THE SPIRITUAL REIGN:

AN ESSAY
ON THE
COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:

ESPECIAL REFERENCE BEING HAD TO
THE PREMILLENNIAL ARGUMENT OF THE REV. E. B. ELLIOTT,
IN HIS HORÆ APOCALYPTICÆ.

BY CLEMENS.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

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PREFACE.

The writer of the following Essay perused Mr. Elliott's Horae Apocalypticae, with a deep conviction of its truth, so far as regards fulfilled prophecy. But, on the question of the personal reign of Christ, he found himself unable to adopt the conclusions of that writer.

If he could bow to human authority, on a subject of this nature, he would have done so to Mr. Elliott. He was induced to compare with Holy Scripture what Mr. E. had advanced; and the result is now before the reader.

He feels exquisitely the pain of differing from many, with whom it would be his chief delight to be altogether agreed. But truth must be dearer to us than friends. It is, however, consolatory to know, that the points of difference in our belief will pass
away with this world; whilst the love of Christ, in which we are one, will be eternal. It is not denied, that, after the last judgment, there will be a “restitution of all things.” In this there is an analogy to the resurrection of the body, which, after its apparent dissolution, shall re-appear a glorious body. So this earth, re-created and renewed by its God, may become a heaven. But satan, death, the grave, and sin, must first be destroyed; and that, we know, will not take place till the millennium has closed.

Since the publication of the first edition, the writer has looked into several modern millennial works, which he had not previously done, and some notices of them will now be found. The whole Essay has been revised, and three new chapters added.

The writer, in this edition, is indebted to the Rev. D. Brown’s “Christ’s Second Coming,” first edition, for many valuable hints. In Dr. Urwick’s Work on the Second Advent, and the Rev. E. G. Marsh’s Essays, very striking remarks will also be found.
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COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY AND HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. AFTER the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ to heaven, we read, that his apostles were thus addressed, by two men who stood by them in white apparel: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts i. 11. The second coming of our blessed Lord must be viewed as a certain event; difference of opinion can only exist as to the time and circumstances of its occurrence. Many excellent persons express their conviction, that he will appear visibly, before the millennium, for the purpose.
of destroying Antichrist, and converting the Jews. They believe the dead in Christ will then arise in their glorified bodies, and, together with the changed living saints, form that glorious company of the blessed of whom it is written, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." The saints, they state, will live and reign with Christ personally on earth one thousand years; after which the wicked shall arise, and their judgment take place. They express it to be the one great object of their desire, to have part in this first resurrection, and to be privileged to enjoy the presence and glory of their Lord on earth. This is what is usually termed the doctrine of the Personal Reign.

2. Others of their christian brethren are led to doubt these conclusions. They think that the Lord Jesus will not personally reappear until the day of final judgment, when he will come in the clouds, to judge the quick and the dead. At the sound of the last trumpet, they expect the dead in Christ to arise first; and, in their glorified bodies, to be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they be for ever with the Lord, in heaven. Immediately afterwards, the wicked will also arise, and be condemned by their Judge to everlasting death. Many of the descriptions in Scripture of Christ's coming in the clouds, they conceive, relate to intermediate judgments, in the course of God's spiritual and providential government; and the symbolic language is to indicate the foreshadowing and typical relation of those judgments to the last day, and their agreement with it in the one common object,—the justification of the righteousness of God.
3. It is the object of this Essay to set forth the scriptural grounds of this latter view. The intelligent reader of the New Testament will, no doubt, have become acquainted with the deep national prejudices of the first Jewish converts, and have learnt how very difficult it was, to bring them to acknowledge Jew and Gentile to be made spiritually one in Christ Jesus. They could not be brought to part with the cherished persuasion of their nation, that the descendants of Abraham were ever to possess the almost exclusive glory of the Messiah's kingdom. Whilst their temple, which had been honoured by the personal presence of Christ, remained, this prejudice might, to a certain extent, receive favour. But, when Jerusalem was laid waste, and their ecclesiastical polity had passed away, it was obvious that if Jesus was the Messiah, his reign was not to be confined to the Jews, and his temple was to be no longer a building of stone, but a spiritual church, comprising within its pale, believers of all nations. Still, many among the primitive Christians, Gentiles, as well as Jews, were but partially enlightened on this point. The rabbinical notion of a visibly reigning Messiah, was congenial to them. They did therefore, undoubtedly, in great numbers, but by no means universally, follow Jewish teaching in this matter, and embraced the doctrine of a future personal reign of our Lord Jesus on earth. But, as if to shew that this doctrine came not from God, but was rather to be viewed as an earthly weed, they added to its other delights very luscious descriptions of the animal enjoyments of eating and drinking. It was even pretended by Papias, a very early
writer, that some Christian elders had heard from St. John a prophecy to the following effect: "The days shall come, in which there shall be vines which shall severally have ten thousand branches; and every one of these branches shall severally have ten thousand lesser branches; and every one of these branches shall have ten thousand twigs; and every one of these twigs shall have ten thousand clusters of grapes; and every one of these grapes being pressed, shall give twenty-five metretas, or two hundred and seventy-five gallons of wine; and when one shall take hold of one of those sacred bunches, another shall cry out, I am a better bunch, take me, and by me glorify God." This strange Farrago, with other aberrations of the early Christian Fathers, may be found by the reader somewhat fully set forth in Whitby's "Treatise on the Millennium." Our present premillenarian brethren of course repudiate all views of this description.

4. As an instance of what we have just admitted, we may here introduce the words of Justin Martyr, who lived in the reign of Antoninus Pius, about A. D. 150. In Justin's Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, the latter says, "Now tell me truly, whether you do really believe that Jerusalem is to be built again, and expect that your people shall be gathered together to live in joy and pleasure with Christ and the patriarchs and the prophets?" To which Justin replies, "I have already owned that I and several others of the same way of thinking with myself, are fully persuaded that this will most assuredly come to pass. And again I told you that many good and pious Christians do not believe it."
He afterwards adds, that "John, one of Christ's apostles, in that revelation which was discovered to him, hath foretold that those who believe in our Christ should live a thousand years in Jerusalem." Rev. xx. The value of Justin's testimony may be determined by his misquotation of St. John in this place. We turn, however, to Clemens Romanus, who was the earliest of the Christian Fathers, and wrote in the reign of Domitian, about A.D. 93, and do not find him express any view of this nature. In his epistle to the Corinthians, he merely says, "Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord doth continually show us that there shall be a future resurrection, of which he has made our Lord Jesus Christ the first fruits, raising him from the dead. Let us contemplate the resurrection that is continually before our eyes. Day and night manifest a resurrection to us. The night lies down, and the day arises: again the day departs, and the night comes on." * He then illustrates the point further by the seed sown; and from the dissolution of it argues the great power of the providence of the Lord in raising it up again.

This passage is of much importance, and has not been properly noticed by writers on the subject. Clemens Romanus has even been numbered with the fathers holding the premillennial view. But it is presumed, this misconception has arisen from some

* καταναόντωμεν, ἀγαπτοί, σὺς ὁ διστῶς ἰκανίκνυται διηνυσίως ἡμῖν τὴν μίλλουσαν ἀνάστασιν ἱκεθαι, ἢς τὴν ἀπῳχὴν ἰδεούσατο τοῦ κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν νεκροῖς ἀναστήσας. Ἐδωμιν, ἀγαπητοί, τὴν κατὰ καιρὸν γινομένην ἀνάστασιν. Ἡμέρα, κ. τ. λ.—1 Clementis ad Cor. § 24. Patrum Apostolicorum Opera. Tubingae, 1842.
expressions in an alleged second Epistle of his, which is clearly shewn to be of no authority. See Prolegomena Secundae Clementis Epistolae. Patrum Apostolicorum Opera. Tubingae, 1842.

5. The case of Clemens Romanus shews that caution must be exercised in admitting the exclusive claims of premillenarians to the authority of the early Christians. Their views never were universally received in the ancient Church; although it is but fair to admit, that during the latter part of the first century, and throughout the second, and a great part of the third, the general current flowed in favour of a first literal resurrection, and a personal reign. But the doctrine was corrupted, as we have seen, by the intermixture of alleged sensual enjoyments. This latter consideration appears, eventually, to have produced a revulsion. Men, with the New Testament in their hands, could not help finally repudiating the introduction of Jewish tradition into the christian system, however they might, for a season, be misled. An ultra literal reading of the words of the prophets and the apostles, it was found, could not stand full discussion. No doubt many, like Origen, spiritualized too much; but more sober minds were enabled to draw right distinctions between the letter and the spirit. We learn from Eusebius' History,* that in the reign of Gallienus, about A.D. 259, "Nepos, a bishop in Egypt, taught that the promises given to holy men in the Scriptures, should be understood more as the Jews understood them; and supposed

* Book vii. c. xxiv.
there would be a certain millennium of luxury* on the earth. Thinking, therefore, that he could establish his own opinion by the Revelation of John, he composed a book on this subject, with the title, Refutation of the Allegorists. This was warmly opposed by Dionysius, in his work on the Promises." Dionysius here referred to, was of Alexandria, and a very eminent writer. He says, "that being at Arsinoe, where this doctrine of Nepos was afloat, so that schisms and apostacies of whole churches followed; after he had called together the presbyters and teachers of the brethren in the villages; when the brethren had come who wished to be present, he exhorted them to examine the doctrine publicly. When they had produced Nepos' book, as a kind of armour and impregnable fortress, he sat with them three days, from morning till evening, attempting to refute what it contained. Nor did we, says he, evade objections, but endeavoured, as far as possible, to keep to our subject, and to confirm these. Nor ashamed, if reason prevailed, to change opinions, and to acknowledge the truth; but rather received with good conscience and sincerity, and with single hearts before God, whatever was established by the proofs and doctrines of the Holy Scriptures."

It seems that at length Coracio, who was the leader of the party, "in the hearing of all the brethren present, confessed and owned to Dionysius, that he would no longer adhere to this doctrine, nor discuss it; that he would neither mention nor teach it, as he had been fully convinced by the opposite arguments."

* τινάχης συμματικής.
This passage is one of the most interesting on the subject related in Ecclesiastical History, and is very instructive in every point of view.

6. After the Nicene age, premillennial notions still lingered in the church; for St. Augustine, in his "City of God," (lib. xx. c. 7.) says, "This opinion were tolerable, if it proposed only spiritual delights from the Lord's presence unto the saints during this sabbatical period. For we were once of this opinion. But when those of that opinion affirm that the saints, after this resurrection, shall do nothing but revel in fleshly banquets, where the cheer shall exceed both modesty and measure, this is gross, and fit for none but carnal men to believe. But they that are really and truly spiritual call those opinionists χιλιαστας; the word is Greek, and may be interpreted millenaries."

It is somewhat difficult to state with precision St. Augustine's own views. Yet, on the whole, we gather from his "City of God," that he considered the millennium to have its commencement from the binding of the devil, which took place when the church first spread from Judea into other regions. He remarks, that it is not said, he shall not seduce any one; but that he shall no more deceive the nations,* until the thousand years are fulfilled, that is, he says, either the remainder of the sixth day, [St. Augustine here referring to the Septuagint chronology,] the last thousand, or the whole time the world is to continue. The Septuagint

* "Nec enim dictum est, ut non seduceret aliquem; sed ut non seduceret, inquit, jam gentes."—CIVITATE DEI. Lib. xx. c. 7.
chronology made our Lord's birth between five thousand and six thousand years from the creation, so that it would take place in the sixth or last thousand; for according to the Jewish tradition, the time of the world's existence was to be six thousand years.

St. Augustine interprets the nations to mean the Gentile church. His notion of the millennium prevailed throughout the middle ages, and there was a general consternation in western Europe about the year one thousand, arising out of this view of prophecy. Mosheim says, "prodigious numbers of people abandoned all their civil connexions and their parental relations, and giving over to the churches or monasteries all their lands, treasures, and worldly effects, repaired with the utmost precipitation to Palestine, where they imagined Christ would descend from heaven. Others devoted themselves, by a solemn and voluntary oath, to the service of the churches, convents, and priesthood. When an eclipse of the sun or moon happened to be visible, the cities were deserted. . . . In a word, no language is sufficient to express the confusion and despair that tormented the minds of miserable mortals upon this occasion." [Mosheim Cent. x. p. 11.]

Almost all the donations made to the church in this century had the words, "the end of the world being now at hand."

After the Reformation, many Protestant doctors also held St. Augustine's views, as Luther, Lightfoot, &c., the papal tyranny under Hildebrand and Gregory VII., being supposed by them to end the millennium.

This is still, in all probability, the opinion of many in
the Church of Rome, as it has the support of Bossuet. Romish commentators consider Satan’s coming to be the rising of the Waldenses and other alleged heretics.

7. At the Reformation, it is well known the Jewish view of the millennium again became prevalent; and numerous fanatics asserted, that the reign of the saints on earth had either begun, or was about to commence. It became so grave a question, that our Reformers, in the articles published in King Edward’s reign, inserted the following one expressly on the subject. “Heretics called Millennarii.” “They that go about to renew the fable of heretics, called Millennarii, be repugnant to Holy Scripture, and cast themselves headlong into a Jewish dotage.” * In “a short catechism or plain instruction, containing the sum of Christian learning, set forth by the King’s Majesty’s authority, for all schoolmasters to teach, 1553,” and which was, consequently, about the last document of King Edward’s divines, we find their sentiments expressed as follows:—“Antichrist is not yet slain. For this cause do we long for, and pray that it may at length come to pass and be fulfilled, that Christ may reign with his saints, according to God’s promises: that he may live and be Lord in the world, according to the decrees of the holy Gospel; not after the traditions of men, nor pleasure of worldly tyrants.”†

But the meaning of the Reformers, in this passage, was not that of our modern premillenarian brethren.

* See the Two Liturgies, with other documents set forth by authority in the reign of King Edward VI., p. 537.—PARKER SOCIETY, 1844.
† P. 520.
This is clear from the following extract from the same catechism, which proceeds thus:—"Our profit by Christ's ascension." Scholar, "The chief cause was to pluck out of us that false opinion which sometimes deceived the apostles themselves: that Christ should in earth visibly reign, as other kings and ruffling princes of the world. This error he minded to have utterly suppressed in us: and that we should think his kingdom to consist in higher things. Which thing, therefore, he thought fitter, because it was for our commodity and profit, that some such kingdom should be set up, as the foundations thereof should rest upon our faith."*

The views of the Reformers further appear in the answer to the question on "The Day of Doom." The Catechism there says, "Christ shall come; at whose voice all the dead shall rise, perfect and sound, both in body and soul. The whole world shall behold him sitting on the throne of his majesty: and after the examination of every man's conscience, the last sentence shall be pronounced. Then the children of God shall be in perfect possession of that kingdom of freedom from death and of everlasting life, which was prepared for them before the foundations of the world were laid. And they shall reign with Christ for ever. But the ungodly that believed not, shall be thrown into everlasting fire, appointed for the devil and his angels."†

This representation of the last judgment, it will be seen hereafter, is quite inconsistent with modern premillennial notions. It seems pretty obvious, that our Reformers held St. Augustine's notion of the millen-

* P. 508.  
† P. 511.
gium, and viewed it as a past event. The kingdom of Christ they speak of in this catechism must be presumed, therefore, to be on earth, after the final judgment. In short, that their expressions have no reference whatever to a millennium, in the sense in which that word is now understood. The views of the Church of England are plainly inconsistent with the premillennial theory of a first literal resurrection. It is well known, that premillenarians do not read Matt. xxv. 31—46, in a natural sense. It so obviously treats of one resurrection and one judgment, that they say it does not relate to the final judgment of the quick and the dead, but to some supposed act of judgment on the heathen. Yet the Church of England continually quotes this passage in its plain natural sense, as applying to the last judgment.—See the Burial Service,—The Communion on Ash Wednesday,—The Consecration of Bishops, &c. The Athanasian Creed, also, adopts only one resurrection of the body. So we may also say of the Apostle's and Nicene Creed. The prayer in the Burial Service, for Christ shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom, scarcely squares with premillennial notions; since it adds, "that we may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory." The millennium, we know, is not that glory. The foreign Reformers held much the same opinions as our own divines; as the reader will perceive on referring to Mr. Elliott's most valuable "Brief Sketch of the History of Apocalyptic Interpretation," in the Appendix to his fourth volume.
8. There is a theory of the millennium, supported by Hammond and others, since the Reformation; which makes the resurrection (Rev. xx. 6) to be ecclesiastical, and to have had its commencement from the time of Constantine. Paganism was, it is said, then overthrown; and Christianity and the church, from a state of prostration and apparent death, visibly raised up and enthroned. The millennium of external Christianity, thus begun, was to extend through one thousand years thence following; i.e. from the fourth to the fourteenth century: when the rise of the Othman Turks, from Scythia, and their attack on Christendom, fulfilled, it is alleged, what is said in the prophecy about Gog and Magog. At the destruction of the Turkish Mahomedan power, there is to be the universal resurrection and final judgment. This system, however, refutes itself: inasmuch as it requires the second apocalyptic beast to be Rome Pagan, instead of Rome Papal; makes the dark ages of the dominations of Popery, and Mahomedanism, to be the time of Satan’s binding and Christ’s reigning on earth! and the “little season” of Gog and Magog’s apostacy to be 500 or 800 years.

9. The principal writer in England, who, after the Reformation, revived the doctrine of a resurrection of the martyrs, and their reigning personally with Christ on earth for a thousand years, was the well known Joseph Mede. In his Clavis Apocalyptica, published about 1634, he favoured that view. Yet, in his “Remarks on some Passages in the Revelation,” published about 1650, he appears to have somewhat modified his opinions; for he there says, “The presence
of Christ in his kingdom shall no doubt be glorious and evident; yet I dare not so much as imagine (which some ancients have thought) that it should be avisible converse on earth. For the kingdom of Christ ever hath been, and shall be, regnum celeorum, a kingdom whose throne and kingly residence is in heaven. There he was installed, when he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; (Heb. i.) and there, as in his proper temple, is continually to appear in the presence of his Father, to make intercession for us. Comp. Rom. viii. 34, with Heb. ix. 24. Yet may we grant, he shall appear from heaven especially, for the calling and gathering of his ancient people.” Mr. Mede has had many followers. Several of the writers who substantially agree with the view of Rev. xx. given in his Clavis Apocalyptica, rank high amongst English divines: and last, not least, we may name the Rev. E. B. Elliott, whose wonderful work on the Apocalypse will carry down his name to future generations.

But notwithstanding this doctrine, with modifications, has been asserted and reasserted at different periods of the Christian dispensation, and is at the present moment widely prevalent in England; it has never continued to hold fast the ground it gained, and never was admitted to be a catholic truth. It was never admitted into the Creeds, nor is it found in the Te Deum, or any other formulary or confession of faith.
CHAPTER II.

THE DIFFICULTIES THAT ATTEND THE PREMILLENNIAL VIEW.

1. One of the principal causes which prevented the doctrine of Christ’s premillennial advent being received as a catholic truth in the earlier ages, was, as we have seen, the mixture of supposed carnal with spiritual delights. The pure taste of sincere and intelligent Christians was shocked, at the nature of the pleasures held up to their view. They knew, by experience, that such things did not produce happiness here; and they were unable, therefore, to see how they could do so hereafter. In modern times, the qualified views of our premillenarian friends are also liable to strong objections; a few of which we will proceed to notice.

2. Upon being referred by premillenarians to the twentieth chapter of Revelations, it at once strikes the mind, that the reign of Christ and his saints, there described, is not eternal; and can scarcely, therefore, be said to fulfil the correct notion we entertain, from other parts of Scripture, of a resurrection state. Gog and Magog, we are told, being stirred up by Satan, in number as the sand of the sea, surround the camp of
the saints, and put it in the most imminent peril. But
it is difficult to conceive such a state of things to arise,
where Christ is personally present, and where resurrec-
tion saints, in their glorified bodies, are reigning. The
modern church seems to revolt at such a conclusion,
almost as strongly as the ancient Christians did, at the
view of carnal pleasures. Is it possible that our divine
Lord, after coming in the clouds, attended by angels,
and ten thousand of his saints, and after having taken
possession of his kingdom, can have that kingdom,
even for a moment, wrested from him, or apparently,
put in jeopardy? The Christian almost instinctively
replies, It cannot be. Until Christ's second coming, it
is evident, for mysterious, but, no doubt, wise purposes,
Satan is permitted occasionally to prevail. But after
Jesus has once more personally appeared and reigned,
it seems clear that Satan must be overthrown, and his
power become extinct.

3. According to the premillennial view, there will be
on earth, during the reign of the saints, two distinct
classes of inhabitants; namely, the risen dead in their
glorified bodies, and others in their original natural
state. Here, admitting that persons so differently
constituted may, through the mercy of God, exist har-
moniously together; yet it is evident, that the salvation
of the unchanged saints must be accomplished in a
manner different from that prescribed in the present
dispensation. There can be no preaching of Christ
crucified, inasmuch as he will then be reigning on earth:
nevertheless, St. Paul was determined to know nothing
among the Corinthians "save Jesus Christ, and him
crucified." There can be no sacrament of the Lord's supper, since it is expressly stated by St. Paul to be celebrated until Christ's coming again. 1 Cor. xi. 26.

We may observe also that—

Our Lord, in giving his commission to his disciples to preach the gospel, and to baptize all nations, adds, "Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. But premillenarians hold that the end of the world means the conclusion of the present dispensation, which they say will be at Christ's coming, immediately before the millennium.

If so, it is clear that the sacrament of baptism, and the existing commission to preach the gospel, must, together with the Lord's supper, be necessarily superseded at that time: nay, more, that the Holy Scriptures, as well as the present means of grace, will be out of date. "Startling as it may appear to some," says an esteemed premillennial writer, "yet I apprehend it will be found, that the Holy Scriptures would, for the most part, be rendered inapplicable to the then existing circumstances of men in the flesh, and that there would need some further revelation from God." Again, "nor will the scriptures superseded in the millennium be devoid of interest or use; but they will serve in the way of retrospect and memorial." It is added in a note; "Thus the manna given in the wilderness ceased on the entering of the church into the promised land: but a pot of it was laid up in the ark as a memorial."—Brook's Abdiel's Essays, xv., s. 2, 3. The intelligent reader will be tempted instinctively to exclaim, Surely this seems like "another gospel." Gal. i. 8.
4. Premillenarians teach that Christ will leave his throne at the right hand of God, in heaven, and come and reign on earth one thousand years.

By this doctrine, the mediation of Christ for his people will be seriously affected. It is now carried on by him at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, Heb. viii. 1. This is also proved by the type of the high priest, under the law, entering into the holy of holies. The apostle says, “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building: neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered at once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” “For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”—Heb. ix. 11, 12, 24. The words in italics appear to us conclusive, of the mediation being within the veil, i.e., in heaven. Indeed, the fact constitutes the principal scope of the argument in the epistle to the Hebrews. “A minister of the tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not men.” It seems to us perilous to argue that this mediation may be on earth, when there is no revelation to that effect in the Scriptures. For assumptions of such a nature go far to supersede the authority of the Divine word.

We give the following pithy extracts from Mr. Brown. He says, “As Christ’s going in within the veil corresponds to his ascension from the earth and session at the
right hand of God; so his coming again, as did the high priest, at the close of his work, answers to his glorious return to us at his second advent. And thus the period of his intercession is just the time of his absence from us—neither less nor more."

"When the advent arrives, the intercession is done: and when intercession is done, salvation is done. There can be no millennium after that."

5. The doctrine of the premillenarians is not only liable to the preceding objection, but it casts discredit upon the work of the Holy Spirit, as if unable to accomplish the conversion and consolation of mankind upon an extensive scale.

In fact, according to them, our Lord's appearance is to introduce a new dispensation altogether. Yet the scriptures teach that Christ is already come to his people by the Spirit; and there is nothing to shew that this is a merely temporary arrangement. We believe there will be no other on this side the eternal world; and that the manifestation of Christ, during the millennium, will be of the same nature as at present. What that manifestation is, will appear from the following passage of scripture. Ever blessed are they who partake of it.

"I will not leave you comfortless," says our Lord, "I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more: but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my
Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

The apostles who were, like our premillenarian brethren, ever intent upon a personal visible appearance, were surprised at this use of the word "manifest"—for "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 18—23.

Notwithstanding the use of language implying something palpable, yet Christ came not visibly, but by the Comforter. His personal appearance was not the means divinely prescribed for the conversion and consolation of his people. We must be guided alone by the scripture, in a case like this. In another text, (John xvi. 7,) Christ says, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." "I will pray the Father, and he will send you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, (σις τοῦ αἰῶνα) John xvi. 16. The last expression must, according to every sound rule of criticism, be held to extend throughout the Christian dispensation to the end of time, and therefore negatives a personal reign of the Son on earth. The Son asks the Father, and the Spirit is given; the Son sits on his mediatorial throne in heaven, and the Spirit descends to perform its appointed work on earth. The three divine, and ever glorious persons, thus act contemporaneously for man's redemption, each in his own blessed sphere. The whole
is in harmony. The text refutes the notion of the coming of Christ being for the consolation of believers on earth, for that work is here expressly assigned to the Spirit. The following quotations from approved commentators support our conclusions. "He, the Spirit, coming to supply my absence, and as the consequence of my ascension into heaven."—Whitby. "For if I do not go away and appear in heaven, under the character of the Great High Priest, the Comforter will not come."—Doddridge. "The presence of the Comforter would be far more advantageous to the apostles, and the other disciples, than that of Christ in person could have been. He would be everywhere present with them, when widely separated from each other; whereas, the bodily presence of Christ could have been only in one place at once."—Scott.

6. The language of our Lord, related in the 16th chapter of St. John's Gospel, appears materially to support the preceding views. He was preparing his disciples for the state of things that should exist after his ascension to heaven. He had said, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." He added, "But if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not in me. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." It appears to be the divine economy to assign to the Holy Spirit the work of touching and converting the heart to God. The coming of Christ personally, to reign, might con-
vince the judgment and strike the outward sense, but it would not of itself create faith or love. It could not, therefore, promote the true conversion of the world. The world, in the passage before us, may be assumed to be the whole of mankind, including Jew and Greek, who are alienated from Christ. To those who receive his blessed influences, it is the office of the Spirit to demonstrate that this world is in error, and to convict and reprove it of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. We shall hereafter return to this passage.

7. It is but proper to state, that one modern premillennial writer (Mr. Bonar) contends as strongly as we do for the converting and consoling power of the Spirit continuing through the millennium.

"What place," he says, "do we assign to the second coming in those days? So far as conversion is concerned, the mere event itself will have all the influence of a most remarkable providence, but not more. God awakens men oftentimes by sudden fear, by a thunderstorm, by the death of a friend at the side, or the like. He will, in those days, awaken thousands by the providence attending, and circumstances connected with, the Lord's appearing. But still it is the Holy Ghost that is the agent; external circumstances are only the tools by which the blessed Spirit may see good to work."* But let the reader mark how Mr. Bonar, in preserving the work of the Spirit, destroys all the glory and prestige of the second advent. It is reduced by him to be "a most remarkable providence, but not

more." Christ's coming in the clouds, attended by his holy angels! the resurrection of the dead! the passing away of the heavens and the earth! these ranked only with sudden fear by a thunder-storm, the death of a friend by the side, or the like!! It is evident that the converting work of the Spirit, and the personal reign of Christ on earth, cannot be made to harmonise.

8. Another difficulty which besets the premillennial theory is, the length of its day of judgment. It is essential to its existence, that there should be an interval exceeding one thousand years between the judgment of the righteous and the wicked. Yet, to the unso-phisticated reader, the resurrection of the just and of the unjust appears to be one event, distinguished only by a difference in order or precedence,—the righteous rising first, and sitting in judgment with their Lord upon the wicked. A person unacquainted with this controversy, never dreams of such a distinction of times as the premillennial system requires, and without which it falls at once to the ground. This, surely, forms a strong presumption against its truth. For it has been well observed, the true meaning of scripture is generally that which strikes an unprejudiced person, of good common sense, at the first reading. It seems, also, very difficult for a premillenarian to say what will be done with the righteous, who shall live during the millennium. Will they die? If so, when? When and how will they be judged? For the righteous living before the millennium, they allege, will have received their judgment,; and the final judgment, premillenarians say, is to be only of the wicked. These are perplexing
questions. Mr. Bickersteth, however, has ventured an explanation. After stating that at the end of the millennium, "the apostates are first slain by fire, and afterwards raised with the rest of the wicked dead for judgment. But that no change is then mentioned as passing on the Jewish nation, or on the living righteous:" he therefore concludes "that the living righteous, after the millennium, [and we may add, after the judgment of the wicked,] may yet continue a seed to serve God, and in successive generations be trained up for heavenly glory." And this is not a hasty conjecture, but attempted to be fully proved. He adds, "Thus remarkable are the proofs in the Old Testament of the perpetual continuance of the Jewish nation on our earth."*

Obvious it is to remark, that this excellent man either possesses a light hitherto not vouchsafed to the church; or, that his judgment has, in this matter, been superseded by his zeal to carry out a theory.

9. That the judgment of the righteous and the wicked is one contemporary event, and without such a distance as a thousand years between them, as premillenarians assert, appears to us clear, from a consideration of the language of St. Paul in the two epistles to the Thessalonians. In the first epistle, (c. iv.,) the apostle has told them "that the Lord should descend from heaven with a shout, and the dead in Christ should rise first." Here indeed, the premillenarian exclaims, is clearly the first resurrection. But we reply: The apostle, in his second

* TWELVE LECTURES ON THE SECOND COMING. 1844.
epistle, (i. 7—10,) refers to the same event, and there he gives the other side: "To you who are troubled," he says, "rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in them that believe." The latter verses are decisive on the question, they clench the matter, and shew the resurrection of the saints and of the wicked to be one act, not two. When "the dead in Christ rise," then, at the same time, will the Lord Jesus take vengeance on them who knew not God." There is to be no interval. The more we consider these two passages, our conviction is increased of their destroying the premillennial theory.

10. Pious premillenarians, on being pressed with the objections contained in this chapter, profess, that they have only to believe the testimony of scripture, and are not answerable for consequences. Such is their favourite answer. God will remove, they say, all seeming difficulties, and bring about events in his own way, and in his own appointed time. Let us, they say, only believe. This reply, however, is not satisfactory. The question is, whether what they say is scripture doctrine. Our pious friends quietly assume the point in dispute, and seem surprised that any servant of Christ can doubt their conclusions. If the doctrine, like that of the Trinity, or General Resurrection, was a catholic verity, admitted by all orthodox Christians, such a
course might be a proper one. But the truth of their views is the very matter at issue; not with heathens or heretics, but with their fellow Christians. Those, therefore, on the side of this Essay, have a fair right to urge objections and consequences, which appear to them insurmountable.
CHAPTER III.

ON SCRIPTURE PHRASEOLOGY.

1. We may, and do cheerfully concede to our premillenarian brethren their meed of praise, for bringing before the church, more powerfully than was previously the case in our day, the grand and consoling doctrine of our Lord's second coming. No one, reading the New Testament with diligence, can help being struck with the prominency there given to that glorious event. Surely it is enough to make the believer's heart vibrate with joy, to think of that blessed day. The Lord shall come to take his people to their eternal home. They shall see him in glory: they shall be caught up in the clouds to meet him in the air; they shall be ever with him. The Church of England admirably expresses the instinctive feeling of the believer, in beseeching the Lord "that it will please him, of his gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom; that we, with all those who are departed in the true faith of his holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in his eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." In this blessed expectation, we differ not from our brethren. We only give it a different chronological place; conceiving, that the position
which they assign to it, dislocates the order of events, and misrepresents the nature of Christ's kingdom.

2. There can be no doubt, that many excellent persons have been led to embrace the premillennial theory, in consequence of the apparent tendency of several expressions regarding Christ's coming in the New Testament. They say, our Lord declares, "Behold I come quickly." St. James says, "The Judge is at the door." St. Peter, "The end of all things is at hand;" and numerous other texts to the same purport, may easily be quoted. The thing is so striking, that Mr. Mede observes, "Baronius and others of Rome's followers, were induced to suppose the apostles, in such passages, were mistaken, as believing the end of the world should have been in their own time." The orthodox Protestant, who believes in the full inspiration of the Scriptures, cannot, however, admit any such conclusion. Nevertheless, let us beware of being carried away with the mere sound of words. There can be little doubt, that many of the texts about Christ's immediate coming, related to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple dispensation, with its priests and sacrifices, constituting the Jewish world. The Lord was coming in anger, to remove and destroy that system of worship which the Jews thought was to continue for ever. It was true that it had been ordained by himself; but its end was answered, and it was to exist no more. It was only the type of that which was more perfect, and which was now revealed in Christ Jesus to all nations. Many of the primitive believers were themselves mistaken on that head, as we know from
the second epistle to the Thessalonians: the apostle (chap. ii. 3.) says, "Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

3. This is so clearly put by Mr. Mede,—whose testimony is the stronger, as he himself was a premillenarian,—that his section on the subject, in his appendix to the apostacy of the latter times, is here given.—

"It was not possible," he says, "that the apostles should expect the end of the world to be in their own time, when so many things were to come before it, as could not be fulfilled in a short time; as, first, the desolation of Jerusalem, and that not till seventy weeks were expired. Secondly,—That the Jews were to be carried captive over all nations, and Jerusalem to be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled. Luke xxi. 24. Thirdly,—That, in the meantime, the Roman empire must be ruined, and that which hindered taken out of the way. 2 Thes. ii. 7. Fourthly,—That after that was done, the man of sin should be revealed, and domineer his time in the temple and church of God. Ibid. Fifthly,—That after all this, viz., when the fulness of the Gentiles should come in, that Israel should be received again to mercy. Rom. xi. 27. Sixthly,—That Christ should reign in his church on earth so long, till he had put down all rule, all authority and power, and subjected all his enemies under his feet, before he should subdue the last enemy, which is death, and surrender his kingdom into the hands of his Father. 1 Cor. xv.
24. Heb. xi. 8. Seventhly,—That the time should be so long that, in the last days, should come scoffers, saying, Where is the promise of his coming? 2 Pet. iii. 4. How is it possible they should imagine the day of doom to be so near, when all these things should first come to pass, and not one of them was yet fulfilled?" He adds, "How could the expectation of this day be made the ground of exhortation, and a motive to watchfulness and prayer, as though it could suddenly and unawares surprise them, which had so many wonderful alterations to forgo it, and yet none of them come to pass?"

4. Mr. Mede's observations ought to be attentively considered by premillenarians, as they strike at the very root of their theory, that the personal coming of Christ may be daily expected. On looking around, it is evident that many important events, essential to complete the chain and end of prophecy, remain still unaccomplished. Therefore, the expressions so often quoted, and so much relied upon, can only apply to his spiritual or providentialcomings, or to the hour of death to individuals; which, to them, is emphatically the coming of Christ, inasmuch as the state in which they are at that time found, will be that which they will occupy in the morning of the resurrection. "He that is holy, will be holy still; and he that is filthy, will be filthy still." In this latter sense alone, it is obvious, can those expressions be applicable to persons of every age and country; for whom, and not for any particular age, let it always be remembered, the gospel and the scriptures are designed. "Behold I come
quickly," says the Lord—"Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus," replies the believer, referring to his individual removal. But in that removal and coming of the Lord, there is an unquestionable allusion to and a type of Christ's second advent at the last day. What has occurred to the believer individually, will occur to the church in one body. The Lord will come to take it to himself. Perhaps in the conclusion of the book of the Apocalypse, the apostle St John might, as Mr. Elliott remarks elsewhere, take a representative character of the whole church in the sense just mentioned; and then the passage is beautifully illustrative of its longing desire, viewed in its complete state, for the coming of its Lord. A friend once remarked to us, that he thought there must be something more than the hour of death alluded to in the many scriptures concerning Christ's coming in the clouds. It is scarcely, perhaps, necessary for us to say, "We think so too." Realize the thing. Death is the dissolution of the tie between the body and soul; the intermediate state then takes place, of which very little is said in scripture. On the morning of the resurrection it ends: the body and soul are once more one. What does the saint then first behold? The glorious sight of the Son of Man coming in the clouds, with his holy angels. That moment should be continually held in view by us.

5. It may be expedient here, to make a few further observations respecting the right interpretation of scripture language. If a literal construction can stand, according to Hooker's rule, it ought to be received. But from the nature of the case, in very numerous instan-
ces, the literal meaning cannot stand, and evidently never was intended by the inspired writers to be adopted. Those who contend for such a construction, too much narrow the mind of the Spirit. A well known writer argues, that a certain Greek word means a personal appearance, and he contends, therefore, zealously, for Christ's personal coming before the millennium. But do we not find, that in the Greek, as well as every other language, terms originally true only of the body, are applied to the mind? They have a secondary as well as a primary meaning. When speaking of spiritual or intellectual perceptions, we say, "I see;" "I feel;" "I hear;" "I am prostrate." We speak of "the right hand of God;" of "his face;" of "his eyes;" of his displaying "a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm;" "walking upon the wings of the wind;" of "being seated at his right hand;" of "his sword;" of "his footstool." We say, that God is "seen in his works." "The various parts of creation minister invisibly to his will," &c. So that nothing conclusive can be drawn from language thus applied: but the subject and the context must determine the sense. We may add, as a further illustration, the language in the ecclesiastical tradition, quoted from St. Ambrose, that St. Peter, being about to fly from persecution at Rome, on arriving at the gate, he saw our Lord entering the city, whereupon he said, "Lord, whither art thou going?" Christ answered, "I am coming hither to be crucified again." "Peter, hence," it is added, "understood that Christ was to be crucifried again in his servant."
Again: in other instances, we reverse the figure. We call a material building, "a church;" "a house," &c.; terms applicable to that which is contained within. The Easterns, we know, abound in metaphorical language. Their sovereigns are "brothers to the sun and moon;" "golden feet." The Chinese empire is "celestial." A man says, "may you live a thousand years,"—"light of my eyes." Even we Westerns speak of "a star;" "a jewel;" &c. Our blessed Lord called Herod "a fox;" the scribes and pharisees "vipers." And yet, in all these instances, the expression is never understood literally. The phrases only express, under a figure, the inward and invisible perceptions of the speaker, regarding the person or thing referred to.

This subject might easily be enlarged upon; but almost everyone's experience will suggest illustrations, and satisfy him, that the too literal acceptance of terms, would, in many instances, tend rather to confuse, than assist the right understanding of a matter. There is, also, to be noticed, a mode of speaking still more applicable to the subject under discussion, than any hitherto mentioned; namely, when we say "pestilence walks;" "riches have wings;" &c.; in which the event is palpable, but brought about by an invisible agency. So is the coming of Christ, in a spiritual or providential sense. It is manifest to all, but produced by an unseen power.

6. It is proper here to notice a rule of interpretation afforded by our blessed Lord. In Malachi, iv. 5, 6, we have the following prophecy;—"Behold,
I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Our Lord says, Matt. xi. 13, &c., "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Then again, xvii. 10—13, "His disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already... Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." Turn we to the prophecy of John’s birth; Luke i. 17. It is there said, "He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." It seems impossible to have a higher or clearer canon of interpretation than this. Yet our premillenarian brethren cannot receive it. It is our authority for often interpreting spiritually what they allege must necessarily be literal.

7. There is another rule of interpretation so well expressed by Mr. Brown, in his admirable work on Christ’s second coming, that we give it in his own words. In substance it has often occurred to us, and is well calculated to guide through many prophetic difficulties.

"There is not one of the terms by which the state of grace is described, which does not convey underneath it an announcement of the corresponding thing
in the state of glory. It is, in fact, the same thing at two different stages of its progress which is described; the one farther forward than, and the perfection of, the other; and as Christ's work secured the whole, so all that ever will be is seminally contained in the Church's present state, and truly couched under every description of that present state.” c. viii., p. 207.

Again, in comparing Isaiah lx. with Rev. xxi., he adapts this rule to the prophets of the Old Testament, and says, “To a cursory reader, the apostle appears just to transcribe the prophet, and both to be setting forth the same thing. But it is quite otherwise. All that is in John is seminally contained in Isaiah. But the one is treating of a mortal, the other of an incorruptible state of the Church... The prophet's vision furnishes not only the language, but the ideas embodied in the vision of the apostle. Only the prophet's immediate theme is one not quite so far forward in the march of the divine scheme, as the apostle's... "Thy people shall be all righteous," says the prophet. Isaiah lx. 21. “There shall in no wise enter into the new Jerusalem anything that defileth," says the apostle. Rev. xxi. 27. Are these descriptions of one and the same state? Manifestly not. The one is just the earnest of, and the next stage to, the other. The one is that in the earthly, what the other is in the heavenly. Prevaling holiness is all that the one holds out: Perfect holiness is what the other announces.” ibid. p. 223.

It will be well for the reader to give these rules an attentive consideration. They are destructive of the great mass of premillennial interpretations.
8. There is some difficulty, occasionally, in understanding scripture language, with reference to the literal and spiritual Israel. This arises from the compound character of Abraham, who was the progenitor of a nation that involved within it a spiritual as well as a natural seed. Hence, promises made to the Jews literally, according to the canon we have just quoted, have an extended and more complete fulfilment in the Christian Church, which it would seem, was throughout the whole of the Old Testament period, in the Divine mind. The reader, who attentively peruses the references in the gospels to the literal expressions of the prophets, will be surprised to find how they are explained in a spiritual sense. In New Testament language, the church of Christ is, also, often regarded in its complete character of one body—part being in heaven—part still on earth. In this sense, the twenty-four elders in the Revelation of St. John, say, “we shall reign on the earth.” Indeed, this is still a very common mode of expression. We speak of a nation in its corporate capacity, and apply the same terms to acts of our ancestors, as if they were our own. Our soldiers, or our sailors, or our parliament, did such and such acts. Speaking in this corporate sense, the acts of a succession of persons are represented only as of one. “The beast;” “the witnesses;” “the false prophet;” “the harlot;” “Babylon;” are instances of this kind. We, of this day, speak of “the Turk;” “the Jew;” “the Pope;” &c.; not meaning an individual, but the successive individuals or characters, that have been so designated.
A few words may be added, respecting the symbolic language of scripture. "The sun," and "the moon," are put for the ruling powers in a family or state. "The heavens," in such connection, mean the national or earthly firmament, in which such powers move. "The clouds," are, in like manner, to be so applied: only the latter phrase always seems to mean some act of divine judgment. "The stars" are principal people, either civil or ecclesiastical. It is wonderful how the proper understanding of these few figures will explain many otherwise difficult passages of scripture prophecy. Take, as an instance, the language of St. Peter, Acts ii. 20, "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord:" in which the allusion is, evidently, to the overthrow of the spiritual and temporal powers of the Jews, before the destruction of their city; which event, in reference to that nation, is described as the day of the Lord.

If human authority be requisite on this head, we may quote Sir Isaac Newton, who, in chapter ii. of his "Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel," says, "In sacred prophecy, the sun is put for the whole species and race of kings in the kingdom or kingdoms of the world politic. Darkening, smiting, or setting of the sun, moon, and stars, for the ceasing of a kingdom or for the desolation thereof, proportional to the darkness; darkening the sun, turning the moon into blood, and falling of the stars, for the same. The creating a new heaven and earth, and the passing away of an
old one, for the rise and reign of the body politic signified thereby,” &c.

Again,—Bishop Warburton (Div. Legation, Book 4,) says, “For, as in the hieroglyphic writing, the sun, moon, and stars, were used to represent states and empires, kings, queens, and nobility; their eclipse and extinction, temporary disasters or entire overthrow, &c.; so, in like manner, the holy prophets call kings and empires by the names of the heavenly luminaries: their misfortunes and overthrow are represented by eclipses and extinctions: stars falling from the firmament, to denote the destruction of the nobility. In a word, the prophetic style seems to be a speaking hieroglyphic.”

9. We may further illustrate the preceding observations by a single Psalm; the lxviiith. “Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered.” Here God is represented arising, as if he had bodily parts. “Let them also, that hate him, flee before him.” But their flying is to be “As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.” It continues, “Extol Him that rideth upon the heavens. Why leap ye, ye high hills; this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in, yea, the Lord shall dwell in it for ever. The chariots of God, are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. The Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place.” It is afterwards added, “That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies.” Exactly the same imagery, it will be perceived, is here employed, to describe the spiritual
triumphs and glory of God, as would be used of an *earthly* conqueror. So in the eighteenth verse: "Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Here especially, observe, we have, even the literal language foretelling the ascension, accompanied by figurative terms. Analogously to the ancient triumphs, it is said, "Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men." Thus we see many circumstances may be the subject of a prophecy, and be literally fulfilled; and yet even that fulfilment may be illustrated by the use of a metonymy or figure non-literal in its interpretation. These things require to be accurately considered, in order to approach, in an intelligent manner, the subject before us, and to come to correct conclusions. In matters of this kind, we must not dogmatize upon certain expressions, as if incapable of any other than a literal construction, but we must carefully seek the mind of the Spirit; and Oh! that the Holy Spirit may bless these pages, and guide the writer and reader in the path of truth!
CHAPTER IV.

THE SPIRITUAL MILLENNIUM.

1. Perhaps some one, appalled at the apparent difficulties that surround the case, may be tempted to fall back upon the view entertained at the Reformation, and abandon the expectation of a future millennium of any kind. We have ourselves often been tempted in that direction; but, on reflection, we find that cannot be. First,—The millennium, in chronological order, immediately precedes the day of judgment, with the exception of the interval of Satan being again loosed, and the general apostacy of Gog and Magog. Rev. xx. Secondly,—There has hitherto been no period of time fulfilling the requisites of the millennium, namely, the binding of Satan, the abolition of war, and the ceasing of strifes and divisions. “The lion has not yet lain down with the lamb;” nor have “men yet turned their swords into ploughshares, nor their spears into pruning hooks.” Thirdly,—The stone, which was to strike Daniel’s image upon his feet, and afterwards to become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth, has not yet performed its destined mission; nevertheless, the prophecy of this is so evident, that he that runneth may read:—“In the days of these kings, (i. e., of the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was to be
divided, and which event has long since occurred,) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." Dan. ii. 44. Fourthly,—We have not yet seen the destruction of Antichrist, and the conversion and restoration of the Jews; events which are to be followed by a state of things which St. Paul describes under the figure of "life from the dead."

In short, the millennial period meets us in scripture, whichever way we turn. Our reformers did not live in a sufficiently advanced state of the world to form an accurate judgment upon it.

2. Providence, in matters of this kind, is the great interpreter of scripture. It would now be vain to allege, that we have not better opportunities of forming a more correct opinion upon prophetic subjects, than were possessed by those who preceded us. Let any intelligent person peruse the works of ancient writers on prophecy, and compare them with authors of the present day, and he will find the advance of light to be manifest. He will see himself to be in the position of a man, who, having ascended an eminence, looks back upon the country he has left behind. There may still be obscure spots in the distance, but he beholds the grand outlines mapped out to his retrospective view. Very few readers of scripture will now be found to deny an expectation of a more glorious period of the church than that in which we live. The principal question to be agitated is, the nature of that glory. Will it be a new
dispensation, or a more complete development of the existing one of the Spirit? We reply affirmatively to the latter. We believe that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, was the first act of the glory of the latter day;—the bud of a future flower. It is true, that it was the will of God that many severe frosts and storms should injure the bud and retard the flower and fruit, but not destroy them. The seeds of an apostacy were early to be sown in the Church, and the weed antichrist, was destined, for a long season, to overshadow and poison the soil. The work of the Spirit would, during that dark period, be necessarily restricted, though never abandoned. But we have the cheering promise, that the man of sin will be destroyed, and Satan be bound; upon which, the Spirit, being no longer resisted, will be poured out in overflowing showers of divine grace, which will spiritually replenish the earth.

What need we more than that to make the earth glorious. The believer, who now experiences in his own soul the unction from the Holy One, finds himself in a happy position. His joy in the Lord is great. After reading the life of any individual so favoured, are we not constrained to say, What want we more than this? Is it not present peace, and the pledge of future bliss? The Saviour is revealed to the soul, and spiritually manifested as an intercessor seated at the right hand of God. That soul is happy. Extend the feeling to large communities, and you have the millennium before you.

How easily this can be done by an omnipotent God,
when the proper moment arrives, is needless for us to shew; and it is quite unnecessary for us to speculate upon the means that may be employed; i.e., whether by an enlarged blessing upon existing institutions, or by some new agency. At present, we are to perform our duty according to our light. Hereafter the Lord will give the word; great will be the number of the preachers. Dead souls will experience the first resurrection in numbers and rapidity beyond our present conceptions. Nations will be born in a day. "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in its time." That state will be general which Jonathan Edwards describes to have taken place in a revival of religion in 1735, at Northampton in New England.

"A great and earnest concern about the great things of religion and the eternal world became universal in all parts of the town, and amongst persons of all ages and degrees. The only thing in their view was to get the kingdom of heaven, and every one appeared pressing into it: the engagedness of their hearts in the great concern could not be hid; it appeared in their very countenances. The work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner, and increased more and more: souls did, as it were, come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought out of darkness into marvellous light.

"The town seemed to be full of the presence of God. . . . It was a time of joy in families, on account of salvation being brought to them: parents rejoicing over
their children, as new born; and husbands over their wives; and wives over their husbands.

"The goings of God were then in his sanctuary: God's day was a delight, and his tabernacles were amiable. Our public assemblies were then beautiful: the congregation was alive in God's service. In all companies, on other days, on whatever occasions persons met, Christ was to be heard and seen in the midst of them. Those amongst us that had been formerly converted were greatly enlivened and renewed with fresh and extraordinary visitations of the Spirit God." See Edward's Narrative of the Revival of Religion in New England. Is not the millennium day foreshadowed here, on a small scale—A drop of the future shower?

3. We have already, in a former chapter, touched upon the office of the blessed Spirit, as described in the 16th chapter of St. John's gospel. We will now further develop our views of that chapter. The sin of which the Holy Spirit will convict the world, is first, "Because they believe not in Christ." They had not faith. Now faith is defined by St. Paul to be "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." To see the Lord with the eye of faith is conversion, and is the work of the Spirit. But merely to see him personally, has no such blessing attached to it. The judgment might be convinced, but the heart not reached. The apostle says, "We are saved by hope: but the hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?" Further, it is said, "We walk by faith, not by sight."
Our blessed Lord himself said to Thomas, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed;" implying a greater blessing to be attendant upon believing than seeing. These scriptures also repudiate the idea of faith being rendered efficacious by a personal presence. The text continues, "of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more." The purpose of Christ's going to the Father, as we gather from this chapter, and other passages of scripture, was to sit at his right hand, and make intercession for his people. This righteousness, therefore, can only be presumed to be pleaded whilst the Saviour is with the Father, at his right hand, which we have already seen is in heaven. "The righteousness of faith," says St. Paul, "speaketh in this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. x. 6—9. Hence, this second particular, like the first, is not applicable to a Saviour personally reigning on earth, but to one absent in the body, present in the Spirit;—to a "Christ formed in you, the hope of glory." Our Lord adds, "Of judgment: because the prince of this world is judged." The prince of this world is Satan. He is already condemned or judged; and those who serve
and obey him, are under like condemnation. This judgment commenced when Christ overcame him at the cross, and is still in progress, though not completed. He was afterwards expelled from the pagan heavens, and from much visible power over mankind. He is, however, still loose on the earth; and although we know that he will be bound for a thousand years, he will not be finally judged, or sentence be carried into complete effect, until after the millennium; and at the general resurrection, he will be “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” This passage, therefore, clearly asserts, that the Spirit’s demonstrating power will continue till Satan is finally judged at the end of all things; and negatives an intermediate personal reign of Christ, inasmuch as the Spirit was to have a distinct operation on earth, and to supply the Saviour’s absence.

4. An objector, perhaps, may say, It seems very difficult, even upon your own more sobered views of a millennium, to reconcile many parts of scripture with an universal spread of true religion. For instance, “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, and few there be that find it.” “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, for whosoever loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” “He that will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me.” Many other texts of the same class might be quoted. To this we
reply, that many of these texts are not inconsistent with the state of things which, we assume, will exist during the millennium. We believe, that although kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church; and although, in prophetic language, it is said, "Thy people shall be all righteous;" still, all this is spoken rather of the overwhelming numbers, than of every individual. Even our pre-millenrian brethren, who go the farthest in their views of the renewed earth, hesitate to speak of all evil being extinct during the one thousand years. The excellent Mr. Bickersteth, in a passage, part of which we have already quoted, says, "The subjection during the millennium, not being a complete and full subjection of the heart to God, the corruption of man will, at its close, have a yet further manifestation. During the millennium, the faithful are mingled with those who only yield a feigned obedience. The last apostacy removes them from the 'earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.'" Such characters, however, will not be influential, but obliged to conform in outward things to the reigning righteous.

Such a state will not be like heaven, of which alone it can be said, "that there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." But as the good in a world of wickedness, possess some influence, and often, in consequence, provoke the hatred and opposition of the wicked, so the reverse may be true in millennial days, and the feigned professor prove, to a partial extent, an annoyance to the righteous. The bind-
ing of Satan, we think, is not necessarily to be taken in a physical sense. It may have reference to his influences. St. Augustine long since pointed out that it is not said, he shall no more tempt men, but that he shall no more deceive the nations. He will no longer have power over large bodies of men. He will possess no party: nevertheless, in a limited degree, he may harass and annoy individual souls: watching them, perhaps, as the dragon is represented in Revelation xii., standing before the woman, ready to devour her man child. Alas! also we know, that, for a season, he will recover his power with raging violence. May not a knowledge of this produce much pain to the saints?

We would venture to suggest an enquiry, whether there may not be an analogy between the first or spiritual resurrection state of an individual believer now, and the first or spiritual resurrection state of the church, during the millennium. The one, though renewed from heaven, and possessing in himself the germinating principle of future glory, is still imperfect, and liable to various trials; even so may it be with the regenerated church. In each case, the end of imperfection is the coming of the Lord. That is the day of joy to the church in its individual members, and in its complete body.

5. The scriptures, as we understand them, have even now an application to persons in very different circumstances. For instance, some passages apply with peculiar force to those suffering under persecution. Whilst others declare, “Godliness has the promise of the life that now is.” Both may be true, though the perse-
cuted saint has no part in the latter promise. But time rolls on, and we find persecution over, and the church prosperous. Then the promises and warnings, of an opposite cast to those about persecution, come into exercise. Still the scriptures, in all cases, are found to be "profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." With regard to some of the texts we have quoted, we conceive the objector does not fully enter into their meaning. For instance, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way." Strait and narrow, because of holiness. But the saint does not object to this. It is the unrighteous who view this as a hard saying, and turn aside to the wide gate, and the broad way. It will be different in millennial times. Men will then choose the narrow way, which leadeth unto life. The present broad way will, happily, have become an unfrequented one. Again, "Let him take up his cross and follow me." Neither is this an objection to a Christian; whether it be an outward or an inward cross, he knows it is useful, and preparing him for glory. The Holy Spirit renders everything sweet that leads to Jesus. Will, then, the inward cross exist in the millennium? We believe it will.

Many other of the texts may also be profitable to millennial saints, as shewing their escape from trials which their brethren in past ages endured, as we in the present day regard those relating to persecution unto death. This train of thought might be further pursued; but, perhaps, enough has been said.

6. There is a subject which appears connected with our present chapter, and to which we will here briefly
refer. It is observed by Bishop Butler, in his Analogy of Religion, (part i. c. v.,) that “our being placed in a state of discipline, throughout this life for another world, is a providential disposition of things exactly of the same kind as our being placed in a state of discipline during childhood for mature age.” Now, we think it clear, that anything of this kind is inconsistent with the personal reign of Christ on earth. On his return he will be glorified, and the vision of him will necessarily be beatific. Whoever beholds him must be perfect, and have undergone a change to enable him to behold so glorious a Being. It is said, 1 John, iii. 2, “When he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

We cannot admit of any exceptions to this requirement. We must be made like to him,—and exchange a natural for a spiritual body. Such a state, however, is in direct opposition to one of trial. Yet it is trial which constitutes the grand security of the saved. To be Christ’s people, without partaking, more or less, of the fellowship of his sufferings, would place the millennial saints in a position like that of Adam, and imply a possibility of their apostacy even in glory. We believe, that it is essential to salvation to undergo trial and discipline on earth, and we derive from this a further argument in favour of a spiritual millennium, since a beatific view of Christ, as we have just observed, is inconsistent with anything of that nature.

7. A train of ideas has often been presented to our view. We have thought on the glories of the millennium;—how productive they must be of spiritual joy
and happiness to those who participate in them. Wars will have ceased—men will be just and merciful. Piety and benevolence will bear rule. What a blessed scene! Surely, can there be in such a state any alloy! Then we have endeavoured to place ourselves in the position of a believer under papal persecution—one of the Waldenses, or of our own Wickliffites, for instance. We have thought, could he have had presented to him, in vision, the present position of things;—the Bible he loved translated into almost every language of the earth, and circulated and read far and wide; no obstructions to its being read, but, on the contrary, every incentive to so doing being given by the aid of printing, and of works explanatory of the sacred text; large churches open, and crowded with apparently devout congregations; the gospel faithfully preached, and men invited and encouraged to come to the Saviour; schools founded for the instruction of the young; and the conveniences of life increased beyond the conceptions of every former age. "What a blissful vision!" would our poor persecuted saint exclaim, "surely all evil is banished, from what I now behold." But is it so to us? We, who now live, know that, amidst the reality of this vision, there is anxiety and pain, sin and sorrow; and although, compared with past generations, we may be said to have a goodly heritage, still we feel our life to be a pilgrimage. May not the future be, in this respect, like the present and the past?

There is one thing, more especially, which may occasion much inward suffering in millennial times. We know that, in proportion to the clear light and shining
of the Spirit, is the pain produced by secret alienations from God. The worldly man is indifferent to such a feeling; but not so the follower of the Lord. He dreads the nearness of sin. So the saints, during the millennium, being favoured with larger spiritual influences than are bestowed on us, may endure more intense agony at the sight of remaining imperfections, and departures from the law of their God; heightened, perhaps, by a knowledge that there will still on earth occur a fearful apostacy, the time of which may be to them uncertain. Still, however, their joy will be great, (as is even now with us, in some degree, the case,) when they realize the glorious fact, that more souls are gathered to Christ than in preceding generations. Whenever the Redeemer sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied, believers must rejoice.
CHAPTER V.

THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM, AND THE JUDGMENT UPON THE JEWISH CHURCH AND PEOPLE.

PART I.

1. Premillenarians have much to say on our Lord's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, the parables of the ten virgins and the talents, also the judgment of the sheep and goats. It seems proper, therefore, to pay some attention to those subjects, especially as they involve matters of the most interesting kind.

It appears to us, that commentators upon Matthew xxiv. have not taken sufficiently into consideration its connection with the preceding chapter. Our Lord had there made the following declaration to the Jews; "Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some of them ye shall kill and crucify; some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth.... Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." xxiii. 32—36. After our Lord had delivered this awful denunciation, he went out and departed from the temple. "Afterwards his disciples
came to him to shew him the buildings of the temple. Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.” It is afterwards added, that, “as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples [Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew,] came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Or, [Mark xiii.] “What shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?” This reference of the disciples, we think, was to the threatening in the preceding chapter, which we have already quoted, and to the declaration to the Jews, also made in the same chapter, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” The question related to the time when the threatened wrath would take place, and the sign of it. Perhaps the disciples remembered, and had in their thoughts, some former declarations of their Lord. For instance, that in Matthew, xvi. 28, “Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” It was to be manifested to all the world, that whosoever resisted the will of the Lord Jesus must perish. His own people to whom he came, but who received him not, were now to pay the awful penalty of their unbelief. The Romans were to come and take away their name and nation. The disciples would naturally connect the laying waste of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the temple, with the end of the world: for a Jew recognised no knowledge of God,
save amongst his own people; nor any polity except of Moses and the Levitical law. Perhaps he might add a slight glimmering of the reign of the Messiah. It is well to satisfy the mind upon these points, for they afford the key to the succeeding prophecy, and save a great deal of otherwise conjectural reasoning. The language of symbols, to which we have already referred, ought also to be well studied, in order to arrive at a correct appreciation of our Lord's words. In order to shorten the discussion, we shall pass at once to verse 29, since the intervening verses do not form so immediate a subject of dispute with our premillenarian brethren, and we are unable to illustrate them beyond what is contained in many excellent works easy of access.

2. "Immediately after the tribulation of these days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." This bold language forcibly strikes the imagination, and seems almost to lead the mind to the final judgment. It is, however, parallel with the words of Joel quoted by St. Peter, Acts ii. 19, 20, "I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath: blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and terrible day of the Lord." This day of the Lord in Joel, we gather from the apostle, had reference to the wrath of God upon Jerusalem, then about to be accomplished, and the closing of the Mosaic dispensation. In other parts of scripture, similar language is
applied to temporal visitations; always, however, implying a change of government, dynasty, or dispensation. Isaiah, for instance, thus speaks of Babylon: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." xiii. 9, 10. This appears from the same chapter, clearly to relate to the destruction of Babylon by the Medes. It is the uniform language applied by the Lord to his righteous judgments; and has evidently an ultimate reference to the great final judgment of the last day. The learned Jew Maimonides has often been quoted, as observing, that these metaphors import that men, who, for their state and dignity, might be compared to the sun and moon, shall suddenly fall down as a leaf from the vine and fig-tree. Our Lord’s words, interpreted by the prophetic symbols, intimate the removal of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of the Jewish nation,—the putting down of their stars, or men of high station,—and the shaking and overturning of the whole governing power. How exactly all this was fulfilled history faithfully relates.

3. "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four
winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Interpreting this, as we conceive we are bound to do, by the prophetic symbols, the appearance of the sign of the Son of man in heaven meant the destruction of Jerusalem, and the final passing away of the Jewish ecclesiastical dispensation and polity, as Christ, the Son of man, had foretold. Their departure was the sign of his exaltation;—proving him to have received all power in heaven and earth. He would send his army and destroy these murderers, and burn up their city. The Romans, in this respect, acted only as the ministers of his will. To this day, the siege of Jerusalem forms the most signal instance on record, of the fulfilment of prophecy, and one of the most manifest proofs or signs that the Son of man reigns, and will execute righteous vengeance on his enemies. Who can doubt, after its occurrence, that Jesus is now exalted on high? Let Christians offer up thanksgivings to God for that glorious fact. Perhaps the full figure implies the planting of the religion of the cross in the heaven of the Roman world. When Christ’s glory was thus to be manifested, the tribes of the Jewish earth were to mourn. They were not to be destroyed but dispersed. The Roman medal celebrating this wonderful event, bears testimony to this, by representing a mourning woman sitting under a palm tree; with the inscription, Judæa Capta. "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven." How similar is this language to that of Ezekiel, spoken of Egypt, "When I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and will make the stars thereof dark: I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon
shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee.” xxxii. 7, 8. This was fulfilled by the sword of the king of Babylon, v. 11. The sun of Egypt was obscured by the cloud of the Assyrian king. Her moon, by the same means, ceased to give her light. The Roman power, in like manner, as the instrument of the Son of man, clouded the Jewish heavens. The Lord Jesus overruled and directed that power. He was in the clouds. He also sent forth his angels or messengers, the apostles and other preachers of the gospel, whose voice, like that of a trumpet, should be obeyed by the elect from the four winds of heaven, i.e., from one part of the Roman heavens unto the other. “Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom [i.e., the Jews] shall be cast into outer darkness.” Matt. viii. 11, 12. The learned Doctor Lightfoot observes, “When Jerusalem shall be reduced to ashes, then shall the Son of man send forth his ministers of several nations from the four corners of heaven; so that God shall not want a church, though the Jews be cast off.

4. “Now learn,” continues our Lord, “a parable of the fig-tree. When his branch is yet tender, and puttheth forth leaves, ye know the summer is nigh: so, likewise, when ye shall see all these things, know that it [i.e., the coming of the Son of man] is near, even at the doors. Verily, I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.” Connecting, as we do, the end of chapter xxiii. with
the present one, we find our Lord bracketing in, as it were, the prophecy, with the solemn declaration, that it should be fulfilled in the days of that generation, viz., of those then living. History records that the whole took place within thirty years. This declaration appears so plain, that it excites wonder in the mind how any one can think otherwise. It seems to be the point of the whole matter. "These," says our Lord, in the parallel passage in Luke xxi. 22, "be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled." But our premillenarian brethren here meet us with all their energy. They allege, that the part of the prophecy we are considering relates to Christ's second advent, now, as they state, at hand. We acknowledge our inability to perceive the force of their reasoning. We have seen this symbolic language appropriately applied to the events connected with the siege of Jerusalem, and we cannot see why such a dislocation of the order of the prophecy, as they contend for, ought to be admitted. Our brethren, we know, are prepared with their critical crucibles, but we contend that it is not merely the words, it is the thing itself—the facts—that require our construction to stand. We know they ring many learned changes on the Greek word γῆνα, and, with Beza's Latin translation as an alleged quasi authority, read, "This nation or people shall not pass," &c. But granting (which we do not) this translation to be correct, it does not make out their case; for the Jews, as a nation, that is, with a capital city, and peculiar ecclesiastical government, did pass away in the time of that generation. Let the
reader refer also to the following passages; Matt. xi. 16, xii. 42. Mark viii. 12. Luke vii. 31, xi. 29—32, 50, 51: they shew the expression "this generation"* to apply to the then existing Jews, and confine our Lord's prophecy to that age.

The next illustration refers to the same circumstances; for the fig-tree putting forth its leaves, was a sure prognostic that summer was nigh; so the then coming events were sure indications of the approaching vengeance upon the Jewish church and state. There was to be a period, from our Lord's ascension to the destruction of Jerusalem, in which the dispensations of the law and the gospel would be partially intermixed, and the one obscure the other, but finally the latter would triumph, and the other pass away. The overturning of the temple worship was necessary for the complete establishment of the kingdom of Christ. We refer our readers to the Twentieth Dissertation of Bishop Newton, and especially to the following striking quotation from Bishop Warburton's Julian:—"This prophecy," says Bishop W., "does not respect Christ's second coming to judgment, but his first; in the abolition of the Jewish polity, and the establishment of the Christian: that kingdom of Christ, which commenced on the total ceasing of the Theocracy. For as God's reign over the Jews entirely ended with the abolition of the temple service, so the reign of Christ, 'in spirit and in

* Gr. γενετόρ. Lat. Vulgate, generatio hæc. Fr. Martin's Translation, cette génération. Mr. Brooks admits that "Beza has ætas, and Tremellius generatio," in this passage, though he alleges the Greek is not so translated by them in other places.
truth,' had then its first beginning. This was the true establishment of Christianity, not that effected by the donation or conversion of Constantine."

5. We may notice that many here refer to the parallel passage in Luke xxi. 20—27, in which, undoubtedly, the history of the Jewish people is carried down to a later period. It is there said, "They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon," &c. "Here," they say, "is a transition from the destruction of Jerusalem to its restoration;" and they proceed again to make the prophecy applicable to our own day. To this we reply, that it is undeniable that our Lord does, in Luke xxi. 24, for a moment turn from the immediate event, to trace the history of the Jews and of Jerusalem to a future day, with, very probably, a hint that the Gentile church might then, like the Jewish, require a purifying judgment; so that Jew and Gentile, being alike guilty separately, might the more readily unite in one glorious, pure, millennial church. But, in the next verse, he forthwith returns to his original subject, uses the same symbolic language and the allusion to the fig-tree, which we have already noticed, and winds up the whole with the admonition, "So likewise ye, (let the reader mark that word,) when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." This language, in our view, is conclusive,
and limits the prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem; and, therefore, in its own proper meaning, it has reference to a past event. Still, however, we deny not, that, by accommodation of language, many of the terms may be applied to the coming of Christ to destroy Anti-christ, which we all agree is now not far distant: nay, more; we admit an affinity in the events; the one a judgment upon the apostate Gentiles, as the other was upon the Jews; and both displaying the righteous vengeance of the Lord against iniquity. This, we think, is in some degree intimated, as we have observed, by our Lord's referring to "the times of the Gentiles." Moreover, both these events are undoubted types of the final judgment, and the imagery employed is derived from that awful day. But, on these typical occasions, the coming of the Lord Jesus in the clouds of heaven is not literal but symbolic.

PART II.

6. Our guide, hitherto, in explaining our Lord's prophecy of the siege of Jerusalem, has been a faithful adherence to the prophetic symbols. We have consequently felt our ground to be solid, since we believe these symbols to have an uniform meaning. It may probably be enquired of us, now, whether we consider the prophecy to be entirely confined to the events of that siege to which we allege them to refer. To this we reply, that it appears to us the symbolic language ends with
verse 31: we think, with Bishop Newton, that verses 32—34 treat of the near approach of the siege, and that in verse 35 there is a transition to the great and final day. What is more natural than for our Lord, after finishing with the type, to pass outward to the antitype—to the events of that day of which the other was but a prefiguration? Filled with the subject, he rises to a still higher theme, and exclaims, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." All this seems inapplicable to the siege of Jerusalem; the detail of circumstances, and the declaration that it should be fulfilled in that generation, are inconsistent with the exact day and hour being unknown to the divine speaker. But the great day of final account was then, it would appear, hid from him in his character of the Messiah. It was, nevertheless, a certain event, however long it might be deferred. So equally certain to us is the hour of death, though unknown to us is the time. It is the will of God that it should be so. The practical lesson is, that, the time being uncertain, we are required diligently to watch. Our Lord seems to have seized the occasion to urge this solemn duty upon his disciples; and may we profit by the lesson.
We conceive our Lord's illustration of the days of Noah, refers to the season after the millennium, just before his last coming. Men will then again have been seduced by Satan into unbelief, and Gog and Magog will come up from the four quarters of the earth, as the sand of the sea in number. That period will resemble the days before the flood. There will be "scoffers walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming." 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. In the times before the flood it is said, "God looked down upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said, The end of all flesh is before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold I will destroy them with the earth." Gen. vi. This language seems applicable to the time to which we refer it; i.e., when the present world will be, as the old world was, ripe for destruction. But the events of the siege of Jerusalem, relating only to one nation, scarcely come up to the scale of the words. Our Lord, in the succeeding verses, proceeds to lay before us his final coming as a motive for watchfulness: "Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Again, "Therefore, be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." The further we advance in this chapter, the stronger is our conviction that a difference exists in our Lord's language after verse 35. Before that verse, events are detailed which were to happen in that generation; the disciples were exhorted to observe the
signs, and by so doing escape the threatened destruction. But after that verse, an event is foretold which was certain; but for which the preparation would not be so much the observation of outward things, as an inward spirit of sanctified watching.

7. Some excellent commentators have considered Luke xvii. 20, ad fin., as a parallel passage to the one we are considering, and refer the days of Noe, &c., to times preceding the destruction of Jerusalem. On points of this nature much modesty is to be observed, as they do not affect vital matters, and the language is capable of different interpretations. But we beg to submit, that Matt. xxiv. is a more detailed account of the proceedings of which Luke xvii. is evidently an abridgment, and spoken on another occasion. It is, therefore, more reasonable to explain Luke xvii. by Matt. xxiv. than the reverse. Viewing Luke xvii. as a compressed statement of what is given more fully in Matt. xxiv., it appears consistent enough to suppose from verse 26 to apply to an event distinct from that of the preceding verses. The days of the Son of man, we affirm, include all the days of the kingdom of the Messiah on earth; and "the day of the Son of man being revealed," in this instance, signifies his final coming; of which, as we have already observed, it is equally clear, that the coming to destroy Jerusalem was a type.

8. To return, however, to Matt. xxiv. At verse 42, our Lord proceeds to undeceive the apostles on the subject of his approaching kingdom. It was not to be, as they probably supposed, a day of unmixed spiritual prosperity and triumph of the Messiah: on the contrary,
It would be a very mixed state; one of discipline, and requiring great watchfulness. He gives an instance of a faithful and wise servant, who acted in the spirit of watchfulness, and was found by his Lord at the hour of his death so doing: and, on the contrary, of an evil servant, who should say in his heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming." This last appears to refer to some infidelity, as to the coming of our Lord personally at the day of judgment, or at death. The delay of the first event, or forgetfulness of the second, caused the hour of death, and the day of judgment to be, practically, at least, forgotten: and the consequence was, that "he began to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkard." Our Lord, as we conceive, still referring to the time of his future kingdom by the adverb of time, "Then," xxv. i., proceeds to illustrate the nature of it, by the parable of the ten virgins; for we consider this, as well as the succeeding parable of the talents, to be rather illustrative, than strictly speaking prophetic, as many suppose it to be, of the state of the church, at the coming of Christ. It is apparently intended to be, and has, in fact, been used by divines in all ages, as applicable to the existing circumstances of the outward church. Applying it as a prophecy, it does not agree with those passages which are acknowledged, on all hands, to relate to the final day. "Behold," says St. Paul, "I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." St. Peter says, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." This momentary change, and the awful nature
of Christ's appearance, give no opportunity for the interlocutory matter which this parable contains; nor does the parable fall in with premillennial views, inasmuch as it represents the coming to be entirely for judgment, not for conversion. "The door was shut;" and the answer to the cry, "Lord, open to us," was, "I know you not." Further, the wise and the foolish are represented as being at the same moment on the stage; which is contrary to the theory of a thousand years existing between the resurrection of the just and unjust. In the resurrection, we believe the wicked will not cry for mercy; they will know that the day of grace has closed upon them for ever. The parable, as we have just observed, being more illustrative than prophetic, the machinery used is not to be interpreted in a manner to destroy its obvious general intention.

We do not know that it is necessary for us to write much about the parable of the talents. Part of what we have just said will be applicable to it. That parable will illustrate any state of the church whilst militant on earth. No doubt, the greater our light and privileges, the more we are called upon to exert our talents for the glory of God. The concluding part of the discourse, relating to the judgment of the sheep and goats, is, by a more than ordinary consensus, applied to the last judgment. Premillenarians suggest different interpretations to suit their views; sometimes it is judgment upon the heathen, at other times the first act of their day of judgment; but we have hitherto seen nothing advanced to shake our confidence in the ordinary application, or even to render any formal defence
of it necessary. The common sense of mankind seems to have irrevocably fixed its meaning.

9. A few words, in conclusion, in reply to the objection which possibly some may make, that our view includes no provision for a millennium. On this point, let us be careful not to confound things that differ. The object of our Lord, in the present discourse, was, as we conceive, to beat out of the minds of his apostles, the unfounded expectation which they evidently possessed of an immediate triumphant kingdom. They afterwards said, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Our Lord saw it was necessary to guard them particularly against an error which seemed rooted in the very nature of a Jew. The glory of the church on earth was not then his subject: but rather the reverse. The full and specific revelation of that glory for a thousand years, was reserved for the beloved apostle St. John. Such appears to us to be the fact. But if the whole must needs be prophetic, as some contend, we offer on that assumption the following hints:—We suggest that the faithful and true servant, and afterwards the evil servant, might shew the first and prosperous state of Christianity, and afterwards the apostacy of the eastern and western churches. The parable of the ten virgins, the state of things between the reformation and millennium, when there would be both wise and foolish churches. And lastly, the talents, the millennium, in which the great majority will properly use their talents; and even the small number who act otherwise, will not, like the servant in the first case, beat their fellow-servants, but, at the
worst, shall only be termed slothful and unprofitable. These suggestions we offer, not as our views, but only to shew, that, even on the supposition of the prophetic nature of the parables, interpretations may fairly be given contrary to those upon which our premillenarian brethren so much rely.
CHAPTER VI.

RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES.

1. In further discussing the premillennial question in the succeeding chapters of this Essay, we shall refer to the Horae Apocalypticae of the Rev. E. B. Elliott, because we view it to be the ablest exposition of premillennial doctrine with which we are acquainted; and because the present Essay originated from an enquiry into the subject occasioned by the perusal of that work. The order, therefore, will rather be that of following Mr. E., than what might possibly have been otherwise chosen. We now enter at once upon the consideration of one of the most perplexed questions. In proceeding, indeed, to consider the subject of the first resurrection, and the whole contents of Rev. xx., there is produced in the mind an instinctive feeling of approaching mysterious ground. We have before us an enigma, and we should be glad to escape proposing a solution. Sincere and enlightened Christians entertain conflicting theories as to the true interpretation; and every one must acknowledge that there are great difficulties in the way of a satisfactory conclusion. It becomes all, therefore, to express themselves with some degree of diffidence. Yet, if we would form an opinion at all on
the nature of the millennium, and the reign of the saints on earth, it seems impossible to avoid attempting an exposition of this passage. And if the attempt be made with meekness, and an humble dependance upon God's Holy Spirit, the discussion may form part of that "running to and fro," by which "knowledge is to be increased." May grace be vouchsafed to us to write in this spirit, on the present occasion; for, otherwise, the end in view, namely, the development of truth, can never be promoted. A mere contention for victory in argument, it is scarcely necessary to remark, is not a Christian motive.

2. It may be proper to call attention, in the first instance, to the fact, that the Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation of St. John, contains a prophetichistory of the conflict between the two great spiritual powers of light and darkness, from the first to the second advent of Christ. We, however, commence with the tenth chapter of that book, in which we read of a mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. He had in his hand a little book open. He set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth,.... and lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer." "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." The apostle, by command, took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; it was in his mouth sweet as honey, and as soon as he had eaten it, his belly was bitter: and he was informed
that "he must prophecy again, before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

In the next chapter, we have the vision of the two witnesses, to whom the Lord gave power to prophecy 1260 days, clothed in sackcloth. It is said, "When they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them; and their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city which, spiritually, is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half... And after three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither; and they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them." It is afterwards said,—"The seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

3. The chapters from xii. to xviii., both inclusive, do not take us much further in advance in chronological order. They relate to intermediate events, fulfilling God's judgments. We, however, have the pouring out of the vials forming the seventh trumpet, and are acquainted more particularly with its successive blasts, till we arrive at the eve of that period which was announced at the close of the vision of the witnesses, in
chapter xi., viz., when "the kingdoms of this world were to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." In the xix. chapter, ver. 11, we have a vision introductory of that great event. The apostle says, "I saw heaven opened, and beheld a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet... These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth." chap. xx. Then again we proceed to read thus:—"I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him,
that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years."

4. The reader, it is trusted, will have carefully read over the preceding quotations, and connected them in chronological order in his mind. "In the tenth chapter of the Apocalypse," Mr. Elliott well observes, "we had, for the first time, revealed whereabouts we were in God's grand prophetic calendar of the world's history." The angel, in that chapter, symbolises our gracious Redeemer, suddenly appearing with great power and energy at the Reformation. The little book in his hand open, the Gospels or the Bible, probably the latter. The angel's oath testified that the end of the enigmatical period of 1260 years was approaching, and comparatively nigh at hand. It would not indeed be just as yet. But there should intervene but one more trumpet sounding before it. In the days of the seventh angel, (whenever he may be about to sound,) then
the mystery of God shall be finished. The apostle's prophesying again, meant his receiving and eating the little book in the angel's hand, which book, we have seen, was either the whole Bible in a miniature form, or else some miniature part of it, as the gospels. He was to resume and receive the function and work of gospel preaching. The two witnesses, meant a succession of faithful ministers and gospel preaching, during 1260 years, witnessing for Christ, in contradiction to, and against, the various superstitions of the apostacy successively developed; and for the rule of God's word against the traditions and commandments of men; their condition being one of mourning and persecution, as of those who had to prophesy in sackcloth.

5. The witnesses being symbolic, the death spoken of was symbolic also: but the figure is so strong, as to signify nothing less than the complete silencing of those whom they represented. This took place at Rome, the broad street or place of the great papal city, at the Lateran Council. The English Lollards and Waldenses of Piedmont had been silenced. There remained only the remnant of the Bohemian Hussites. They were, by a papal bull, inserted, with approbation of the Council, in the session held Dec. 1513, summoned to appear and plead before the Council at the next session, May 5th, in the spring following. The day of the session arrived. The Council met; but there was no report of any stirring or pleading of the Bohemian heretics. Throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, Christ's witnessing servants were silenced,—they appeared as dead. The orator of the session ascended
the pulpit, and amidst the applause of the Council, uttered the memorable exclamation of triumph heard never before or since,—referring to the pope's power, he said,—“Jam nemo reclamat, nullus obsistit,”—no one now resists—none opposes. Again,—“Jam universal illius (ecclesiae) corpus uni capiti, hoc est tibi, subditem esse conspicitur.”—“The whole body of the church is now seen to be subjected to thee, the one head of it,”—addressing the pope. The witnesses, however, had completed their testimony,—having witnessed against each successive development of the apostacy. But it was predicted that for three days and a half the witnesses were to be looked upon as dead;—in other words, there was to be the interval of three years and a half between the first recognition of their extinction by the assembled deputies from the states of Christendom, and their resuscitation. The day of the session was May 5th, 1514,—the day of Luther's posting up his theses at Wittenberg—the well known epoch of the Reformation—Oct. 31, 1517,—three years and a half precisely to a day. The heaven to which the witnesses ascended, was a heaven visible to the enemies of the witnesses, and therefore not the spiritual heaven of the divine presence, but the heaven of political power and dignity. The ascent thither, an advancement to such dignity and power, and the call or summons from persons highest, for the time being, in political authority. The ascent of the witnesses was the result of Christ's special intimation, to identify further and more explicitly, the cause and triumph of the witnesses with the Reformation.
CHAPTER VII.

DESTRUCTION OF THE BEAST AND FALSE PROPHET,
AND SATAN BOUND.

1. The preceding exposition is compressed from Mr. Elliott's second volume; and to this, as well as Mr. E.'s general views of fulfilled prophecy, we have to express a full assent. Perhaps, if we might presume to suggest any addition, it would be, that the little book, by one of those allusive illustrations to which Mr. E. so often refers, gave an intimation of the discovery of the art of printing, which was so pre-eminently instrumental in spreading the Reformation. The Romanists are never afraid of the Bible, whilst it occupies an immense roll of parchment, or extends over numerous folio volumes, as it did in the ages before printing was discovered. It was the little printed pocket Bible, that, at the Reformation, became the vade mecum of the Protestant, which effected the overthrow of Rome amongst the masses of the people. Perhaps, also, the book being in the mouth sweet, and in the belly bitter, might intimate, that the first glorious success of Gospel preaching at the Reformation, would not continue throughout with its original purity and energy: And that many severe persecutions,—such as the burning of martyrs, the horrors of the inquisition,
and the civil wars and dragonades of France and other countries, would occasionally cast a gloom over its progress. The departure of many from evangelical truth, into neological and other errors, may also have been foreseen by the apostle. We would also suggest, that the heaven to which the witnesses were called to ascend, was rather the national adoption of their doctrines, than their political position. This last suggestion, however, is offered with diffidence.

2. After adopting the principles of interpretation contained in the preceding sections, we might have expected Mr. Elliott to have applied the same rules to unfilled prophecy. But, for some unexplained reason, he has forsaken them in his exposition of the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of the Apocalypse. Following, however, Mr. E.'s original, and, as it is conceived, sounder principles, we are lead to explain the appearance of Christ in the nineteenth chapter, as indicating his assuming great power and influence upon earth; and his being seated upon a white horse, to signify that he will ride on gloriously as a spiritual conqueror, subduing his enemies under his feet. The armies which were in heaven following him upon white horses, very probably, those witnesses who had ascended to heaven in a cloud, in chapter xi., and who, according to the previous interpretation, were exalted to preeminence in protestant countries. Out of the triumphant Redeemer's mouth goeth a sharp sword, which, we know from previous passages, (Rev. i. 16., &c.,) does not mean a literal sword, but the keen cutting power of his word, accompanied by the Spirit to subdue all
opposition; being sometimes a savour of death unto death, as well as of life unto life. His smiting the nations, and ruling them with a rod of iron, signifies the subduing of all his enemies, and his restraining wickedness of every kind, by his providence. In accomplishing this, he will have to exercise many severe chastisements upon the wicked and rebellious; which is compared to treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of God. A war of principles will take place; the beast and the kings of the earth, that is the papal apostacy and its supporters and sympathisers, oppose themselves to the gospel, with more than ordinary vigour. These words, “The kings of the earth and their armies,” here, probably, intimate that others besides the papacy will be engaged in this struggle. It will, however, all be in vain; for Christ having now arisen to victory, signified by his riding a white horse, will overcome and take the beast and the false prophet. They can no longer stand against the truth, as it is in Jesus; and will be cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone,—that is, they will suddenly disappear under the visible anger of God displayed against them; and the words seem to imply some remarkable judgment, like that of Dathan and Abiram. The remnant, most probably meaning the kings of the earth and their armies, that is, the unbelieving nations, will be overcome and slain by the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth, and signifies the condemning power of the gospel, which proves to many the savour of death unto death. Afterwards, the dragon, that is literally, Satan,
is bound a thousand years, and will be cast into the bottomless pit, shut up and a seal put upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years shall be fulfilled; and after that, he must be loosed for a little season.

3. The great difficulty of the prophecy now commences. The apostle (Rev. xx. 4,) “saw thrones, and they sat upon them; and judgment was given unto them.” The question is, who they were that sat upon the thrones. We beg to suggest, that they are the triumphing righteous; those who having spiritually risen again, are justified freely through Christ Jesus; a class or first-fruits of whom, designated by our Lord His Witnesses, ascended to heaven, or great pre-eminence, at the period of the Reformation; and who, it is conceived, will be the same who follow Christ riding on white horses. These, through the victory of their great leader, will be left in possession of the entire field of the world; and no longer witness, in any degree, in sackcloth, as those so characterised (as protestants) did from the Reformation till Christ's coming in power. The glorious truths held by these witnesses will no longer be confined to protestant countries; but, blessed be God, every opposing obstacle being removed, the wicked kings of the earth and their armies being slain, Christ will occupy, and reign over, the whole globe: that is to say, the knowledge of salvation through faith in Christ, working by love, will be generally enjoyed by mankind. It will influence and direct all kings, governors, parliaments, and people. The majority, instead of being wicked, shall be good: yea, “from the rising of the
sun, to the going down of the same, the Lord's name shall be praised. Then shall all the people praise thee, O Lord, yea, all the people shall praise thee. Then shall the earth bring forth her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.” There will be no protestant churches; for there will be nothing to witness or protest against; but the church will be catholic, in the true and scriptural sense.

4. The expression, “thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them,” appears to have a parallel in Daniel vii. 25, 26; where it is declared, that “The little horn [that is Rome papal] shall speak great words against the Most High. And shall wear out the saints of the Most High:” “but the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his [the fourth or Roman beast’s] dominion, to consume and to destroy it, unto the end;” (verse 27,) 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.” This passage wonderfully illustrates the one before us. Those “who were worn out,” and those “who afterwards had the dominion,” are declared to be the saints of the Most High. Obviously, not the same individuals, but a succession of persons of the same character. And so with regard to the witnesses who ascended at the Reformation, and the saints who ride on white horses with Christ, and those who afterwards sit on thrones. These are not the same individuals, either in a natural or resurrection state, but successive generations of
believers, having "one Lord, one faith, one baptism;" and are spoken of in their corporate capacity.

5. There is a previous passage, (Dan. vii. 13,) which, in a striking manner, also illustrates the subject under discussion. The prophet says, "I saw in the night vision, and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." The prophet afterwards gives the true meaning of this passage as follows:—"I Daniel was grieved in my spirit, in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the thing;" which interpretation, we have in verse 27, quoted in the last section. Here the figurative language, as in many other instances, induces a conclusion, that Christ will personally come and reign. But when an interpretation is given on infallible authority, we learn that the kingdom is that "of the people of the saints;" and, therefore, his presence and reign with them is spiritual. The phrase in the chapter before us, and in Rev. xx., that those who sat on the thrones "lived and reigned with Christ," upon which some argue for a personal reign, scarcely goes beyond the words addressed by our Lord to his apostles, "Lo, I am with you, to the end of the world:" or those, "Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is the extent of
this presence, rather than its nature, which, in our view, constitutes the difference between our day and that of the millennium.

6. It seems as if the whole of chapter xx. may be divided into two sections. The first, extending from verse 1—11, regards the millennium, and the subsequent apostacy of Gog and Magog. The other, verse 11 to the end, the final judgment of the dead, both small and great. It strikes us forcibly, that the series of events in this chapter, and those foretold Rev. xi. from the 15th to the 18th verse, both inclusive, are quite identical; and comprise the whole interval from the commencement of the millennium to the end of time. In Rev. xi. 15: it is said, “The seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” This relates to the millennium. The voices are not, observe, from heaven in its proper sense, but from the political or ecclesiastical heavens, as is evident from the phrase,—“the kingdoms of this world.” The whole, therefore, seems to have reference to the period now under discussion, when the apostle saw thrones and they sat upon them, Rev. xx. 4, and which extended over one thousand years.

The discussion of the remaining verses, 16, 17, 18, we reserve to Chapter ix.
CHAPTER VIII.

THRONES AND SYMBOLIC SOULS.—FIRST RESURRECTION.

1. Having shown who they were that sat upon the thrones, we proceed in the exposition of Rev. xx. 4, 5. The words are as follows: "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: [and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands:] and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." It is suggested that the words included in brackets, may be read as if in parenthesis; and that the personal pronoun "they," has reference alone to those who sat upon the thrones, and not to the souls of the martyrs. See Gen. xv. 13—16, for a somewhat similar idiom. Others, however, view the "they" to include souls re-united to their bodies. "They lived," i. e., in a resurrection state.

The personal pronoun "they," being used without a substantive, seems to imply a vivid view of something heard of, or presented to the eye. A person in
English, when excited, would say, "They come!" "See, they are there!" the mind being so interested, that the tongue cannot use the proper circumlocution of stating the substantive, or particular persons, or things, that were come or were seen. And may we not imagine the delight of the apostle, at seeing the people of God represented as finally sitting on thrones and reigning? Oh! what an ecstatic view, after so many adverse and trying events! Words could scarce express his joy. The reader, on this supposition, will substitute in lieu of "they," the substantive "saints," or "people of God."

2. The souls are considered by Mr. Elliott to be "evidently the same individuals that the apostle had beheld gathered under the altar, in a symbolic vision long antecedent, the victims of the persecutions of Rome pagan; and others, also, whosoever had not worshipped, and who, at the time of the judgment, did not worship, the beast or his image." With this we agree; except that we would write, they are evidently symbols of the same individuals, not the individuals themselves. The passage just above referred to by Mr. Elliott, Rev. vi. 9—11, is as follows:—"When he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their
fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." This view, it will be perceived, assumes that none other but martyrs are referred to in this passage. This we presume to think is clear. In Rev. xiii. 15, those "not worshipping the image of the beast" are named as martyrs, that is, killed for their testimony;—"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." "The parallel," says Mr. Tregelles, "to this sentence (Rev. xx. 4,) in Greek construction, is found in Rev. i. 7. In each case there is a general statement followed by ἀλλ' οἵτινες: not as some class added to the general statement; but, as expressing some, who, while included in the general term, are brought into especial prominence." He adds, "John sees a certain class in symbolic vision: and especially and prominently amongst them, and as part of them, 'those who had not worshipped;' whom he had previously seen as warred against, overcome, and slain. The grammar of the sentence shews this."

The souls, Rev. vi., are represented as calling upon God to avenge them; in which cry, no doubt, their fellow martyrs, who suffered for the word of God, under popish persecutions, joined. Indeed, as we have seen, the text implies it. But it is obvious, that the representation in this passage is symbolic. We are not to imagine that the souls or spirits of the blessed martyrs are thus placed, in one mass, under an altar. Oh! no; they are doubtless with Christ, in paradise, enjoying
great felicity, and there waiting for the resurrection of their bodies, and the eternal reward of the last day. We know that the proto-martyr St. Stephen departed, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and crying with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." The representation, therefore, is only made with reference to this earth, and to indicate that, although the Almighty may permit the wicked for a season to say, "Tush, thou God carest not for it?" he will nevertheless, on earth, make inquisition for blood; and, in the course of his providence, avenge his saints. It seems illustrated by Gen. iv. 10;—"The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." The symbol of a soul implies the absence of a body, and shews that those here symbolised were then in the separate state; and not in a resurrection one, as pre-millenarians allege.

Keeping, therefore, in view, that the representation of those martyrs was of their symbolic and not of their real state, we must explain, in an analogical manner, this vision in Rev. xx.—So interpreted, it will not mean that the actual souls of the martyrs were on earth, or themselves there seated on thrones, no more than it is to be supposed that Christ and his saints will ever appear mounted on white horses. But they were symbolised as now triumphing. Under the sixth seal, they cried to God to avenge them; that is, that God would be pleased to remove from the earth all persecutions of his people, and to cause the truth, for which they had shed their blood, to prevail. This, God had now done. It formed part of the song of triumph,
in chap. xix.,—"Alleluia; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." The great object of the martyrs' sufferings, was now attained, by the witness of Jesus and the word of God being at length universally prevalent. Possibly, an intimation may be intended that the souls of the martyrs in heaven will have some peculiar rejoicing in the knowledge of their cause being triumphant; as we know "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth."

3. We have seen in the Quarterly Review, for March, 1847, an engraving of the sculpture at Behistan, the inscription on which has lately, with wonderful ingenuity, been decyphered by Major Rawlinson. The sculpture represents Darius, king of the Medes and Persians. His Bowman and spearman are behind him. The king, with one foot, is trampling on a prostrate rebel; whilst nine other captives are linked together in a row. Above is represented the fervor, or protecting spirit of the king, floating in the air, and participating, as it were, in the triumph. This appears to us to illustrate and confirm our suggestions. It shews it was a very ancient practice to introduce spiritual symbols into representations of actual occurrences. And supposing two or more fervors, or protecting spirits, were so introduced, might not the sculpture be described in similar language to that of St. John? "I saw the place of justice, and they were there: And I saw the fervers, or
protecting spirits: and they there punished the rebels.” Now no one in this case would, we suggest, apply the pronoun they to the protecting spirits; but to the king and his living executioners. Figurative representations of this nature, have been very common in all ages. We daily see pictures, with the figure of death introduced in the above manner. Perhaps some intimation may also be intended, like to that 2 Kings, vi. 17, where, at the prayer of Elisha, the eyes of his young man were opened, “and he saw, and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

4. We have thus explained the souls of the martyrs as being merely symbolic, because that interpretation best corresponds with the symbols of the souls under the altar, in the sixth seal; it is, nevertheless, almost impossible not to suppose, that the symbol implies some degree of sympathetic feeling and oneness, between the martyrs symbolised, and the reigning saints. They were one in Christ their Lord: were of His one body the church: their cause was one. The one now lived again in the other. We think it, therefore, fair to admit an interpretation, with reference to such oneness. For we cannot assent to the weight of Mr. Gipps’ objection, which Mr. Elliott urges, namely,—that any notable revival of the spirit of the old martyrs, in times of millennial blessedness, is almost a contradiction in terms. We ask, is Mr. Gipps’ mode of putting the question the right one? The spirit of a martyr is not so much his martyrdom, as his faith in Christ. A man may give his body to be burned, and
yet not have a faith working by love. 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.
In Rev. ii. 13, our blessed Lord's declares;—"Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr." The martyr died for the faith; and that faith we know was the witness of Jesus. It is, therefore, the strong vigorous faith, and general character of the martyrs, and not their martyrdom, that is supposed to re-appear in the millennial saints.

If any one were to say, he saw, in certain individuals, the souls of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer; would not that language be perfectly understood? and would it not mean, that they had the same faith, the same animating principle of action? But the martyrdom would not form part of the view, except in a contingent sense. The martyrdom is an accident, not the substance of the thing. No doubt the saints, during the millennium, would, if required, lay down their lives for Christ; and so, likewise, would true believers, if called to it, in every age; but it may not form part of the will of God concerning them: for martyrdom is only one of the many tests, by which the Lord tries the faith of his people.

How striking, in this view, is the language of John Huss, in his celebrated dream. He says, "I, as it were awakening from the dead, and rising from the grave, shall rejoice with exceeding great joy." On his medal, also, a Latin inscription testifies to the same effect,—"In a hundred years, ye shall answer to God and to me." He prophetically thought he should live again in future confessors of his faith. Of this sort of
language, we have also the witness of Pope Adrian; for speaking of Huss, and Jerome of Prague, he says,—“Heretics, that seem to be now alive again, in the person of Luther, their great admirer.” An Arab writer says of Ab-del Kader, that he had, in a measure, become imbued with the soul of the holy Muley. The scripture also testifies, that the spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. It is needless to multiply instances. The language is natural and pregnant with instruction.

5. Proceeding with our exposition, we conclude, that the words, “the rest of the dead lived not again, till the thousand years were ended,” have reference to those slain, Rev. xix. 21. They were symbolically slain, as Mr. E. supposes the witnesses were, in Rev. xi. 7, 8. The death spoken of, he writes, was “symbolic; but the figure is so strong, as to signify nothing less than the complete silencing of those it represented.”

The word “slain,” in Rev. xix., is evidently analogous to the word “death,” in Rev. xx. To speak of any one as slain, includes the supposition of some violent death, which was the case in both the instances referred to. The witnesses had had their resurrection, but the dead or slain here were to have no resurrection, till the thousand years were expired; when Satan is again to be loosed for a little season. We find, in Acts, xv. 17, the apostle St. James, at the first counsel in Jerusalem, applying the very term οἱ καταλοιποί, translated “the residue of men,” to the Gentile or unbelieving nations. So also, St. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, ii. 3, “were by nature children of wrath, even as others,” (οἱ λοιποί,) i. e., the unbelieving world, dead in trespasses
and sins, and who were not raised up and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Here, Rev. xix., the term would seem to be applied, not to the beast and the false prophet. They were destroyed, by being cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone; and probably after their destruction, the Christian nations over whom they had tyrannised, will obey the gospel, and form part of those saints who sit on thrones. But v. 15, it is said, out of the mouth of Christ goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; (τὰ ἐθνά) and we have it intimated in Rev. xvi. 14, that the nations, in this part of the apocalypse, are to be taken in an extended sense. Putting, therefore, all these things together, it appears highly probable, that the term ὁι λαοῖ τῶν here means the kings of the earth and their armies, or some part of them who constituted the nations, or unbelievers referred to in Rev. xix. 15—19, and who are said to have been actually slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth. They are thus corporately dead; Gentilism, or unbelief of every kind, passes away, being quite subdued by the power of the gospel. It has no longer an existence. The apostle had seen believers in Christ, in their faithful testimony, symbolized by the witnesses and martyrs once slain, now live again and rejoice in persons of like views and faith. But the remnant of the dead, that is, the dead Gentiles, or unbelievers, (termed also τὰ ἐθνά, the nations,) lived not again till the thousand years were finished. The unbelieving or Gentile nations, being thus slain, or dead; the two-edged sword of Christ
having, on the one side, slain unbelief and its professors, so, on the other, the word of God spiritually raised up in faith millions of souls. The apostle is struck with the glory of the scene, and exclaims,—"This is the first resurrection;" that is, See the power of the first resurrection manifested fully! The spiritual resurrection was now no longer confined to a part, but animated the whole church, which had, as a body, assumed the first resurrection state. In the great spiritual conflict previously depicted, the faithful had first been killed, and their cause dead. Faith was extinct. Afterwards they had a living again, and an exaltation to higher power; and, eventually, through their Lord, they overcame the enemies who had killed them. Those enemies being slain, unbelief was extinct,—not to revive again till the thousand years are ended.

6. We now proceed to enquire more particularly into the meaning of the first resurrection. The unbelievers who were dead individually in sin, were also dead corporately. There were no longer any professed unbelievers. So, in the first resurrection, individuals were first partakers of it in Christ Jesus, by faith, and afterwards in a body, the church, which experienced life from the dead. It is said, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." These words afford a strong argument against the premillennial view of a bodily resurrection of some of the saints. For to be blessed and holy, and to be delivered from the power of the second death, constitutes no peculiarity of the army of martyrs. Thanks be to God! these are the common privileges of all saints, or
sanctified persons, throughout the whole Christian dispensation. "He that overcometh," says our Lord, "shall not be hurt of the second death." Rev. ii. 11. On the premillennial hypothesis, therefore, the words lose their point. Those living, however, during the one thousand years will be a chosen generation, in being enabled, to a greater extent than their predecessors, "to offer and present unto the Lord, themselves, their souls, their bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto him." And thus shall they be priests of God and Christ, and reign with him a thousand years.

This first resurrection, we may remark, in its most extensive sense, may be said to be the spiritual birth of all saints, from the first to the second coming of Christ. It is a new state, created in an individual heart, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.—It is of a spiritual nature, affecting the soul, or spiritual interests, and not a resurrection of the body. Indeed, the very term, "First resurrection." seems to give an intimation of its nature; for, a human being consists of two parts,—soul and body. The soul is, by nature, spiritually dead. The apostle says,—"we are dead in trespasses and sins." If the soul ever lives, it must have a resurrection to eternal life before the body dies, and consequently, before its resurrection. Nay more; the first resurrection of the soul is so important, that the final resurrection of the body will have its destiny determined by it. "If Christ," says St. Paul, "be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in
you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you." So that we at once arrive at the conclusion, that, on those who have experienced the first resurrection, the second death has no power. The source of this resurrection is the Lord Jesus Christ. "I AM," says he, "THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE: HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." John, xi. 25, 26.

7. This is the view taken by St. Augustine, in his "City of God." After quoting John v. 25, he says: "Jesus does not as yet speak of the second resurrection—that of the body which is to come, but of the first resurrection which is now; for, to distinguish these two, he says, 'the hour shall come and now it.' But this is not the resurrection of bodies but of souls, for souls have their death in sin and wickedness; according to which death they are dead of whom the Lord says, Let the dead bury their dead, i. e., let those who are dead in their souls bury the dead in body. Therefore, to those dead in trespasses and sins, he says,—The hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and they who hear shall live. They shall hear, he says, who obey, who believe, and who unto the end shall persevere." Again: "Those who through remission of their sins live now, live not to themselves, but to him who died for all our sins, and rose again for our justification: so that believing in him who justifieth the wicked, they are justified from unrighteousness; being made alive from the dead, they
apertain to the resurrection that now is of souls. For to this, the first, none pertains except those who shall be eternally blessed; but to the second, not only the blessed pertain, but also the wicked. This is mercy's resurrection: the other, that of judgment." He adds, afterwards,—"Rise, then, in the first resurrection, ye who will not be condemned in the second."*

In the same book, chapter x., Augustine, answering some supposed objections to this doctrine, says:—"But what shall they say to the apostle, who calleth this a resurrection. For, according to the inner, not to the outward man, they had arisen to whom he said,—If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above: which sense, in other words, elsewhere he puts, saying,—Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Hence, also, that text,—"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life."

After the above quotations, it is unnecessary to add further proofs. The resurrection is, itself, of individuals. But individuals, when formed into churches, are frequently addressed or spoken of corporately, in the same terms as in their individual capacity. Our Lord, in this manner, addressed the seven churches of Asia, through their various angels. To the church of Sardis, he says,—"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." It was not in the first

* S. Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis, Episcopi de Civitate Dei. Lipsiae, 1825. Lib. xx. c. 6.
resurrection state. And, so of different churches, during successive periods, the same words might be used. There were resurrections, or revivals, of churches and people here and there, at various times, but no general or universal one.

But, at length, the Lord in his mercy, having subdued all opposing powers, produces a general spiritual resurrection; and, through individuals, renovates all institutions, churches, communities, and kingdoms. There are no longer works of darkness,—no longer a world lying in wickedness,—but everything is animated by "The first resurrection. The state of the world is entirely new. The people being risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. They all walk in newness of life. Christ is their everlasting light. They obey his new commandment. They love one another. May we not all exclaim,—O Lord, hasten that period! Amen.

8. On referring to the Burial Service of the Church of England, we cannot but quote the following prayer, as beautifully expressive of the views of this Essay:—

"O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in him, shall not die eternally; who also hath taught us, by his holy apostle St. Paul, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for them that sleep in him; We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest
in him, as our hope is this our brother doth; and that, at the general resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight; and receive that blessing, which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear thee, saying, Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world: Grant this, we beseech thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer.

In this prayer, the doctrine of the first spiritual resurrection is recognised and stated, with reference to its blessed consequences at the general resurrection at the last day. This prayer is anti-premillennial and recognises no resurrection of the body previous to the final day of judgment: and applies Matt. xxv. 34, to the proceedings of that day, and not as premillenarians suggest, to some judgment on the Gentiles, or first act of the general judgment.
1. There are various considerations connected with Rev. xx., which were not introduced into the preceding chapters, but which it will now be well to add. Among these, a very prominent one is, the analogy that exists between Rev. xx. and the following passages in the fifth chapter of St. John's gospel: and which renders them illustrative of each other. Our Lord says, John v. 24, —"Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that hath sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." 25,—"Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." 26,—"For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." 27,—"And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man." 28,—"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice." 29,—"And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." This pass-
age, according to the best critics,* contains a reference to two different deaths,—the one spiritual, the other literal; yet the same word is used in both places, and is illustrative of the view given in this Essay of Rev. xx. In John v. 25, 26, we have the spiritual resurrection. "The dead," meaning, the spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live. So in the first resurrection, Rev. xx., those who sat upon thrones lived. They were risen again in Christ Jesus, and had spiritual life. Here, in John v., 27, 28, 29, there is a reference to the general resurrection of the last day. It is said, "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth. They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." Both, be it observed, at one time. So in the concluding verses, Rev. xx., we have also a description of the last judgment. The apostle says, he saw "the dead, small and great, stand before God. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up the dead that were in them." These latter expressions seem as if purposely varied, in order to convey the impression of their relating to all the dead. Yet, it is a cardinal point, with premillenarians, to prove that they do not do so.

2. The language of St. Augustine on this chapter, John v., is also very emphatic. "O rise," says he, "in the first resurrection, all you that will not perish in the second; 'for the hour cometh, and now is, when the

* See Bloomfield, Bishop Pearson, &c.; to whom may be added St. Augustine.
dead shall hear the voice of the son of man, and they that hear shall live'—that is, they shall not come into condemnation, which is called the second death. Into this, they shall be cast headlong after the second resurrection, which is future of the body, that arise not in the first, which is of the soul. 'For the hour will come,' not that the hour is now, because it shall be at the end of the world, in the last and great judgment of God, when 'all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth.' But he says not here as he said before,—'And they that hear shall live,' for they shall not have all that bliss, which is only to be called life because it is the true life.”* It is obvious, that if the above quoted passages, in John v. and Rev. xx., referring to the resurrection of the literal dead, include the whole of the dead, then the phrase, first resurrection, in Rev. xx. 5, 6, cannot have reference to the body, as premillenarians assert, but must be understood as relating to the soul, as St. Augustine urges.

It may be remarked, that, even granting our premillenarian brethren what they demand, the expression upon which they so much rely, seems to be scarcely correct in point of fact. For the first resurrection of the body, never to die again, was that of our Lord and of those saints who came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many. Matt. xxvii. 52, and 53. Was that not the resurrection referred to by Isaiah?—(xxvi. 19,)—"Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body they shall arise." Assuming the first resurrection to be

* Civitate Dei. b. xx. c. 6,—already referred to.
spoken of the soul, it is a truth for every age; and of universal import.

3. The substance of Mr. Elliott's argument for a literal interpretation of the first resurrection, is as follows:—He says, "in Rev. xi. 18, it is said 'The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets.' This," proceeds Mr. E., "is what here, Rev. xx. 4, begins to be figured. A part of the dead, viz., the prophets and saints being now adjudged to have the reward of a participation in Christ's millennial kingdom: the rest, of the dead reserved to receive judgment on the expiration of the thousand years." He adds, "If the harshness that was shewn to attach to any but the literal construction of 'the dead,' in that certain passage, do there preclude all figurative interpretations of the phrase, the literal sense must, from its parallelism, attach to the same phrase here also."

It is obvious, that, according to this view, the souls, (Rev. xx. 4,) ought to be those of all the dead saints; but it is manifest that those of martyrs only are there referred to. The apostle saw the souls of them who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus; and we have already shewn the language cannot be proved, by figure or otherwise, to extend beyond the martyrs. Taking this to be the case, how then stands Mr. E.'s argument? Rev. xi. 18, mentions the time of the dead to be judged, (ο καιρὸς τῶν νεκρῶν) evidently including all the dead; not a part. But the martyrs are not the whole even of the pious dead. The
resurrection, therefore, of a part of the dead saints, must be deferred until after the one thousand years; but that, we know, is contrary to the premillennial theory, which insists that the resurrection, Rev. xx. 12, is of the wicked dead solely. But the apostle says, "I saw the dead, (τοὺς νεκροὺς) small and great, stand before God;" i. e., the whole of the dead; not "the rest of the dead," mentioned v. 5. It is no objection against us to say, we construe the word dead, in this chapter, in two different senses: one figurative; the other literal. Our Lord himself does so in the phrase, "Let the dead bury their dead." The question, however, arises, which Mr. Elliott suggests, "Are the dead, Rev. xi. 18, to be understood in a literal or figurative sense?" Mr. Brown, for whose judgment, in these matters, we have the highest respect, connects, as we understand him, this verse with Rev. vi. 10, and writes "The judgment, which the vision says was given, just means redress for the wrong inflicted by one party, and received by the other. Those who suffered under the pagan system, ask explicitly to be judged, and to have their blood avenged on them that dwell on the earth. vi. 10. Now here are these martyrs under paganism in our vision: and they are getting the judgment which they asked. If they be here personally, why are they that dwell on the earth not here in their proper persons also? Then, again, those who suffered under the papal system, when their time came that they should be judged, 'were to see the destroyers of the earth themselves destroyed.' xi. 18. Now, here, in our vision, are those faithful resisters of antichrist to the death:
and John sees them also, getting the judgment promised them. This is our view of the matter. It proceeds on the principle of persons living in their successors." Christ's Second Coming, p. 340.

4. To those who altogether agree with Mr. Brown, Mr. Elliott is at once answered. But although we, in general, assent to Mr. Brown's principles of interpretation, we cannot, in this case, make up our minds to the conclusion, that "the time of the dead to be judged," Rev. xi. 18, is parallel with Rev. xx. 5, but rather with "the dead small and great," v. 12. We think that, in Rev. xi., v. 15 may be separated from the three following verses. Verse 15 having reference to the commencement and continuance of the millennium; the other three verses to the close of it. These verses are as follows: 16,—"The four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 17,—Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. 18,—And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shoulddest destroy them which destroy the earth." The language of the whole passage is admitted, on all hands, to be anticipatory. But if anticipatory at all of the millennium state, why not of the end, as well as of the beginning? We can see no reason, a priori, against such a supposition. Now we
note, First,—that it is said, the Lord God had taken to himself great power and had reigned. Secondly,—that the nations had been angry and his wrath had come. Thirdly,—that the time of the dead was come that they should be judged. Fourthly—that God should give rewards unto his servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to those that feared his name small and great. Lastly,—that he should destroy them that destroyed the earth. Now, it can scarcely be said that these things were fulfilled at the commencement of the millennium. Christ had not then reigned: but was only beginning to do so: the nations, in the full sense here required, had not been angry; for reference seems to be made to something like the rebellion of Gog and Magog. The time of the dead, i.e., of the universal dead, as the phrase implies, had not come that they should be judged: nor that God should give reward to those that feared his name small and great: nor were those destroyed who destroyed the earth, for the devil was again to be let loose; he had only been chained.

But all these things are applicable, in their fullest sense, to the events described in Rev. xx., as taking place after the millennium. Christ had then reigned: the nations, from the four quarters of the earth, had rebelled under Gog and Magog: the time had arrived when the literal dead, small and great, were to be finally judged. God was then about to reward all his saints; —not merely a part of them: and he had destroyed them who destroyed the earth; namely,—Satan, death, and the grave. This passage is one of Mr. E.'s strong-
holds, to which he retreats when pressed by an opponent. Mr. E. somewhere objects that such a view unduly extends the seventh trumpet; but is not the seventh to be the last trumpet, and include all events to the end of time?

5. It is proper here to notice an argument advanced by Mr. Faber, respecting "the rest of the dead, who lived not again till the thousand years were finished." Rev. xx. 5.

He says,—"The resurrection of 'the rest of the dead' takes place, we are told, at the end of the thousand years. But the end of the thousand years is not the end of the world. Therefore, what is called the resurrection of the dead, occurring at the end of the thousand years, and long before the final consummation of all things, cannot be the literal resurrection of the dead, small and great, which the prophet fixes to the unknown and undefined epoch of the literal day of judgment."

This argument, it will be perceived, supersedes the persuasion expressed by Mr. Elliott, "that no explanation of those phrases, such as to satisfy the conditions of the case, can be given, except that which refers them to the dead, small and great, mentioned after the account of Gog and Magog." The reader will at once see, that if "the rest of the dead" are not the literal dead, "small and great," the phrase must have a figurative and not a literal interpretation, and the pre-millennial argument fails. Mr. Elliott, it is true, says that Mr. Faber's argument is founded on a quite mistaken assumption of the requirements of the word till in the clause, and he offers many learned arguments, as we
find also is the case with Mr. Birks, in his "Four last Monarchies," to shew that the word ἵως, "till," does not imply that the event will take place immediately at the end of the period to which it has relation. But notwithstanding what these learned writers have advanced, we must be permitted to say, that nine readers out of ten will understand the phrase as Mr. Faber does; namely,—that, on the expiration of the thousand years, the rest of the dead would, thereupon, live again. The instances produced to the contrary, if they really are so, will be viewed rather as forming the exception than the rule. We think there are two parallels: in the one Satan is bound till the thousand years are fulfilled; in the other the rest of the dead, i.e., unbelieving gentiles, lived not again until the thousand years are finished. The parallels end at the same time. Afterwards Satan is loosed and deceives the nations. Clearly, then, the rest of the dead living again, is not the judgment of the dead, small and great. Mr. Faber's conclusion is a very heavy blow to the premillennial cause, and almost in itself decisive of the controversy.

6. With regard to Mr. Elliott's observations on the chapter under consideration, namely, that the word ἡνεκεν, "souls," no more indicates that they were still ἱναι, "incorporeal souls," than the title ἔσται, v. 12, implies, that these last were still, at the time of their standing before him, dead men; nothing more seems requisite than to point out that the instances are not parallel. Supply the word "risen" to ἔσται, and you have the risen dead, meaning the complete man resuscitated; but let the same word be supplied before
and it will still only mean the risen souls of the beheaded, not risen souls and bodies, and will scarcely at all vary the first meaning. There are other considerations that will soon satisfy the reader, that the same rule cannot be applied to these two words, and that the argument deduced is not of force.

7. It will be perceived, that we consider the Reformation to have been a first-fruits and precursor of the harvest-day or gathering of the first or spiritual resurrection; inasmuch as that truth then shone out gloriously. The doctrine of free salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, was proclaimed with a trumpet voice. Justification by faith alone was declared to be the article of a standing or falling church. More or less, that faith had animated all the martyrs and witnesses of Jesus; but the serpent, through his instruments, the beast and the false prophet, had fiercely denied it; asserting on the contrary, that salvation was obtained by good works, and the power and ordinances of the visible church.

Just before the dawn of the Reformation, spiritual Christianity had become practically extinct. But upon the development of that blessed event, Christ was preached with greater clearness and energy than had been the case since the days of the apostles. Everywhere it was made known, that "the dead in trespasses and sins" are never quickened "unless they hear the voice of the Son of God," and "believe in Him that sent him." The great difference between a spiritual and a carnal church was shewn to be in the power of the first resurrection in Christ Jesus, through faith, and not of works. "I am," says the
Saviour, "the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." It is remarkable, also, how writers on the Reformation adopt language having reference to a resurrection.—Mr. D'Aubigné says, "The church had fallen, because deprived of the grand doctrine of Justification by Faith in the Saviour; and if she were ever to rise again, it would only be by having that doctrine restored." Again: "This commotion in renovating the church, renovated so many nations, called others into existence, and created a new empire and a new Christendom. It sprang from the spontaneous action of the power of God. He had deposited, before hand, this new life in the bosom of the church. For all that was worth being revived, its movement was one of regeneration."

But, perhaps, the best testimony is from Mr. Elliott. He entitles one of his chapters,—"Reformation begun in the Discovery of Christ our Saviour;" and, in part III., c. viii., vol. 11., he says,—"The figure of a revival, resuscitation, or resurrection, is so natural, as well as striking, and so evidently appropriate in the case of Luther and the witnesses preceding him, that we cannot wonder at its having been perpetually applied by writers of whatever creed or sentiments. Not by way of illustration, but on account of its beauty and historic interest, I must beg," says he, "permission to subjoin an exemplification of it made anticipatively, I may almost say, prophetically, one hundred years before Luther, by the martyr Huss. We are told he dreamt, a few nights before his martyrdom, that some pictures
of Christ, that he had painted on the wall, were effaced by the pope and bishops. The dream afflicted him. But the next night he dreamt again, and seemed to see painters, more in number, and with more effect, restoring the pictures of Jesus. He told his dream to his friends. ‘I am no vain dreamer,’ he said, ‘but hold for certain, that the image of Christ shall never be effaced. They wish to destroy it; but it shall be painted afresh in the hearts of gospel preachers better than myself.’” The dream will be found related in Foxe’s Book of Martyrs, Vol. iii., p. 508. Seeley’s Edition.

From these considerations, may we not indulge the cheering persuasion, that the light of the truth will never again be extinguished. But as Christ came suddenly at the Reformation, with great spiritual resurrection power, so we may expect him again to appear, still more gloriously, to put away sackcloth from his witnesses, and to shine forth in the millennial day. “Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts, look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hath planted, and the branch that thou madest so strong for thyself. So will we not go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.” Psalm lxxx.

8. The latter part of Rev. xx. affords matter for consideration by all Christians, especially by our premillenarian brethren. Can they have given it the attention it demands? After the earth, according to their
views, has been restored to a paradisiacal state of regeneration, it is difficult to conceive how there should remain in it such awful elements of depravity, as to permit men, in number as the sand of the sea, and from the four quarters of the earth, to fall into apostacy, apparently almost at once, on Satan's being again loosed. Can we realize such a state of things? The post-millennial rebellion is, indeed, a very painful matter, and a difficulty upon almost any supposition of a millennium. But upon the premillennial theory, the difficulty is monstrous, and amounts to an insuperable objection. The mind, as we have observed before, seems instinctively to recoil from it. Even in our more limited view of a spiritual reign, and of the continuance of the earth in its present state, such an apostacy, though more possible, is still the most awful instance of depravity since the flood. Men may allege now, that they have acted only as their forefathers had done before them. That they never had had practically displayed upon a large scale what grace, mercy, and peace were. They never had seen Christianity fully acted upon. Its professors, instead of loving, had too often hated one another. But the men of the post-millennial time, will have been acquainted with all these. For many generations, they will have experienced the goodness of the Lord. The earth will have brought forth its fruits, and God, even their own God, will have blessed them. And yet, at the first opportunity, they will almost spontaneously display an invincible hatred of God, and a love of darkness more than light. Oh! how deeply seated is the corruption of
our nature to produce such a declension. Most probably, these men will be the scoffers referred to by St. Peter, who say, Where is the promise of his coming? In all probability, they will be outwardly prosperous. But their prosperity will destroy them. They will eat and drink, will marry and be given in marriage. But in an hour they expect not, the Lord Jesus will appear in the clouds, and the last trumpet shall sound. Will not the conduct of these apostates justify the righteous decree of God, when he says to the wicked,—"Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?"

9. Mr. Scott's view of this affecting subject, is so striking, that we give it in this section. He says,—"At the end of the millennium, God will remove the restraint which had been laid on Satan and his angels, for reasons which we are not competent to understand. Perhaps, among others, to shew, that the long-continued happy estate of the world, was not the effect of any amelioration of human nature, as descended from fallen Adam; but of an immediate divine influence on the minds of men by regeneration. Being loosed out of prison, their great deceiver will again exert himself, and soon excite agents; who, with all earnestness, subtlety, and sagacity, will corrupt the gospel, and seduce men into apostacy, idolatry, infidelity, and vice; and thus, the old generation of believers dying, the succeeding race, through many nations, in the four quarters of the earth, will be deceived by them; and, having themselves departed from the faith, they will be instigated to hate and persecute such as adhere to
it. Thus the spirit of antichrist will rise again, after the thousand years are expired. Then religious wars will be undertaken; and at length the whole multitude of the apostate nations, even Gog and Magog, as risen again, will confederate against the church, and come to fight against her with armies innumerable as the sand of the sea. It is in vain to enquire who Gog and Magog will be, or whence they will come, for this must be understood figuratively, to denote enemies fierce and numerous, as Gog and Magog had been before the millennium. When Satan and his angels shall be loosed, a few years will suffice to seduce multitudes into idolatry and infidelity, and other persecutions and massacres of Christians will be as natural as ever, and as readily resorted to; so that it will probably appear to the pious remnant as if the cause of Christ was about to be altogether ruined."

What a sad view to be sketched by so cautious, sober-minded, and judicious a commentator as Thomas Scott. It would seem as if the two extremes were to be wrought out: During the thousand years, God’s goodness:—during the interval, man’s wickedness and the devil’s power. This is called indeed a little season, —but that is a comparative term, and may be longer than we imagine. Whatever it may be, it destroys the dreams and hallucinations of pious premillenarians, and their supposed heaven upon earth previous to the final day.

* Note in loco.
CHAPTER X.

I.—THE PARABLE OF THE TARES AND WHEAT.

We proceed now to the parable of the tares and wheat, which Mr. Elliott says, "seems to allow no possible place or room, for the intervention of such a spiritual millennium as Whitby's and Vitringa's; before that which is symbolically called 'the end of the ages.'"

The parable in question, is found in Matthew xiii, in which there are various other parables, all describing the "kingdom of heaven." These are, 1. The parable of the sower. 2. The tares and wheat, now to be discussed. 3. The grain of mustard seed. 4. The leaven leavening the whole lump. Then the parable of the tares and wheat is explained. 5. The treasure hid in a field. 6. The pearl of great price. 7. The net cast into the sea, with an explanation. All these are to describe and set forth the kingdom of heaven under its various phases and circumstances. That kingdom was not to be of the unmixed nature which the disciples probably thought would be the case with the kingdom of the Messiah.

2. What then is meant by the kingdom of heaven? We reply, it is the state of things comprised in the commission given by Christ to his disciples, Matthew, xxviii 19, 20, concerning which, our Lord added, "and
lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.”
—That is, therefore, the period of its continuance. It is expressed by the Greek word άιων, which Bloomfield, in his note upon this parable says, “is the duration of the present state of probation, and of the visible church.” The question arises, whether or not the millennium is included in this period. The answer to this will be contained in the enquiry, whether or not the millennium will be free from hypocrisy and trial. We have already stated our opinion that it will not; and that an exemption from the latter, would, instead of being a privilege to the saints then living, be quite the reverse.

3. That the millennium will not be such a state of regeneration as Mr. E. contends for, seems clear, from death and sin not being declared to be extinct; on the contrary, we may conclude they will be in existence, from the fact of the nations being so readily again seduced by Satan at the great final apostacy of Gog and Magog. In such a state of things, can we say that no tares will exist, and that every root of bitterness in the human heart will be destroyed? Will all the evil seed, so industriously sown by Satan during the days of his admitted activity, be exhausted? Moreover, death and hell are not said to be cast into the lake of fire until after the millennium. Mr. Bickersteth, we have seen, admits the existence of hypocrisy. He speaks of persons of “feigned obedience.” Is not this exactly the nature of the tares? A false thing intermixed with the true, and scarcely to be distinguished from it by the outward appearance. Not a distinct
party by profession, like the gentile heathens or the infidels; but an insidious secret enemy. Is there, in this, any inconsistency with Satan not being enabled to deceive the nations during the millennium. Quite otherwise. His secret power, in isolated cases, or the sproutings of the seed he had already sown, may accomplish all this. We have already quoted St. Augustine's distinction. It is not said, that he shall not seduce any one, but that he shall not deceive the nations. A judicious friend, on perusing the above, adds, "It is by the reduction of Satan's power over individuals, that his ability to deceive nations will be destroyed. This power will be subdued by the general manifestation of Christ to the souls of men; the majority of whom will have victory over Satan, and be kept as in a garrison by the grace of God, through faith; whilst others, who remain unconverted, will be awed and restrained by the presence of religion around them, and prevented from entering into combinations through lack of numbers on their side. This will form the real glory of the Saviour's triumph. The crucified but risen Redeemer, wrestling the subjects of Satan from his grasp, through the power of the Spirit." An important consideration may here be pointed out. The mustard seed is to become a tree, and the leaven was to be hid till the whole was leaven; implying a gradual but complete extension of the kingdom of heaven, and negativing any change in its constitution.

4. The end of the world, in these parables, we contend, cannot be taken in the premillennial acceptation; namely, as the end of a dispensation which closes before
the millennium commences. The representations are quite opposed to anything of the kind. "The Son of man," it is said, "shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their father." Now, the parable of the tares and wheat assumes them to be in existence and all upon the platform at one given period of time; namely, the moment of Christ's second coming: so that the angels may proceed at once to execute their office, and separate the bad from the good. But we think it must be admitted, that the mixture of tares and wheat described by this parable, is not to be limited to any one generation, but is to be applicable to all ages of the church. The process of separation, therefore, cannot take place in this world, nor until there shall be a resurrection both of the good and bad. It is said, the angels will cast them that do wickedly into a furnace of fire, and this before the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their father. But the premillennial theory requires a resurrection of the righteous, one thousand years, at least, before the wicked. How can this parable be fulfilled upon their supposition? Its grand point is destroyed. But the representation in the parable, quite agrees with the ordinary view of the day of judgment, in which the righteous are first to arise and to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; there to be assessors with him in the condemnation of the wicked, and their being sent to hell. But the
whole to be so rapid as to form, as it were, one almost momentary event.

5. There is a further consideration which we wish to suggest, namely, whether the phrase, "kingdom of the Father," ever means the millennial reign of Christ. The following passages seem to us, to oppose such a conclusion:—"In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." John xiv. 2. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." 1 Cor. xv. 24. "Heaven and earth shall pass away."—"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not even the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Mark xiii. 31 32. "I will no more drink with you of the fruit of the vine, till I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Now if "the kingdom of the Father" means, as these texts seem to imply, invisible and heavenly glory, then must the righteous shining forth in the kingdom of their father, refer to the scene at the final judgment, and clearly not to the millennium.

II.—THE MAN OF SIN.

6. The next head is that of The Man of Sin, (2 Thess. ii. 7,) upon which Mr. Elliott says,—"That, admitting the νομοσία to be Christ's second personal coming, it follows instantly and necessarily, that there can intervene no millennium of universal holiness and gospel truth before it." We have to remark, that the
apostle, in the first instance, only asserts that the day of the Lord should not come except there came a falling away first. The coming of that day, and the destruction of the Man of Sin, are not declared to be identical. The ground is kept quite clear for his intermediate annihilation. The apostle had, in verse 2, referred to Christ's personal coming, but the grand object of his epistle was to deny that it "was at hand." It was a far distant event: a falling away was first to take place, and the Man of Sin to be revealed. He then digresses, to describe "that wicked" whom the Lord would destroy with the brightness of his coming. But whether that be his coming "in the clouds," is the point we dispute with our premillenarian brethren. If the apostacy be spiritual, it seems fair, by analogy, to assume the coming to destroy it to be spiritual rather than personal. As to the Greek word ἐρρωσία, it is used in the original, verse 8, for the "coming of Christ;" and, verse 9, for "the coming" of "that wicked." If the coming of the Lord, therefore, mentioned by the apostle, (verse 8,) must necessarily imply his personal appearance, then must "that wicked" come personally, and be placed in some way in personal collision with the Redeemer. The Man of Sin, upon this presumption, must be some incarnation of evil, who shall appear like the fabled giants of old, visibly and personally, to contend against the Deity.

Such appears the inevitable consequence of insisting upon a strictly literal interpretation of the word in question. Mr. E. himself, in his disquisition upon the Man of Sin, does not admit the hypothesis of a per-
sonal antichrist, beyond an identification with the pope of Rome. He adopts the orthodox protestant interpretation on that point. The head of the apostacy, it is true, is termed "He;" but we have good ground for concluding, that a single person is not meant; no more than the "He" that letteth; which is generally interpreted of the Pagan Roman Empire. But, if "that wicked" spoken of in this chapter, be not an individual, but an apostate power gradually revealed, and exercising during many ages, evil influence through its agents; why may not the coming of the Lord be spiritual, and indicate the glorious and probably rapid success of his true church, through a more than ordinary pouring out of the Holy Spirit? If the apostacy described, be of a spiritual nature, why is not the power that comes to destroy it also spiritual? Protestants ought to be cautious in urging a too literal interpretation of New Testament terms, lest they give countenance to the Romish perversion of the words,—"This is my body."

7. Disquisitions on the literal meaning of Greek words cannot decide this controversy. For instance, ἐρχόμενος is used to denote a personal coming, (John xii. 13,) with special reference to the Messiah. Yet the same word is used, (Rev. ii. 16,) evidently in a spiritual or providential sense: "Repent, or else I will come (ἐρχομαι) unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." It is used similarly in Rev. ii. 5, and iii. 3. The same word may be, and often is used, both in a bodily and spiritual sense. It is not satisfactory theology, to fix one invariable meaning to the same term. The circumstances and the
context must be taken into consideration. In the first epistle of St. John, the word “sin,” is manifestly to be understood in two different senses. With reference to the phrase used in this chapter, upon which premillenarians so strongly insist, namely,—“The Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming,” and which they say must receive a literal construction, calm consideration will tend to lessen that impression. The apostle had, it is admitted, just referred to the final coming of Christ; and when he turned aside to speak of the intervening apostacy and its destruction, what was more natural than for him to adopt some of its imagery, more especially as the overthrow of Antichrist is one of those events that typify and foreshew the great day of account? Such was the case when our Lord foretold the destruction of the Jewish Church and the siege of Jerusalem. Yet Christ then, only came in power. No doubt the passage is a difficult one. We incline to interpret it thus:—Christ, before the millennium, comes by his providence and grace to consume the “Man of Sin,” that manifestation of Satan, who for a while is to be bound. After the one thousand years he re-appears, probably in some more open and flagrant form: the Lord then suddenly comes to final judgment, and by his glorious presence destroys his power for ever.

There is a passage, (Isa. xi. 4,) which throws some light upon this subject. In that passage, it is said,—“But with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and,
with the *breath* of his lips, he shall slay the wicked.” Scarcely any one will doubt, however the destruction there threatened might regard the Jewish degenerate state and people, referred to, as we conceive, by the word “earth,” that this passage has, nevertheless, a principal reference to a *spiritual* work. Yet the terms closely resemble those in the text under discussion, and are most aptly illustrative, if not prophetic. But, Christ’s coming to destroy Jerusalem, and to make the house of his enemies desolate, was *providential*, not *personal*; and, therefore, not against our view. In Psalm lxxii. 6, it is said,—the Lord “shall come down like rain upon the mown grass;” evidently alluding to a spiritual descent. We have Rev. ii. 16,—“I will fight against them, with the sword of my mouth.” Rev. i. 16,—“Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.” And Isaiah xlix. 2,—“He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.” These last quoted texts, are generally received as referring to the effects of the preached or written word. If so, we contend, that the proper construction of the words now under discussion is, that the Lord will suddenly destroy the power of the wicked one, by some extraordinary preaching of the gospel, and by his ministers prevailing rapidly over Satan and his adherents. Something of this kind, as a first-fruits, took place at the Reformation, on a limited scale. The universal spread of the gospel may well be presented to the mind, under the figure of a glorious day, before whose bright shining the powers of darkness shall, like the shades of night, pass away and be destroyed. Is not Christ said to be “a
light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel"? Again: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come;" and various other texts of the same kind. Yet no one interprets these terms literally: the meaning of them seems obvious to the common understanding.

8. In the 7th chapter of Daniel, as we have already shown, the giving of the "kingdom to the people of the saints of the Most High," is described as the coming of the Son of man. Why, therefore, by analogy, may not Christ, in the passage before us, be said to come and destroy his enemies, when his servants, through the power of the two-edged sword proceeding out of his mouth, everywhere prevail? And when, throughout the whole earth, "honour and glory, praise, dominion, and power, shall be given to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb for ever and ever." The more the passage in question is compared with other scriptures, the more growing, we think, will be the impression, that its true interpretation is spiritual, and not literal. And that the glowing terms are only to indicate a brighter and more glorious gospel day than has ever yet been known: a more manifest, and permanent spiritual presence of God and splendid shining of the truth as it is in Jesus, than the world ever before witnessed. May the Lord hasten that day, and speedily rejoice the hearts of his servants who are waiting for him!

Finally: it seems pretty clear, that the passage in discussion, and Rev. xix., refer to the same event; and the latter passage is so evidently figurative, we conceive,
of spiritual triumphs, under the most splendid earthly imagery, as to lead us to place them under one category. Many premillenarians contend, that Rev. xix. is descriptive of Christ's second coming. But we think, without due consideration. The language is symbolical of a contest; but the coming of Christ to judgment, is not one in any sense. It is to judge and carry into effect a sentence: for all opposition to God will then be at an end. Rev. xix. rather resembles the xlvth Psalm: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness." "The sword of Messiah," says Bishop Horne, "is his word; which is said by St. Paul to be 'quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.'" With this weapon he prevailed; and thereby made his glory and majesty to be known throughout the world."
CHAPTER XI.

THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISE.—INTRODUCTION.
STATEMENT OF MR. ELLIOTT'S VIEWS.

Mr. Elliott's third conclusion, viz. — "That the time of Christ's second coming, and the gathering of the dead saints, are cotemporary events, follows," as he says, "from the not obscurely predicted synchronism of the departed saints' resurrection, with the commencement of Israel's promised conversion to Christ, as well as the cotemporary blessedness of the world." To make this important part of his argument clear he must, he says, trace it somewhat fully and from the fountain head, keeping Israel in the first instance chiefly in view. He argues, that the land of promise was given to Abraham and his seed; and he, therefore, expects that patriarch and his descendants to rise again at the millennium and personally possess it. The same coincidence of time, between Israel's restoration, and the saints' resurrection, is also expressed, he says, only much more clearly, in Isaiah's prophecy, xxiv.—xxvii. In Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, those bones and that resurrection are to be construed not simply of the living Jewish people, and their fall and resuscitation, but of the Jewish saints departed also, and their bodily resurrection, in common with Christian saints at the time of Israel's restoration. It was thus the Jewish
expositors, that lived between the return from Babylon and the destruction of Jerusalem, Mr. E. says, understood the passages cited; and, although a different construction has been put upon them by ancient as well as modern anti-premillenarians, as if they were simply prophecies of the revival and resuscitation of Israel naturally; still, allowing that to be in part, yet he, Mr. E., thinks that the Jews rightly viewed them as including also distinct predictions of the literal resurrection of the saints literally dead, cotemporaneously with Israel's figurative resurrection.

1. We have already considered that part of the premillennial argument grounded on Rev. xx., the tares and wheat, and the Man of Sin. The reader will judge whether or not it is requisite, for the proper understanding of all those passages, to adopt Mr. Elliott's theory of a personal reign of the Redeemer with his resurrection saints on earth. Mr. E., it will be seen, from the statement thus given, proceeds to contend, that Abraham and all the Old Testament saints understood the promises regarding the land of Canaan, in a sense agreeing with Mr. E.'s view; namely, that they should be raised after death personally to possess it. He thinks this view, which, he says, was that of the Jewish Rabbies in our Saviour's time, runs through the whole of the Scriptures; and he labours this argument more perhaps than any of the preceding. It is necessary, therefore, for us to follow him into this discussion; for anything that falls from Mr. E., although we may not ultimately agree with him, demands a full and candid consideration.
2. Mr. Elliott, in support of his theory, contends that the promise of Christ's redemption involved a two-fold restoration, and removal of the curse;—the moral restoration of man, and the physical restoration of this created earth of his habitation. This physical restoration of the earth, he assumes, will take place at the commencement of the millennium. Nor is it, he thinks, mere unfounded conjecture to suppose, that Adam, Abel, and Enoch, so understood, and hoped themselves to profit by it. So also of Abraham and the rest of the Old Testament saints. He thinks the promises in the Old Testament all imply this. Let us, therefore, take the case of Abraham, and discuss the point with him, so far as regards that patriarch. It is the pivot upon which this question seems to turn. Mr. Elliott notices, that, in the promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham, it is said,—"To thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." He says, it is not the mere human expositor, referring to St. Stephen, Acts vii., that has noticed the fact of those terms of the promise having apparently given to Abraham a personal interest in the land as its inheritor, and similarly to Isaac and Jacob after him; so that at length, after death, and through the medium of a resurrection, inheriting the same Canaan, some way, at length, made heavenly. Mr. Elliott assumes there will be, during the millennium, a paradisiacal sinless state of perfection, both of the animate and inanimate creation. But this assumption, so necessary to his theory, never yet has been proved. On the contrary, strong presumption exists against it, from the acknowledged fact of the post-millennial apostacy, and
the revived influence of Satan, which continues till the day of final judgment. We have already said much on this point; and we must again insist, that until Satan is totally destroyed, there cannot be such a state of things as Mr. Elliott argues upon. There is great weight in Mr. Townsend's observation,* that the declaration made by the Almighty to our first parents, is the key to all history. God said,—"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Now this contest is not to end with the millennium;—it is only to have a truce or sleep during that period—to prevail again with renewed and awful energy. The dragon is only chained, not destroyed. How can the earthly Canaan, under such circumstances, in any sense, be termed heavenly? Mr. Elliott quotes 1 John iii. 8.;—"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." But these works are not destroyed during the thousand years, nor until Satan is finally cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

3. "But Abraham expected," says Mr. Elliott, "to revive at the restoration of his descendants, and then to inherit the earth." We ask, where is it so said in scripture? The passage referred to in St. Stephen's address, as we shall see, says no such thing; and the whole scope of the argument in the epistle to the Hebrews, is pointedly against any such conclusion. The argument of this epistle is, that we have an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of

* "Spiritual Communion with God." Vol. I.
the Majesty in the heavens—for if he were on earth he should not be a priest—that there remaineth a rest for the people of God with Christ their Lord, who, it is again declared, is entered into heaven itself for us. So of Abraham, and those very saints to whom Mr. Elliott refers, it is said, "They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city," (xi. 16,) which city is declared to be now in existence. "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God—the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." xii. 22—24. Putting these passages together, what can be clearer than that the heaven the patriarchs sought, was one above, where the spirits of just men are made perfect, and not a heaven on earth with their bodies. Moreover, that the heaven they sought was already in existence, and not an earthly Canaan, as Mr. E. will have it, some way to be made heavenly. Is not this expression a slip of a good man carried away with his theory? The essential part of the argument of the epistle to the Hebrews, is, that the heaven is above. How can an earthly Canaan, still liable to sin, in any way, fulfil such a requisition? Moreover, after the millennium, and consequently after this supposed heavenly creation on earth, we read of the four quarters of the earth, (Rev. xx.,) exactly the expression used at the present day; and the saints are said to be in a camp, παρμέσολω, that is, in military
array or quarters, or as the wandering Israelites in the wilderness. Does such a state of things, fit in with Mr. Elliott’s supposed new creation of a heaven on earth, and which, if even created, would have to pass away at Christ’s final coming. Important considerations like these demand attention; and the views of good men,—yea, of a “master in Israel,” must not be received because of personal respect or esteem, but must be tested by the scriptures.

4. Mr. Elliott refers to St. Stephen, Acts vii. What then says that holy martyr? It is true, he points out, as Mr. E. says, that Abraham obtained no inheritance in the land of promise, “no not so much as to set his foot on.” But the whole drift of his address, it is obvious, was not that Abraham will hereafter rise again and possess it, but that Abraham’s seed (see Gen. xv.) did, in due time, obtain it according to the promise. “When,” says he, “the time of promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt.” And he proceeds to argue, that we are to regard the spiritual, rather than the temporal view of those things; for, he continues, “Solomon built him a house; howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as saith the prophet: ‘Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool.’ ‘What house will ye build me? saith the Lord; or what is the place of my rest?’ ‘Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.’”

St. Stephen attacked the prejudices of those Jews to whom Mr. E. refers as authorities. He tells them,
contrary to their views of an earthly reigning Messiah, that the throne of God is in heaven; and that the earth is only his footstool. We are told, that when the Jews heard these things, namely,—to have their most darling notion assailed, "they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." To this we may add, that St. Paul, in referring (Rom. xi.,) to the conversion and restoration of Israel, never alludes to any personal resurrection of the Old Testament saints; but argues, v. 15, "If the casting away of Israel be the reconciling of the the world, what shall the receiving [not, observe, the resurrection] of them be, but life from the dead." The expression, "receive of them" is totally opposed to the view Mr. E. entertains.

5. But Mr. E. makes some observations as to the sign given by God to Abraham. Gen. xv. 16. He says, "There now opened to Abraham the vista of a new line of covenant promise; not annulling or superseding, but only subordinate to, and corroborative of, the older covenant of promise. The new promise being that of his natural seed, as a living nation, occupying the earthly Canaan, for an actual guarantee and sign to perpetual generations of his spiritual seed, at length after death, and through the medium of a resurrection, inheriting the same Canaan, some way at length made heavenly, and with God himself revealed therein as their God." Perhaps it is not easy to understand exactly how Mr. Elliott arrives at this conclusion. But as the whole subject is important and interesting, it will be well to enter fully into it, and review the pro-
Promises of God made to Abraham. The first is in Genesis xii., on the occasion of Abraham's leaving his own country, and entering with Sarah and Lot into the land of Canaan. The Lord had said,—"I will make of thee a great nation;" and, "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." "Abraham passed through the land into the place of Sichem, into the plains of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there he builded an altar to the Lord." This passage appears to comprise every promise made to Abraham. First,—to Abraham: "Of thee (i.e. of thy descendants) I will make a great nation: and make thy name great." The reader will be pleased to observe the peculiarity of the address, for it is important in this controversy. Abraham is put for his descendants: "I will make of thee a great nation." And so afterwards, by a like figure, his descendants are put for him;—the whole being referable to the corporate capacity that existed between them. Such a mode of writing is common in scripture. We only give two instances, but they may be increased to almost any extent. "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." Gen. ix. 27. "Esau is Edom." Gen. xxxvi. 8. Posterities are thus spoken of, under the names of their ancestors. We observe, that, in Deuteronomy, on entering the promised land, the name Abraham and his seed are used indiscriminately;—"That thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord thy God sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac,
and to Jacob to give them." xxx. 20. "And the Lord said unto him, (Moses) This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed." xxxiv. 4. This may be regarded as an answer to Mr. E.'s emphasis on the words "to thee," as requiring to be fulfilled even by a resurrection from the dead. Secondly:—"In thee (i.e. in thy descendant) shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Here is the promise of the Messiah, who was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel." And here, therefore, begins at once, the two-fold character of Abraham, as the father of an earthly and a spiritual Israel. Thirdly:—The Lord adds, (v. 8,) "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Here was the gift of the earthly Canaan; not, observe, to Abraham, but to his seed. So that we have the whole of Abraham's position at once before us, according even to the light of the New Testament.

6. Some time afterwards, when Abraham had become an actual resident in the land, the Lord said,—"All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." xiii. 14—16. This was a promise of very great enlargement to Abraham, and contains a vista of future earthly eminence and glory to the Israelitish nation, as well temporal as spiritual. Then comes chapter xv., which commences by a doubt which seems
to have come upon Abraham. "Behold," he says, "to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is my heir." Upon this, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." This passage has reference to the spiritual seed; and differs, therefore, from chap. xiii. This we know from St. Paul, who says, "Faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. For the promise, that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise is made of none effect." Rom. iv. 9—14. Again:—"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In
thee shall all nations be blessed. So, then, they which are of faith, shall be blessed with faithful Abraham.”
Gal. iii. 6—9.

It is quite clear, that Abraham’s faith, on this occasion, had reference not only to an heir, but to the promised Messiah, who should be a Saviour, not only of Abraham’s natural seed, but of all nations. So that the view was of the most comprehensive nature.

7. After Abraham’s act of faith in the Redeemer of the world, the Lord said unto Abraham, chapter xv.,—“I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And the Lord said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old,” &c. Abraham’s question seems taking the whole scope of the passage, to involve an enquiry for something whereby he should know that he should inherit. In imitation of a custom among the ancients, in which, when one party promised a favour, and the other a service, a victim was cut in half, and the parties walked between the two halves, in order to declare, that they would deserve the death of the victim, if the covenant was not observed. So it pleased God to command Abraham to take the animals which were to be offered in sacrifice to slay them, and to divide them, except the birds, and to place one victim over against another.*—“When the sun went down,” the narrative proceeds, “a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him, and the Lord said unto Abram, Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a

* See Townsend, in loco.
land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again." "In the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates." Now, what can the general reader gather from the whole of this passage, beyond that God, in answer to Abraham's enquiry, had shown him that he (Abraham) was to possess the land in his seed, or posterity; and, that he was permitted to have, in vista, the sufferings of his earthly descendants in Egypt, which occasioned him great horror; but he was afterwards comforted with a promise of their deliverance, and of the land being given to his seed,—"from the river of Egypt, to the great river Euphrates." As to himself, he was not personally to inherit, but to go to his fathers in peace,—no doubt to heaven,—and be buried in a good old age. Who can see, with Mr. Elliott, in all this, anything of a new covenant, and of a guarantee to Abraham, through the medium of a resurrection, himself inhabiting this land of Canaan, someway made heavenly? It seems to us imaginary.

8. We have next, in Gen. xvii., the appointment of the rite of circumcision, and a confirmation of the grant to Abraham, as follows,—"I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their
generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” It is now well understood by learned men, that circumcision was in use among many of the ancient nations, and was not, as is generally supposed, in its origin, peculiar to the Jews. On the present occasion, however, the Lord appointed it to Abraham for a special purpose; and it afterwards became a mark of the Jewish nation. Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being yet uncircumcised. He was already justified by faith. So that very sign was, contrary to the views of the Jews in after days, an indication that salvation was to be of faith; and that men were to have a spiritual resurrection in the Anointed One, who was to be the Saviour—not only of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles: for circumcision was only a supplementary act; and not an essential part of the original covenant. If Mr. Townsend’s view be correct,* that circumcision was a token of the priesthood, which seems very probable; then did it also indicate that Abraham, and his literal descendants, were to possess a priesthood and outward temple, till He came who was the real High Priest; upon whose coming, that priesthood of circumcision would become extinct, and the original covenant with all nations be developed, by faith which is in Christ Jesus.

We add, in illustration, a valuable observation from

* See Spiritual Communion, Vol. I.
Mr. Scott. "The word rendered everlasting," he says, "must be understood according to the nature of the subject: when used about the things of the present world or outward privileges, it means perpetual and unalterable while the same state of things continues: but when it relates to inward spiritual blessings, or the concerns of a future state, it seems generally, if not always, strictly to denote eternal duration." Note in loco. When Christ, therefore, had come, and been born in Judea, circumcision and the land no longer formed part of the covenant. The end intended was accomplished. The original covenant of faith revived. Its foundation in Christ is everlasting.

9. It may here be remarked, that, in the grant of the land, on occasion of Abraham's circumcision, the literal expression, "I will give unto thee and thy seed after thee," is opposed to Mr. Elliott's conclusion of Abraham and all his seed contemporaneously possessing it. The words, "to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever," meant no more than that Abraham's seed must derive title through him. To thee, i.e., in reversion, and to thy seed, i.e., in possession. An English lawyer knows the reversion of an inheritance is made or conveyed to the grantee of it, and his heirs for ever; although such grantee may never possess it personally. Title, however, must be derived through him. We have a very striking illustration in the act of settlement upon the Princess Sophia and her heirs, being protestants. It was, in fact, a reversion to the princess; but all her successors stand, as it were, in her place; and if we speak of the title to the throne, it is the same,
whether the name of the Princess Sophia or Queen Victoria be used: they are in that respect one. The Jews possessed the land whilst they were spiritually in favour with God; but when they fell away, the land was taken from them. When they turn once more to the Lord, and acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah, it seems as if the land will be restored to them again, for an everlasting possession; \( i.e. \), so long as Messiah’s earthly kingdom exists. Oh that they may speedily repossess it! yea, speedily.
CHAPTER XII.

THE PROPHETS, AND JEWISH AUTHORITY IN A CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1. Having negatived, as we presume, Mr. Elliott's notion of Abraham's personally rising again to possess the land of Canaan, we must now leave the patriarch, and proceed forward. In the prophets, Mr. E. says, the same coincidence of time between Israel's restoration and the saints' resurrection, is also expressed, only much more clearly. Take, for example, Isaiah's prophecy, chs. xxiv.—xxvii., which see. He adds, that St. Paul expressly identifies the fulfilment of those words,—"He shall swallow up death in victory,"—with the time of the saints' resurrection, while the prophet as expressly identifies it with that of Israel's restoration. To the same effect, he says, are the prophecies of Isaiah's two last chapters; where the restoration of Israel is connected with the new heaven and the new earth.

2. Preliminary, to our consideration of this part of the subject, we beg to quote the following observations of the late eminent Thomas Scott, in his concluding remarks on the prophecy of Isaiah. He says,—"In the prophecies of Daniel, and in the revelation of St. John, as well as in the other prophetical writings, there are certain dates, or a regular order, which help us to understand to what period of time each predic-
tion belongs. But in Isaiah, especially in the latter part of the book, the transition from the days of the prophet to those after the captivity, or rather those of the Messiah, and thence to the glorious times which we may yet expect, and to the consummation of all things, is often sudden and unexpected; and, as suddenly, the prophecy reverts to the coming of Christ, and events connected with it. This increases the expositor's difficulty, and should increase his caution and diffidence, as to the interpretation given to many parts.” Mr. Elliott's identification of the words, “he shall swallow up death in victory,” with the time of a first premillennial resurrection of the saints, is a petitio principii. We all allow, that when all the saints have put on immortality, death will be swallowed up in victory. Upon that point there is no doubt. But the matter in dispute is, when that event will take place. Will it be before or after the millennium? That is the question at issue. Mr. Elliott also says, that the prophet as expressly identifies these terms with Israel's restoration. But is this so? May not this be one of those scintillations of prophecy which it is very difficult to apply chronologically? Mr. E. places the swallowing up death in victory, his alleged first premillennial resurrection and the restoration of the Jews, in juxtaposition, and making them constitute, as it were, one event. Will it really be so? It is true St. Paul declares, that when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality,—death shall be swallowed up in victory. But then, we allege, that victory will not be completed until the final judgment;
and if so, the restoration of the Jews cannot by any possibility be tacked to it. But does the passage quoted by Mr. E. even relate to the Jews' restoration? We feel compelled to question such a conclusion. The chapter referred to is Isaiah xxv., and runs thus: —"In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Now, on glancing over the chapter, the following particulars appear to us to be clearly enunciated. 1. That the feast of all nations is the gospel. 2. That the covering destroyed, is the dispersion of the Gentile darkness, at Christ's coming. He was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles." 3. Christ will, eventually, swallow up death in victory, in his own people, as a consequence of his own conquest over death, and by his own glorious resurrection and ascension. 4. His gospel shall, even now, but more especially hereafter, cause all tears to be wiped away from all faces. "Behold," says the angel, "I bring you glad tidings of
great joy, which shall be unto all people." 5. The song of the waiting people is described,—their delight at the glad tidings, and their rejoicing under the influences of the Holy Spirit; and there is nothing said that goes beyond a spiritual perception of God’s salvation by his people. On turning to Mr. Scott’s commentary, it appears to be substantially to the same purport as our own. He says,—"These verses evidently contain a prophecy of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which shall follow, from the coming of Christ to the end of the world. A feast would be provided for all people, Gentile as well as Jew. At Jerusalem, the middle wall of partition was broken down by the crucifixion of Christ, and hence the gospel would be diffused through the nations of the earth." We have tried in vain to bring out any other meaning of the prophecy. There cannot be a literal feast of fat things: a literal destroying of the covering cast over all people, &c.: nor does it fall in with the pre-millennial advent. Literal death will not be overcome till after the millennium.

Our interpretation, then, refers the prophecy to the first coming of Christ and the gospel times, to which it spiritually applies; and, if so, Mr. E.’s application of it to the future restoration of the Jews is destroyed. Mr. E. says the words "swallow up death in victory" are quoted by the apostle: and he may ask, in what sense. We respectfully reply, that as Christ, by his death and resurrection triumphed personally over death and the grave, at his first coming, so, at his second coming, he will finally triumph in his people. His whole
church will then have a joyful resurrection, and death will be swallowed up in the complete victory of Christ their head.

3. A good deal of the preceding reasoning, applies to Mr. E.'s reference to Isaiah lxv., where he says, the restoration of Israel is connected with the new heavens and the new earth. On a subject of this nature can we have a safer guide than St. Paul? In Romans x. 20, he applies the words in the commencement of this chapter, to the first coming of Christ, and the call of the Gentiles. "But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me." Taking, therefore, the apostle's quotation as a clue, it would seem, as if this chapter indicated the displeasure of God against the Jewish nation,—their casting off,—and the calling of a new people, by election, out of them and the Gentile nations. "Ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord shall slay thee, and shall call his servants by another name," i.e., Christian. For, behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth: the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." That is, the Jewish heavens and earth shall pass away, and a new Christian heavens and earth be formed. The Christian dispensation thus developed, shall spread extensively. Then, addressing again the Jews, the prophet says,—"But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people." Isa. lxv. 15—19. The purport of this seems
to be evident. Even ye Jews will, in the end, have cause to rejoice in this new creation; for Jerusalem herself, and my restored people, shall participate and rejoice in its blessings. If, then, following St. Paul's guidance, we arrive at the conclusion, that the new heavens and the new earth, in the above chapter, have reference to Christ's first coming and the gospel dispensation, then, Mr. E. is at fault in connecting them with the restoration of Israel for the purpose of supporting his premillennial argument. The links in his chain of reasoning snap asunder. Perhaps it may be proper to notice, that Mr. Elliott and others connect the new heavens and the new earth in this lxvth chapter of Isaiah, with those in 2 Peter iii. 13, which are undoubtedly literal. They allege that the expression of Peter, "according to his promise" has reference to this chapter. But in Peter, and Rev. xxii., where also the new heavens and new earth are named, the heavenly and eternal state is evidently intended; and, if the promise alluded to by Peter, be this passage of Isaiah, it is only in the sense named by Mr. Brown; namely, the one contains the germ of the other. "Wherein dwelleth righteousness;" constituting the point of connection. The spiritual is the seed of the eternal future. It appears, from the subsequent part of Isaiah lxv., that it regards an earthly Jerusalem; but the New Testament texts, point to "the holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven."

4. There is now, Ezekiel xxxvii., the vision of the dry bones. Mr. E. says, that many Christian fathers, deriving their views perhaps from Jewish Rabbies, cou-
strued those bones, and that resurrection, to be, not simply of living Jewish people, and their fall and resurrection, but of the Jewish saints departed also, and their bodily resurrection, in common with Christian saints, at the time of Israel's restoration. He seems himself, to think this case more equivocal than others, and his authorities scarcely appear to support the point at all. The passage, however, is a most important one. The reader, on referring to the chapter, will perceive the phrases, "Son of man, those bones are the whole house of Israel," explained by the sticks of Judah and Ephraim, which the Lord commands (v. 17, 19,) to be joined one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand." Again, v. 21, the purport of the vision is fully explained:—"Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation." Few things, one would suppose, could be more evident than that this vision, under the figure of a resurrection, foretells the conversion and restoration of Israel, and the raising the complete nation, from a state of religious and national depression, to one of spiritual prosperity, under the reign of the true David, their king and Messiah. If the vision, as Mr. E. urges, is to foreshew the resurrection of the whole house of Israel, literally, how can you escape the conclusion, that all the children of Abraham, according to the flesh, are, in consequence of their descent, reckoned amongst the righteous, and partake of a common resurrection?
This, however, is contrary to the whole testimony of Christ and his apostles.

5. Mr. Elliott says, he may especially rest on the prophecy in Dan. xii., compared with verse 13, of the same chapter, and quotes Clarius to the following effect:—"Omnium catholicorum et peritorum Hebraeorum consensu in hoc ultimo versus resurrectio promittur." And so, too, he says Calmet. This, to a certain extent, may be admitted. And if we might venture a suggestion, it is that the resurrection is parallel to Ezekiel xxxvii. 12. "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." And possibly there is an intimation that some of the restored Israelites will not be of a proper spirit, and their rising will be rather for a falling again than otherwise. Still, the passage is a perplexed one to either party, and nothing decisive can be concluded from it per se. It has been suggested by some, that verses 2 and 3 may be separated from the preceding one. They speak, however, of the resurrection of the just and the wicked as one event. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." The great point premillenarians insist upon is, the resurrection of the righteous a thousand years and more before the wicked, to enjoy an earthly paradise: but this view the text does not support, and the many learned criticisms used to torture it to that purport have hitherto quite failed. If it alludes to the national resurrection of Israel, as we think it probably does, we also see the
final resurrection typified and peering through, and the one contemporaneous rising of the righteous and the wicked confirmed. The meaning of Daniel's standing in his lot, at the end of the days, must evidently depend upon the true solution of the previous verses. If they really teach a first bodily resurrection of the saints, and a personal reign on earth, doubtless Daniel will partake of the blessing. But if the resurrection of the just and unjust, at the last day, with some intermediate allusion to the fall and rising again of many in Israel, be intended; then the phrase means no more than that Daniel will stand in his lot, at the last day, among those who shall rise first in order before the wicked, and who shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in air. The real point at issue is therefore left undecided by this passage, and we must all express ourselves with some degree of modesty concerning it. In a reference by Mr. E. to this text, in another part of his work, he seems indeed to assent to the last observation, and terms this passage in Daniel "inconclusive."

6. We are now taking leave of the prophets and the Old Testament, and it seems here to be proper to notice a rather extraordinary paragraph of Mr. Elliott's. He says,—"The Jewish expositors, that lived between the return from Babylon and the destruction of Jerusalem, understood the passages cited as distinct predictions of the literal resurrection of the saints literally dead, with Israel's figurative resurrection." We should have thought, that light derived from such a source would be viewed as rather suspicious. The rays come
through a murky atmosphere. It is so well known, as to require no elaborate proof, that the rabbies, at and about the time of our Saviour's birth, had lost all spiritual views of the Messiah. The majority of them, at least, had so done, and regarded him as a temporal conqueror, who should conduct their nation to universal empire. We know from scripture, that there existed two powerful sects, who influenced the people. The one, the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection of the body; the other, the Pharisees, who professed to believe in that doctrine, but added numerous traditions and glosses, which they professed to have received from Moses. The quotations referred to by Mr. E., are from rabbies of this latter school. Yet we know our blessed Lord, in addressing these pharisees, declared, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites! well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matt. xv. 6—9. That the pharisees held wrong notions about the Messiah, is evident from our Saviour's question to them, (Matt. xxii. 42,) "What think ye of Christ? Whose son if he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word." It is evident, that the pharisees regarded the Messiah as a natural descendant of David, without regard to his divinity. Are such
men to be quoted as authorities, by Christians, respecting the Messiah's kingdom? Are we to forsake New Testament light, for Jewish darkness?

7. Very striking are the observations of the Rev. R. Herschell, in his "Mystery of the Gospel Dispensation." Whilst contending, to some extent justly, that the promises of the Jewish prophets relate to the Jewish people, he argues, that the mystery hidden for ages, (Ephesians iii.,) was the present dispensation of an elect church. "The ancient prophets," he says, "gave no hint of any such intermediate dispensation between the coming of Christ and the accomplishment of that deliverance which his coming was to effect." p. 10. "They never gave us to understand," he adds, "that this general rejection was to last for many centuries." But what is the language of St. James, Acts xv. 14; "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets." So also St. Paul, Rom. ix. 8; "The children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." But did it never occur to Mr. Herschell that, possibly, after all, a perfectly glorious church on earth, according to the Jewish view, may not be foretold; and that the Jew must be content to accept the cross, and to labour in comparative imperfection, as well as the Gentile? Both, however, will have their complete blessedness in the heavenly state.

8. It is remarkable how premillenarians, in their views, identify themselves with the Jews, and treat almost as
nothing, the spiritual application of the prophecies, begun by our Lord when referring to John the Baptist as Elias, and carried on, as we have seen, by St. James and St. Paul. Is it quite seemly for the professed followers of the crucified Jesus, to pass over, almost at a bound, his humiliation, and the doctrine of the cross, to unite with his bitterest enemies, in professing Messiah's glory to be rather an earthly reign and presence? If the notions of the premillenarians are true, to the extent that many plead for, very much is done even to justify the Jewish nation in their refusal of a crucified Jesus as Messiah. And is there not also imminent danger of present spiritual experience being overlooked, in an overstretched expectation of an event, which, so far as concerns the millennium, may be unfounded?
CHAPTER XIII.

SOME FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON GOD'S PROMISE TO ABRAHAM, AND THE THRONE OF DAVID.

1. We have seen St. Stephen's testimony to the fulfilment of the promise, Gen. xvii. 6—8, to the descendants of Abraham, his children according to the flesh, when they entered upon the land of Canaan under Joshua. And undoubtedly, if they had been faithful unto God, and continued to be followers of Abraham's faith, they would have had that land throughout all generations, as their inheritance. But they turned aside like a deceitful bow, and forgat God their Saviour; and when the Redeemer came to his own, his own received him not. They forfeited the blessing, and the Romans came and took away their place and nation.

With regard to the promise made to Abraham, what saith the New Testament? St. Paul, (Gal. iii. 16,) declares how to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." And he afterwards adds, v. 26,—"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
2. Most evident it is, that the claim of the Jews, as the natural descendants of Abraham, can avail them nothing under the new dispensation, unless they are heirs also of Abraham's faith. They never can have the land of promise again permanently, except as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. And if, on their acknowledging Christ to be their Messiah, the inheritance of the land of Canaan be restored to them, as it probably will, their title will arise from its being annexed to their faith in Him. Jesus will be their God and king. "But is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not," says the apostle, "also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also." Rom. iii. 29. The middle wall of partition is broken down, and we are all one in Him, Jew and Greek. Truly Christ, in the millennium, will be the king of all nations of the earth. "Kings shall bow down to him, and all nations shall do him honour." But some one will possibly ask, Is not Christ called king of the Jews? We reply:—Our sovereign Queen Victoria, with reference to this portion of our island, its laws and constitution, may be termed queen of England; as to Scotland, and its laws and peculiar constitution, queen of Scotland; and the like of Ireland. But her being called queen of any one of the three kingdoms, does not impugn her title to the sovereignty of the whole of the British empire. So Christ's being termed king of the Jewish section of the Christian Church, does not preclude his being equally king of the Gentile portion of it. We are, on questions of this kind, quite ready to meet our premillenarian brethren and their canon of literal construction. We will, for
the sake of discussion, take the message of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary. "Behold," says he, "thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Now, this address seemed to have a peculiar relation to the Jews. In the song of Zachariah, also, the coming of Christ seems to be applied solely to that people. "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people." It does not appear that the pious Israelites, even then, had had revealed to them the full meaning of the terms employed. They all still seemed to think that salvation was only for the Jews. But the time was at hand for a fuller manifestation of the promise made to Abraham, that, through the holy child Jesus, the Gentiles should by faith become Abraham's children, and fellow-heirs of the promises made to him. This appears to have been declared first by holy Simeon, "A man just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast
prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”

3. The whole mystery was now revealed, and the Jewish dispensation being about to close, we learn that the throne of David did not mean, as those Jewish saints probably originally thought it did, and as some modern literalists still say it does, a throne of a king of literal Israel. We would ask how could it? To make our Saviour an earthly sovereign, over a people limited like the nation of Israel under David, or even under the extended dominion of Solomon his son, is not consistent with the views opened to Simeon. Let the restored Jews be numerous to any extent, they will still be one nation. But the true David, the Messiah, is to be king over all nations, and to him shall the gathering of the Gentiles be. In the prophecy of Amos, (ix. 11, 12,) we have the promise that,—“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins; and I will build it as in the days of old.” But will David’s royal house be restored, as in the time of old? Oh, no. At the first council of Jerusalem, (Acts xv. 16,) we have a very different view given us. The inspired apostle St. James states this to have been fulfilled in the Gentiles being admitted into the Christian Church. “That the residue,” says he, “of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called.” So that here the house of David is raised up, by the Gentile nations submitting spiritually to the Son of David; and a key is afforded us to unlock many other mysteries
connected with prophetic language. Christ, the true David is raised to preside, and to have his tabernacle amongst the nations of the *spiritual* Israel. The phrase, "throne of David," will be found, on reference to 2 Sam. vii. 15, 16, to be put in contrast with that of Saul. The latter had no permanency, and ended with the original possessor; but David's was to descend to, and was actually possessed by, his children of many generations. "My mercy, saith the Lord, shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." By the throne of David, therefore, named by the angel Gabriel, is to be understood, dominion over that kingdom of Christ which is not transient, but spiritual and eternal.

But all this is put out of doubt by St. Peter, in his address to the Jews, Acts ii. 29—33. "Men and brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. He, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." We do not know that
anything can be more specific than this. Let the reader, however, compare Is. xxii. 22 with Rev. iii. 7. The former says, "The key [or government] of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder, so he shall open and none shall shut, and he shall shut and none shall open." The latter, "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." It is not here said, He that shall have, but, He that hath the key, &c.

4. We feel strongly, that the views here given are according to the mind of the Spirit; Firstly,—The dispensation commencing at Pentecost, requires a more searching, deep, and essential kind of religion, than the ritualism of the Jewish worship. They that worship the Father now, must worship him in spirit and in truth. Literal expressions, are to be regarded in their spiritual application, rather than in the outward circumstances to which they refer. When we read, for instance, in the Old Testament, terms originally used of temple worship, and of the outward glory and reign of temporal Israel, we must, in the light of the New Testament, enlarge the horizon beyond Judaism, to a spiritual creation now in existence, but which shall be more gloriously displayed hereafter. Secondly,—When the Jewish temple and economy were destroyed, the peculiar character of the Jewish nation, as the depository of the true church, passed away; and, thenceforth, the children of Abraham, spiritually considered, were those who followed Abraham's faith, whether they
were Jews or Gentiles. These were now inheritors of the promises made to him their common father, and the earthly Jerusalem was no longer to be set apart exclusively for God's worship. And, when hereafter rebuilt, and its people restored, it will not be, as in former times, peerless, but only the first among its peers. Thirdly,—From the very first, the Almighty principally regarded Abraham in the above character, as father of the faithful of all ages and nations; and bestowed upon his natural seed the land of Canaan, as a sort of type and pledge of the heavenly Canaan promised to his spiritual seed; and not as Mr. Elliott argues, as a guarantee and sign that he and his natural seed of Israel, through the medium of a resurrection, should inherit the same Canaan someway made heavenly. And, finally,—In reading the psalms and prophets, we must ever keep this intermingled character of Abraham and the covenants in view. And whilst we may, in many instances, look to a fulfilment in the literal Israel, still there must also be a vista looking towards the spiritual Israel, whose temple and Jerusalem is heaven.
CHAPTER XIV.

NEW TESTAMENT, AND THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

1. Having now discussed the proper interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies, and shewn, as we conceive, their end not to be the resurrection of God's saints to reign on a millennial earth, but rather to point spiritually to the full fruition of the glory of Heaven, we will now, with Mr. Elliott, enter upon the New Testament.

Mr. E. says,—"That our blessed Lord assured to his disciples, a participation in the future government of the twelve tribes of Israel at his advent, and in his kingdom; which participation they could only have through and after a resurrection from the dead. Nor were the disciples led, even by his latest instructions, otherwise to view the matter." It seems to him, he says,—"remarkable that, after Christ's resurrection, just when he had been speaking to them of the things of 'the kingdom of God,' they asked him, 'If he would, at that time, restore the kingdom to Israel?' as if the Jewish view of the synchronism of Israel's restoration and the Messiah's kingdom was admitted into this conversation. Nor were they corrected by Christ, but only told it was not for them to know the times and seasons. To the same effect was St. Paul's
declaration, when pleading before Agrippa, that he was judged 'for the hope of the promise made by God to their fathers; to which promise the twelve tribes, instantly serving God, hoped to come:' compared with his previous saying 'of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.' Besides which, we have, as before said, his memorable comment in 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55, on certain promises already cited from Isaiah and Hosea."

He adds, "with this agrees, also, the New Testament representations of the synchronism of Christ's advent and the saints resurrection, with the time of the general predicted blessedness of the world. Thus, as a first example, there is the passage from Matthew, (xix. 28,) which makes mention of the great future παλιγγενσia, or regeneration; for what can that be but the state when Christ shall make all things new, and this earth be restored to paradisiacal blessedness; and the passage, Acts iii. 19,—' Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' There is, also, Rom. viii. 18, 19,—' I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.'"

2. We are now called upon to discuss the important question of the nature of Christ's kingdom, with reference to New Testament terms. Perhaps, no safer guide in the matter of definition, can be found than Cruden, in his Concordance. What says he of this
kingdom? It is as follows:—"Kingdom of God."

Of his power, "To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations."

Psalm cxlv. 12, 13. "How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation." Dan. iv. 3.

Of his grace, "And Jesus went about all Gallilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."

"Thy kingdom come; thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven." "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. iv. 23; vi. 10, 33.

Of his glory, "For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Luke xxii. 16. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?"

1 Cor. vi. 9. Of Christ, "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Matt. xvi. 28. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Colos. i. 13.

Of Heaven, signifying the state of the church under the gospel or the kingdom of the Messiah, when great spiritual blessings and privileges were to be bestowed, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. iii. 2.

The visible church, which is heavenly, and prepares for
the kingdom of glory, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind."

Matt. v. 19, 20; xiii. 47. The state of the church, or the gospel in the world, or of grace in the soul, which should increase, notwithstanding its small appearance at first, "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Matt. xiii. 31, 32. Or for grace in the heart, "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke xvii. 21. The place of eternal happiness and glory, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. v. 10.

Such are Cruden's definitions; all, be it observed, of a spiritual character, and no allusion is made by him to an earthly paradisiacal kingdom previous to the day of final judgment.

3. This kingdom is to be viewed in two senses;—its condemning and its saving power. John the Baptist, Matt. iii., testified, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of hea-
ven is at hand." He says of our Lord, "That he should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Whose fan was in his hand, and he would throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner: but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Our Lord, Matt. xiii., details the progress of this kingdom in seven parables. In Matt. xxviii., he gives his commission to the apostles to preach it, and says, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." It was spiritually demonstrated, Acts iii., on the day of Pentecost; when Jesus, being seated on the throne of David, at the right hand of God, sent down the Holy Spirit. He will deliver up this kingdom "to God even the Father." 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25. When "He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet." After the kingdom had struggled for a while with the Mosaic dispensation, it overcame; and the ecclesiastical Jewish heavens and earth passed away on the destruction of Jerusalem. Again, it encountered and overthrew the pagan dragon, when the Roman empire became Christian under Constantine. The devil afterwards revived pagan idolatry, under the mask of popery. This apostacy, Christ is also coming in his kingdom to destroy. He will afterwards reign gloriously in spiritual power during the millennium. His enemies, we know, will again make a final hostile struggle; but he will personally come at the judgment of the great white throne, and overthrow the devil and all evil. The last enemy that is destroyed is death. Then the earthly exhibition of the kingdom ends. Its future
is in heaven; and "what we know not now, we shall know hereafter." The great eras of the demonstrating spiritual power of this kingdom, were the day of Pentecost and the Reformation. Another will be the millennium, after the destruction of antichrist.

4. We agree with Cruden's definitions; and cannot find any reference to a spiritual kingdom whose source of converting power is to be on earth. A kingdom must always be designated from the place whence its influence proceeds; which, so far as regards the gospel, is in heaven, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. There is no statement of Christ sitting at the right hand of God on earth. Mr. Mede well expresses the matter. He says, "The kingdom of Christ ever hath been, and shall be, regnum caelorum, a kingdom whose throne and kingly residence is in heaven." We may add, it is now in existence, and has been ever since Christ's ascension. It is true, it may be occasionally obscured and clouded; but, nevertheless, its sun, like the natural sun in a cloudy day, still exists; and, the mists being dispersed, it will eventually shine gloriously. At present, a usurped power resists this kingdom; and hitherto has succeeded in preventing its being universally spread. But that only affects its extent and brilliancy, not its nature. When the opposing power is finally overcome; Christ will, according to the usual distinction, be king de facto, as he is now de jure. He shall have it, to whom the right belongs. When it is said, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, it is not to be understood in any
other sense, than that the kings of this world will govern upon gospel principles, and promote, in every possible manner, the spiritual interests of the inhabitants. Religion, instead of being considered secondary, will be a primary consideration with all men, at all times and places. "They will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Christ's kingdom being spiritual, he has been, and ever will be, present in it. "I am with you always," says he, "even to the end of the world." Again: "My kingdom is not of this world;" i.e., it is not to be of worldly things, as now constituted, in a direct sense; it is only to affect them indirectly, by the beams of the gospel shewing them in their true light, namely, as transitory and perishing. While Satan, and death, and the grave exist, which they will do till the last day, this earth cannot be rendered so pure, so sublimated or ethereal, as to form the source and seat of a holy and heavenly government. Holiness and heavenliness it can only possess in a reflected manner, as the moon derives its light and glory from the distant sun.

5. Premillenarians quote, as we even understand Mr. Elliott, in some measure to do, the following passages: "Ye," says Christ, "are they which have continued with me in my temptation: and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Luke xxii. 28—30. Again; "I will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." These,
and other passages of the same class, they assert, are to be taken in their literal sense. They ask, "Where is this kingdom?" not in heaven—for in heaven there is no eating and drinking; no judging the twelve tribes of Israel; but it is that kingdom which is joined to the manifestation of Christ, ready to judge the world.

In reply to such reasoning as this, we may say, First,—If the act of eating and drinking in these texts is to be taken in a literal sense, the fathers were, to a very considerable extent, justified in their expectation of carnal delights in feasting; and it will be difficult, with such an interpretation, to prevent the great bulk of mankind from looking upon Christ's personal reign as a time of sensual enjoyment. Secondly,—If we interpret these expressions literally, the ground is cut from beneath us in arguing with the papists on John vii., and on the words, "This is my body." We must, according to this teaching, literally eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood. One would have thought, that our Lord had quite guarded against any such mode of interpretation by his language in John vii. 37, 38. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this," adds the apostle, "spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." Again: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." John iv. 32, 34. "Labour not for the meat that perisheth; but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting
life." John vi. 27. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Matt. v. 6. The apostle St. Paul says, also, 1 Cor. iii. 2, "I have fed you with milk and not with meat."

"And did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. These latter texts are so plain and manifest in their meaning, that, being compared with the former, the true nature of the eating and drinking to which Christ refers, is evident; even our premillenarian brethren themselves being judges.

6. The kingdom to which our Lord refers, and to which the apostles were appointed, it may be conceded, was, and is on earth, but it was of a spiritual description. It was the gospel dispensation; the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. We have already observed, its various diversities are expressed in seven parables in Matt. xiii. It is comprised in the commission given by our blessed Lord to his apostles in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. It was not to be "meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Our Lord had said to the Jews, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. xxi. 43. It is evident here, that our Lord refers to the presence of God with his people, and to his reigning in their hearts and outward ordinances. The voice was about to be heard in the outward temple, "Let us depart." It is, we repeat, the spiritual kingdom of the church of God to which our Lord refers. In this kingdom,
it is manifest, the promise was largely fulfilled to the apostles. They were joined with Christ. "He is the head of the body, the church." Colos. i. 18. "God hath set some in the church, first apostles." 1 Cor. xii. 28. "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Eph. ii. 20. Moreover, the apostles were exalted to judge or reign; i. e., sit on thrones in this spiritual kingdom, in being appointed by Christ to preach the gospel, and thereby possessing the power of the keys of the kingdom: "Whosoever sins ye forgive," says our Lord, "they are forgiven; or whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." The apostles now govern or rule over all true churches of Christ, by means of the word given them to preach, and written in the New Testament. They judge us now, spiritually, as fully by the word, as they did when personally on earth. They did also eat and drink with Christ spiritually in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and in various other ways were sustained by him. If, in these matters, the apostles had not the promise fulfilled, we are at a loss to know what can be said to be so.

7. The nature of Christ's kingdom may also be ascertained by enquiring what sort of kingdom it was that Christ came to overthrow. His kingdom is antagonistical to the kingdom of Satan. But that kingdom, though prevailing upon earth, had its source in the invisible world. St. Paul terms our arch enemy "the prince of the power of the air;"—"the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Eph. ii. 2. Our Lord says again,—"If Satan be divided against himself,
how shall his kingdom stand?" Luke xi. 18. Again: —"To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Acts xxvi. 18. So also the passage, "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven." But although the kingdom of Satan on earth is thus described, as manifested by his evil dominion over men, yet he himself is invisible, and his influence spiritual; so is it with that kingdom whose head overcometh Satan.

As to the question asked by the disciples of our Lord.—If he would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel? it seems to us, that it was the temporal dominion to which they alluded. That suited best their carnal notions. They would scarcely mean the spiritual kingdom of God, for of that the Jewish nation was not then deprived. They possessed their temple, the levitical law and priesthood,—they possessed the oracles of God, and were outwardly his people. It would seem, that our Lord, by his conduct, rather evinced pity for the darkness of their understanding, and their delusion of worldly prosperity, than that implied approval of their inquiry, which premillenarians are so particularly disposed to infer from the passage.

8. The destruction of the four great empires, symbolized in Nebuchadnezzar's image, is illustrative of this subject. We are told, that "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." This kingdom is symbolised by "a stone cut out without hands, which smote the image on his feet,
which were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” The terms used imply agency, rather than personality; and the language leads to the impression, that the gospel will be brought to bear effectually against worldly maxims and heathenish sentiments;—that human laws, institutions, and proceedings, shall hereafter harmonise with the religion of Jesus. Men will become true spiritual members of that church of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone. “Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” Jer. xxiii. 29. The expression, “stone cut out without hands becoming a great mountain,” indicates an invisible, though energetic agency; and a growth and extension quite different from that momentary effect which premillenarians seem to expect, and justly, if their view were a right one, from the personal appearance of the adorable Redeemer. The whole is illustrated by that beautiful passage, Zec. iv. 6, 7, 10, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the head stone thereof, with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace, unto it.”... “For who hath despised the day of small things?”

Such appears to be the nature of Christ’s millennial kingdom on earth. It is rather the sanctifying of earthly things to God and his glory, than the bringing down of heavenly beings from the paradise above, to a world which, in its best estate, will still be transitory and pass away.
CHAPTER XV.

THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST, AND THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS.

1. The next case that Mr. Elliott refers to, is that of St. Paul pleading before Agrippa; viz., that he was judged "for the hope of the promise made of God to the fathers, to which promise the twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night, hoped to have come," compared with his previous saying, "of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question." For there can be no doubt, Mr. E. says, that the promise to which the hopes of the twelve tribes were instantly directed, was that of the resurrection of the kingdom of Israel; which event, consequently, was thus directly associated by the apostle, with the resurrection of the just. Now, granting to Mr. Elliott, that the Jews looked for a temporal kingdom and resurrection of the just, at the coming of the Messiah, still that was not St. Paul's hope. He did not hold that in common with his countrymen. He knew and believed, that the Messiah had already come, and yet there had been no resurrection. On this point he differed from his countrymen, and was viewed by them as a heretic. "I confess" says he, (Acts xxiv. 14,) "unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law, and in the pro-
phets; and have hope towards God, which they themselves allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust.” Now the hope of the twelve tribes was, strictly speaking, not so much the resurrection of Israel, as the coming of the Messiah. In that hope, St. Paul had a common anticipation with his brethren; and to that, therefore, he refers, as if he had said, I only insist upon what they themselves contend for, the coming of a Messiah. Only he preached, as we have observed, that he was already come; and as to the matter of a resurrection, they admitted there was to be one. But, St. Paul adds, “of the just and the unjust;” and at once puts himself in direct opposition to the views of premillenarians. They, in common with the Jews of old, contend, that at Christ’s coming, there shall be a resurrection of the just, i. e., of the saints who shall be raised to partake with him of his kingdom. But the apostle’s doctrine, we have seen, was different from this. He preached that there should be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. He extended the whole matter to the good and to the bad; to Jew and Greek alike; and thundered in the ears of both, the awful realities of the great day, in which, no Jewish privileges could deliver, nor Gentile indifference save, from the decree of the Judge of all the earth. This is evident from what took place before Felix. Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; and we read that Felix trembled. It was not of the privileges of the righteous only, but also of the punishment of the wicked that St. Paul spoke; and, there-
fore, his allusion is not to any *first* resurrection of the dead, as Mr. E. would have us believe, but to the general resurrection of the last day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and when *every one* shall be judged according to his works: and when they that have done good shall go into everlasting life; and they that have done evil into everlasting death. We see, therefore, that Mr. Elliott's argument on this point is inconclusive.

2. In connection with the preceding section, it may be noticed, that premillenarians often speak and write of those who oppose them, as if they thought little of the resurrection and the second coming of our Lord. There is at least an insinuation of something of that kind. Far, however, be any such thing from our thoughts. To a believer, the return of his Lord, and the glory that shall follow, must be a subject of the most intense interest. He believes it was the prayer and object of all the elect in Christ, in every age, to attain to the resurrection of the *just*: to be *first* in order of those who shall rise from the dead in the great day of the Lord. To obtain that and its blessed results, is the grand object of their works of faith and their labour of love in Christ Jesus. They seek to have that lot in the end of the days. They will then have their reward; will see their adored Lord, and partake eternally of the joys of his glorious kingdom. "O! glorious hour. O! blessed abode. They will be near and like their God." They read of this joyful event in the Scriptures; and are filled with rapture: "Thou shalt be recompensed at the
resurrection of the just.” “They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead. . . are the children of God; being the children of the resurrection.” Luke xx. 35, 36. “If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.” Phil. iii. 11. Also, “Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s, at his coming: then cometh the end.” 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24. “The dead in Christ shall rise first.” 1 Thes. iv. 16. These texts speak the hope of every renewed heart in Christ Jesus; though sometimes the power of expressing it accurately may not exist. Still, to have a joyful resurrection, and to be with the Saviour in eternal happiness, is the object of a sincere Christian. We beseech our premillenarian brethren, on this point, to correct their judgment, and to enlarge their charity towards us. We differ from them only in believing, that when the first resurrection, in order, has taken place, and the saints have been caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; then will follow the resurrection of the wicked, so immediately as to constitute, as it were, one day, without any such interval as the millennium or personal reign on earth. We believe, that the judgment will be on the whole body of the righteous; and on the whole body of the wicked. That the church of the saints, on that day, will have completed its number, and not one be wanting. This we conceive to be most admirably expressed by St. Paul, in the 1 Cor. xv., “Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. Then cometh the end.” As soon as Christ, the first-fruits, and they that are
Christ's at his coming, have arisen, then, i. e., forthwith cometh the end: the church of Christ is completed, and the work of redemption fulfilled. There is, thenceforth, no other work to be done on the present earth, except to raise the wicked from its dust and to condemn them with Satan to everlasting punishment. Any other interpretation, we conceive, arises not from the words themselves, but from the ingenuity of those whose system requires it. The reader will excuse this dilation. It seems requisite, in order to put the matter in its proper position with both sides, in this controversy. Explanations of this nature often prevent much misunderstanding.

3. Mr. Elliot discusses the passage from Matt. xix. 28, which makes mention of the great future παλιγγενεσία, or regeneration; the passage, Acts iii. 19, referring to “the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord;” and Rom. viii. 19, which speaks of “the manifestation of the sons of God.” The passage, Matt. xix. 28, is as follows: “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” The reader will be aware, that concerning this, and the two other texts referred to, much discussion has taken place among learned men, and large quotations of Greek and Latin might easily be displayed, with the views of ancient and modern writers. We have considered these, but it is foreign to the purpose of this Essay to enter into a very critical disquisition. We
shall therefore give, what appears to us, the meaning of the texts in question, without referring to authorities. It seems to us, that the text immediately before us, cannot, in any case, be taken in a strictly literal manner; for we know, the twelve apostles addressed, could never sit upon twelve thrones, inasmuch as one of them evinced himself to be a notorious hypocrite, and went to his own place. It is true, his office was supplied by the choice of Matthias; but can we suppose, that St. Paul, who was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles," was not to have a throne as well as his brethren? According, however, to the literal reading of the language, there was no thirteenth tribe of Israel, over which he could preside. The most natural interpretation is that which we have given to a very similar passage, namely, that when Christ should be exalted to his throne, at the right hand of God, the apostles would be raised to high stations in his spiritual kingdom, and be judges in it through all ages. This would be effected by their inspired preaching and writing. Holy Scripture is declared in every age to be able "to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." None of their successors in the ministry, would possess any authority in the church of the same kind. The gift was personal to the apostles. But, inasmuch as the regeneration of an individual affects his state and position at the last day, and determines whether he shall reign eternally with Christ or not, so we conceive in this passage, there is a further reference to the glorious pre-eminence of the apostles, in that new creation which shall follow the
final judgment. They will then shine as the stars in the kingdom of the Father. But the millennium is not the eternal state; and will consist rather in the full expansion of the new heavens of the day of pentecost, and their blessed influence upon the earth, than in any new creation. We cannot, therefore, concede a pre-millennial interpretation to this text.

4. There is next, Acts iii. 19—21, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." It appears, from Luke i. 70, that the concluding words, viz., "which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets," may have a more direct reference to the sending of Jesus Christ, than to the restitution of all things; though it is conceded that the one may be considered as the effect of the other. We also concede to our premillenarian brethren, that the word ἀρραβώνας, is fairly translated by the word restore, or by the phrase in our version, "the restitution of all things." Mr. E. well suggests the meaning, "a new and different constitution of things, generally by restoration to what it was originally." But, on the other hand, we must observe, that Bloomfield adds, "and, by implication, for the better." The restoring of a thing to its original state, implies also the idea of completion; so that we come round to a sense, in which the "restitu-
tion of all things," means that the dislocated original is once more sound. But can the world be said to be restored to a perfect state whilst Satan is enabled to stain it with his polluted steps, or whilst death and hell and sin continue in existence? Surely these must all be destroyed, before the restitution of all things to God can take place, and Jesus be visibly seen to live and reign with his people. Yet we know that their final destruction will not take place till after the thousand years. During that period the evil influences of Satan will only be suspended; to be again revived with apparently increased energy and effect. "The times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," some explain of the future national conversion of the Jews. In that case the event is distinct from the one named in the succeeding paragraph: but assuming both paragraphs to refer to the same event, the words are aptly illustrated by Rev. xxi. 4, in which, after the final judgment, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." An old writer, Joseph Perry, quoted by Mr. Brown, seems to us to have written very sensibly on this text. According to Mr. B's. quotation, "Christ's Second Coming," (p. 269,) Perry concludes as follows: "What though this restitution of all things takes in the restoration of the creation unto its paradisiacal state; yet it is certain that the bringing in the elect by regenerating grace, and completing the whole mystical body of Christ is the
principal part of that restitution, they being principally concerned in it, and for whose sake all other creatures are to be restored; all which plainly shows that there will be no more conversion when Christ is come, which will not be until the restitution of all things."

5. There remains Romans viii. 18—23, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." It is very difficult to say, that we know the true sense of this passage. It is wrapt in much mystery. We incline to the supposition that the creature means the physical man; which, as well as the soul, shall be delivered by a glorious resurrection, from the bondage of corruption or decay, into a glorious state: the body being purified and inhabited also by a purified soul and will, shall serve and honour God. The whole creation, most probably the whole visible world, groaneth and travaileth in pain at present; and, as well as the saints, waits for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body, at the resurrection
and restoration of all things. But all this does not assist the premillenarian conclusion. The manifestation of the sons of God cannot take place whilst Satan retains any power to annoy them. We think with Tertullian, as quoted by Whitby, "Then shall be the end of evil, when the devil, the prince of evil, shall go away into the fire," &c. Tunc erit mali finis, cum præses ejus diabolus abierit in ignem, &c.

6. Mr. Elliott's 6th and 7th heads scarcely need notice, as they are rather corroborations of preceding views than material in themselves. Our discussion with Mr. E. may now be considered as closed. We take leave of him with feelings of the highest esteem, affection, and regard. We view his work as an honour to himself, and a most valuable gift to the church of Christ. It is only in his premillennial anticipations that we cannot follow him. In parting, we say, Brother, beloved in the Lord, farewell! We differ, it is true, on the points here discussed; but we are united in things of ten thousand times more practical importance. We have the same conviction of our fallen and wretched state, by nature; and of the only remedy provided in Jesus Christ our Lord. The gospel we know to be the solace of every woe; and the Saviour it reveals, to be precious to all believers. He is their refuge, their deliverer, in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment. Our present subject of difference will end, when the doubt is solved, by the second coming of our Lord in the clouds. But, Oh! the things in which, through grace, we agree, they shall never end; but, on the Redeemer's appearance, be strengthened and continued, for ever and ever.—Amen.
CHAPTER XVI.

TEXTS NOT REFERRED TO BY MR. ELLIOTT.

1. A kind friend having pointed out one or two texts, not referred to by Mr. Elliott, we take the present opportunity of making some observations upon them. There is, first, Zechariah xiv., on which it is asserted that the words, "his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives," will be literally fulfilled, and prove his personal reign on earth. But the reading of the chapter carefully over will, we think dissipate such a conclusion. The following is the passage: "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle;" ... "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof towards the east and towards the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." On perusing these words, and especially that part of
the context describing the "light not to be clear nor dark," can we be quite sure that Mr. Scott, and those who agree with him, are mistaken in referring this prophecy to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus? The Roman armies included all nations, and ever after that siege, the Lord seemed to fight against the empire. Our Saviour stood with his feet upon the mount of Olives, and the separation of the mountain may mean, the breaking up of the exclusive Jewish dispensation, and the admission of the Gentiles:—the coming of the Lord;—the siege of Jerusalem;—and his saints—the preachers of the gospel. The gospel day for many years not to be clear nor dark, but in the evening tide to be light. All this seems to suit the prophecy very well. But, for the sake of argument, we will waive this interpretation. Does the premillennial one, then, necessarily follow? We think not. It is said, in the first instance, the Lord will fight, as when he fought in the day of battle. Now he fought in the days of Israel and Judah often; yet he never visibly appeared except in the effects of his invisible strokes. He struck the blow by the ministers of his power, which were sometimes angels, and at other times earthquakes, pestilence, or famine.

2. "His feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst." This, it is said, must be taken literally. We ask, then, are the following passages ever so taken: Zech. xiii. 1, —"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness;" or Ezekiel xxxviii. 18,
in which the Lord is made to say, "**MY FURY SHALL COME UP IN MY FACE?**" If these expressions are figurative, why not the present? Moreover, is not God said to **touch** the mountains and they smoke,—to spread out his **hands**,—to deliver his people with a mighty **hand** and a stretched out **arm**;—and other figures of the like kind; speaking of himself, as if he possessed bodily parts? The figures are all, however, declaratory of his power; and so, we conceive, is the present one. The event may be real, though figuratively described; or there may be joined to the prophecy of a literal circumstance, a figurative accompaniment. This we have already instanced in the lxviiiith Psalm, in which there is a prophecy of the ascension. In fulfilling it, Christ ascended on high literally, but he only in a figurative sense led "**captivity captive.**" Even we moderns say of Nelson, "**He died in the arms of victory.**" So here, the cleaving of the mountain may be real, but Christ's standing with his feet upon it be a figure. There may in the text be an allusion to the ancient conquerors putting their feet upon the necks of their enemies, in token of subjection. Is it an improbable supposition, that, the nations having surrounded Jerusalem with their armies, the Almighty, by some awful exercise of his power, may separate the mount of Olives by an earthquake, and tread down the enemies of his people, as it were, under his feet? Lastly,—we ask, will the Son of man (Dan. vii.) be **visibly** brought to the Ancient of Days; or Christ (2 Thes.) in a **palpable** manner consume Antichrist by the spirit of his mouth? Will the Lord Jesus (Rev.
appear from heaven *riding* a white horse? Why, then, in the present case, argue so perseveringly for Christ's literally "standing" with his feet? Next,—The Jews are "to flee like as they fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah." Now, if Christ is personally to come, and stand upon Mount Zion for the deliverance of his people, why should they fly? They ought, on the contrary, to rejoice at the sight of their deliverer. But supposing the event to be accomplished by agency, as by earthquake in the time of King Uzziah, then their flight is a natural thing. They see and feel the power of God mysteriously at work, and fly in ignorance and alarm, not comprehending the meaning or result. "And the Lord shall come, and all his saints with him." This, we think, at once shews the meaning to be spiritual. The Lord will not bring his saints to fight literally in war against the enemies of Jerusalem. Such a supposition outrages every pious feeling. No one expects (Rev. xix.) that Christ and his saints will literally ride on white horses, to fight against the beast and the kings of the earth. The Lord will come by the power of his word, subduing the Jews to the gospel; in which blessed work the saints or people of God will be fellow-workers with their Saviour.

3. The view we have just given of Zech. xiv., is much strengthened by comparing it with a parallel prophecy;—Ezek. xxxviii. 18—22. There Gog and Magog are mentioned as going up to besiege Jerusalem. The description given there of the fighting of the Lord, shews at once it is not literal:—"When Gog shall come
against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken. All the men that are upon the face of the earth shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood." Here the Lord sets forth his own power in figurative, but the result in literal terms. Hence our first conclusion is confirmed, that the "standing with his feet" is figurative, the effect upon the mountain literal.

4. There is also our Lord's declaration:—"Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Matt. xxiii. 38, 39. There is some difficulty, it must be admitted, in this text. But let us try it with the context and other Scriptures. The words in question are very awful, being the concluding ones of our Lord's ministry to the Jews. He had just addressed the Scribes and Pharisees as follows: "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed
upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto
the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew
between the temple and the altar. Verily, I say unto
you, all these things shall come upon this generation.”
The Lord tells the generation he addressed, that they
should see their house, their temple and the city, in
which they boasted, left desolate. More than that, he
told them they would not, addressing them personally,
escape the damnation of hell. So that, carrying on the
view, they would see him no more till the last day,
when they would be compelled to own him to be the
true Messiah, and to offer an extorted acknowledgment
of his blessedness. But, alas, they would not see him
in mercy but in judgment. “Behold,” it is said, “he
cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and
they also which pierced him: and all the kindreds of
the earth shall wail because of him.” Rev. i. 7. The
passage is, in fact, analogous to Matt. xxvi. 64:—
“Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the
right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of hea-
ven.” At the day of judgment, the enemies of Christ
will be made unwilling witnesses of his glory, being
convinced, but too late, of their error. We have thus
noticed this passage, and the others referred to, as
they show that, when Christ comes to judgment, his
enemies will manifestly be present and see him in his
glory; and this is one of the strongest possible argu-
ments against the premillennial view, which makes
Christ’s coming to be only to deliver his saints, whilst
the wicked are to remain afterwards in their graves for
more than a thousand years.
5. We grieve to say, that many fervid premillenarians press passages of Scripture into their service without due consideration. For instance, all the texts relating to the final day of judgment, they, without scruple, apply to their supposed premillennial advent. The great and awful judgment of the great white throne, after the millennial day, is, by them, at once swept away. Again,—others speak of the saints being caught up into the air, whilst God's judgments are poured down upon the wicked, and of their afterwards descending again to the earth to reign. We presume this is founded upon 1 Thes. iv. 17, in which the apostle says, "We which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." But if the saints are "caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so are to be for ever with the Lord," what becomes of the favourite literal interpretation, by premillenarians, of the Lord's: "standing with his feet upon the mount of Olives;" for, according to this text, he will not, at his first appearance, touch the earth? Again,—if we apply one text in a premillennial way, so we must others; and, it is declared, 2 Pet. iii. 10, that "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth, also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up;" there can then remain no mount of Olives upon which the Lord can stand with his feet. Moreover, in such a dissolution of things as St. Peter describes, how are those people to be preserved, over whom the risen saints are to have their reign on earth?
Premillenarians attempt, but are not able, to explain away this difficulty. It is, in fact, one of their own creating; for, upon our view, there is none at all. We believe that the text relates to the final day, since it is expressly said by the apostle that “that the heavens and the earth which are now,... are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

6. It is also a favourite question with some premillenarians to ask, are they to wait for their Lord another thousand years? Is there no hope, say they, of his appearance during that period? We reply,—beloved brethren, speak not thus. Are we better, or do we possess more love for the Lord, than the prophets and apostles? and yet, how much longer they patiently wait his coming, and until then rest in peace! Moreover, there is nothing to shew that, during the one thousand years, the coming of the Lord will not be the hope of the church, as it is now. We believe that it will; only perhaps in a more intense degree. It is probable, there will be the same uncertainty about the commencement and end of the millennial period, that now exists concerning the seventy weeks; the true date of the death of Christ; the beginning of the 1260 years; and other dates given in Scripture. Many things may also be said of an advanced state of the millennial day, which cannot be predicted of its commencement. It may have its dawn, its mid-day, and its evening twilight. Moreover, the period may not be one thousand literal years. So that the saints will live, as at present, with uncertainty as to the hour or day of
Christ's appearing. The only time, it is probable, when Christ will cease to be expected, will be during the apostacy of Gog and Magog. The scoffers will say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" Our Lord has declared, when he cometh, he will not find faith in the earth; that is, we presume, in a prevailing state. But, when least expected, he will most certainly come, and finally destroy his enemies.

There are many other points which we might notice, but the reader will already be wearied, and we have no pleasure in prolonging a discussion with those from whom we differ on this question, but with whom, in all essential matters, we are one. We may all be satisfied with this assurance, that "when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." 1 John, iii. 2. We join our dear brethren in praying for the hastening of that time.

7. Still, perhaps, some one may say, Is there no meaning in the three texts relating to the regeneration, the restitution of all things, and the manifestation of the sons of God? Shall God's will never be done on earth, as it is done in heaven? To which we reply, the texts alluded to, most certainly do speak of a new state of things, and apparently of a restoration, or new formation, of the earth to a purity resembling heaven. We acknowledge this, and thank God for such a glorious prospect. The whole that we allege is, that this beatific state will not take place till after the general judgment, the passing away of the existing creation, and the total destruction, not the suspension, of evil, and the power of the evil
one. Whatever the future glory may be, we conceive it will be entered into at once by the whole body of the redeemed saints, with Christ their head, and not by any chosen portion of them. It is the common lot of their glorious inheritance. We believe it is true of all what is asserted in Job: “Man lieth down, and rises not till the heavens be no more.” We consider this future new creation to be proved by 2 Pet. iii. 10—13, already quoted; for, after stating that “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up:” it is added, “nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” So, also, Rev. xxi., where, immediately after the literal description of the general judgment, we have the following description also literal: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said
unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things.” We have already shewn, that this passage cannot have reference to the millennium; inasmuch as tears, death, sorrow, crying, and pain, will have an existence after that event. it is only in the eternal world that they will be no more.

Our humble prayer for ourselves, and all we love, is, that we may be citizens of this holy city, this new Jerusalem. Lord, we believe, help thou our unbelief. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. . . . Amen.
CHAPTER XVII.

SENTIMENTS OF MODERN PREMILLENNARIANS;
WITH OBSERVATIONS THEREON.

WHILST the foregoing work was passing through the press, we had the opportunity of reading some of the writings of the leading premillenarians; and it occurred to us, that it would illustrate our subject, if we extracted shortly their views of the millennium, and added a few observations thereon.

THE REV. E. BICKERSTEH.

"The millennium kingdom is a farther era to be noticed. This is singled out for distinct observation in different parts of the word of God. It is a time of transition from the kingdom of grace to the kingdom of glory, and partakes of the features of both these kingdoms. It is a state of probation to men upon earth, and beginning of assured blessedness to the saints of the resurrection.

"The subjection during the millennium, not being, indeed, a complete and full subjection of the heart to him, the corruption of man will, at its close, have a yet further manifestation. During the millennium, the faithful are mingled with those who only yield a feigned
obedience, as we see predicted in the close of the prophecies both of Isaiah lxv. 20, and Zech. xiv. 17—19. The last rebellion after the millennium, is distinctly described in the book of Revelation, when the thousand years are expired, &c. The objects of their enmity are the camp of the saints and the beloved city; and the extent of the rebellion affects the whole earth. This last open apostacy of the wicked, finally separates all the unbelievers, and removes them from the earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. They are first slain by fire, and afterwards raised with the rest of the wicked dead for judgment. But no change is there mentioned as passing on the Jewish nation, or on the living righteous who continue faithful to God, as on the translation of the saints before the millennium. The object of the rebellion—to overthrow the camp of the saints and the beloved city—fails of its design; God protects them. The living righteous then, after the millennium, may yet continue a seed to serve God; and, in successive generations be trained for heavenly glory.”

Mr. B. adds, “This period of a thousand generations, thus repeatedly mentioned, reaches far beyond the millennium;—a perpetual continuation of men living in flesh on the earth.”—The Second Coming to Judgment and the Kingdom of Christ. Being Lectures delivered during Lent, 1843, at St. George’s, Bloomsbury. By Twelve Clergymen of the Church of England.—p.p. 399—417, 418.
"The world to come—literally the habitable earth that is to be—and the thing intended is the state to which it is the revealed will of God to bring the earth, as man's dwelling-place, at his own appointed time; that is, at the second advent of Christ." Dr. Mc Neill illustrates this under the four following heads:—1. "There shall be no more sin." 2. "There shall be no more sorrow." 3. "There shall be no more ignorance." 4. "There shall be no more curse." He then adds, "Such shall the world to come be. This earth, with all the then inhabitants thereof, without sin, without sorrow, without ignorance, without curse of any kind, on man or on beast, or on the fields or the trees. I have said the then population; because, in the process of thus establishing the earth, two classes of its present and past population shall be removed—those who have truly believed the gospel, and those who have rejected it. Those who have believed shall be with Christ, but in risen bodies, reigning over it one with Christ; constituting the king, rather than any part of the kingdom. For this, those among them who have fallen asleep in the faith, are now waiting. In Rev. v. 9, we read their song retrospective and prospective. Those who have rejected the gospel, shall be cast into the pit with the fallen angels. They are symbolised by the beast and the false prophet, and include all who have received the mark of the beast in their foreheads or in their hands. "Who then shall remain? 1. The restored Jews;
on whose behalf mercy shall have triumphed over judgment, according to the manifold promises made to their forefathers. And, 2. The millions of the heathen who have never heard, and, of course, have never rejected, the gospel; and of whom it is written that, 'they shall come to Judah's light, and their kings to the brightness of her rising:' and, again, 'that ten men out of all languages of the nations, shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'" 

"This is that better land, that golden age after which the human heart yearns, and for the introduction of which so many fond schemes are fondly proposed."—Lecture iv., p.p. 93, 101, 107. "The Priest upon his Throne: being Lectures delivered, Lent, 1849, at St. George's, Bloomsbury. By Twelve Clergymen of the Church of England."

We may observe, that Dr. Mc Neill speaks in the preceding extract of the state of things during the thousand years. After the thousand years, he admits there will be sin on a large scale.—p. 96.

THE REV. A. BONAR.

"It is said that our views regarding the conversion of sinners in the millennial day, are completely at variance with the scriptural view of that conversion as at present. This is charged on us by many objectors from an entirely mistaken idea of the place and influence we assign to the personal appearing of Christ in this matter. They suppose we hold that Christ's
personal appearing is to be the main instrument of conversion then: whereas, we maintain that conversion then will be the very same thing as conversion now. It is right, however, to notice here, that all premillennialists have not been of our opinion. Some have held that conversion then shall be a different process in some respects; and that saints then shall be a different sort of Christians—a kind of Adamic race. Now, we wholly renounce this view. We have not the slightest sympathy with it. It is not a view that our principles lead to: for our belief in the premillennial coming, in no way alters our belief in the Lord's true and faithful word, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

"The bride is the saints living before the millennium. The bride's children those born afterwards. The bride shall be the object of infinitely greater honour and glory, than the numbers without number, the millions upon millions of the millennial day."—Redemption Draweth Nigh. p.p. 150, 151, 131.

The Rev. J. Cumming, D. D.

"The instant that the earth has been thus consigned to the habitation of the dead in soul and the dead in body, the fire... shall burst at a thousand orifices; the gasses that compose our atmosphere shall ignite, and 'the heaven and the earth'—meaning this visible economy—'shall melt,' in the language of the apostle, 'as if with fervent heat.' Christ's people in the air—the people that are not Christ's on the earth—the living
punished on it, the dead buried beneath it. Such, then, is the first resurrection: and when this has taken place, this purified earth shall be the residence of the saints of God.

"Such is the millennium as it is described in scripture; but one difficult point remains: it may be my own delusion; but it does strike me, that I have found the explanation of an universally perplexing point—the difficulty is this—if there is to be a millennium of a thousand years with Christ and his own people, in the midst of the earth, how is it, that when Satan shall be loosed, that there shall be found a people in the four corners of the earth called Gog and Magog, who shall be gathered together in battle and war against the saints of God in the resurrection body? Now I admit there is great difficulty about this.

"I will give what I think the probable solution of an admitted and perplexing difficulty. Do you perceive, that it is here stated, that when the dead in Christ have risen, and ascended to the Lord, the rest of the dead lived not, till the one thousand years were finished? I suppose, then, 'that the rest of the dead,'—that is, the unconverted,—are raised from the dead just at the moment that the thousand years are completely closed; and that the rest of the dead, raised in their bodies, are those enemies who make war with the saints in their resurrection bodies: the unjust shall arise as well as the just: the one shall have their bodies restored as well as the other; the imprimatur of eternity stamped upon the one: the imprimatur of eternity stamped upon the other;—the one an eternal capacity of woe—the
other of bliss. I suppose, and I believe it the true solution of the difficulty, that the armies that arose from the four corners of the earth, are just 'the rest of the dead,' raised at the close of the millennium, and then, observe, with all their vices inextirpated, their natures unregenerated, their hearts in the gall of bitterness; they shall be headed by the archangel's energy and the archangel's hate, and shall make one last dying and desperate attack upon the saints of God that dwell in the New Jerusalem and there magnify and worship the lamb."—Apocalyptical Sketches, 1848. p.p. 481—484.

THE REV. HORATIUS BONAR.

"We differ from Mr. Brown. I think the scripture warrants us in believing, that the millennial state, though not absolutely perfect, will be one of unspeakably greater and larger blessedness, holiness, and glory, than he conceives. Any remnant of sin or death will only be as the spots upon the face of the sun: utterly hidden in the excellent splendour. Millenarians are often charged with the fault of allowing no room for a falling away. This is not the case. We do not believe that every individual is to be a saint." p. 44.

"We do not believe that the millennial dispensation will be in essence different from the present. We speak of it as another dispensation, in the same sense as we speak of the patriarchal dispensation or the Jewish dispensation." p. 55.

"We do not believe that Christ and his risen saints are to dwell in actual houses of lime and stone, such
as we dwell in. Their dwelling is in the pavilion cloud, or residence furnished for them in the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from God, and which rests over the earth, just as the pillar cloud did of old. From that, as the palace of the king in which they abide, they go forth continually, as vice-royal potentates, to rule the nations of the earth. Their position, office, and procedure, will be something similar to angels in the present age, who are 'ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation.” p. 59.

"He is not to dwell in the habitations of sinful men as he did the first time. He dwells in the new [not the earthly] Jerusalem, round which is gathered the pavilion cloud of glory. That is his palace in which he reigns as king. He no more comes in contact with sin than did the pillar cloud come in contact with the pollution of Israel over which it hung. . .No millenarian ever said that he and his saints walk up and down the earth conversing with unconverted men;—though of unconverted men, how few will there be in that holy time. Not one amongst ten thousand.” p. 98.

"We do not believe in the cessation of Christ’s mediatorial office. He remains eternal mediator,—the everlasting medium of communication between God and man. The place of intercession we hold to be nonessential. He interceded on earth once; he will intercede there again when he returns. Locality makes no difference.” p. 6.—"The Coming and Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. By the Rev. Horatius Bonar, 1849.”
Upon the preceding extracts, we cannot but remark that the assumption of unproved facts by the writers is extraordinary. For instance, 1st,—They, one and all, take for granted, that the first resurrection, Rev. xx. 4, 5, is to be of the whole body of saints, when a glance of the eye shows, that the living and reigning there mentioned, is of the martyrs only. 2ndly,—They all consider the new heavens and new earth, 2 Peter iii., to be in existence during the millennium, and, with the exception of Dr. Cumming, believe that the new earth will be inhabited by mortal men, who by some means are to be saved from the general conflagration. Yet, let the reader refer to St. Peter, and see whether his language admits of any such construction. He says, "The heavens and the earth which are now, are kept in store reserved unto fire against the judgment and perdition [not deliverance and escape] of ungodly men." Again, v. 7, "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The saints, we know from 2 Thes. iv. 17, will have been previously caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall be delivered. But the apostle expressly declares the contrary of the ungodly. This we say is the plain and obvious meaning of the passage.

But Dr. McNeill tells us, "that the Jewish nation, and the millions of the heathen who have never heard, and, of course, have never rejected, the gospel," do escape. By what process, however, we know not. They will, it seems, pass through the fire unhurt.
Nay, more, whilst still mortal, they will become those sinless and perfect beings, who, we are told, are to inhabit the earth during the millennium. Is it not obvious, according to this doctrine, that, instead of benefiting the heathen by preaching the gospel to them, we rather injure them? It is a witness to condemn those who hear it; whilst those who do not hear will be saved. And this consideration is the more pressing, as premillenarians teach that the Lord's second advent is now near at hand.

Then again, Mr. Bickersteth speaks of the millennium as "a transition," "a state of probation," and of "the faithful being mingled with those who only yield a feigned obedience;" the Messrs. Bonar also speak of sinners, and of the need of conversion during the millennium, as well as now; but Dr. Mc Neill denies any such thing, and says, "there will then be no more sin, no more sorrow, no more ignorance, no more curse. It will be a golden age." Mr. Bickersteth, in the first part of the extract we have given, writes soberly and well; but in the latter part, when he informs us, that, after the final judgment upon the wicked, the Jewish nation and others, will form "a perpetual continuation of men living in the flesh on earth;" we say it may possibly be so; but we do not find any such revelation in scripture. The expression "a thousand generations," is too vague for supporting so extraordinary a conclusion.

The high regard we entertain for Doctor Cumming, causes us to rejoice that he does not fall in with the great mass of premillenarians. He considers Christ's
coming, as we do, to be the completion of the church; and that, after that event, conversion and mortality will be over. The risen righteous will, he thinks, inhabit a renewed and glorious earth for one thousand years; after which, the awful assault he describes awaits them. But does not this impugn that text which declares, "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest?" Job iii. 17.

The Messrs. Bonar are the most sober of the writers we have quoted; their endeavour is to make premillennial views as unobjectionable as possible. But here we inquire, what scriptural authority has Mr. A. Bonar for his distinction between "the bride, and the children of the bride;" and the difference in their future state? Is not the whole of the redeemed church one body, and Christ's spouse? We also enquire, if Mr. H. Bonar is quite consistent, where he tells us Christ will intercede on earth again, when he returns; and yet, that his residence is not to be on earth, but in "a pavilion cloud," resting over the earth, just as the pillar cloud did of old? We confess we cannot practically see the difference between this and his residence in heaven. Again, he says, "the place of intercession, we hold to be nonessential." This is merely ipse dixit. The scripture states, that Christ "is not entered into the holy place made with hands ... but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;" Heb. ix. 24; and there is no revelation of an intercession for sinners elsewhere. We must, therefore, hesitate to accept Mr. H. Bonar's authority for such an important conclusion. Our friends read everything
through premillennial glasses. Assertions, however strongly made, are not proofs; and, although they may gratify warm partizans, and give an appearance of strength to an argument, they do not convince reflecting opponents. There are many things in the writings of the Messrs. Bonar of which we approve; and, if we had the pleasure of their personal acquaint ance, we doubt not we should find much in them to love and esteem. But, on the other hand, we think we detect in Mr. H. Bonar's last work, a tendency to literary gladiatorship. In the part where he most triumphs, we can assure him we do not find the thrust of his controversial sword to be mortal. We allude to 2 Thes. ii.; which, at v. 8, we admit at once to be a difficult text to anti-premillenarians. But we deny that it is so plain as he alleges against us. The simplest reader sees that the phrase "consume with the spirit of his mouth," rather indicates something invisible than anything palpable and in immediate contact; and this is strongly confirmed when the passage is compared with other scriptures. Hence Calvin, Jewell, and other great theologians of former times; with Jebb and others of our day; suppose the text to relate to two events, or to the beginning and end of one protracted period. It is scarcely fair of Mr. H. Bonar to place such writers in his catena. If the text be thus separated into two comings, the premillennial charm upon it is broken.

We are not unwilling to accept Mr. H. Bonar's illustration of king James and the prince of Orange. The former, it is notorious, was not dethroned by the
personal presence of the prince, but by the news of his coming: he might, according to the scripture phrase, be said to be consumed by the spirit of the mouth, i.e., by proclamation and intelligence of his opponent's approach. The king, however, reappeared, (as we assume Satan will do, in some form of antichrist or man of sin, after the millennium,) and met the prince man to man in battle, in Ireland, and there was finally destroyed. We trust such a comparison is not irreverent. We are led to it by Mr. H. Bonar's illustration. There are, also, pretty obvious answers to many of Mr. H. Bonar's other exegetical remarks. For instance;—2 Peter iii. In the case of the new heavens and the new earth, the change is moral, as well as physical, for it is added, "wherein dwelleth righteousness;" and manifestly, in this latter particular, is the connection between this text and Isa. lxv.

Again, we admit 1 Cor. xv. 54 to have reference to a resurrection; but it is of the whole body of the saints, and not of a part of them, as Mr. H. B. must suppose, if Christ's advent be premillennial. We believe the phrase—"He shall swallow up death in victory," to apply, in the first instance, to the resurrection and ascension of our divine Lord; followed, however, finally, by that of his whole body, the church. But, granting a transition, in Isa. xxv. 7, from the first to the second coming, what follows, except that when the saints are raised Christ's redeeming work is completed? and v. 8 contains the blessing of the resurrection state. We do not see in it anything else. Again, Mr. H. Bonar, in his preface, wishes to prescribe to us
the manner of conducting this controversy. He says, that we ought to begin first by establishing our own case, before we assail his. A court of law would not require this. For here both sides admit a millennium. Mr. H. Bonar and his friends add a personal to a spiritual presence. This we deny: and we naturally direct our efforts to overthrow their arguments. Supposing we have done so, the matter stands as it was, and we have nothing more to prove. This appears simple, but Mr. H. Bonar is not satisfied, and speaks thus, "We are ready to cite twenty plain texts, in which the two things are spoken of, and in which the advent is uniformly placed first." This is clearly begging the question, for, if he can perform what he promises, we must of course bow, and are at once out of court. His doing so, is the thing we dispute. But we must cease, as, in these matters, we have no doubt, Mr. Brown will be enabled to answer the chief part of his opponent's bill of indictment. All, perhaps, he cannot; for, in this, as in every great controversy, there are points upon which an antagonist cannot be easily silenced. This is the case on both sides, and we must all begin to learn the practical duty of exercising forbearance one towards another. It is our deep conviction, that the divines whose writings we have just quoted, have gone beyond the scriptures; and we think their system tempts them to appear wise above what is written. But we find, in practice, that men are often happily inconsistent, and act far better than their views would lead to. We acknowledge, therefore, our brethren's exertions in spreading the gospel, their love
for the heathen, and the numerous Christian virtues in which they excel. In this we rejoice: and pray that we may follow their good example. Yea, may we emulate their hope, and, whatever may be the sense we attach to it, continually attend to the admonition "Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with us all. Amen."

FINIS.