the foundation of the church, at the opening of this dispensation, was the *literal* thing prayed for, yet some portion of the difficulty remains: we cannot spiritualize the petitions, "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In one sense the will of God is done on earth. Nothing occurs but by his permission. He causes the wrath of man and of devils to shew his praise, but the will of God is not done on earth *as it is in heaven*, either literally or in any other sense. But the fact is, the kingdom prayed for, is a kingdom in which the will of God shall be done perfectly—and when that kingdom shall be established on earth, the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Can we hope for or expect any such state of things? If not, the Saviour would not have taught his disciples to pray for it. Nay more, unless God's word does teach that it is his purpose at some time, so to establish his kingdom, and cause his will so to be done on earth, we cannot put up this prayer with faith, nothing wavering—nothing doubting, that what we pray for, is agreeable to the will of God. Such thoughts indulged, would do dishonour to the blessed name of him who taught us thus to pray.

But the scriptures do not authorize us to expect the literal fulfilment of these petitions, during the present dispensation—Many places may be cited to this point, but let the following suffice. In Matth. 13: 24–30, we have the parable of the

wheat and the tares, or as it is called, (in verse 36th) "the parable of the tares of the field." The interpretation was given by our Lord himself, and it is recorded in the same chap. (verses 37 to 43.) The passage is too long to extract, but will the reader be pleased to open to the place and read, first the parable and then the interpretation. In verse 24 he will find, that "the parable was put forth" as a likeness of the kingdom of heaven, and it teaches us that as the tares and the wheat were permitted to grow together until the harvest, so the children of the kingdom, and the children of the wicked one will exist together till the end of this world, *that is*, (if the reader will consult the original,) of this age or dispensation, (*αιωνος* ver. 40.) Then (and not before) the Son of Man will send his angels and gather out of *his kingdom* all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, and then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun *in the kingdom of their Father*, Matth. 13: 41, 43. This parable teaches that the period which precedes the end of this (*αιωνος*) dispensation, is characterized by a mixture of evil with good, and that it is the purpose of God to allow this mixed condition to exist until the end of it. Until then the will of God, therefore, will not be done on earth as it is in heaven. And even if the visible church be the kingdom of heaven here represented, the church (which is gathered out of the world and ought to be better than the world) will continue to be a mixed body, doing God's will imperfectly at the best. But at the close of this dispensation a new and more glorious order of things will commence—The Son of Man will expel from the world, which belongs to him, and is his kingdom, every evil, every malign influence, every offender against his righteous law. Satan shall be expelled and confined to the bottomless abyss: and then the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father. Nothing is here said of the translation of the righteous to some other orb—rather it would seem that they were in the kingdom of the Son of Man during the period of mixture, and that the separation was made by *gathering out of it* the evil, while the good are allowed to remain. We observe here the same thing which we noticed in the passage cited from the prophet Daniel. The same kingdom is called the kingdom of the Son of Man and the kingdom of the Father, and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, that is to say, they will be as *sons of God* in the kingdom of God, and being sons, they will be conformed to the image of Christ, that he might be the first born among many brethren, (Rom. 8: 29.) But it should be observed, that the prayer is not that the will of God may be done *by the church or in the church*

as it is in heaven. Now, although the church, in one or another of its forms, has embraced myriads of persons, destitute of godliness, yet it never has comprised the whole human family. The petition, however, is, thy will be done *on earth* (that is by all those who dwell on earth) as it is in heaven. Those then, who understand these petitions as having respect to the church, or a dispensation, or order of things which extends only to a part of the human family, very much abridge the import of these petitions. Upon the whole then, may we not conclude; this prayer teaches us to expect that at some time hereafter, the kingdom of God will be established upon earth in a more exalted form, than any thing the world has hitherto witnessed, and that during that kingdom, the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven?

There are many other passages in the scriptures which prove the same doctrine. We should perhaps weary the reader were we to attempt a detailed examination of all of them. It may not be improper, however, briefly to refer to a few, and leave it to the reader to investigate them at his leisure.

In 2 Tim. 4: 1, we find this passage, "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, *at his appearing and his kingdom.*" There can be no doubt, that Paul here refers to a future personal advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, because he connects with it, the judgment of the living and the dead. Nor can it be doubted that the apostle also refers to a *future kingdom* of the Lord Jesus Christ, for he connects that with his advent, and his judgment of the dead and living.

Another passage, which seems decisive of the whole question, is recorded in Luke 19: 11-27—It is the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return. The nobleman undoubtedly represents the Lord Jesus Christ—his departure into a far country to receive a kingdom, denotes our Lord's ascension into heaven—the return of the nobleman, denotes the second advent of our Lord or (in the language of 2 Tim. 4: 1, just cited) *his appearing in his kingdom.* The parable then goes on to describe two initiatory acts of government, or of his reign in the kingdom of God. The scene of the transaction certainly is upon earth, and the objects which enter into the scene are sublunary things. In reference to this parable, the Rev. Edward Greswell remarked, "that the difficulty or rather the impossibility of explaining it satisfactorily and consistently, upon any other principle than that of a reference to the millenary dispensation, contributed as much as any thing else, to confirm his own

belief in the futurity of that dispensation; and in fact, first to draw his attention seriously to this subject. The difficulty which was felt by himself, he is persuaded, will be felt by any other person, who shall attempt to explain the parable, without doing violence to it, and to find a counterpart for it, in any economy or in reference to any kingdom of Christ whether past or to come but that." The reader, if he has the opportunity, will do well to consult that learned writer's exposition of this parable in vol. 4th (pp. 419 to 514) of his work on the Parables.

The passage in Heb. 2: 5, is remarkable when considered in the original, "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the *world to come*, whereof we speak." In verse 14th of the first chapter, we are taught that during this economy, the angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation; but the *world to come*, is not put in subjection to them. Now what is this world to come? Most Christians perhaps—and some who should know better—would say, heaven is the world to come, which is here intended—Dr. Scott seems to think, that it includes "the dispensation of the Messiah and the millennium as connected with heavenly happiness." "The times of the Messiah began at the first coming of Christ and will continue till his second coming," within which period that commentator believes the millennium will occur, as it appears by other parts of his commentary. It is difficult to understand Professor Stuart's commentary on this verse. The words translated *world to come*, mean literally the *habitable earth to come*, *την οικουμενην την μελλουσαν*. These words, he says, are equivalent to *ὁ καιρος ὁ μελλων*, that is, (as he interprets) *the Christian dispensation*, the world as it will be in future. Dr. Owen observes, "that it denotes a certain state or condition of things in this world," that is on this globe, "for the apostle does not treat directly of heaven," and to call heaven "the world to come," because we are to go into it, is, says Beza, "rather harsh."

Paul* refers doubtless to a future dispensation to be realized

* Dr. Bloomfield's note is very unsatisfactory, the paraphrase, or gloss, which he gives, is "the times of the New Testament." He adds, they are so termed in the style of the prophets, who call this dispensation such symbolically, (Ernesti.) So Dindorf. Doddridge explains it of the kingdom of the Messiah, which extends not only to earth but to heaven. See Whitby and Macknight. Slade thinks it probable, that the phrase refers to the state of the gospel here on earth, that being what the apostle is speaking of, and he refers to Acts 7: 53. Gal. 3: 19.

It is supposed that this epistle was written about the year 61 or 62, and the world or dispensation to which this passage refers, was *then future*, (*μελλουσαν*) and yet the times of the N. T. had been running near 30 years, and the gospel had been extensively promulgated in the Roman empire. But how the word *world or inhabited earth*, can signify a kingdom on earth and in heaven, and

on this sphere,—he means what Peter does by the *new earth*, 2 Pet. 3: 13,—he means what our Lord did by the (*παλιγγενεσία* Matth. 19: 28), *regeneration* or new creation, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory,—he means what Peter did by the (*ἀποκατάστασις πάντων* Acts 3: 21) *restitution of all things*, which will take place when the heavens shall no longer receive (that is, detain) the Lord Jesus Christ. This habitable earth to come—this new earth—this regeneration, and restitution of all things, will be signalised and made glorious by the fulfilment of Isaiah 6: 3. “The whole earth is full of his glory.” That the glory of Christ (at his second advent, when he shall come with power and *great glory*, and sit upon the throne of his glory) is here foretold, will be evident by comparing the place with John 12: 41, where this passage is cited, and the glory which Esaias saw, is declared to be the glory of Christ.

Again the apostle Paul in Eph. 1: 10, refers to a future economy, which he calls the economy or dispensation of the fulness of the times. This economy will begin when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled—when Jerusalem shall no longer be trodden down by a hostile power, Luke 21: 24,—when God will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down—and will build again the ruins thereof and set it up, Acts 15: 16. Amos 9: 11. This Jerusalem, though now trodden down, is yet the city of the great king, by which men are forbidden to swear, as they are by heaven which is God’s throne, Matth. 5: 35.

This future kingdom is also predicted in Rev. 11: 15, 19. It will be ushered in by the voice of the seventh angel. At this trump, the mystery of God shall be finished, Rev. 10: 7—the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord—the dead will be raised—the servants of God will be

how the words *to come*, can signify what *is present*, it is hard to comprehend. The difficulty in which the commentators involve the subject, arises from this: they assume as a settled point, that the present economy is the final one on earth, and they endeavour to make every text bend to that theory. If they would admit that this dispensation is only preparatory or introductory to another, as this and other passages teach, many hard questions would be solved. But as they will not do this, they are obliged to invent senses for words which elsewhere they do not bear; and each commentator being guided by his own view of what is probable, or plausible, or according to the analogy of faith, their interpretations are discordant. Upon the ground of this discordancy, the Romanists build an argument for the necessity of an infallible interpreter, and such they claim their church to be. Yet that church in truth, took the lead in establishing false theories and false interpretation, and is in fact the first author of them all. Errors of interpretation may be less multifarious in that church, but they are not less real nor less remote from the simplicity of this truth; on the contrary, many of their errors are certainly much more gross—and many are even subversive of the essential doctrines of the gospel.

rewarded, and the destroyers of the earth will be destroyed, Rev. 11: 18. Then will be fulfilled the promise made to him that overcometh and keepeth Christ's works to the end—he shall have power over the nations, &c. (See Rev. 2: 26, with which compare Rev. 12: 5 and 19: 15. Ps. 2: 8, 9.)

But it is time to conclude this essay, and this we will do by recalling for a moment the reader's attention to a thought expressed in a former paper. It was concerning this future glorious kingdom, (of the saints—of the Son of Man—of heaven—of God; for we have seen that each of these expressions are used to denote the same kingdom,) that the Pharisees inquired. Ignorant of their own obduracy and blindness, and consequently having no proper conception of the holiness of that kingdom, or of the incapacity of depraved human nature to enjoy it, they imagined that when it came to their nation, it would certainly be established. They had Abraham for their father, and that was a title which could not be defeated or lost, Matth. 3: 9. They did not attend, therefore, with candour and care to the proofs which our Lord gave them of his Messiahship, and consequently were ignorant, that, meek and lowly as he appeared, He was really the Lord of glory and the Prince of life. Actuated by the Spirit of worldly politics, they rejected and crucified him, lest the Romans, to whom they were already subject, should come and take away their place and nation, not knowing, and not believing that if they would accept of him and his kingdom, he would gather and protect them in the most affectionate manner, while the Roman power, and every hostile power would have crumbled before him, and been dissipated at his presence, like the chaff of the summer threshing floor before a mighty wind, (Matth. 23: 37. Luke 19: 41–41. Ps. 81: 10–15. Dan. 2: 34, 35. Ps. 2: 8, 9.) They had not, therefore, the least conception that the loss of the glorious kingdom about which they inquired, depended, in any sense, upon their acceptance or refusal of the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah. Thus blind and obdurate and unbelieving, they “demanded *when* the kingdom of God should come.” The Lord Jesus, knowing the character of the human heart, and foreseeing full well the event of his ministry among the Jews, answers them according to the intent of their question and the foreseen event, and then reiterates the doctrine which he had taught from the beginning. More than eighteen centuries have already elapsed since this kingdom was taken from that nation, and still it remains in abeyance, awaiting the termination of this economy, in which the Holy Spirit will prepare a people who shall be willing to receive him in the day of his advent in power and great glory. The Spirit and the bride

say come, and let all who love our Lord's appearing say come—Thy kingdom come. Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

ESSAY IV.

“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.”

Having proved sufficiently, as we suppose, in the preceding essay, that the present dispensation is not the final one, but only preparatory to a dispensation far more glorious, called in the scriptures “the kingdom of heaven,” and “the kingdom of God,” we now proceed to consider what is here affirmed of it, *namely*, that it cometh not *with observation*—“non venit regnum Dei cum observatione.”

This expression is a singular one, and suggests the possibility that it may not correctly give the sense of the original text. *Ουκ ερχεται η βασιλεια του θεου μετα παρατηρησεως.* We may affirm of two material objects, that one comes with or without the other, or figuratively we may affirm of things not material, that one comes with or without the other: We may say, Peter and John came to the sepulchre, but Peter came not with John—we may say that pestilence does not always come with famine—that with night cometh sadness, but joy cometh with the morning, &c. &c., yet it is not in this sense that we can say, the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. In the examples given, “*with*,” has the force of a conjunction, and the sense is, that the two objects come or come not conjunctively in the vicinity or company of each other. See Winer's idioms, *μετα*. But *observation*, is an act of some agent, while the kingdom of God is a great and glorious reality, which cannot be said to come *conjunctively*, with that which is not the subject of an action, but is itself nothing but an action.* Feeling this

* Dr. Campbell thinks the expression “exceedingly awkward, not to say absurd,” and the awkwardness consists in his view chiefly in applying the idea of “motion to a kingdom, as when mention is made of its coming, approaching, and the like.” Accordingly he translates the expression, “when the (*βασιλεια*) reign of God should (*ερχεται*) commence.” But the idea of motion is contained in the word (*ερχεται*, translated by him) *commence*, and Dr. C. himself translates it in (the Lord's prayer), Matth. 6: 10. Luke 11: 2, by the word *come*,

difficulty, commentators have sought for a theological sense of the word *observatio*, at variance with its meaning in classical Latin as the only means of overcoming it. One says* the word is taken for a certain external and terrene splendour of majesty, or for an illustrious and conspicuous pomp, by which a thing may be discussed, (*Bibliotheca sacra Petri Ravennelli.*) Another says† the word *observatio*, by a frequent Hebraism, by which the abstract is put for the concrete and its subject, signifies a noted or illustrious and observable thing. The sense of this passage, he says,‡ is “The kingdom of God and Messiah will not come at his first advent, with any splendid pomp and illustrious and conspicuous majesty, so that it should necessarily be seen by all, and it should be said, “Lo here, or Lo there, is his army, his camps, his standards. Already he hath taken this or that city—here or there states have taken the oath of allegiance to him,” “as political kingdoms and kings usually come,” &c. &c., (*Mathiae, Flacii, Illyrici, Clavis, ad verb observ.*) Another commentator would substitute for (*cum observatione*) “with observation,” the words (*ita ut observetur ex externis (sc. circumstantiis) si animus advertatur*) “so that it may be observed,§ *namely, from ex-*

which surely contains the idea of motion, “Thy reign,” (not kingdom) “come.” But wherein is it less awkward to ascribe motion to *reign* than to kingdom, and what is gained by substituting *commence* for the word “come,” in this place, except, that it covers from the eye of a mere English reader, an objection which would overturn his criticism on the word βασις? This change in the translation, does indeed fall in very well with the hypothesis, that the present dispensation of the gospel to the Gentiles is the “kingdom of God” spoken of in this passage. Without entering, however, into the question whether βασις may not mean “reign,” it is sufficient to say it may mean “kingdom,” and that ἐρχεται, does mean *come*, and that *come* does involve the idea of *motion*, and the expression in question is by no means uncommon. The *awkwardness* of the expression, as it appears to the writer, arises from a misconception and mistranslation of the words μετα παρατ,—more particularly in conjoining things unlike in kind, and in applying to both the idea of coming, which cannot be understood of both in the same sense.

* “Pro externo quopiam et terreno majestatis splendore seu illustri et conspicua pompâ ex qua aliquid possit agnosci.”

† “Observatio usitato Hebraismo quo abstractum pro concreto et ejus subjecto ponitur, significat rem notam aut illustrem, ac observabilem.”

‡ Regnum Dei ac Meschiae non veniet in suo primo adventu cum aliquâ splendidâ pompâ, ac illustri conspicuâque majestate, ut ab omnibus conspicui necessario possit, et dicatur “Ecce hic aut ibi ejus exercitus, ejus castra et vexilla; jam cepit hanc aut illam urbem, hic aut ibi civitates jam ei juraverunt,” sicut politica regna ac reges cum illustri superbaque pompa in omnium oculis incurrente turba potentiâ ac majestate, venire solent.

§ Hardoin paraphrases the expression thus: “Non præcedet Messiae et Dei regnum signum aliquod, quod in cælo vel ære observari possit.” The expression μετα παρατ, he says is used for μετα σημασις (*signi datione*), and his commentary is, “cum signo aliquo, quod observari in cælo possit Matth. 12: 39, usus est eo *observationis* verbo Plinius passim multis locis ut lib. 18, sect. 65.” Cornelius a Lapide, another Jesuit, gives the following: “Regnum Dei et Messiae non veniet cum prævio apparatu, nec cum pompâ externâ militum, equorum, curruum, ut ex illa ipsum observare et certo præscire possitis, sicut

ternal circumstances if the mind attend to them," (Munthe's *Observationes Philologicæ*.) Dr. Scott thinks the import of the expression is this, "be conspicuous by outward splendour and magnificent displays, like the triumphs of conquerors or the coronation of kings and emperors." Others prefer the marginal reading as being a more just rendering of the words (*μετα παρατηρησεως*) *cum observatione*, which is "with outward show," viz. "the gospel dispensation is not ushered in with pomp and splendour." Cartwright (*Harm. in loco*) observes upon this place, that "the question was doubtless put in mockery; for as Christ was continually discoursing concerning the kingdom of God at hand, while there was no change of external state among the Jews, wicked and malicious men thought it a plausible pretext of vexing him. Therefore, as if he were vainly prating and trifling about the kingdom of God, they inquire of him tauntingly, when at length this kingdom of God was to come. The Pharisees thought (and even to this day the Jews are in the same error), the kingdom of the Messiah would be carnal, like that of other kings, and they thought Messiah would come with royal splendour and would dwell in royal state either in Jerusalem or Samaria, (where the royal palaces formerly were,) and that from his court, he would give laws to all nations, and by his prudence and power would cause all, who should acknowledge him as king, to dwell securely and happily, under their own vine and fig-tree. But Christ by his answer, shews that the kingdom of God would not be (visible) a-far off, as if conspicuous in pomp: and, therefore, they were greatly deceived, who were looking for the kingdom of God with eyes of flesh, which is in no respect carnal or earthly, since it is nothing else but the interior and spiritual renovation of the mind; because he teaches from the nature of the kingdom itself, that those act perversely who look hither and thither, in order that they may observe visible marks, as if he had said, "The renewal of the church, which God has promised, is to be looked for within, because by quickening his own elect into celestial newness, he erects his kingdom in them: and thus he obliquely reproves the sottishness of the Pharisees, who aspired after

regem certò adesse scitis, dum videtis prævium ejus comitatum, cum quali vos regnum Messiae venturum putatis, et jam quasi proximum observatis. Non poterit observari, ait glossa, quia non est corporale ut putatis, sed spirituale, quod jam, inceptit. Quocirca Christus venit sine pompâ pauper et humilis ut ostenderet regnum suum esse spirituale et divinum, non corporale et mundanum Non dicent: Ecce in Jerusalem est thronus regalis Christi: Ecce ibi regnat in magnificentiâ quasi alter Salomon: quia non Christus regnat in throno corporali sed in animâ spirituali, dum illam per gratiam suam regit et flectit ad omne bonum sicque eam dirigit ad regnum cœleste."

nothing, except that which was terrestrial and perishing. Yet it is to be observed, that Christ spoke only of the beginnings of the kingdom of God, because now we are beginning to be made anew in spirit, according to the image of God, in order that afterwards the entire renovation of us, and of the whole world, may follow each in the proper time; concerning which Paul discourses largely, Rom. 8: 23." Afterwards (on the next verse) this author adds, "The scope, therefore, of the answer of Christ, in this place, was to teach his disciples that the kingdom of God was not to be restored at present with external felicity and glory, but in spirit and faith, and that too with the greatest affliction and severest temptations of the citizens of this kingdom," &c. But there is no end to the opinions of commentators on this passage, "congeruntur autem variæ interpretationes in eum," said Illyricus two centuries ago, and they are not less various now than they were then. But this variety and discordance of opinions, is a strong proof that none of them has hit upon the true meaning of the passage. Many objections may be urged against these interpretations, but it is not our purpose to do more than merely mention some of them. 1. These authors ascribe to the word *observation*, a sense which it no where else has; in fact, the sense is invented for this place. 2. The answer of our Lord so interpreted, does not meet the stress of the question. The Pharisees inquired *when* (πότε) the kingdom of God should come, not (πώς) *how* or *in what manner* it should come. Now, why should the Saviour avoid giving a direct answer to the question, in the sense in which it was proposed to him? Surely not for lack of wisdom; it would be impious to suppose so—nor would he evade the question, by answering one that was not put to him, because the actual question was one which should not have been asked. In such a case our Lord would have refused to give the information called for, and such it is believed, was the purport of the answer. 3. This interpretation assumes, that the present dispensation of the gospel among the heathen or Gentiles, is the kingdom of God, and that no future dispensation on earth is to be expected. This opinion it is believed, is not scriptural, for reasons given in a former essay.

4. If the kingdom of God referred to in this passage, is that reign or dispensation which shall be ushered in at the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, with power and great glory, it will come with external splendour of majesty—it will be a noted, illustrious and observable thing—it will be conspicuous by outward splendour and magnificent displays, compared with which the pomp and the triumph of conquerors, and the

coronation of kings and emperors, are but as the light of a glow-worm to the splendour of the meridian sun. The interpretations opposed, resting as they do upon this assumption, *to wit*, that the present dispensation is the final one, and, therefore, is the kingdom of God intended in this passage, will be disproved, if it can be shewn that the present dispensation is not final, but preparatory to the kingdom God, spoken of in this passage. In the last essay this question was considered, and some proofs were submitted to the reader which were deemed decisive, although but a small part of the evidence was produced. But waving further objections, we desire the reader to consider the following suggestions.

The word (*παρατηρησις*) translated *observation*, does not bear that meaning precisely, nor does it bear any of the meanings which, by interpreters, are given to the word *observatio*. In fact it has some varieties or shades of meaning quite different from those of the words by which it is rendered. It occurs in the N. T. only in this place and only a few times in classical Greek. Commonly it is rendered *observatio, vaticinatio, augurium*. But the kindred words *τηρεω* and *παρατηρεω* occur frequently. The word *τηρεω* signifies to observe or watch a visible object with the eye, Matth. 27: 36, 54—28: 4. Figuratively it may signify to confine as in a prison, Acts 12: 5, 6. Jude 6. 2 Pet. 2: 4, or to keep laid up, or to reserve for a future time, 1 Pet. 1: 4, also *to obey* or keep* a command, Matth. 19: 17. The word *παρατηρεω* means to watch a thing from a proximate position—or metaphorically, to watch closely, narrowly, or with malicious intentions, Mark 3: 2. Luke 6: 7—14: 1—20: 20. Acts 9: 24. The word *παρατηρεω* also has the general meaning of *φυλασσω* to watch, to observe narrowly, or attentively, or closely, from which we have the word *φυλακη* custody, keeping guard, a watch, or fourth part of the night, (*vigilia, excubatio, quarta pars noctis.*) “For a thousand years in thy sight, are as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night, (*φυλακη εν νυκτι.*)” Ps. (89: 4 in Lxx.) 90: 4. In Luke 2: 8, we have the expression (*φυλασσοντες φυλακας* watching watches), *keeping watch*. See Luke 12: 38. Mark 13: 35. May not the word *παρατηρησις* have a signification corresponding with that of *φυλακη*, which, from signifying the *act of watching*, during a certain interval, comes to signify the interval itself? Both these nouns contain the abstract primary sense of the verbs from which they are derived, and both the verbs signify pretty much the same idea, and if *φυλακη* may be used to signify

* The word *φυλασσω* is also used by Paul in the same sense, “For neither they themselves *νομιν φυλασσουσιν* keep the law, Gal. 6: 13. See also Acts 16: 4—21: 24. Rom. 2: 26.

a stated interval or period, why may not παρατηρησις have the same signification? But if it be objected that the evangelist would have used φυλακη, if such had been his meaning, the answer is obvious: The word φυλακη is by inveterate usage confined to a short interval, and that a portion of the night. It is, therefore, altogether inappropriate to express a period upon the expanded chronology of prophecy, which has to do with dispensations or ages. Taking that largeness of view, which the Holy Spirit takes, when he calls a thousand years a watch in the night, we may call (as Paul does in Rom. 13: 12) the whole period of the world's existence since the fall and the curse, *the night*, and we may look forward to the coming kingdom of God as the approaching day, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand," &c. Elegantly, therefore, may this word (παρατηρησις) be used to signify a watch or a stated interval, in this larger night of the world's apostacy, and of God's displeasure towards it. It has not been restricted by usage to any particular interval, and would, therefore, be suitable (if such were the intention) to mark any determinate period, however large, upon the scheme of the ages, or dispensations which God has appointed and arranged, Heb. 1: 2. Eph. 2: 7. In confirmation of this suggestion it may be observed that the word παρατηρω is used (in Gal. 4: 10) to express the solemn and religious manner in which the Jews kept their festivals, and other solemn periods—"Ye observe (παρατηρεῖσθε) days, and months, and times and years." These solemn periods came after stated intervals, which were all marked upon the Jewish calendar. But how could it be known when these solemn occasions arrived? Only by denoting the efflux of time from one festival to another. How, for example, would the year of jubilee be known, but by noting the efflux of years from the last year of jubilee; and how could it be known precisely when any year was complete, but by noting the efflux of months or days from its beginning? It is upon the interval, therefore, that the mind must be fixed,—the efflux of that, must be watched and noted, otherwise the time of its expiring will not be known. By an easy and natural figure, the word expressing the act of watching (φυλασσαν) through a stated interval, may be used to express the interval itself, (as φυλακη vigilia,) and such, it is suggested, may be the figurative sense of the word παρατηρησις in this place. But if such be the meaning of the word, the preposition (μετα) should not be translated "with" but *after*. It may be objected, however, that μετα when followed by a genitive is translated *with*, whereas when it signifies *after*, it is followed by a noun in the accusative, relating to time, as in Matth. 27: 63. "After (μετα)

three days, I will rise again," Matth. 1: 12, "after (*μετα*) the carrying away of Babylon." But *μετα* is not uniformly translated *with* when followed by a genitive. Thus we have the phrase in classical Greek, *μετ' ολιγων τουτων*, "brevi post hasce res tempore," *shortly after these things were done*. In this expression *ολιγων* really qualifies *μετα*—(*paulo post*) and *τουτων* is really governed by *μετα* thus qualified. Or we may consider the expression under consideration elliptical, (and this is perhaps the just view of it,) and supply the word *καιρον* or *χρονον* or a word of similar meaning. The kingdom of God cometh not after (*μετα καιρον παρατηρησεως*) a *season, period, stated interval* of (watching) observation, as your years of jubilee do, &c.

It may be added, this word is also used by Diodorus Siculus in connexion with objects or events which naturally occur at stated intervals, which must have been ascertained by the careful observation and notation of time: such as the rising of the Nile, and the rising of fixed stars, *ει των αστρων αρχαισταται παρατηρησεις*, pa. 6, D., *ει πολλων χρονων της παρατηρησεως παρα τοις Αιγυπτιαις ανασηραμμενης*, pa. 23, C. If this word then, be proper to denote the action, of giving and continuing the attention through a fixed interval, it may, consistently with the laws of language, be used to signify *the interval itself*. This is proved incontestibly by the use of the kindred words *φυλακη*, *vigilia*, *watch*, to signify the fourth part of the night. If the reader should hesitate to give his assent to these suggestions, we would ask him to consider whether the meanings commonly given to the word *observation* in this place, are not more unnatural, and far fetched? Open the commentators, and write down in order the various meanings they give to this word. *Observation* means "an external and terrene splendour of majesty," "an illustrious conspicuous pomp," "a noted or illustrious and observable thing," "conspicuousness by outward splendour and display," "outward show." But these meanings cannot be extracted from the word, and as a further proof of it, the reader may be challenged to produce another place, either in sacred or secular literature where any critic has attempted to force any one of these meanings either upon the word *παρατηρησις* or *observatio*.* Without being tenacious, therefore, of the

* "Michaelis says, there is no classical example of this word (*παρατ.*), but Kypke has produced three, from Plutarch, Antoninus and Longinus, to which Bishop Marsh adds a fourth from Arrian. The sense prevailing in those passages is *attention, observation*, which does not seem suitable here. I therefore prefer the interpretation of others: *namely, splendour, pomp*, which falls under observation, or by its appearance particularly strikes the senses," *Bloomfield's Crit. Dig.* in loco. The interpretation which Dr. Bloomfield prefers is, by his own shewing, conjectural. It is not the classical sense, and this is the only place in the N. T. where the word occurs. But Dr. Bloomfield understands the phrase "Kingdom of God," in the Jewish sense, for the

meaning suggested in this essay, it appears to be much less objectionable than those which are commonly preferred.

What then are we to understand by this expression, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." By the kingdom of God, we are to understand the glorious kingdom which God will establish on earth under the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. This kingdom cometh not after a known, stated interval, like the festivals, to which the Pharisees were so much accustomed—it cometh not like the year of jubilee, (which was typical of Messiah's kingdom,) the approach of which could be accurately noted:—it cometh not like the morning, whose approach may be determined by the efflux of the successive watches of the night: It cometh not after a set time, a revealed interval which can be observed. The answer thus understood, denies the information which the Pharisees demanded, and this we should expect, if the inquiry related to the glorious kingdom of Messiah.

It is an objection to the common interpretation, that it makes our Lord's reply to the question tautologous. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say Lo here! or Lo there! The kingdom of God being spiritual, and the work of the spirit on the hearts of men not being the subject of ocular inspection, its nature forbids that it should be announced by one to another, saying Lo here! or Lo there! This is pretty much the same idea as that derived by the common interpretation from the words "without observation"—But this expression was added to make the answer full and perfect. It means, that it will not come in such a way as to be a sign of its own approach, so that men may say of it, Lo! here it comes! Lo! there it comes! If the kingdom were to come like a visible object; if for example, it were to approach as a cloud borne onward (even with the rapidity of a tempest) from the horizon, men would have some, though brief, premonition of its approach. But the sign of the coming of the Son of Man, *will be the Son of Man in heaven*, Matth. 24: 30. The kingdom will come as the lightning which in an instant, too brief to be noted before it is gone, shoots athwart the heaven, and is seen by one observer as soon as by another, and before either can say to the other, Lo here! or Lo there!

appearance and manifestation of King Messiah, where it occurs in the question, and indeed we can hardly suppose the Pharisees could put the question in any other sense. But the phrase "kingdom of God," in the answer of our Lord, he evidently understands in what is called the gospel sense—that is, in a sense which seems suitable to the present dispensation. But the writer believes that the Lord Jesus did not speak of this present dispensation, but of his future glorious reign as Messiah. The sense of the word (*παρουσία*) which has been contended for, has at least analogy to support it.

The two expressions then taken together, amount to this; that by no possible means could the Pharisees get any previous information as to the time of the actual coming of Messiah's glorious kingdom; neither by watching the efflux of time, nor by watching external objects. Not by the former means, because the interval upon which its coming depends is not revealed, and never will be, till the kingdom actually comes in open manifestation—Not by watching external objects, because the manner of its manifestation will altogether preclude the possibility of such premonitions or notices.

It has been already suggested, that the remaining expression in our Lord's reply is not, properly speaking, an answer to the question proposed to him, but is in fact, a reiteration of the great doctrine with which he commenced his public ministry. It was suggested also, that the expression may be translated so as to give it an adversative sense, which was called for by the denial "that the kingdom of God had come," implied in propounding the question to which our Lord replied with so much meekness, adding—"But indeed the kingdom of God has come to you."

Yet if the reader should, after all, reject this explanation of the expression (*μετα παρατηρησεως, cum observatione*) "cometh not with observation," it would not follow that he ought also to understand by the "kingdom of God," the present gospel dispensation: For there is another sense (as has been shewn already) in which the glorious kingdom of Messiah cometh not with observation, because it cometh at the conclusion of this economy, the progress of which cannot be observed. It cometh not (*ita ut observetur externis circumstantiis si animus advertatur*) "in such manner that it may be observed by external circumstances," because this economy furnishes no circumstances which can denote its own approach towards completion, and consequently, not any circumstances which denote the approach of the kingdom of God, which will immediately succeed this economy. And assuming (what we think we have proved) that the kingdom intended in this passage, is the future glorious kingdom of Messiah, this explanation of the words, (if it be not their very sense,) is according to the truth of the case. For consider this: had our Lord in framing his answer looked exclusively to men, he would have replied, the kingdom of God would never come. He might have said to the Pharisees "God has already brought this kingdom nigh, and has freely and affectionately offered it to your nation. But your nation will not accept it. As far, therefore, as it depends upon the will of your nation, it will never come. But it is God's purpose in a little time, to offer this kingdom

to the Gentiles, yet they are by nature like yourselves, and they too, if left to themselves, will reject it also: When then will this kingdom come? Never; if its coming is to depend on the spontaneous acceptance of depraved men. It is God's purpose, however, to establish an economy of grace, which shall be carried on by the Holy Spirit, and in the meantime I shall return to the Father, and the kingdom will be removed from you. Large numbers will be constrained by the Holy Spirit's influence, freely to embrace the offer of the kingdom, and as the work of the Spirit advances, the kingdom, which is now only relatively nigh to your nation, will draw absolutely nigh to the world; so that when I come again in this kingdom which I now offer, I shall find a people prepared by the Holy Spirit, and made willing to receive me in that day of my coming in power, Ps. 110: 3. And when this economy of grace shall be fulfilled, by the accomplishment of the number of another elect nation, which shall so be prepared and made willing by the Holy Spirit to receive me, then the kingdom of God shall come. But if you will not accept the kingdom, it is not for you to inquire when the kingdom will come, nor upon whom God will bestow it."

Certainly the Saviour, in framing his answer, had a tacit respect to the economy of grace, which was about to be established. The common opinion is that he actually spoke of it under the name of the kingdom of God. The belief of the writer is, however, that he tacitly referred to it as a means to an end, which end was the kingdom of God, about which the Pharisees inquired, and of which only he spoke. He made no open allusion to the call of the Gentiles. The details of this economy he never revealed. They were unknown to the apostles. They are of course equally unknown to us. They knew not the times nor the seasons appointed in reference to this economy. They did not know but that God would gather the elect nation out of the generation of men then alive, or out of that and the next, or out of that and the next two, or next ten, or next fifty. God did not reveal to them his purpose in that behalf, nor did he reveal the number of his elect, nor the times in which, nor the extent to which, his Spirit should operate on the hearts of men in constraining them freely to yield to Christ the obedience of faith. Evidently, therefore, it was vain to inquire about the time of the coming of the kingdom of God, as though its approach could be calculated, by the effluxes of a chronological period, or be discerned by the progress of the economy of grace, of which it will be, so to speak, the matured fruit.

The sum of what has been said upon this passage of scrip-

ture, may be briefly stated thus: The kingdom about which the Pharisees inquired, and to which our Lord had respect in his answer, was the kingdom which at first was preached by John the Baptist—and afterwards by our Lord himself and by his disciples. It was the same which our Lord, near the close of his public ministry among the Jews, declared should be taken from them and given to another nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. That kingdom was not the Christian church, or the present economy of the gospel, in which the Jews have equal but no greater privileges than the Gentiles, but it was the glorious kingdom of the Messiah, which will not be established upon the earth till the second advent of the Son of Man in power and great glory. Of this glorious and yet future kingdom, our Lord affirmed that it cometh not with observation, that is, it cometh not at the close of a revealed interval, the effluxes of which can be observed, neither will it draw nigh by gradual and visible approaches, and thus become a sign of its own coming, so that one can point it out to another—saying Lo here it comes, or Lo there: The interval which actually existed between the time when this question was put, and the time of the actual manifestation of the kingdom of God, was the little portion which remained of his own personal ministry, and the present dispensation. But the length of this dispensation is not given,—we only know that it will continue until the church of the first born, or the mystical body shall be completed, under the administration of the Spirit. Of course, as we cannot know how long this dispensation is to continue, we cannot know, by the time elapsed since its commencement, how far we are from the end of it, and as we cannot discern the work of the Spirit, and are not informed what numbers it will embrace, nor to how many generations it will extend, we cannot know either how much the Spirit has accomplished, nor how much of his work remains. The last clause of the answer is not directly called for by the question, but it was added on account of the denial of his principal doctrine, which was implied by the question. It is in fact a reiteration of the doctrine, which he at first began to preach, and the expression, as we have shown, should be translated, “but indeed the kingdom of God is come to you,” or “is come among you.”

Some of the bearings of the doctrine contended for, in this and the preceding essays, have already been adverted to. In the first place, it was said, that it illustrates and enforces the doctrine of the depravity of the human heart, and the doctrine of election—that it explains why our Lord’s ministry was confined to the Jewish nation, and why the kingdom was

offered to that people exclusively in the first instance; that it furnishes a reason why Israel has been preserved thus far as a distinct people, and will be so preserved until the advent of Christ in power and glory; and it serves to teach us humility and to be tender hearted towards God's ancient covenant people. There are several other points of doctrine upon which the discussion has an important bearing. Some of these will be briefly mentioned.

1. The opinion that none but temporal rewards were promised to the Jews under the Levitical economy is not well founded. They were promised the blessings of Messiah's kingdom—the very kingdom now preached among the Gentiles, and which contained all those blessings which are now urged upon the Gentiles as well as Jews, as motives to accept it; and which kingdom, since it was rejected by the Jews, will not be manifested until the second advent. The parable of the marriage, under the imagery of oxen and fatlings, and other things proper to a feast, represents the blessings which, at first, were offered to the Jews, and afterwards to Jews and Gentiles, indiscriminately. There is no change in the good things prepared. The change is in the persons designed to partake of them. A further proof may be cited from 1 Pet. 2: 9, where he quotes Exod. 19: 6, and applies it to Christians—“Ye are—a royal priesthood—a holy nation,” &c. (*βασιλειαν ἁγίων ἔθνος ἕστες*. See lxx. Ex. 19: 6,) shewing that Christians are substituted for the Jewish nation, to whom it was promised originally upon condition of obedience, that they should become “the royal priesthood and holy nation.” And the apostle here probably alludes not only to Exod. 19: 6, but to the words of our Lord recorded in Matth. 21: 42, 43, as the reader may perceive by comparing these two verses with 1 Pet. 2: 8, 9. Besides, the blessing of being made kings and priests unto God, which is the idea of a royal priesthood, is several times mentioned in the Revelation as the rewards which the saints will receive, Rev. 1: 6—5: 10—20: 6.

2. We see a reason for the uncertain duration of the present economy, and are enabled better to understand why the early Christians were impressed with a belief of the nearness of Christ's second advent. If these views are correct, we are not authorized by the scriptures to say, that a thousand years or any other period must elapse before the coming of the kingdom of God. But this subject requires a more extended discussion than would be proper in this place. It will form the subject of another essay.

3. This doctrine also shews that the world holds its present condition by the sufferance of God. The time of the fourth

kingdom was fulfilled when Christ came preaching the kingdom of God—the times of that kingdom have been prolonged in consequence (so to speak) of the unfaithfulness of Israel. Their unfaithfulness (speaking after the manner of men) created a new exigency, and required a new dispensation, in order to give opportunity to gather another elect nation, (*viz.* the church,) from among the heathen. It is, therefore, for the sake of this church that the day of God's wrath is yet deferred—As it was for Lot's sake, Sodom was spared during a little space, (Gen. 19: 22,) so it is for the sake of his elect, that God now restrains his wrath against the world. This is distinctly taught in Luke 18: 1–8, which belongs to the context of the passage we have considered, and 2 Pet. 3: 9, 15, when rightly understood.

4. These views also furnish a means of forming a correct estimate of state-established religions. The gospel of the kingdom was preached to the Jews *as a nation*. Their state being a theocracy, their religion was their law. They were called upon nationally to accept of Christ and his kingdom, which had come nigh to them. But since the fall and dispersion of that nation, the gospel has been preached to individuals among all nations, but not to nations *as such*.* The Gentiles, therefore, are not called upon to establish the gospel by law, but individuals (composing the nations) to whom the gospel is sent, are called upon to embrace Christ and come out from among the ungodly, by whom they are surrounded, and be a peculiar people unto God. Those who shall believe will be gathered out of the nations, and, like the newly invited guests, in the parable of the marriage, will form a new community, which shall take the place originally offered to the Jewish nation. Besides, as the times of the Gentiles are prolonged by the mere forbearance of God, and as the apostate nations of Christendom themselves shall be violently destroyed, as the enemies of Christ, when the church shall be completed, to unite the church to the secular governments of the earth, is the same thing as to unite it to powers hostile to it, and hostile to Christ the Head of the church. The union must therefore cease, before the Lord comes to destroy the nations, or the churches allied with them must fall in a common ruin. Thus much is intimated by the symbol of the fourth empire. The

* The same thought is expressed in Warburton's Julian, Book I. chap. I—“that religion which elsewhere, has only particulars for its subjects, had here (i. e. among the Jews while they subsisted as a body politic,) a nation or community, and what elsewhere, as far as concerns the Divine origin of religion is a private matter, was here a public.” This author, however, accounts for the fact, in a manner quite different from that suggested in this essay.

little horn which was diverse from the rest, being a part of the beast, and being in union with the other horns, was destroyed by the same judgment which destroyed the body and the other horns of the beast. Dan. 7th chap. However much states or nations may have been benefitted by the establishment of religion by law, the church itself, has always suffered from the union, being corrupted thereby; and this effect upon the church, besides causing positive mischiefs of enormous magnitude to the nations of Christendom, has deprived them of the salutary influence which an uncorrupted church would have exerted.*

5. This explanation of the place we have been considering, enables us better to understand the preaching of our Lord to the Jews. He was a *minister of the circumcision* for the truth of God, to confirm the *promises* unto the Fathers, Rom. 15: 8. Being a minister of the circumcision, his ministry fell within the period allotted for the duration of the Levitical economy, and was confined to the Jewish people—and the object of his mission, being to confirm the *promises* unto the fathers, (or the promises *made* unto the fathers,) it of necessity included the offer of the kingdom, which was the great promise in which all others centred. The miracles which he performed, proved him to be the Messiah, and to be invested with the right to confer the kingdom upon the nation and establish it over them, if they would receive him. And most of his public acts and declarations, had respect to the office of preaching this kingdom. But while he laboured assiduously and with the most affectionate solicitude to prevail upon the nation to receive him and his kingdom, he knew from the beginning what would be the result of his ministry, both to the Jewish nation and to the world at large, and many of his declarations proceed upon the assumption of the foreseen event. The passage we have been considering contains an example of both kinds. Having the event of his ministry in view, he told the Pharisees, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation,” and then he adds, “the kingdom of God has come.”

* Such texts as Isaiah 49: 23—52: 15—60: 3, 10, 11, 16—62: 2. Ps. 72: 9, 10, 11—138: 4. Rev. 21: 21, 26, are unfulfilled prophecy. They are descriptive of the condition of things in the “world to come,”—the millennial dispensation or the yet future kingdom of God. Yet Cornelius a Lapide, (in 2 Thess. 2: 4,) when speaking of the honour shewn to the chief pontiff of the Roman church (justifying it) says, “Denique hunc honorem et reverentiam, Ecclesiæ in suo capite Pontifici à regibus esse deferendum, prædixit Isaias, cap. 49: 23.” “And kings shall be thy nursing fathers and queens thy nursing mothers, they shall bow down to thee with their face towards the earth and lick up the dust of thy feet.” Those Protestants who agree in assigning these prophecies to the present dispensation, give a great handle to the Romanists: for surely if any church has received such honours, or is likely to receive such honours as these from the kings of the earth, it is the Roman church.

The last expression he added by virtue of his office as a preacher of the kingdom, and virtually it was a renewed offer of that kingdom. Many passages may be cited in which the Lord predicts his own sufferings and death, (Matth. 20: 17, 20—21: 33, 41. John 12: 32, 34,) sometimes in plain language, sometimes by way of parable. Now how can such passages be reconciled with the opinion, that Christ came in the flesh to offer and to establish his glorious kingdom over Israel? The answer which the foregoing discussion suggests is, that the offers of the kingdom were made in fulfilment of the promise which God had made to the fathers of that nation. He did not dispense himself (if we may so speak) from making the offer on the ground of the foreseen rejection of the kingdom by the nation: While on the other hand, the predictions which Christ made of his own sufferings, and death, and those passages which purport that he came to suffer, proceed upon the ground of the foreseen infidelity of the nation. We may take the same distinction, in respect to many of the prophecies of the Old Testament, but the subject is too large to be developed in this place.

There was a necessity that Christ should suffer, before he should enter into his glory. In fact we cannot conceive, how the promises could have been performed to the fathers and the pious dead of that nation, without a resurrection. Nor can we see how there could be a resurrection, except Christ had died and had become the first fruits, (1 Cor. 15: 23.) May we not say then, it was not more certain that numbers of the pious of former generations of that nation had died, than that the generation to whom the Lord Jesus Christ went, would reject him? Does not Peter say as much in Acts 2: 23? "Him being delivered by the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge* of God, ye have taken, and *with wicked hands* have crucified and slain." See John 3: 14. Yet for all that, Christ offered the kingdom to the Jewish nation, just as though it were not certain they would reject it, while the nation, though it was certain they would reject it, were guilty in doing so, and drew down upon themselves the severe and long continued judgments of God. On the other hand: when advert- ing to the issue and event of his ministry among the Jews, and its consequences to them as a nation, as well as to the world, the Lord Jesus Christ spoke of these as equally within the design of his incarnation, and as the very means which the infinite wisdom of God had provided for the extirpation of sin, and the renovation of the world and its restoration to the forfeited favour of God. See note A. at the end of this essay.

6. If these views are agreeable to the scriptures, they prove

that the great salvation offered to us in the gospel of the kingdom of Jesus Christ our Lord, will not be attained by the whole human family. We have seen that this gospel was, at the first, confined to one nation. Had that nation accepted it, they would have become the saved nation, and the sole inheritors of the blessings of the kingdom, while upon the kingdoms represented by the image, (see Dan. 2,) would have fallen the severe judgments of God. But Israel, according to the flesh, as a nation, rejected the kingdom, and thereby lost it, and while some received Christ, and received from him power to become sons of God, John 1: 12, multitudes died in their sins, of whom we can entertain less hope, than of the heathens who never despised so great privileges, Matth. 12: 41, 42—22: 13 to 36—11: 20, 23. Luke 10: 13, 16. Rom. 9: 27—11: 2, 4. 1 Thess. 2: 14, 16. Rev. 7: 3, 9. But the nation having rejected the kingdom, a new dispensation was opened for the gathering of a people who, through the influences of the Holy Spirit, shall be made willing to receive Christ and his kingdom, when he shall come again. This substituted people are called in Gal. 6: 16, “the Israel of God.” The word *Israel*, is a name of *national* distinction, and can never be understood to signify the whole human race. Yet none but the Israel of God will inherit this kingdom, for they only will inherit the promise made to Israel, according to the flesh in Exod. 19: 5, 6, *viz.* that they shall be a *peculiar* people, which certainly implies that there will be other people who shall have no part in these privileges.

7. Finally, we may observe a difference between the rejection of the Lord Jesus and his kingdom, by the Jews as a nation, when he came to them personally, and the rejection of him and his kingdom by sinners under this economy of the Spirit. The voluntary, and guilty rejection of the Lord Jesus by the Jewish nation, was an event which lay in the *train of means* appointed for the redemption and salvation of the lost race of Adam. No nation ever before or since were placed in such a position, or under such momentous responsibilities, as were the Jews of that generation to whom the kingdom was (not prophesied of, *as future*, but) preached *as come*. While the Jews sinned awfully in crucifying the Lord of Glory, his sufferings and death caused by that sin, were an ample provision for its atonement and pardon. Our blessed Lord while on the cross prayed for them, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” And this may help to explain why the sins they committed against the person of the Son of Man, could be forgiven, while the sins which they afterwards committed against the Holy Ghost, could not be

forgiven. But the rejection of Christ by sinners now, (during this dispensation of the Holy Spirit,) does not lie in *the train of means*, leading to the atonement. If Christ be rejected now, it is not followed by an act of atonement; and though from the identity of its nature, with the sin of the Jews, who rejected him in person, it is called by the apostle (Heb. 6: 6) crucifying him afresh, yet God has provided no way in which it can be pardoned. It does not effect that which atones for it. There remaineth not to us, (if we crucify the Lord afresh, as there remained to the Jews who rejected him in the flesh, and delivered him to the Gentiles,) a (*βορῆ*) sacrifice for the sin, but the next great event (since the death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord) in God's arrangement, is a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation at the second advent of the Lord, when he shall come without sin unto the salvation of those who look for him and to establish his kingdom on the ruins of every hostile power.

NOTE A, TO PAGE 59.

In order to appreciate this remark, the reader should separate (at least in his own mind) under distinct heads, the *public* and the *private* teachings and actings of the Lord Jesus. There is a marked distinction between these different portions of the gospels. To the multitudes he spoke in parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them, Matth. 13: 34, but when alone with his disciples he expounded all things unto them, Mark 4: 34. Luke 8: 10. To his disciples in private, he predicted his own rejection and crucifixion in plain terms, Luke 18: 31, 34—9: 22, but to the people in public he announced the event by an allegory, John 2: 19. The destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, and the dispersion of the Jews, he foretold to his disciples privately, with great minuteness, at the close of his public ministry in the prophecy on the Mount, (Matth. 24. Mark 13. Luke 21,) but the same event he had foretold to the people publicly only by parables, or in general terms, Matth. 21: 33, 43—22: 1—7—23: 38. Luke 13: 35—20: 16—19: 43, 44. When Peter in private confessed him to be the Christ of God, the Lord strictly charged them to tell no man that thing, Luke 9: 21. Mark 8: 30. Even some of his miracles which were done privately he did not allow to be published, Mark 7: 36—8: 26. Luke 8: 56. The transfiguration was a miraculous display of the glory of Christ, which only three of the disciples were allowed to witness, and they were strictly enjoined not to tell any one of it, till the Son of Man should be risen from the dead, Mark 9: 9. Matth. 17: 9. See Luke 9: 36. Compare also the instruction which was privately given to Nicodemus, concerning the kingdom of God, with the answer given to the Pharisees in Luke 17: 20, 21, which we have been considering, or with any public instruction which he gave concerning the kingdom of Heaven. In the conversation with Nicodemus, Christ said that which, by necessary implication, deprived that nation of the very kingdom he went about publicly preaching. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." The nation must

be newly created before they could enter the kingdom he was preaching. He declared to this Pharisee his own rejection and crucifixion by applying to himself the type of the serpent, which Moses lifted up, John 3: 14. In vain do we search for declarations as plain as these on these subjects in his public ministrations. Another remarkable instance, is the conversation with the woman of Samaria. This was properly a private or (if we may so say) extra-official teaching. The reader may perhaps require a proof of this. If so, let him recollect that Christ was the minister of the circumcision, Rom. 15: 8. He forebade his disciples to enter any city of the Samaritans—he confined them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matth. 10: 5, 6. He declared he was not sent, save only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matth. 15: 24. Of course his office as a minister of the circumcision did not call him into Samaria, and hence John takes care to tell us, that he did not go there except by a sort of necessity. He *must needs* go through it, John 4: 4. Of course what he said to this woman, was not in the official character of the minister of the circumcision, but was a private instruction, given by the way on his journey from Judea to Galilee. Yet in this private extra-official teaching, he declares plainly that the temple worship at Jerusalem would soon cease, and a period (*οργη*) or economy would ensue in which spiritual worship would be rendered to God acceptably in other places besides Jerusalem or Samaria. Now what we wish the reader to remark is this, that in the various private instructions of our Lord, he gives much more distinct intimations of the issue of the Jewish economy, and much clearer intimations of the future, than he did in his public official teaching in the temple, and elsewhere to the scribes, pharisees, lawyers and the multitudes. The reader is desired to search the four gospels, and see whether the fact is not so. How then is it to be accounted for?—and how do the views expressed in these essays, help to explain this fact? Why thus: The Lord Jesus went officially to that nation, and offered to them the promised kingdom. He exhibited sufficient proofs of his Messiahship, to convince the nation of his rightful claim to that character, if their hearts had been right—and proofs sufficient to fix upon the nation guilt in rejecting him. But they were not such proofs as would command the assent of the mind against the inclination of the heart. Now, it is easy to conceive, that the Lord Jesus Christ could have made such exhibitions of his glory and his power, as would have stifled the suggestions of their evil hearts, and secured an outward national acceptance of his person, without a renewal of their natures, but without which they could not see or enter his kingdom. Take for example, the transfiguration. Had the Lord Jesus been transfigured in Jerusalem, at a great festival, upon the pinnacle of the temple, what would not its effect have been upon the minds of people and rulers? Yet it was not sufficient to get the assent of their minds; the renewal of their hearts was necessary. The miracles, therefore, as well as the public instructions of the Lord Jesus, were not arbitrarily given or performed, but all were divinely appointed—the kind of instruction, as well as the quantity of it—and the kind of miracles, as well as their number—and all of them suited to the end designed. Our Lord declared explicitly of his public teaching, that he said nothing of himself, and did nothing of himself, but all as he was directed by the Father, John 8: 28—7: 17—that his works were sufficient to convince them of sin, because they were such as no other man ever did, John 15: 22, 24. They were such as were especially appropriate to prove him, not merely a teacher sent from God, as Nicodemus acknowledged him to be, (John 3: 2,) but *the Messiah, that prophet king* whom they expected, John 6: 14, 15. The appropriateness of his miracles to prove him not merely a prophet or teacher come from God, may be inferred from the answer to John, when he sent to inquire, “art thou (*ο ερχομενος*) *the coming one,*” the Messiah, “or should we expect another.” The answer is a reference to his miracles; the import of the answer was, that he was the Messiah, Matth. 11: 3, 6. Yet if these miracles might as well be expected from any other prophet or teacher come from God, as from Messiah, how could John determine from these miracles whether he was the Messiah or not? While, therefore, the public teaching and miracles of Christ, were given according to the Divine purpose, and in such measure as would fix guilt upon the nation in rejecting Christ,

and were limited to that measure and end, his private instructions to his disciples and to others, who approached him with a teachable Spirit, extended to matters which, if we may so express it, were not appropriate to his official relations to the nation as such. The place we have undertaken to explain, when compared with the instruction given to Nicodemus, affords an illustration of what we mean. The Pharisees asked our Lord a question concerning the *time* of the coming of the kingdom of God. He does not enter into a discourse concerning its nature, or the preparation of heart, which are requisite to enter the kingdom. He tells them nothing concerning his crucifixion or of his being lifted up; but answers their question fully and plainly, as we have seen. Yet he adds, (still in his character of a public teacher,) "But indeed the kingdom of God has come to you." It may be supposed that the verses following this answer, are at variance with this suggestion, inasmuch as they enter with some detail in the events which were soon to follow. But although recorded by Luke, as if this instruction to the disciples followed immediately upon the answer to the Pharisees, we are not obliged to suppose that it was uttered in their presence or hearing. In fact, the instruction is so similar to that which was given privately to the disciples or some of them on the Mount of Olives, it seems hardly probable, that the portion of the 17th chapter which follows verse 21, (and proceeding as far as the 8th verse of the 18th chapter,) was delivered publicly or in the hearing of any but the disciples. Indeed Luke records it as said to the *disciples*, (see 17: 22,) *not as said* to the Pharisees. We have another observation: The most striking peculiarity of the gospel of John, in the view of the writer is, that it contains in a far greater proportion than the other gospels, these private instructions of our Lord. In the first four chapters but little is recorded of his public teaching, and nothing of that nature occurs after the 50th verse of the 12th chapter. It is commonly supposed this gospel was written about the year 86 or 94—it is sufficient for the present purpose to say, it was written the last of all, and after the gospel had been extensively promulgated throughout the Roman empire. It was written at a time when, by the demonstrations of the Spirit, no one could be at a loss to understand what (Nicodemus found it impossible to conceive) our Lord meant by the new birth—the birth of water and of Spirit—it was written after the temple worship had ceased, and the (*αἰς*) period or dispensation of Spiritual worship had commenced among the nations, according to the prediction of the Lord to the woman of Samaria. The Comforter had come, and his office and power were understood and felt in his operations, not within the limits of Judea alone, but wherever the gospel had been carried, John 15: 8. Now these more private matters of instruction, had a stronger—a plainer and a more important bearing on the Gentile economy, than any which were contained in his public official discourses to the Jewish people, and hence the chief reason perhaps for writing this gospel. It was important that Christians, who saw these wonderful works of the Spirit, and their bearing upon the world at large, should know that they had been distinctly foretold by our Lord during his personal ministry. The public preaching of Jesus to the Jews as a people, belonged not to the present economy, but to the Levitical. Being exclusively addressed to Jews, the Gentiles became interested in it subsequently, and only incidentally, as in many other things pertaining to the Levitical dispensation. For example when He began to preach, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the gospel," he announced an event, and urged a duty with which that nation was chiefly concerned. Had the nation, as such, believed the gospel, and received the kingdom, they would have continued to be, as we have shewn, the elect nation; Gentiles could not have shared in the blessings which he then offered exclusively to the Jews. Let us not be misunderstood. We do not deny, but rather affirm, that in our Lord's public teaching, many truths are stated, which as much concern the Gentiles as they did the Jews to whom they were *primarily* addressed. Thus when he tells the Jews, "no man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him," he announces a universal truth, as interesting to us Gentiles as it was to the Jews. As originally used and applied (John 6: 44 and context) *in a public discourse* to the Jews, it intimated that they could not repent and receive the gospel and the kingdom, which he was then engaged

in preaching, without Divine assistance, and therefore they would lose that kingdom, unless the Father interposed and inclined the nation as such to receive him. Events have shewn (and the scriptures predicted them) that it was not the purpose of God thus to interpose in behalf of that nation; but to leave them to themselves; to let them stumble and fall, in order that he might open a new economy in which Gentiles should share with Jews. Yet observe how much more minute is the instruction on this head to Nicodemus, and how much more plainly he refers to this present economy in his private conversation with a *stranger* (Luke 17: 18) in Samaria, than he does in his public discourses to the Jews. The fact, that in these private discourses our Lord more frequently anticipates the issue of his public ministrations to that nation—that he lifts the veil more frequently, and shews more clearly to private inquirers, coming events, as well as the nature of the new dispensation which was to follow his ascension, as well as the means by which it would be carried on, give a peculiar value to these private discourses, owing to their appropriateness to the present dispensation; and this fact supplies perhaps, as has been suggested, one of the chief motives for writing the gospel of John. But we shall not pursue these observations any farther. What has been said, may serve as hints to classify the contents of the gospels, with reference to their bearing respectively on the ministry of the circumcision and the dispensation of the Spirit. They may also serve to point out the chief distinction between the gospels and the Epistles of the N. T. We conclude this diffusive note, by recalling the reader's attention to the point which these observations were intended to illustrate, *viz:* that the doctrine advocated in these essays, enables us better to understand the preaching of our Lord to the Jews. His public official teaching and preaching of the kingdom to the *Jewish nation as such*, urging their acceptance of it, and of him as their Messiah, and of his miracles which were wrought for the purpose of inclining the nation to close in with his offer, had reference primarily to an object which failed, and which he foresaw would fail. Yet the failure was not so distinctly announced by him in his public discourses, as it was in his private intercourse with his disciples and others, nor was it publicly announced even in parables, till near the close of his ministry. Whereas privately that event was told by our Lord at least inferentially from the beginning of his ministry, John 3: 14, 3, 5.

ESSAY V.

“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.”

Tindal, the author of the infidel work called “Christianity as Old as the Creation,” makes the following remarks upon the prophecies. “As to the prophecies in the Old Testament I must confess my ignorance, that I do not understand them As to those prophecies, if they may be so called, in the New Testament, relating to the second coming of Christ and the end of the world, the best interpreters and commentators own the apostles themselves were grossly mistaken, there scarce being an epistle but where they foretell that those times they wrote in were *tempora novissima* (the last times), and the then age the last age, and those days the

last days, and that the end of the world was nigh, and the coming of Christ at hand, as is plain, among other texts, from 1 Cor. 10: 11. Rom. 13: 11, 12. Heb. 9: 26. James 5: 7, 8. 1 John 2: 18. 2 Pet. 3: 12, 13; and they do not assert this as a mere matter of speculation, but build motives and arguments upon it to excite people to the practice of piety and all good works." He then cites the following passages as examples and proofs of these positions, Phil. 4: 5. Heb. 10: 24, 25. 1 Pet. 4: 7, 8. 1 Cor. 7: 29. 2 Pet. 3: 11, 12. 1 Tim. 6: 13, 14. 1 Cor. 11: 26. 1 Thess. 4: 15, 16, 17. In another place this author limits or qualifies the saying of our Lord (Matth. 24: 36) that, "of that day and that hour, knoweth no man, no not the angels of Heaven, but my Father only;" by the assertion in verse 33d, that "this generation shall not pass away till all those things be fulfilled," so that he would have us to understand our Lord as saying that, though the day and the hour of his advent was unknown, yet it would be within the life-time of the men then living. From the whole he infers that "if most of the apostles upon what motives soever were mistaken in a matter of this consequence, how can we be absolutely certain that any one of them may not be mistaken in any other matter? If they were not inspired in what they said in their writings, concerning the then coming of Christ, how could they be inspired in those arguments they build on a foundation, far from being so? If they thought their times were the last, no direction they gave could be intended to reach further than their own times."

This is an insidious argument, but it rests upon a false interpretation of the scriptures. No deist can, consistently with his own principles, deny that God has a right to determine how far and in what way he will reveal himself and his purposes to men. None can believe for a moment, that a Being of infinite attributes—the God whom we adore—is under an obligation to make known to men in their present state, all His purposes. To receive such knowledge, would require an infinite expansion of the human faculties, and in fact, the exaltation of man in knowledge infinitely above the highest order of finite beings. Nor can any reasonable mind believe, that God is under obligation to reveal to men such and so many of his purposes as they can comprehend. The deist must admit that God in these and all other respects, is rightfully a sovereign—and that he may give or withhold, as seemeth good to him. Such at least is the character which the holy scriptures ascribe to God, and that is all that we need assume in reply to an argument which rests upon the allegation

that the scriptures do not contain a full declaration of all that God, in his providence, has accomplished.

Now the scriptures teach us, that God has purposed that the Lord Jesus Christ shall at *some time* return to this earth. Thus much is revealed beforehand. They also teach that the time of his second coming, though purposed immutably, shall never be revealed to angels or men, except by the event itself, Matth. 24: 36. Mark 13: 32. Luke 21: 34. Acts 1: 7. The first of these revelations furnishes the ground of a rational and confident expectation of the event, while the second, forbids every man from saying or believing, that *it may not* occur in his own life-time. Now these were the revelations which were given to the apostles, and this (generally stated) was the mode in which (as it appears to some persons) they applied them. A prophet is no more than any other man, in respect to things which God *does not reveal* to him: but as believers, having immortal interests depending on these truths, the apostles would be justified in using the revelations actually made, as motives for their own conduct, and to influence the conduct of others. They could not be said to be *mistaken* in their character of prophets, because they did not foreknow things not revealed to them, nor can they with justice be said to have been mistaken as men, or as Christian teachers, because they inferred from the absolute uncertainty of the time of the coming of an absolutely certain event, that it might come to pass in their life-time. For let it be supposed that any of the apostles had been inspired to declare, that the second coming of Christ would not occur till after the lapse of many (10, 20 or 30) centuries, such a revelation would so far forth put the times and the seasons out of the power exclusively of the Father, which it was his purpose, in the most absolute way, to retain exclusively within his power. For the doctrine is, that neither men nor angels shall be inspired to tell when the event *shall not be*, any more than to declare when it *shall be*, but for aught that either can know, it may be indefinitely near. Let it be admitted then, that the conclusion from these two doctrines is just and rational; that for any thing the apostles could certainly know, the second advent of Christ *might* have taken place in their life-time, and we have a motive of the greatest power in producing personal vigilance and holiness. For the possibility (judged of according to sound reason) is of infinite moment to the individual.

But this is not stating the argument in its full force. It must be admitted, that a teacher sent of God, to instruct men, is bound to declare the message with which he is charged. Now if it should be found that the Lord Jesus Christ himself,

urged this ignorance of men of the time of his second coming as a motive to personal watchfulness, and if he sent the apostles to teach mankind the same doctrines, which he had taught them, and urge those doctrines by the same motives, surely their obedience to their master in executing their commission, cannot be alleged as a proof, that they were grossly mistaken in regard to the time of the second coming of Christ, (Matth. 28: 20.) While, therefore, it is conceded that the apostles constantly appealed to the second coming of Christ, not as a "mere speculation, but to build motives and arguments upon it to excite the people to the practice of piety and all good works," we deny that they were *grossly mistaken*, or that they reasoned fallaciously, or deceived others, or did that which was at all inconsistent with their claim to be inspired teachers. The event does not prove that they were mistaken, for they never taught that the day of Christ would *certainly come* in their life-time. They did but derive motives from an event designedly left in absolute uncertainty by the spirit of God, for the very use which they made of it;—nay more, they did but imitate the example and obey the express commands of the Lord Jesus Christ, (Matth. 24: 48, 51. Luke 18: 8—21: 35.) Let us suppose for a moment, that the ministers of the gospel of the nineteenth century, were one and all to preach the same doctrine which this infidel writer says the apostles taught, and that, "not as a speculation, but to build motives and arguments upon it, to excite people to piety and all good works," might not the men who shall live in the twentieth century of this present dispensation, with equal reason, charge them with being grossly mistaken? But this question itself assumes what no man or angel knows; for who, of the generation now on earth, knows with certainty that God will continue this present dispensation, or the world in its present condition, yet another century? Who can say how long he will restrain his wrath against the abominations of wicked men? Who can say how long it will be, before he shall have accomplished the number of his elect? Who can say that the advent will be delayed a day, or an hour after the last of God's elect shall be born and born again? Under the Old Testament economy, the chosen people of God had divine assurance that their nation should be preserved until the coming of the Messiah. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come," Gen. 49: 10. The same promise was involved in the words of Isaiah to Ahaz, Isa. 7: 1, 16. Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, were besieging Jerusalem. The prophet was commanded to bid Ahaz to take courage, for the design of these

confederates should not succeed: Ahaz doubted, and to remove the doubt, he was commanded to ask a sign. He refused to do so. The prophet replied, the Lord himself shall give you a sign: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," a promise which was not fulfilled till nearly seven hundred years afterwards, by which, it was manifest that the house of David should not be destroyed, or Jerusalem come under the power of Damascus, before the birth of the Messiah. Ahaz, therefore, had nothing to fear from the besieging enemies, either for Jerusalem or the house of David, inasmuch as the Messiah was to arise from that house. Hence this promise was a sign, (or rather a certain proof,) that those enemies should not prevail. Ahaz did not indeed know how long it would be until the birth of the Messiah; but afterwards during the captivity, the angel Gabriel was commissioned to inform Daniel of the times determined for that purpose, Dan. 9: 24. These promises involved the continuance of this (σχημα του κοσμου) order of things, until the seed should come, who should bruise the serpent's head. So since the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is the covenant of God in Christ alone, which prolongs the present order of things. God has made no covenant with the world, that he will spare it a day. He is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, 2 Pet. 3: 9. So far from it, he continually restrains his wrath against it for the sake of his elect—such is the meaning of 2 Pet. 3: 9, (See Oecumenius cited by Macknight,) and of Luke 18: 7. The covenant of God, that Christ shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, must be fulfilled. Time must, therefore, be given that all those given to Christ should be brought to repentance under the administration of the Spirit. In other words, as before the coming of Christ, the house of David must be preserved till the promised seed should come; so now, since the coming of Christ, the present order of things must be preserved, not because God is well pleased with it, but because the mystical body of Christ must be completed—just as Sodom was spared a short space, not for Sodom's sake, but for the sake of Lot, to whom the angel said, "Haste thee, escape thither, (to Zoar,) for I can do nothing till thou be come thither," Gen. 19: 22. Now if it be true that the number given to Christ is no where revealed, nor the number of generations out of which they are to be gathered, revealed, could the apostles know that the exigencies of the covenant of grace might not be satisfied out of their own generation? Could any Christian of any subsequent age, assuredly know, that the mystical body of Christ would require a larger number than it was the purpose of God to call from his own

generation? Can any man, now alive, be assured that ten centuries and more are still requisite to this end, seeing that it depends on the secret purpose of God? In this sense—as was observed in a former essay—the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. This spiritual building is concealed from the eyes of men. They cannot discern its progress, so as to mark its approximation towards (or rather how much it lacks of) completion. Yet they know that it has long been in progress, that it is now in progress, that it is every day drawing nearer to its completion. But *when* it will be completed, or after *what interval* it will be completed, was not revealed to the apostles, nor has it been revealed to us, although the Providence of God has made us, who now live, certain of many things of which all former ages were ignorant. But to resume. It is profanely absurd to argue that a true prophet must be omniscient. No deist can, without renouncing all reason, deny that God can inspire a man *certainly* to foretell *one* single event without more. The Bible itself purports to be a revelation, which has been made in many parts, (Heb. 1: 1,) and no Christian supposes that any prophet was inspired to foretell more than the part committed to him.

But waving these general considerations, the reader is requested to consider attentively the instructions and exhortations of the Lord Jesus Christ upon this point. The following passages may be selected, Matth. 24: 36. Mark 13: 32. Acts 1: 7. (Comp. Dan. 12: 8, 9.) Matth. 25: 6. Luke 17: 26, &c. —21: 34, 35. (Comp. 1 Thess. 5: 2, 3.) It is remarkable that (according to Mark 13: 32) our Lord declared that the *Son knoweth not* the day of his second advent. This passage has been perverted by the Socinians. Our Lord declared that he taught nothing except what was committed to him by his Father to teach. In his office of prophet, he did not transcend his commission, any more than did any of the holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God. This passage, therefore, means only that it was not an event which was committed to him in his prophetic character to reveal. It remained in the Father's power, Acts 1: 7. Our Lord, therefore, in perfect consistency urged on his immediate disciples and his disciples of every age since, the duty of personal watchfulness, for that event which certainly would come, and which (for ought that men could ever know) might come in their day—an event which would come suddenly and unexpectedly upon those who should witness its awful splendour and glories. His example in this respect, had the force of a precept to his apostles.*

* David Levi, a learned Jew, speaking of those Christian writers who

There is a point of instruction in Luke 12: 41, which is not commonly noticed. Our Lord had been enforcing on the disciples, the duty of watchfulness, "Let your loins be girded, and your lights burning, (alluding, perhaps, to the night of the exodus from Egypt, Exod. 12: 11, 42,) and ye yourselves as men that wait for their Lord, &c. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching, &c. And if he shall come in the *second* watch, or in the *third* watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants," &c. But Peter said, Lord speakest thou this parable *unto us* or even unto *all*. The object of Peter was to obtain a discriminating answer. Dost thou mean by servants *us*, the apostles, or dost thou intend others. The question involved the *time* of the *second advent*, a point upon which (as has been said) our Lord never gave any information by which even an approximation could be made to it. Had our Lord said that this parable was applicable to them *exclusively* of others, they would have inferred that his coming would take place in their life-time; had he said it did not apply to them personally, but to others, they would have inferred that the advent of which he spoke, would not occur in their life-time. But this event was not to be revealed within these limits or any other. He replies, by asking a question, which he *does* answer, and which contained all the information which Peter needed. "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, &c., he is that blessed servant whom his Lord when he cometh, (*ex. gr.* coming, or at his coming, be that when it may,) shall find so doing." This answer

acknowledge that the prophecies concerning the Messiah are to be understood in their most literal, obvious sense, says that "they cannot produce one single, clear, unequivocal prophecy from the Old Testament which foretells a twofold coming of one and the same person as the Messiah: and that too, at the distance of such a number of years as have already elapsed from the supposed period of his being upon earth," Levi's Dissert., vol. i. p. 120. To the first part of this observation, it may be replied, that the scriptures of the O. T. do in several places plainly intimate a twofold advent of one and the same person, as Messiah—an advent, *namely*, of meekness and humility, (as in Is. 42: 1-8,) at which he should be rejected and cut off, (Is. 55. Dan. 9: 26,) and an advent of glory and power, when he will destroy his enemies, Is. 42: 13, et seq. Dan. 7: 13, 14. To the second part of this observation, it may be replied, that if the scriptures of the O. T. did, in fact, reveal two distinct advents of the Messiah, separated by an interval (also defined and revealed) of 1800 years or more, they would not be in accordance with the representations of the New Testament, which represents the advent always as near, ("Maran-atha *Domini noster venit* tessera est ecclesie, summam spei Christiane, his verbis, comprehendens.") This observation of Levi proves that one of his objections against the gospel, is founded upon a misconception of what it teaches, and like that of Tindal's before mentioned, was suggested to him by Christian writers. If it were possible to divest the scriptures of the false glosses with which they have been invested by those who profess to receive them, and to present them in the simplicity of their truths, infidelity would be deprived of many of its strongest arguments.

furnished a motive for watchfulness to Peter, and at the same time withheld that information, which the purpose of God has studiously concealed. The appositeness of this reply displays Divine Wisdom. It is one of those nice congruities which commonly escape our notice, and which shows that no artifice could ever have contrived the history or the instructions contained in the gospel.

After the resurrection, our Lord intimated to Peter obscurely, that he should suffer death before the second coming of Christ, (John 21: 18,) "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself," &c. John, who wrote his gospel long after Peter's death, interpreted the expression, "This he said, signifying by what death," &c. John 21: 19. But in regard to John, when Peter inquired as to his end, our Lord replied hypothetically, affirming nothing inconsistent with the event of his surviving until the return of his Lord. The disciples converted (it seems) this hypothetical expression, "*if* I will that he remain till I come," into an assertion that he should remain; yet, says John, "Jesus said not, he shall not die, but *if* I will that he tarry till I come," &c. Now it cannot be supposed that the brethren expected that John would live 1800 years or more on earth, as we know must have been the fact, if the promise had been that he should survive until the second advent of Christ. Rather, they must have supposed that the second advent would take place within a period which, at the utmost, should not greatly exceed the ordinary period of the life of a man. Had they foreseen, what we may now look back upon, it is not probable that they would have committed the mistake, which the Evangelist here corrects. The Holy Spirit saw fit to record with precision,* both the

* John wrote his gospel (according to the opinion of the ancients), at a very advanced age, after his return from Patmos to Ephesus. If this opinion be correct, as it undoubtedly is, it was written long after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Yet John takes pains to correct this mistake at that late day, lest after his death, it might be made use of by ignorant or malicious men, to the prejudice of the truth. But if the coming intended was a Providential coming to destroy Jerusalem, (as some have supposed,) why should he take pains to correct this saying of the brethren, which (according to that hypothesis) had been proved by events to be according to the truth? Still more absurd is the opinion which was once, and perhaps is now, entertained by many, that this apostle did not die at all; for if such was to be the fact, why should John say that "Jesus said not unto him he shall not die." If it was the Saviour's purpose that John should not die, either by violence or by a natural death, the brethren spread abroad a *true saying*, and whether it could be gathered from the Saviour's words or not, would not be likely to do harm. The only natural explanation is that above given, "Jesus spoke of his coming under the condition of its *possible nearness*." This was his manner of referring to it. Even when he represents this dispensation by the absence of a man travelling into a far country, and returning after a *long time*, (as in Matth. 25: 14, 19,) the events prefigured all fall within the period of a *man's* life, and even less; for a *long journey*, requiring a *long absence*, considered

words of our Lord, and the erroneous interpretation which was put upon them by the brethren. So that this passage is not only a proof of the belief of the first Christians, but another example of the indefiniteness in which the time of the second advent is left, as has been already stated.

Both Peter (2 Eph. 1: 13) and Paul, (2 Tim. 4: 6,) towards the close of their career, were informed of their demise, yet Paul, at a previous time (in 2 Cor. 5: 2) spoke of the event, of his being clothed upon without being unclothed, (Comp. 1 Thess. 4: 17. Phil. 3: 21,) as an object of hope, and perhaps even of expectation, though without any assurance of its certainty.*

If the foregoing observations are well founded, they disprove the allegations of infidels that the apostles were mistaken. God has revealed such truths as his infinite wisdom saw best adapted to the scheme of redemption. To deny that his prophets and apostles were inspired, because they were ignorant of those things, which God has declared he will not reveal, is in effect to deny God's right to establish such a scheme as is contained in the Bible. To deny that the apostles "might build motives and arguments," such as our reason

relatively to the ordinary course of human employments, would be satisfied by supposing it to occupy a few years. Well then, if the reader will admit that our Lord still continued to speak of his return as an event *possibly* near, the intimation that John might *possibly* live till he should come, by no means involved the idea that he would survive what they might have considered a ripe old age. And as they could predict neither the day of the Lord's coming, nor the day of John's death, nor know that either was remote, they had no reason to say, nor could they say, the latter event *must* occur before the former. Events, however, have made the matter clear, and Providence has revealed many things to us which prophecy did not foretell to the first Christians.

* Dr. Bloomfield remarks on 1 Cor. 15: 52 (*and we shall be changed*), "the apostle here (as often) uses *α μετασχηματισμός* and speaks not in his own person, but in theirs." He then adds in a note, "considering the frequency of this figure, I think Doddridge was right in not admitting the inference so often drawn from hence, and unwarily conceded by Grotius and Rosenmuller, that the apostle expected he should live till the day of judgment." No doubt this was conceding too much. The apostle had no confident expectation, although he knew that as the day of Christ's advent was absolutely uncertain, such an event might be, for aught he knew. On 1 Thess. 4: 15, Dr. B. after referring to the annotation of Dr. Benson, gives as his own judgment, that although the words "*we who are alive*," &c. do not imply that he should live until the last day—the day of the Lord's advent—yet that he thought it *possible* the last day was so near at hand, that some then living might see it, and having no certain information he expresses himself indefinitely. And surely (to use the words of Doddridge), "an ignorance on this point, was by no means inconsistent with a knowledge of *whatever* was necessary to the preaching of the gospel." He then refers to Mark 13: 32 and 1 Cor. 15: 51. If this concession be not too much, it follows that Paul was not expecting a Spiritual millennium, previously to the advent of Christ, and indeed; the description which he gives in the 2 Thess. 2 chap. of the future, until the day of Christ, which he must be supposed to have written by inspiration, is inconsistent with any such expectation. See Appendix to this essay.

approves and sees to be just, upon revealed truths, "in order to excite men to piety and good works," when they are bound to do so, both by the precept and example of Christ, is in effect, to deny that God may exact obedience. To say that God deceives men, by exhibiting a partial view of his purposes, so as to lead them to inferences, which he will not verify, is not only blasphemous, but denies to him his sovereign right, to give or to withhold at his pleasure. If the ground of such a denial or objection consists in the constitution of man as a rational being, Paul has given the answer, by the question, "shall the thing formed, say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" If the stress of it, be rested on the partial revelation of God's purposes, it comes in direct conflict with the relation which must ever exist between creatures and their Creator; and the objection will eternally exist; for God will forever be infinite in all his attributes, and his purposes past finding out, and all creatures will be but as the small dust of the balance before Him.

These observations also show, that the system of popery, morally speaking, could not have been established, except upon the virtual or practical denial of this very doctrine, which is alleged by infidels in disproof of the inspiration of the apostles: and it is remarkable that Chillingworth has drawn an argument from the doctrine of the millenaries against the infallibility of the Roman Catholic church. It is well worth while for the reader to refer to it, (see his works, Additional Discourse V.) Chillingworth might have given a wider scope to his conclusion; for this doctrine, as will presently be shewn, concludes as strongly against, not only the whole exterior, but the entire spirit of the system of popery. Hence it is, that while most Romanists have treated the doctrine as a heresy, others feeling their traditions must fail, if Papias, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Lactantius and their cotemporaries should be denounced as heretics, endeavour to escape the dilemma, by taking a distinction between what these fathers have said in the name of the church, and have delivered as the doctrine of the church, and what they choose to consider their personal opinions and conjectures. Some of them trace the doctrine to certain passages in the Apocalypse, which they suppose these fathers misinterpreted; while others affirm, that they borrowed it from Plato. The answer given by Chillingworth to this mode of getting over the difficulty is conclusive. The fact, however, that all the fathers, whose writings have come down to us, previous to Origen, and some who were cotemporary and subsequent to him, believed this doctrine cannot be disproved. The question then, which is submitted

to the reader, is this: "Is it possible that the apostles, or any other body of pious Christians, who seriously believed that their Lord and Master *might* return during their life time, and who ardently desired, and earnestly hoped, and even expected in some degree, that He *would so return*, could have busied their hearts and minds about the pomps and vanities of popery? Is it supposable even, that they could have coveted secular power, splendid forms of worship, extended ecclesiastical jurisdiction? Let the reader take a cursory glance at the voluminous codes of canon law—note the variety of its subjects—its refined and artificial distinctions, and all those provisions which look to perpetuity; and then ask himself, "Could such things as these, engross the minds of men who seriously believed this doctrine." Look again at the episcopal palaces and cathedrals, whose foundations were laid deep, and strong, and with manifest design to survive the effect of ages—Look also at their rich endowments and funded revenues; ample enough to send the gospel into all nations, if they had been so employed—are not these things so many practical denials of the doctrine in question?*

* The evil influence of this departure from the faith once delivered to the saints, is not confined to the Papal church. We may see it not only in the purest of the Protestant churches, but in the families of truly pious Christians. If every pious head of a family lived continually under the influence of the blessed hope of the glorious appearing of the Saviour in his own time, we should not see the children of the church so much like the children of those who do not profess godliness. Consider what would be the conduct of a man, who really believed his Lord *might* come before his death, and translate him, as the apostle teaches the saints will be, who shall live at the coming of our Lord. Examine the details of human employment, desire, and expectation, and put the question upon each particular; what would be the influence of this doctrine upon such a man in respect to it? Would he be greedy of wealth? Would he amass it by oppression or extortion? Would he hoard it? Would he entail his estates? Would he covet worldly distinctions? Would he over-estimate present ease? Would he be indifferent to the immediate conversion of his children and near relatives? Would he say to himself, they are young, there is time enough yet to labour with them; my Lord will certainly delay his coming not only till they have grown old, but for centuries after they are dead? Then consider again, what effect the conversation, conduct, hopes, expectations, employments and plans of such a parent would have upon the education and the character of his children. Is a child trained in the way he should go, who reads in every thing about him, the sentiment, "My Lord delayeth his coming," "My Lord certainly will not come for a thousand years yet." In fact, most children (those even of pious parents) are educated upon the principle, or the assumed certainty, that all things will continue as they are and have been, for a long time to come. Nay, even the operations of the church for the promotion of piety, are often founded on the same idea. How often it is, that money is given with the direction to fund the principal, while the interest only shall be expended in the promotion of some pious object. Do not such directions say plainly, my Lord delayeth his coming for a long time to come? Hence it is that the children of religious teachers, from whom the world naturally expects the best examples of religious training, engage almost, if not quite as often as others do, and with as great ardour, in the pursuit of gain and worldly honour. This is one of the effects of that falling away, predicted by Paul, which is not con-

The first Christians sold their possessions, Acts 2: 45. They believed, it is true, that Jerusalem, the place where their possessions were, would soon be destroyed. But Christians who lived in other parts of the Roman empire, though they knew not that the day of Christ would certainly come in their time, yet not knowing that it would not come in their life time, and believing that it was not remote, certainly would lightly esteem those things which the papal power has always been chiefly solicitous to gain and perpetuate to itself. The man who can say in imitation of his Lord and Master, "My kingdom is not of this world," and who also believes it possible, his Lord may appear after a brief interval, and confer upon him a crown of righteousness, and make him a king and priest unto God, is incapable of imbibing the spirit of the papacy. There cannot be much doubt that one of the earliest corruptions of the primitive faith, was the belief that the apostles were mistaken in reference to this subject, or what in effect amounts to the same thing, that they must be understood as speaking mystically or of a spiritual and not of a personal coming. This single change in the belief of Christians, formed, as it were, a broad basis upon which the towering hierarchy of that church was builded. Ungodly men, allured by ambition, and who desired nothing less than the coming of Christ, got influence in the church, and they constructed a system, every part almost of which, speaks in language not to be misunderstood, "My Lord delayeth his coming." They disregarded what Paul said, (with reference even to the domestic relation of marriage, and with a view to dissuade from an over-estimate of any thing which pertained merely to the present condition of things.) "The fashion of the world passeth away," and also our Lord's injunction, "watch, for ye know not when the Son of Man cometh." They forget too, another saying of our Lord. "This gospel shall be preached

fined to any communion, and it is that very thing, which prepares the church as well as the world for the surprise, with which the great day will burst upon them. Those who consider this doctrine as carnal and earthly in its tendencies, could scarcely make a greater mistake. The fact is, it is too un-earthly, too spiritual to be received and lived by, as if it were true, without more grace than is given to most. It is not only a grief, but the cause of many distressing doubts and fears to some who do hope they cordially receive this doctrine, that their lives accord so little with their belief and their hopes. But one cause of their short comings (though it is no excuse) is, that the great body of those who profess faith in Christ, live by the contrary rule, practically saying "My Lord delayeth his coming." The thought will doubtless occur to some, that those who have hitherto thus judged, have, as events have shewn, judged rightly. But it should be remembered, they judged blindly, (see Mark 13: 35, 36,) and who can say that the effects of the error may not be felt in the unseen state. One thing we know, that *all* scripture is profitable, and that no error in divine things is entirely harmless, though one error may cause more detriment than another.

among all nations for a witness, and *then* shall the end be"—that is, there is to be no perpetuity or continuance after the universal promulgation of the gospel witness.

A jurisdiction, therefore, really oecumenical would be superseded *the moment it became such*. God has, however, for inscrutable reasons, permitted the change of the church at an early period, from a missionary to a sedentary character, to become the means of delaying the end. While the church was missionary, and intent upon executing the command, "Go ye into all the world," &c. Christians were not solicitous about forms, ceremonies, splendid places of worship, &c.—the tent or the open field, a private house, were the places of their labour. But when the church became sedentary—an *establishment* leaning on the arm of political power, she busied herself chiefly about building lofty cathedrals, and devising splendid ceremonies, and then the gospel ceased to spread, and large nations have ever since been left in darkness.

At the period of the reformation, the grosser corruptions of popery were, by most of the Protestant bodies, immediately cast off, and the principal doctrines of grace were vindicated from much error which had been mixed with them. Yet, some things of papal origin, pertaining to doctrine, as well as discipline, were left untouched. The consequence has been, that the effects of the great apostacy predicted by Paul in 2 Thess. 2 ch., are in some measure felt even by the purest of the Protestant churches. Luther, however, did not hold the views which are now so generally entertained relative to the millennium. In his Table Talk, ch. 2, may be found the following remarkable sentiment. "I hope the last day of Judgment is not far off. I verily persuade myself it will not be absent full three hundred years longer." Of course this reformer was not looking forward to a spiritual millennium to precede the second coming of Christ. But in Faber's Sacred Calendar of Prophecy, it is reckoned that the millennium will commence in the year A. D. 1865—that it will end in A. D. 2865, but the second advent of Christ, the literal resurrection and the day of judgment, (which he reckons a literal day,) is postponed until the year A. D. 3200.

If these views of Faber are correct, it follows that without any new revelation, the present generation is able certainly to know and positively to determine, that which none of the apostles or apostolical men, or their immediate converts, appear to have known or taught, and the reader has seen what use infidels make of this opinion. But we must hasten to a conclusion. The infidel writer referred to, is correct in his assertion, as to the frequency with which the apostles refer to

the second coming of Christ. Paul's Epistles contain at least thirty-three plain instances of such reference, if not more. James refers to the same event, once; Peter seven times; John twice in his first epistle, and several times in the Revelations. Jude refers to it also in his short epistle. He is correct too, in saying they used it as a motive to a Godly life. In fact, they urge the doctrine as a motive "to moderation and sobriety, against censorious judgment, to ministerial diligence and faithfulness—to patience and forbearance—to watchfulness—to spiritual mindedness—to general obedience and holiness—to mortification of earthly lusts—to brotherly love—to love to Christ." But his assertion that they were mistaken, is without foundation, for they taught that the time of the second coming of our Lord is so absolutely indefinite, that no man can certainly know that it may not occur in his life time; although it may be true, that from general signs (Matth. 24: 3-27. 2 Tim. 3: 1. Luke 21: 29, 31. 2 Thess. 2: 3) or aspects of the times, the men of any past age might have concluded, that the day was not *impending as it were* over their heads, (and thus much may we know,) yet they could not know, that events might not, in the providence of God, be so rapidly hastened, as to bring the advent within the compass of the age in which they lived. This doctrine cannot be disproved by any infidel, and the apostles made only that use of it, which reason and the example and express command of our Lord required.

In reply, however, to this answer, the infidel alleges that the conduct of the major part of the Christian church, at least from the age of Constantine, has contradicted this view; for practically the church has said that the apostles were mistaken, and the recourse of many Christians to a *spiritual* or *mystical* sense, will never persuade the infidel to surrender that which he perceives to be the real sense. This reply is a sort of *argumentum ad hominem*, and it is the only argument which remains to the infidel. He cannot say that the event has disproved the doctrine, for the doctrine contains nothing contrary to the event, but it is perfectly consistent with it. Nor does the *lapse of time* prove that motives to Christian conduct could not consistently with reason be derived from the ignorance men have always been under, of the time of the event; because, the argument, if it proves any thing, increases in force with the lapse of time, and according to it, the men of this century, have much stronger reasons for believing that the second coming of our Lord will not take place, during this century, than the Christians of the first century had for believing that it would not take place in their age, and yet we are much

nearer to it than they were: and those who shall live at the end of 1000 years from this time, should the present condition of things continue so long—nay, the very last generation of men previously to the second coming of Christ, (whether it be this, the next, the fiftieth or any other more remote,) will have the strongest reason of all men, (so far as mere lapse of time can be a reason,) for believing that Christ will not come to them in judgment, at the very moment, when the eternal king shall open the clouds in terrible majesty: men are very prone to reason thus; and Peter informs us, that the men of the last times will reason thus, (2 Pet. 2: 3.) And our Lord describes the last generation of men as being in eager pursuit of the concerns of this life, just as if the dispensation were but begun, (Luke 17: 26–30—21: 35.) But such reasoning involves the denial of God's government over the world, because it, in effect, denies that he will ever put an end to this condition of things, and summon the living and the dead to the judgment-seat of Christ. Infidels do indeed deny this doctrine, but they cannot disprove the truth of it by their alleged inconsistencies of the scriptures, with themselves or with God's providence. We see too that popery and deism are only different forms of unbelief—the one being a formal, and the other a virtual or practical denial of God's truth. The deist says, the Lord Jesus Christ will never come—the founders of the papacy say he will come, but not for many, many ages. They did not believe the apostles' doctrine in the *literal* sense, although it is impossible to understand it in any other sense. The only reason which they could possibly give, was that the event proved that the apostles and their immediate converts (if they had foreseen the event) would have had no reason to expect its occurrence in their life time. They sought out therefore a sense, which, while it allowed them to presume upon the forbearance of God, as though he had covenanted to spare the abominations of this world forever, in truth imputed to the apostles, the *gross mistake*, which infidelity lays to their charge.

Had the church, however, persevered in the belief of the apostles, the gospel, humanly speaking, would long since have been preached in all the world for a witness, and many who now live, might have been born in that dispensation, with which Satan will not be allowed to interfere.

APPENDIX TO ESSAY V.

The second chapter of the 2nd Epist. to the Thessalonians, when properly considered, has a very important bearing upon the subject of this essay. It shews that the prevailing opinion of a spiritual millennium before the advent of Christ, was unknown to that church and even to the apostle Paul. It is proposed in this note to submit a few hints to the reader, with a view to direct his attention to the bearings of that chapter upon the subject discussed.

The Epistle, it is supposed, was written about the year A. D. 52. This was about eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. The Thessalonians, or some of them, says Dr. Paley, had conceived the opinion, that the coming of Christ was to take place instantly,* and it was this erroneous impression the apostle designed to correct in this second chapter. But many things were to occur before the day of Christ, each of which would have been a sufficient assurance that the day they were expecting was not absolutely impending. If the reader will turn to our Lord's prophecy on the Mount, he will find that several notable things must take place, before the Son of Man would appear in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. Jerusalem must be encompassed by armies, and be taken and utterly destroyed, and the Jews must be carried captive into all nations, and Jerusalem must be trodden down by Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled, Luke 21: 20, 24, 27. Obviously then the apostle might (on the authority of this prophecy) have said to the church he was addressing: "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come except" Jerusalem be first encompassed by armies, and be taken and destroyed, and its inhabitants be carried captive into all nations, and Jerusalem be trodden down by Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. In fact, in the previous epistle the apostle referred very pointedly to this approaching calamity. Speaking of the Jews he says, "Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us: and they please not God, and are contrary to all men; for-

* ΟΤΙ ΕΠΕΣΤΗΚΕΝ nempe hoc anno, (says Grotius,) ΕΠΕΣΤΗΚΕΝ hic dicitur de re presentis ut Rom. 8: 38. 1 Cor. 3: 22. Gal. 1: 4. Heb. 9: 9.

bidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sin alway, but wrath (*εφθασε δε επ' αυτους εις τελος* with which expression compare Luke 11: 20. Matth. 12: 28) hath reached them—(has arrived at them,) to the end," *that is*, to continue-until the end. It cannot be reasonably doubted that the apostle here refers to the judgments which the Saviour predicted, would come upon the Jews, in his prophecy on the Mount. The Thessalonians, however, did not understand him, or did not duly consider this expression. Dr. Paley supposes that the passage in the first epistle, which they misinterpreted, was in the 4th chap. 15th–17th verses, and 5th chap. 4th verse. However this may be, the standing of Jerusalem, in a state of apparent peace and safety, and the existence of the Jews as a community, would have been a sure sign that the day of Christ was not impending, and, as they supposed, just ready to break upon them. Why then did he not fix upon that as a sign? It may be answered perhaps, that Jerusalem was at a great distance, and its standing and freedom from hostile invasion, would not be so proper a sign to give a Gentile church, as some other, which would come more immediately under their inspection. This may be true: but as the writings of the apostles were designed for the instruction of the whole church in all time, till the end, there was a propriety in fixing upon some sign, which would survive that generation, inasmuch as the event has shewn (although it was not known beforehand) that the day of Christ was many generations distant from them. Had the apostle fixed upon the standing of Jerusalem as the sign, it would have been sufficient to correct the error of the Thessalonian church for a time, but the sign would have ceased when that city fell. If he had selected the dispersion of the Jews among all nations, and assured them that this event must not only take place, but the Jews be gathered again into a community before the day of Christ would be revealed, the sign would have served even until now; yet we do not know that this sign would meet the exigencies of the future, or if it would, perhaps it would not have met all the designs which the Holy Spirit had in directing the apostle to fix upon the revelation of the man of sin as a sign. The scriptures plainly teach that the Jewish people will be restored. But the time of their restoration is not revealed. On the contrary, it is involved in the same uncertainty as the time of the advent. This appears by Acts 1: 6, 7, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel." And he said, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." It appears, however, that the Jews will not regain possession of

their ancient city till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, Luke 21: 24; and the expiry of the times of the Gentiles will be followed speedily by the advent. Hence the redemption of the natural posterity of Israel from their present captivity will take place during the interval, which we have reason to believe will be brief, although it may comprehend within its limits a generation, or the ordinary period of human life, or even a longer time. It has occurred to the writer, that the redemption spoken of by our Lord in Luke 21: 28, applies as well to the redemption of the Jews from their present captivity and dispersion, as to the redemption of those who believe in Jesus. 'The Lord foretells the signs which will ensue, on the expiry of the times of the Gentiles, (vs. 25, 26.) There shall be signs in the sun, in the moon, in the stars; on the earth, distress of nations, sea and waves roaring; mens' hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. These agitating and distressing times, may continue during a period of considerable duration, but when these things begin to come to pass, (says our Lord,) then look up, lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.'" Now the persons actually addressed were his disciples, but they were also Jews. They had a strong attachment to their nation. This is evident from the inquiry they addressed the Lord just before his ascension. "Lord wilt thou at this time, restore the kingdom to Israel?" The disciples, therefore, may be considered in a twofold character—as Christians, and constituting the Christian church, and as Jews. And the words cannot be confined to them *personally*, for they have long since departed this life, but the words seem to be addressed to men *living in the flesh*, and therefore they are proper to be understood as addressed to them in a representative character. As the disciples sustained the twofold character of Jews outwardly and Jews inwardly—of the natural Israel and of the Israel of God—the idea suggested is, that these words may have a twofold application, as if the Lord had said: When these things begin to come to pass, let not only all who believe in me, but all the captive children of Israel look up and lift up their heads, for their redemption draweth nigh. Believers shall be redeemed from the power of the grave, and from their bodies of sin and death, and raised to immortal life and glory—and Israel shall be redeemed from their bondage among the nations, and their city shall be trodden down no more by their enemies. This interpretation is merely suggested: It is not insisted upon; because whether it be the true sense or not, other scriptures teach, that the restoration of Israel will take place

about the time of the expiring of the times of the Gentiles, and the coming of the Son of Man in a cloud with power and great glory. But to return to our subject:

If this view be correct, then the apostle might have fixed upon the continuing dispersion of the Jews, after the destruction of their city, as a sign that the day of Christ was not impending. Perhaps, however, as the dispersion of the Jewish people was to precede the revelation of the man of sin, so their restoration must precede his destruction; but if this be so, the interval of these events will, it is supposed, be brief, and therefore the church may reasonably look out for the day of Christ as very near, as soon as Israel shall be restored to the land of their fathers. What reason then can there be, why the Holy Spirit should direct the apostle to fix upon the approaching revelation of the man of sin as a sign, rather than the approaching dispersion of the Jews, and their continuance in that state? It is the common opinion of the ancients, and of most moderns, that the impediment to the revelation of the man of sin, mentioned in the 6th verse, was the Roman empire. The apostle does not plainly declare what he means, but he refers that church to what they already knew, probably by oral instruction from him. Chrysostom assigns as the reason of this obscurity, that the apostle did not wish to offend or give umbrage to the government, by speaking too openly and freely of the downfall of the empire. It was a topic not at all likely to be popular with the higher powers, and at a much later day, Jerome says he had provoked hostility by speaking too plainly of these things. And it should be remembered too, that as this let or hindrance was soon to be removed, it might be safely committed to tradition, and the memory of it was, in fact, preserved until the fall of the empire, which took place near the end of the 5th century. There was then this difference between the signs. The destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews were soon to occur, whereas the empire of Rome would continue at least four centuries longer than Jerusalem. The church, therefore, by being directed to look for the revelation of the man of sin, was directed to look to the more distant event. The non-appearance of the man of sin served the church as a sign, that the day of Christ was not impending during four centuries and more. Whereas the standing of Jerusalem and the existence of the Jews as a body politic, would have scarcely served a single generation. This may indeed be one reason why the Spirit directed the apostle to point the church to the coming of antichrist, or the man of sin, as an event to precede the advent they were expecting. But there was probably another reason, viz. to shew the

character of the time or times that were to ensue until the time of the end. The representation which this chapter gives of the future, is altogether inconsistent with the common hypothesis of a spiritual millennium, before the coming of Christ. The picture the apostle draws, is dark; not a beam of light does he see, till he sees the brightness of the Lord's coming. Let the reader study this chapter with a view to this remark, "Let no one deceive you," he says, "The day of Christ which you are expecting is not impending." Why? What assurance does he give? Does he say there must first come a millennium of blessedness and purity, throughout the whole earth? On the contrary, he says, that day will not come, except *the apostacy* (ἡ ἀποστασία) first come—THE APOSTACY—something specific, not simply a *falling away*. But call it a falling away: Of what? not of the world, for that was already very far fallen away from God, and events have shewn that thus far the mass of the nations have not been brought nearer. The falling away predicted then, was *of the church*. So that the church instead of being the means of converting the world, was itself to fall away. Again: the man of sin must be revealed before the day of Christ, and the son of perdition. Next we have a description of the awful wickedness of that antichristian power. The apostle gives us no intimation of any check or restraint put upon it; on the contrary, what he says, is applicable only to a predominating power, whose wicked will the followers of Christ are unable successfully to oppose. This power he says had not appeared—and the apostacy had not yet begun. But the mystery of iniquity was at work in the apostle's day, which in due time would issue in apostacy, and the revelation of the man of sin, and son of perdition. Augustin (*Civitat. Dei* lib. 20, § 19) remarks, "Some understand the words, *and now ye know what withholdeth*, and the words, *mystery of iniquity doth already work*, of wicked and hypocritical persons in the church, till they come to such a number as to make a great people for antichrist, and that this is the mystery of iniquity, because it is as yet a secret." Whatever be the meaning precisely of these words, it is enough for the present purpose to say, that they predict increasing wickedness, and not the advancement of the church in holiness. The apostle then declares that the man of sin, whom he calls *that wicked*, will subsist, after he shall have been once revealed, until the Lord's coming, because he declares he shall be destroyed by the brightness of the Lord's coming. Now this cannot mean, as some suppose, a spiritual coming which shall destroy this wicked power, by converting it into a holy power, because in all fair reasoning we must suppose that if the Thessalonians

were expecting the personal advent of Christ, immediately to occur, and that the apostle was writing with a view to correct their mistake by shewing them, that a certain power which had not then appeared, must appear before the day of Christ, (because it must be destroyed by the appearing of Christ,) he must be understood as writing of the *same sort* of coming as they were expecting. Still more absurd would it be to explain the coming here spoken of, as a figure, signifying the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman armies, because such an expectation would not be likely to trouble a Gentile church, many hundred miles distant from that place. Besides this, even the Jewish Christians, who were more immediately concerned with the fortunes of Jerusalem, had no reason to believe its destruction was distant, and it is not to be supposed, this apostle would have assured them that it was. 1 Thess. 2: 16. So that if the destruction of that city *was a coming*, in any scriptural sense, it was to be expected as near.

Where then is there any thing in the whole of this chapter, (which we have seen extends from the apostles' day to the coming of Christ in power and great glory, at the end of this dispensation,) to favour the idea of a spiritual millennium, such as the larger part of the Protestant church of the present day expects? Instead of the triumph of the church, the apostle writes of its apostacy—instead of perfect or increasing holiness and purity in the church in his day, he says iniquity is at work secretly, (in a mystery,)—instead of the extinction of this leaven; the man of sin, the son of perdition, or that wicked, was soon to appear—instead of the destruction of the man of sin by the church, with the blessing of God or the ordinary means of grace, or even the keeping of him in check, he was to oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God or is worshipped, so that he should sit as God in the temple of God, (i. e. in the church itself,) showing himself that he is God. The coming of this antichristian power, was to be after the working of Satan with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. So great would be the wickedness of these persons, that God would give them over to strong delusion—leave them to judicial blindness, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Add to this, not a word is said concerning the conversion of all nations, and bringing them into the bosom of the church, and if that had been predicted, the description which is given of the subsequent apostacy of the church, shews that only more nations—all nations, in fact, would thereby become abusers of this gospel of the grace of

God, and so bring down upon them a more awful condemnation. Let the reader then examine the picture which this chapter gives of the future, and, if he can, find a place for a spiritual millennium, between the apostles' day and the day of the destruction of the man of sin, by the brightness of the Lord's coming. If there is to be a millennium of peace and blessedness throughout the whole earth before the coming of Christ, is it not very remarkable that the apostle was not directed by the Holy Spirit to make mention of it? If the design was to give the church a sign that would endure to the end—or to give as a sign, the description of that state of things which should immediately precede the end, why did not the apostle assure the Thessalonian church that their fears were all groundless, because that day would not come except there be a thousand years of universal blessedness first? And if the object were not to furnish the church with a continuing sign down to the very day of the advent—the fact, that a thousand years must elapse previously to the day of Christ, (no matter whether they would begin to run sooner or later,) would have been all sufficient to correct the mistake of the individuals to whom the epistle was first addressed. If the apostle had so plain a way as this, to assure that church, and the church in all times since, that the day of Christ was remote from them, and remote at least a thousand years from all who should not live to see the commencement of this blessed period, why did he write in an obscure way—hinting what he meant, rather than plainly declaring it, for the purpose of avoiding unnecessary offence to the higher powers, as has been plausibly suggested, or for any other purpose whatever? If the reader will carefully consider this chapter, he will, it is believed, be compelled either to admit the doctrine of the premillennial advent, or he must explain how a state of universal purity and blessedness, (corresponding with the descriptions which the prophets give us of the millennium,) can co-exist with the apostacy and the prevalence of the power of the man of sin, or finally he must prove that the brightness of the Lord's coming, which will destroy the man of sin, or that wicked, is not his personal advent in power and great glory. The second branch of this alternative, will be passed without observation, but upon the last, although it has been already referred to incidentally, the reader's attention is requested to a few additional observations. The expectation of the Thessalonians, whatever it may have been, was of a nature to *shake* and *trouble* their minds, (see verse 2nd.) The word translated *shaken*, is a metaphor taken from the sea, which being agitated by storms and tempests is tossed to and fro. The same word is used in Matth. 11: 7, to

denote the shaking of a reed under the power of the wind. The word translated *troubled*, imports such perturbation as ariseth from the relation of something terrible. It is a metaphor, says Leigh, (Crit. Sac.) from soldiers frightened by a sudden alarm. It occurs in Matth. 24: 6. Now would such agitation, such trouble as this, be excited by the expectation either of a figurative or providential coming, for the destruction of a distant city, or of a figurative coming to destroy the man of sin, or the apostate church by converting it to a state of holiness, or of any other figurative or spiritual coming whatever? The common expectation of the church now a days is, that the millenium will break upon the world like the light, gently and gradually, not to destroy but to cheer and bless it. Even by the most ungodly, its approach would be hailed not with terror, or with that sort of agitation and trouble which the Thessalonians appear to have experienced, but as, at the worst, an event which would do them no harm. This then, proves that the church immediately addressed, were not expecting any such figurative coming. But how can the introduction of the millennium, according to the common hypothesis, be called a coming of the Lord at all? The church at present are rather expecting a coming of the Holy Spirit, in new and wonderful manifestation of power. Yet the coming of the Spirit, in any way, cannot be the coming of Christ. If it could be, then the mission of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, was a coming of Christ. But the Lord Jesus had just before said to his disciples, "if I go not away, the Comforter will not come, but if I depart I will send him unto you," John 16: 7. So then there are these two difficulties in the way of the supposition, that the man of sin will be destroyed by a spiritual or figurative coming to convert, and not destroy, viz. such a coming would be rather another coming of the Holy Spirit, and not a coming of the Lord; and secondly, if it could be considered a coming of Christ, there was nothing in its nature to agitate or disturb the minds of Christians.

Again the apostle must be considered as referring in this place to the same coming that he had spoken of in the first epistle, (see chaps. 1: 10—2: 19—3: 13—4: 16, 17—5: 23, 3, 4, and in the first chapter of the 2nd epistle, verses 7, 8, 9, 10,) and also to that same coming which agitated and disturbed the minds of that church. If the reader will consult the places referred to, he will have no doubt that the apostle's mind was fixed intently upon the personal advent of the Lord. Another difficulty then in the way of the hypothesis opposed, is that of shewing from the epistle itself a satisfactory reason why the apostle should in this eighth verse refer to a spiritual or figurative

coming, and not to his personal advent in power and great glory. And this difficulty will be greatly increased, if the expression in the original be carefully considered, (τῆ ἐπιφάνειᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ,) which, according to Benson, is especially suitable to the final advent of Christ to judgment. With these observations this part of the subject is dismissed. But a few words must be added upon another topic, lest the reader should suppose that the discussion in this note or appendix, is at variance with the views advanced in the essay.

The apostle endeavours in this chapter, to remove the mistaken apprehension of the Thessalonian church, that the day of Christ was *impending*, not to prove that it was *remote*; or that it could not occur within the period of a life time. If the opinion be correct, that the impediment in the way of the revelation of the man of sin, to which he referred, was the Roman empire, the event has shewn, that it was at a considerable distance. Yet the time of the downfall of that power was not revealed, and it existed (as do the existing governments of the earth) only by the forbearance of God. Its time was fulfilled—the time for establishing the kingdom of God on its ruins had already come, and, as we have seen, the lengthening of its time was occasioned, in some sense, by the infidelity of the Jews. The apostles and the first Christians were not informed how long God would spare that guilty power. All these things, therefore, might have been brought to pass within a brief space. Yet for all that, they might discern by the signs of the times, that the day was not actually impending, and thus much may we know at this late day. It was important to correct this error, as it exerted a hurtful influence upon the necessary and proper concerns of life. It influenced many, as we have reason to believe, to neglect their secular duties. It was a sort of *denial* of the faith, because it was a perversion of the faith: The doctrine was, as we have seen, that the day of the Lord's advent is not revealed—that it *might*, for aught that was known, *have come* during the life time of the first Christians, (or in the time of any of their successors) not that it *would certainly so come*. Hence those who assumed, as did the Thessalonians, the certainty of the Lord's advent *immediately*, committed an error which was inconsistent with the scriptures, and so was in effect a denial of the faith, and those who (acting upon so erroneous and presumptuous an assumption) neglected to provide the necessary means of supporting in comfort their own, especially those of their own house, (as perhaps some did, under the influence of this error,) were worse than an unbeliever—that is, the effects of this false faith upon the moral and relative duties of life, were worse than the effects of

unbelief in the doctrine as it is really taught, 1 Tim. 5: 8. It was on the ground of the proneness of Christians thus to pervert this doctrine that we find such exhortations as the following: "Be not slothful in business," Rom. 12: 11. The different expectations of the future, which the greater part of professing Christians of the present day entertain, calls rather for ministerial exhortations of the opposite kind: Often it is hard to discover a difference between Christians and worldly men, in the activity and eagerness with which they engage in the affairs of civil and social life. But let the church return again to the ancient faith—let the doctrine be cordially received, "the day of the Lord is at hand," and it will be found to produce the same effects now as it did then—this world would then appear as nothing—its most momentous concerns as trifles—its business as a weariness in the expectation of the shortly expected advent. The infirmity of the flesh would need the aid of a counteracting influence, and hence this exhortation, "Be not slothful in business, but fervent (*ζέοντες* *boiling*) in spirit serving the Lord"—an exhortation which can only be understood in the light of this doctrine. There is another passage which should be mentioned in this connexion, for the light which this subject casts upon it. The passage occurs in this same epistle to the Thessalonians, chap. 3: 10. "For when we were among you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." It is supposed by some, that the apostle intends in this place to appoint *a punishment*, proper to be inflicted upon those who would not work. An objection to this view of the passage is, that the church can exercise only spiritual power, which we do not perceive to be adequate to the execution of such a sentence. It is rather an authoritative appeal to the recusant himself, who is supposed to refuse to work under the expectation of the immediate appearance of Christ, in which event his labour would be useless. As if he had said, "If any one acting under the delusive expectation that the day of Christ is impending, refuses to labour and thereby provide his own bread, saying that the day of Christ is so near that there is no longer occasion to work, then to be consistent, such a one should not eat; for if the day of the Lord is so near as to dispense him from the obligation to labour for his support, then he will not hunger. But if his animal nature shall crave and require food to sustain it before that day shall come, then he should labour to procure it. And the apostle enforces this argument by a command and exhortation, that such should labour with quietness (for this was a Christian duty) and eat their own bread, because there was, as he had proved to them, in the 2nd chapter, need to labour

yet, and patiently wait for the day of Christ which would not come, until after the predicted apostacy of the church should occur, and the man of sin be revealed. Such may be the meaning of these passages. If there are insurmountable objections to the interpretation, they do not occur to the writer. Still he wishes the reader to receive it rather as a suggestion, than as a point clearly established.

It has been suggested in the course of these observations, that the Jews are to be restored previously to the advent. It may be objected, that if an event so stupendous as this, must be accomplished previously to that day, Christians cannot watch as though they really expected it would occur soon. But the same objection might have been made by the first Christians, on the ground that the destruction of Jerusalem and then of Rome must precede the advent of Christ. How could the destruction of such mighty powers be accomplished in a brief space? But the reader must continually bear in mind, that the present condition of things continues only by the sufferance of God, and he can hasten the end in the appointed way so as to fulfil all things in the kingdom of God within the brief period of human life. And as to the restoration of the Jews—if we suppose that it will precede the judgments which will usher in the kingdom of God—it may be brought to pass suddenly and in some wonderful way. If the stork knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming, is it incredible, that God should simultaneously and so efficaciously affect the minds of that people, that they shall arise as one man, and at the same season set their faces to return? There are expressions in the prophecies which indicate that their restoration shall not only be suddenly accomplished, but that it shall be so universal that even the sick and the infirm shall not be left behind. And undoubtedly it will be accomplished under circumstances which will not be entirely subject to the observation of any one person, so that he can mark the progress of it, or say how far it may be at any time from completion. Still if we could not explain how these things may consist, nor how we should watch for an event which will not take place till after the restoration of the Jews, the duty would remain, because such is the command; and the interest of the Christian in the performance of this duty would also remain, for as a snare will that day come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.



The following propositions respecting the advent, are added to fill a page which would otherwise be vacant. They are no part of the foregoing essays, but are taken from the appendix of a small tract on "The Pre-millennial Personal Advent of Christ, by a Spiritual Watchman," and are said to be from the pen of Mr. Cuninghame.

PROPOSITIONS RESPECTING THE ADVENT.

I. From Luke xxi. 25—27, it appears that Christ comes just while the heavens are *shaking* previous to the passing away thereof. The same is evident from Matt. xxiv. 29, 30, and Mark xiii. 24—26. The three evangelists use the word *σαλευθησονται* as marking the moment of the advent.

II. From Rev. vi. 14, 15, it appears, that when the heaven passes away (*απεχαιρισθη*, *departed*) the Lord is *already come*. The language of verses 15 and 16 is simply the description of the identical mourning of all the tribes of the earth, foretold in Matt. xxiv. 30; but this mourning is not till Christ comes, which is a further confirmation of the former proposition.

III. From 1 Thes. iv. 17, it is manifest that our Lord's first advent is in the air, and that there his saints meet him.

IV. From Zech. xiv. it is manifest, that subsequently to our Lord's first appearance in the air he descends to the surface of this earth; though what interval of time passes between these events is unrevealed.

V. The appearance in the passages in Matthew, Mark and Luke, already quoted, is the first appearance of our Lord in the air, since it is previous to the gathering of his elect.

VI. Rev. xiv. 14, must, for a like reason, refer to our Lord's appearance in the air.

VII. From Matt. xxv. 1—10, we learn that the first event after our Lord's appearance in the air, and the gathering of the elect, is the marriage.

VIII. In Rev. xix. 7, it is said, the marriage of the Lamb is come. But by Prop. VII. it is established, that the marriage is after the appearance in the air; therefore, Rev. xix. 7, relates to a point in time subsequent to the appearance of the Lord in the air.

IX. The appearance in Rev. xix. 14, is subsequent to the marriage, therefore our Lord now is seen followed by his saints, the armies which are in heaven. This appearance seems to be identified with that in Zech. xii. 10.—xiv. 4—5.

X. From Matt. xxiv. 35—40, compared with Luke xvii. 26—30, and xxi. 34—36, it is apparent that though, as already

seen in Prop. I., the advent shall be in a time of alarm, and shaking of the powers in the heavens, it shall yet be in a day of peace and carnal enjoyment.

Corollary.—Therefore the events we have lately seen, seem rather to be the signs of the approaching hurricane, than the hurricane itself.

The foregoing propositions were drawn up in answer to the objections of a friend, that we are not yet to expect the advent, because the events in Dan. xi. 44, 45, must *first happen*; and I added an argument, that if (as I believe) the standing up of Michael, Dan. xii., be the same event as that in Zech. xiv. 4, then the events in Dan. xi. 44, 45, shall not precede, but follow, the advent in the air.

I have since arrived at some further conclusions, which are embodied in the form of Propositions:—

XI. At the first sound of the seventh trumpet, the proclamation of the kingdom takes place in heaven—Rev. xi. 17, (mark the *εβασιλευσας*.)

XII. The proclamation, in xviii. 2, announces not the *actual*, but *approaching* fall of Babylon; for, from ver. 4, it appears that the judgment is not yet executed, and that before she falls, God's people, the elect, must come out of her. But the elect are not gathered till Christ comes, and his coming must consequently precede the judgment on Babylon.

XIII. As soon as she falls, there is, in Rev. xix. 1—6, a second proclamation of the kingdom, the counterpart of the former one, (the word is *εβασιλευσει*,) and as the first was in heaven, announcing the *accession* to the kingdom, so I infer that the one in xix. 1—6, is on earth or in the air, and determines the moment of the *investiture* in the kingdom, when our Lord adds to the *στεφανος* the *διαδηματα πολλα*, and this is immediately followed by the marriage.





