

The Second Advent Before, Not After, the Millennium.

by William Kelly

The Scripture is the standard of truth, and Christ's coming is a living hope that should be the constant outlook of believers.

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:16

Topics: "Eschatology", "Millennial Kingdom"

Description

William Kelly preaches about the importance of holding true to the belief in Christ's imminent return and the establishment of His kingdom on earth. He emphasizes the need to rely on the clear teachings of scripture rather than speculative interpretations that deviate from the truth. Kelly highlights the distinction between the first resurrection of the saints to reign with Christ during the millennium and the second resurrection for judgment. He refutes the idea of a post-millennial advent and stresses the significance of Christ's personal reign over the earth in the future kingdom.

Transcript

Scripture is not only the mine, but the standard, of truth. Error cannot stand before the inspired word. Not that the believer is competent of himself either to draw out or to apply aright; our sufficiency is from God, Who also made us sufficient, says the apostle, as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Every Christian cites 1 Thess. 1: 10; 1 Thess. 2: 19; 1 Thess. 3: 13; 1 Thess. 4: 16, etc.; 1 Thess. 5: 2; 2 Thess. 1: 6-10; 2 Thess. 2: 1, 2, 8; 2 Thess. 3: 5, to prove that Christ's coming, or ?????????, is our hope, and that His day will bring judgment on the world. With all this, it is allowed, the apostle's later Epistles agree, as do those of James, Peter, John, and Jude. It is not otherwise with the Gospels.

But it is a strange position to except the Book of Revelation, especially Rev. 20: 1-8, unless we concede the synchronism of vv. 8, 9, with 2 Thess. 2: 8! Even so it is confessed that the very great difficulty is involved of a preliminary victory over Satan earlier than the final victory. "But possibly," says professor Beet, "the events of Rev. 19: 11, Rev. 20: 4, may take place without any interruption of the ordinary course of human life" (p. 30)! Let the Christian read and judge.

To what is all this unbelieving perplexity owing? To the notion that Christ's coming cannot possibly be followed by the millennium and its subsequent conflict, and must therefore follow these events. But is this true? What saith the scripture?

The Lord taught the disciples, not merely that He was to return from heaven, but that they were to be as men looking for him. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him "(Luke 12: 35, 36). Of a millennium to intervene first, not a word. What is said rather excludes it; for will it be a "little flock" as now, when "Jehovah's people shall be all righteous," and "all nations shall flow" unto the mountain of Jehovah's house? Christ's coming was not a mere doctrine assented to, nor a prophetic event at such or such a date. A living hope was bound up, with His coming -- they knew not how soon. The Lord laid the utmost stress on their state of habitual expectancy -- that when He comes and knocks, they may open immediately unto Him. "Blessed are those (He adds, v. 37) Whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching." This goes far beyond mere acquiescence that He will come at some distant date.

Prof. Beet treats this attitude even now, and of course à fortiori of old, as a mistake. "It was near to the thought of the early Christians"; yet he agrees with the infidel that it was an error. "It must be at once admitted that we cannot, with reasonable confidence, expect a return of Christ during the lifetime of men now living. Still less can we daily expect His return" (pp. 149, 150). This with a vengeance is the higher criticism of modern thought.

It is really bolder than any man should be with (not apostles only but) the Lord of all. Did not He know the truth? Did He deliberately set His own to watch in a way open to Gibbon's sneer or Mr. B.'s correction? Did He not encourage them to watch for His coming from heaven as the only right state of soul? His teaching is uniformly to this end: so much so that He characterized the evil servant in Matt. 24: 48 by saying in his heart, "My lord tarrieth," the prelude to beating his fellow-servants, and to eating and drinking with the drunken. In accordance with this the Lord presents the virgins in the following parable as gone forth to meet the bridegroom. Such in fact was the position of the early Christians, the wise and the foolish alike. The Lord warned that during His delay they would all go asleep, as they all did. This was but partially "in the days of the apostles"; but it became worse and worse not long after. Certain it is, as He predicted, that soon "they all slumbered and slept." But the Lord also indicates that "at midnight," when all was darkest, there is a cry, Behold the bridegroom! Come (or, Go) ye forth to meet him. Then what activity! all arose and trimmed their lamps. It is this cry that awakes slumbering Christendom. When the foolish are in quest of the grace they lack, the wise resume the original place so long abandoned by the saints, the bridegroom comes, and those that were ready go in with him to the marriage feast. The foolish and unready come to find the door was shut. It is false that our Lord's return was not expected as a constant outlook "by His better informed followers."

Nothing was revealed in prophecy to blunt the edge of that hope. The Lord seems to have expressly provided that His own, however intelligent, might be kept, expecting Him as habitually as the simplest. Thus, as far as parabolic language goes, none could infer that the same saints should not go out to meet Him, fall asleep, wake up, go out afresh and in with Him to the wedding. On this principle are all the parables constructed: the wheat-and-tarefield, the mustard-seed, the leaven, and the rest in Matt. 13, in no way forbid but fall in with waiting for Him in their lifetime, whatever may be the filling up of the sketch as He tarries. It was the due posture of hope, which all the truth strengthens instead of weakening. Our Lord did predict in Luke 21, as well as in ch. 19, the near approaching destruction of Jerusalem: did this hinder

it? Why, it also was in that one lifetime; and the next event described is His judicial dealing with mankind when seen coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Even Peter's death, and John's survival, are carefully so presented in John 21 and 2 Peter 1 as not to interfere with watching for Christ. A special revelation of the apostle's death left all open for the heart, and Peter recalls it only when about to depart. But he does more. In the same ch. 1 of his Second Epistle he distinguishes between "the prophetic word," and the "day-star arising in the heart." The former they had known, even in their unconverted days; and they did well to pay heed to it still. But now they had, or at least ought in the gospel to have, a better light than the lamp of prophecy, shining in the "squalid place" of the earth as it is. As Christians they should enjoy the heavenly light that shines through the rent veil, and Christ Himself as the morning star for the heart's hope, before the sun of righteousness cannot be hid from the world. It is therefore ignorance of scripture, and a misuse of prophecy, to let any supposed intervening events check the hope of Christ's coming. The Lord, and the apostles, down to the last chapter of the Book of Revelation, always and strenuously make the hope independent of prophecy, not by a fanciful sentimentality, but by a revealed difference in nature and character. The hope is of Christ for heaven. Prophecy treats of events for the earth; which a better knowledge of the word learns to be subsequent. There is no earthly sign revealed to intercept the hope of Christ's coming for us, to receive us to Himself.

Now there are no Epistles of St. Paul so full of the hope as those to the Thessalonians. There, therefore, we may surely look not merely for better information, but for the unerring light of God.

Did the apostle then lead the saints in Thessalonica to look for the millennium before Christ's coming? He taught them, turning from their idols, as a part of their conversion, to wait for God's Son from heaven as well as to serve a living and true God (1 Thess. 1: 10). And so filled was he for himself with this bright hope that in his labors this is his one unfailling joy, not any proximate prospect for European Asia or the world at large, but "Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming"? So he prays that the Lord would give them to abound in love to the establishing of their hearts in holiness before our God and Father at our Lord's coming with all His saints. He will not, does not, sever "that day" from the actual moment in his desires for them and all. Then ch. 4 is worthy of close attention. The Christians at Thessalonica were so intent on the immediate coming of Christ, that they grieved excessively over one or more of their number who had died. This was just the occasion to tell them, as so many do, that death is to all practical purposes the coming of Christ to that individual. Whatever analogy people may frame, the apostle presents our Lord's coming as the divine comfort and remedy for, or rather His triumph over, it. But he does this in a way which demonstrates the fundamental antagonism of post-millennialism to the true hope. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep" (1 Thess. 4: 15). The same formula he carefully repeats in vv. 16, 17: "and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air" etc. If the express intention of the Holy Spirit had been to set the apostle with the saints, then living, in looking for Christ always, assured of His coming soon but not knowing when, could any words be conceived more suited to the purpose? How easy to have put "those who might be alive" when He comes, in the third person, -- to have said "they," as he did say of the deceased.

Nor is it here and now only that the inspired writer so speaks. In 1 Corinthians, written after both those to the Thessalonians, we find precisely the same thing in his great vindication of the resurrection, when he adds a secret as to the saints found alive at the advent. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed . . . for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1

Cor. 15: 51, 52). Compare also 2 Cor. 5: 1-10, converging on the same point. It is therefore the clearly maintained principle of a proximate, not an ultimate, hope. The language of scripture joins issue with the theology of the schools. Christendom has lost the tongue of Canaan, because the truth is no longer a living reality for men. The apostle put no date, and made not a shade of error. Like his Master, he in the Spirit would have the saints ever waiting and looking for Christ's coming.

Beyond controversy the early part of 1 Thess. 5 speaks of the day of the Lord in a way wholly different from that which prevails among our "negative" brethren. It is judicial for the world which it will overtake as a thief in the night, but not the Christian who certainly ought not to be in darkness, that that day should overtake him so. How could it surprise any suddenly if it cannot be before a thousand years of peace beyond example? The coming of the Lord rightly held presupposes the believer resting on redemption, sealed with the Holy Spirit of God, and already meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Those who confound the Lord's coming and His day are as the rule in a like confusion as to the soul; they rarely distinguish aright the work of Christ for them and of the Spirit in them. In such a condition they rather dread, than welcome, the coming of the Lord, and willingly drop into the illusion of great progress and of indisputable improvement, both in the churches and in society at large . . . To these must be added the many triumphs of the foreign mission field. Before our eyes Christ . . . is going forth conquering and to conquer (p. 151). How averse such minds are and must be from the solemn warnings of divine judgment! Yet how plain and sober is scriptural truth! Hear the scriptures that speak of God's purpose to fill the earth with His glory and the knowledge of it: Num. 14: 21; Isa. 11: 9; Hab. 2: 14. In all these the connection is with His judicial dealings, not with our preaching the gospel. Nothing is so blinding, and self-exalting, as unbelief.

Could a better informed follower of Christ say that the Thessalonians, "like so many others since, had misunderstood St. Paul to teach that the Great Day was close at hand"? (p. 150). Really such misunderstanding, both of St. Paul and of the Thessalonians, is discreditable, though a too prevalent error. It is no opinion but a fact, now recognized by the Revisers (of 1881), as well as by all recent translators and reliable commentators, that the ground of such an impression is a mere blunder, though it misled every body for more than a thousand years. I pointed it out to my friend Dr. D. Brown many years ago, while he lived in Glasgow, before exposing it in public. Yet there it stands uncorrected still in the sixth edition of his *Second Coming* (pp. 4, 5, 42-51, 425-433), though he has not ventured to controvert, as I am persuaded neither he nor any other can fairly overthrow, the evidence of it. The delusion which alarmed the Thessalonians was the cry that the day of the Lord was actually come (????????); and the apostle beseeches them by, or for the sake of (????), the reassuring hope of the Lord's coming and our gathering together unto Him, not to be shaken about that day (2 Thess 2: 1). First, it was the disturbance of fear, and this through the false alarm that the day had come, not at all excitement about the blessed hope; which hope on the contrary is appealed to as a reason by the way to comfort them against their groundless alarm. Secondly, the true text and translation of the last clause in 2 Thess. 2: 2 is, beyond doubt, "as that the day of the Lord is present."

Dr. Brown and Prof. Beet are under a delusion here about God's word less excusable than that of the Thessalonian saints. Not only do they wholly mistake what was at work then and there, but they set thereby the apostle at war with himself. For their misunderstanding makes him explode here what he urges later on the Romans (Rom. 13: 12), that the day is at hand (????????). Compare too Phil. 4: 5, Heb. 10: 37. James speaks similarly (James 5: 8); and so substantially Peter (1 Peter 4: 7). Indeed the Lord had Himself impressed His coming suddenly as a motive for all to watch in the early Gospel of Mark (13:

35-37); and none other is what we may call, pace Prof. Beet, His last word closing the Apocalypse. It seems clearly meant to hinder that fatal misuse of the prophetic visions, which enfeebles, if not frustrates, the divinely given hope of His coming. "He which testifieth these things saith, Yea, I come quickly." Did John cavil or correct his Master? He answered, "Amen; come, Lord Jesus."

The apostle next explains that the day -- for this was the question, not His coming to gather us to, Himself on high, but His day or judicial dealing with the world -- cannot be till the evils are completely developed, which that day is to judge. Of these he specifies the apostasy, the falling away from God's truth after being once professed; and further the revelation of the lawless one, as the consummation of the mystery of lawlessness already at work. Once the actual hinderer was removed, the lawlessness doing its secret evil would culminate and be manifested in the lawless one whom the Lord Jesus shall slay (or destroy) with the breath (or spirit) of His mouth, and shall bring to naught by the shining forth (or appearing) of His coming -- not by His coming simply, but by the appearing of it (2 Thess. 2: 8). Now when Christ, our life, shall be manifested, then (????, not ????) shall we also with Him be manifested in glory (Col. 3: 4). It is the moment of His and our appearing, after we have been caught up to Him.

Prof. Beet abandons the Protestant interpretation (reformers and also historicism) of the apostasy or at least of the man of sin. What unbiased Christian can wonder?

There is nothing now corresponding in the least degree to the tremendous antagonist of God and man described in 2 Thess. 2: 4 (p. 150). This may be true as to the person, but the principles are latently at work; and it is unwise to speak as he does of the slow development in modern times of forces bad, if not of good. The passage itself, if we were not living in an age of movement intensely rapid in every sense, most naturally prepares us for the most sudden display of the son of perdition, depending as this does simply on the removal of him that restraineth now. Undoubtedly the worst evil, the lawless person (Antichrist), must be revealed before that day which is to annul him; but to say that the day is not near is flatly to contradict the word of the living God, as well as ignorance of what the text here teaches. Only Mr. B. is to be congratulated for breaking loose from the post-millennial argument, under which others still lie, that the ????????? of our Lord in 2 Thess 2: 1 is His personal advent, in v. 8 is only figurative. This sleight of hand Prof. B. repudiates (p. 22). He owns it is the same throughout; but where then is his millennium before Christ comes? The text reveals a continuity of unbridled willfulness, already working as leaven, till it rise (on the removal of an existing barrier) into a revealed head, the lawless one to fall under the Lord Jesus in His day. How then possibly foist in there the millennium before that day? The Thessalonians, misled as they were by the delusion of a judgment-day already come, fell into no such a preposterous dream as this truly strange doctrine.

It is unfounded then, as a commentator ought to have known, a mere vulgar error, that the Thessalonians had misunderstood St. Paul. He himself gives quite a different source of the mischief. He speaks of either a word, or spirit, or epistle as from us, i.e., pretending so to be (2 Thess 2: 2). It was not his First Epistle misunderstood, but a spurious communication that is meant; for the apostle never taught anything in the least resembling it. The misleaders must have insinuated a figurative day of the Lord under the gospel, answering to such partial or germinant applications of that day as we have in Isa. 13, 19, etc., on Babylon, Egypt, etc. For the Thessalonian saints were passing through sore trial and persecution; so that he had sent Timothy even before his First Epistle, lest by any means the tempter had tempted them to the compromise of their faith and of his own labor. He foresaw their danger of being moved by these afflictions. It seems to have been just in this way that Satan was now working.

Before the First Epistle they were so enthusiastic as to be cast down exceedingly because some fell asleep; for they imagined that these would thereby lose their place at Christ's coming. This was dispelled by the assurance that these also put to sleep by Jesus will God bring with Him; for, when He descends from heaven with an assembling shout, the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we the living that remain shall be caught up together with them. But the more serious error corrected in the Second Epistle is about the living on whom the false teachers sought to bring the terror of the day of the Lord, availing themselves probably of their sore trials as indicating that the day was come. Not so says the apostle in 2 Thess 1. In that day the trouble will be to the persecutors and other wicked men; the righteous are to rest. Their blessed hope of being gathered to the Lord at His coming ought to have guarded them from such a panic. Besides, that day can only arrive when secret lawlessness is replaced (the barrier being gone) by the openly lawless one whom the Lord Jesus will destroy by the appearance of His coming. Not misunderstanding but positive deception marked the misleaders. They were Judaizers; and they wrought by fear of that day as come, not by the hope of the Lord's coming, as not a few imagine. Beyond doubt a previous millennium can find no place either in the thoughts of the Thessalonians or in the apostle's words.

It is hard to understand why 1 Cor. 1: 7, 9, or 2 Cor. 15: 23, 52, or 2 Cor. 5: 10, should be adduced (pp. 22, 23). They are appropriate and forcible for those who believe in waiting for the coming of Christ in His day; but how do they even appear to furnish the shadow of an argument for an antecedent millennium of earthly blessedness? Is there any reality or even show of proof in the Synoptic Gospels to which we are next turned (p. 23)? Where is there a millennium before Christ's coming in Matt. 13? 16? or 24? What evidence there is is clean opposed to the post-millennial plan. The tares sown among the wheat are never removed till the harvest; and the harvest the Lord explains as the completion of the age (? . ??? ??????) not the end of the world, which "world" is expressly distinguished only in the verse before (Matt. 13: 38, 39). Where is the millennium here before the second advent?

The same objection applies with yet more force to the use made of Matt. 16: 27. Does this text prove a millennium before it? When the Son of Man comes, He awards to each according to his doing. Is this only to be cast into the lake of fire?

Prof. Beet, indeed, allows the just force of ?????????? ??? ?????? to be "completion of the age." Now Matt. 12: 32 speaks of "the age to come," as well as of "this age," which was to end with His coming. What is meant? Does it not signify the future age when the Messiah should reign, as distinguished from the age of the law not yet come to its close? Blasphemy against the Spirit shall be forgiven in neither. Whatever may be pardoned in either age, that cannot be. That is, this age and the coming one are two dispensations. The nature of the case excludes the eternal scene where there is no question of either sin or its forgiveness. If there be an ???? to come after this which is closed by the Lord's coming, what can it be but the millennium? Heb. 6: 5 confirms this. The powers of the "age to come" mean samples of such power over Satan, disease, and the like, which the disciples wrought when Christ was here and subsequently; of which the age to come will be the full theatre, and display to God's glory, when Satan's overthrow will be manifest all over the earth.

But there is yet more to observe in Matt. 13: 41, 42. Does anyone doubt that it is of the harvest-field, the world, our Savior speaks as His kingdom, whither at His coming His angels are sent to gather out all offences (or trap-falls) and those that practice lawlessness? On the other hand, who can question that, when the earth is thus purged (not yet dissolved or destroyed) for the Son of man's kingdom, then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father? It is the age to come before eternity, the

millennial age, wherein are the glorified on high, and the earth delivered from the usurper and blessed under the reign of Christ. For, as the Lord taught in the Fourth Gospel, God's kingdom comprises, not only "earthly things," as to which Nicodemus was so dull, but "heavenly things," (John 3: 12) which only came to full light when Christ was glorified, and the Spirit could lead into them those who enjoyed redemption through His blood.

A King reigning in righteousness will characterize the new age. Now the Lord sits on the Father's throne (Rev. 3: 21); then He will sit on His own throne and will rule with a rod of iron, shattering all that rebel as the vessels of the potter. So it will be in the age to come or millennium. How absurd to apply this to the eternity that succeeds! As it has been well remarked, righteousness dwells in the new heavens and new earth when the promise is fulfilled absolutely and for ever. It is no question then of righteous government which represses or punishes evil, as in the millennial day. Neither is it this "evil age" when grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5: 21). Now the Lord asks, or prays, not for the world, but for His own, the gift of the Father (John 17: 9). By and by, when this age is to close, and the coming one to dawn, He asks the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. It will be no question then of the mysteries of the kingdom during which He is the rejected but glorified Son of Man. Having received for Himself the kingdom (Dan. 7, Luke 19), He returns. During His absence His servants, according to the parable, trade with the money entrusted, and on His return receive according to fidelity; as the citizens who hated Him and would not let Him reign over them are slain before Him. Here is without doubt the coming of Christ, but not a hint of a millennium before it; whilst the character of the judgment executed at His coming perfectly suits a millennium, not an eternity to follow.

The same lesson flows from Luke 17, where the days of Noah and of Lot are by Himself compared with the day when the Son of Man is revealed. Here is not the smallest resemblance to the loosing of Satan and the war of Gog and Magog in Rev. 20, any more than to the past siege of Jerusalem by Titus (A.D. 70). Before the Lord appears in judgment it will be so, as we may see in 1 Thess. 5. When His day comes as a thief, it will overtake them eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, marrying and given in marriage. How strange to apply Luke 17: 31 to the dissolution of all things! or even to the destruction of Jerusalem! It is neither an indiscriminate judgment in providence, with which vv. 34, 35 stand in marked contrast, nor yet the last judgment, with which not a feature tallies. It is simply and only the Lord's appearing, with the millennium to follow this judgment of the quick which it cannot precede.

But we must not omit Matt. 25: 31-46. How any sober Christian can turn this scene into the counterpart of Rev. 20: 11-15 is inexplicable, if one knew not the power of prejudice. The latter is expressly a judgment of the dead, without one living man; the other not even of all living men, but only of all the Gentiles or nations, the Jews being before us in the early part of Matt. 24 and professing Christians in the parables that close ch. 24 and go on to Matt. 25: 30. Hence it is the King as such Who judges the Gentiles on their treatment of His envoys, His brethren; and they are set as sheep on His right or as goats on His left accordingly. This is wholly foreign to the judgment of the dead at the end of all in Rev. 20, the "resurrection of judgment"; as vv. 4-6 gave us the previous "resurrection of life," answering to John 5. That of the righteous only is before us in John 6, 1 Thess. 4, and 1 Cor. 15. As this is a resurrection from among the dead, it is necessarily prior, like Christ's, to that of the remaining dead. And "then" may be a long interval as easily as a short; just as "hour" and "day" may last a thousand years and more, as the context proves. But where in all these texts, or in any of them, is Prof. B.'s millennium before the Second Advent?

Throughout St. Paul's Epistles and the Gospels, to which we might add the Book of Acts and the Epistles of James and Peter and Jude, we find everywhere the same metaphors and the same phraseology (p. 26). So say those opposed. But let us read on. The early Christians were looking for Christ's sudden and visible return from heaven, to raise the dead, good and bad, to judge all men, and to bring in eternal retribution. Really this is a perplexing argument from one whose theme is that Christ's coming must follow the millennium. Rev. 20: 1-8 is therefore the millstone around the Professor's neck, which must be somehow got rid of and cast into the sea, if possible.

Now it is wholly denied that the blessed manifested kingdom of Christ rests on that passage only of the N.T., while the O.T. prophets are full of it, yea law, Psalms, and Prophets. Take Acts 3: 19-21, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and He may send Jesus Christ, Who hath been fore-appointed unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, of which God spoke by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Seasons of refreshing were to come from the Lord's presence, Who would send Jesus that had been fore-appointed for them (Israel's repentance being in full view, as usually for the millennium). Heaven must receive Him till times for restoring all things according to prophecy. That is, Jesus will be sent to bring in these blessed times when all things shall be (not destroyed, as in Prof. Beet's scheme, but) reconstituted, as the prophets of old testified. Christ will come from heaven to earth in order to establish millennial blessing. The Greek must be wholly altered to bear the meaning "till all be accomplished." Christ is on high till times come of restoring all, not till all shall have been restored. Having received the kingdom, He returns in it, and must reign till He has put all His enemies under His feet; for He is to abolish all rule, and all authority, and power, before He gives up the kingdom at the end of all. The repentance of Israel, the return of Jesus, the restoring of all things, besides fulfillment of the prophetic word, point to the millennial kingdom.

Again, Luke 20: 34, 35, is entitled to great weight on this head, as it also confirms what has been already said on Matt. 12, 13, and Heb. 6. "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead," etc. Before eternity arrives "that age" is to run its course, as well as "this age" to close. And "that age," or dispensation, is characterized here by "the resurrection of the just," those counted worthy to have part in that age and the resurrection from the dead. How contrasted with the dead who, unworthy and unblessed and unholy, are only raised, after "that age" is over, for a resurrection of judgment and the lake of fire! Scripture never speaks of a general resurrection but of two distinct risings -- of life, and of judgment, separated by the kingdom of Christ and those who reign with Him, the only age when these thousand years of blessing for the earth that now is can be in consistency with Scripture. Compare Phil. 3: 11, 20, 21. To say that the resurrection from the dead is not as peculiar by priority of time as well as in nature, accompaniments and issues, is to give up the force of language as well as description and context. The phrase itself is so weighty that one of the ablest, stumbled by faulty premillennialists, made the wrong vulgar reading in Phil. 3: 11 a chief ground of objection, as Griesbach strangely accepted it. It is now exploded by all critics. What would the late Mr. Gipps have said now?

The more one weighs Prof. B.'s words on the Book of Revelation generally, and on Rev. 20 especially, the less one can accept them.

"That this event" -- "the one definite event for which the early Christians were waiting," (Christ's return) "is less conspicuous in the Book of Revelation (!) than in the rest of the New Testament (!!)" excites no surprise" (p. 27)!!! To ordinary Christians this seem as surprising a deliverance as one has heard for a

long while. The reason is as peculiar as the conclusion. The other writers leave us outside the veil (which is untrue); the Revelation takes us within, and portrays the unseen world before, and during, and after, the coming of Christ. And therefore! in a book which is thus instinct with what is before, and during, and after Christ's coming, this event is less conspicuous than elsewhere, where it is touched on for the most part practically, and but occasionally if we except 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Q.E.D.

"The question nevertheless remains, Where, amid the many and various visions of this mysterious book, shall we place the great event," [etc.] Yes, this is just Prof. B.'s difficulty, because he is not content to believe it where God has placed it and written it for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope. "The only answer" to this question which seems good in his eyes is, that we must not leave it where "this mysterious book" gives it, and we must "place" it, where this book testifies that Christ does not and cannot come. In Rev. 20: 11 there is total and manifest contrast with Christ's coming found in the Gospels and Epistles, save the fact of Christ's sitting on a throne (which is true generally of His reign for a thousand years and more, to say nothing of His present seat on His Father's throne). Is it seriously contended that the twelve sitting as assessors on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, symbolizes with the eternal judgment of the dead? Then is the time when 1 Cor. 6: 2, 3 will be fulfilled; not the outrageous confusion with the judgment of the dead, where are no thrones nor assessors, whatever commentators may dream and say. And so in Matt. 24 the powers of the heavens are shaken, and all tribes of the earth mourn, and the angels gather together His elect (which the context here limits to Israel) from one end of heaven to the other. But all these statements describe a time different from and anterior to the fleeing away of the earth and the heaven when no place will be found for them. They abide in Matt. 24, but not Rev. 20: 11.

The other collocations of scriptural texts in p. 28 have been already shown to be unsound and imaginary, doing violence to Scripture at every turn. And all this to blot out the appearing of Christ from Rev. 19: 11-21 where it is revealed, and to foist it into Rev. 20: 11 where there is no coming described, for the very plain and decisive reason that He will have come already! Nor is it too much to say that, unless Christ come before, it becomes no longer possible thenceforth; for Christ's coming means to this earth whence He ascended (Acts 1). Now before the white-throne judgment the first heaven and the first earth passed away. As nobody pleads for coming to the heaven and new earth of eternity, it is demonstrable that He must have come before "the end," when the elements are dissolved with fervent heat. Christ's coming therefore must be before, not after, the millennium. What avail our notions of difficulty, or facility, or safety (pp. 29-31), against the word of God? Matt. 25: 32 at the beginning of the kingdom is in no way inconsistent with Rev. 20: 7-10 at the end. The camp of the saints and the beloved city (Jerusalem) may be compassed; but not a saint is hurt, and not a sinner escapes: fire from God out of heaven comes down and devours the bad. Surely if there was affliction for the oppressors, and rest for the oppressed, proved gloriously at the Lord's revelation from heaven (2 Thess. 1: 6, 7), there is nothing in that to reconcile with divine judgment falling on the unconverted of the millennium, who had rendered feigned obedience, till at the end the temptation of Satan proves the irremediable evil of man not born of God, in presence of glory then so long familiar, as now in contempt of God's grace.

Nor is there any such strange confusion as adversaries feign. The risen saints reign with Christ over (not "on") the earth; the saints threatened come together as such, consisting of saved Israel and the godly Gentiles. Only the wicked die at that time under God's hand (Isa. 65). On the Holy Mount the Lord had once shown a vision of His power and coming, where on the one hand men appeared in glory, and on the

other men in their unchanged bodies, and Christ the head of both. Was not this a little sample of the kingdom that is to be? It does not answer either to this age, or to eternity. Why is it judged incredible with you (alas! in Christendom), if God does what He says? It was, for men who had not tasted of death in this age, a vision of the kingdom of God coming in power (Matt. 16: 28-17: 13; 2 Peter 1: 16), the beautiful and impressive foreshadowing of that which shall be at the advent, when the glorified shall reign over the earth, and Israel and the nations are here below. It pleased Christ: surely nothing but extreme prejudice, not to say the carnal mind, makes it displeasing to Christians. The kingdom of God comprises "heavenly" as well as "earthly things" (John 3: 3, 5, 12); and the sooner this is learned the better for souls.

Here indeed our men of allegory are deplorably astray. There is no complaint of the Fourth Gospel; but why speak so ungratefully of the "most mysterious book of the New Testament" (p. 137)? Many an unbelieving assault has been made on the Gospel; why then remind the unwary reader of the difficulties which surround the authorship of the Apocalypse? Prof. B. has ill-will enough to point out its "startling grammatical forms and entirely different modes of thought" (p. 38), in order to cast doubt or discredit on it. Yet he well knows how Paul and Peter and James have been each and all attacked more or less. But is it in him quite honest? He may not be aware that the peculiarities of form and thought belong to its prophetic character, and are wholly independent of its date and authorship, which are as certain as anything of the kind can be for all fair and competent students. But does he not himself believe that John the beloved, the Patmos prisoner of Domitian, wrote the book, even though here only he assumed the Hebraistic style and rough garment of a prophet? This was just as much in keeping with its revelation of judgment, as the Epistles and Gospel called for, and have, another mould of thought and speech for their design.

Let me say that Genesis in its noble simplicity is no more admirable an introduction to the Bible, than the Apocalypse is its suited, worthy, and profound completion. The wrestling-ground for contending commentators of every school, and hence open to the sneer of worldly men, divines or sceptics, too indifferent to God's word, and too disposed to lay the faults of its misusers on the book itself, there it stands, still pronouncing the blessing of the Lord on him that reads its words, and on those that hear and keep them; "for the time" (whatever unbelief may cry) "is at hand." And in fact where is the inspired book which, especially in difficult and dangerous times, has wrought more powerfully for good in grave Christian men, notwithstanding many a mistake through haste or prejudice? It is idle to expect that comprehensive and deep understanding of the Apocalypse should exist where there is not familiar acquaintance with all the prophets, as well as with the distinctive ways of God which the New Testament reveals. For where the Old Testament prophets are discursive in the main, and little beyond Daniel and Zechariah is consecutive, and even these have separate visions of no great length or variety, St. John was enabled by the Holy Ghost to communicate a systematic, connected, and complete view of the things which should be after "the things which are," or the church-state (Rev. 2, 3), till time melts into eternity under the judicial hand of our Lord and of His Christ.

No doubt some men of marked piety and general learning, and many with little of either, have written on the book; but even when they were so (marked by learning and piety), this is far from being all that is required to write competently and profitably on it. More than any other book, it openly presses into its service, or subtly refers to, almost every part of the Old Testament; yet is there a characteristically mystic use which is adapted to the New Testament and convicts the mere literalist of a wholly mistaken principle. Originality, after a divine sort, appears throughout; The most able and erudite of its expositors have been in no way distinguished for spiritual intelligence, and are often the devotees of a foregone conclusion, so that they can be entitled to little weight in such a question. And what is the object of alleging mere and

evident extravaganzas, from whatever quarter they may come? Is it to commend truth? or to merge God's word in men's uncertainties? It is the opprobrium of commentators, and of none so much perhaps as the prophetic, that they search, not for God's mind, but for the support of their own preconceived ideas; and that the repute of some draws a long train of followers; as their transparent fallacies provoke another crowd of opponents. Yet the truth remains, sure and acceptable in God's grace to those who have faith to depend on the Lord for it.

But surely John 17, on Prof. B.'s confession, belongs to "the solid platform" of the N. T. writers. Can it then be denied that in vv. 22, 23, we have in weightiest correlation those who are glorified on the one side, and on the other men alive on earth, whether yet to die or not (p. 31)? The glorified, and the unchanged are there in presence one of another, as the Lord teaches us, and with blessed result (in a prayer of His own heart), which these believers do not believe, and therefore venture to stigmatize as "mixed together in strangest confusion" (p. 31). It is really distressing unbelief on their part, who do not apprehend this the third unity -- of glory. For there are three. The first (John 17: 11) is the united expression before a hating world of the Father's name, given to Christ, and now to keep those who were then around Him. The second is in view of those who should believe through their word, unity of communion in the Father and the Son, that the world might "believe " (John 17: 21). The third is the closing unity of glory, where therefore alone they are perfected into one; and, as it would be manifested, it is for the world to "know." The demonstration will be before their eyes; for Christ and His own are to be displayed from heaven in the same glory.

With this agrees Rev. 21: 9-22: 5: a retrogressive vision introducing the relation of the Bride to the kings and nations after Christ comes; just as Rev. 17 is to show how the great Harlot stands toward the kings and nations before He comes. In both cases it is a return to give what was not before described. This is undeniable in the case of Babylon whose fall had been given in Rev. 14: 8, and Rev. 16: 19. Then Rev. 17 explains why, closing with the dirge in Rev. 18. So Rev. 21: 1-8 is the everlasting state which is altogether distinct, the Lamb not being seen as such, but "God all in all." It is the conclusion chronologically of the series that began in Rev. 19, 20 and in fact the end of all, if we can so designate the everlasting state. As you can have nothing subsequent to eternity, the Holy Spirit helps us here as before by a mark (Rev. 21: 9), strikingly similar to that which introduced the retrogressive description of Rev. 17, 18; so that we might discern a like retrogressive description of the Bride (not merely in heaven, as in Rev. 19, nor as in the new heavens and earth of Rev. 21: 1-8 but) in its millennial aspect. That this is the truth appears clearly and certainly from "the nations" (Rev. 21: 24, 26, Rev. 22: 2), and "the kings of the earth" (Rev. 21: 24), which are not and cannot be in eternity, as surely our opponents must admit. As it is not this age, any more than eternity, what can it be but the age to come, the millennium, or "the kingdom"? Prof. Beet therefore ought to see that his idea of "the everlasting splendor pictured in Rev. 21, 22" (p. 28) needs the corrective of the text itself more maturely and accurately weighed. Still less true is his statement in p. 34 that "there is nothing to prevent us from reading the glorious visions of the prophets as descriptions of the final glory." Let him or Dr. Brown face Zech. 14 squarely, to take but a single text, and say whether such a chapter can be fulfilled either now or in eternity. When then? This is but a sample from the prophets, who in truth support nothing but premillennialism.

It is frankly acknowledged that the principle of new heavens and a new earth is laid down in Isa. 65, 66. But the remarkably abstract form of the Hebrew construction is not to be overlooked, not the relative and indicative, but the present participle, which seems a favourite way of describing an action apart from a specified actual time. There is another consideration which any observing Christian reader can see; -- that

the context restricts its application here to Jerusalem, and the land and the people of Israel. None can deny that the state of things portrayed is not eternity, any more than things as they ever were or are now, or can be, save in a different age. So even Dr. J. A. Alexander allows (Comm. in loco) that "it is a promise or prediction of entire change in the existing state of things; the precise nature of the change, and the means by which it shall be brought about, forming no part of the revelation here". It is true that this change he, in his usual manner, inclines to believe moral or spiritual only. But this is a mere opinion: he admits an "entire change," to which the Apocalypse gives the fullest scope, far beyond O.T. or Jewish limits, now that Christ is come and the Holy Spirit given that we might have the mind of Christ, and enter into the boundless counsels of God. It is sorrowful where such grace is not appreciated.

Thus then we have the symbol of the glorified church, the holy city Jerusalem (not the earthly one), but coming down out of heaven from God; yet there are "the nations," and "the kings of the earth," contemporaneously connected and blessed here below. It is in vain to cry What a mongrel state of things is this! What an abhorred mixture of things inconsistent with each other! (Brown's Second Advent p. 392). It is no answer to speak of "the transient glimpses at the Transfiguration," etc. The thesis is that God reveals a long millennial period, widely different from all that has been, and in many respects from the eternity which follows, to which those glimpses are a partial testimony. To the earth Christ will come in His own glory, and of the Father, and of the holy angels: there may be difficulties beyond what is revealed; but the opposite scheme, in the desire to delay His coming, and to deny the true character of the kingdom, makes His coming an impossibility; for it is imagined to be, when the earth and the heavens will have fled away. Now Christ is to come here again.

Take another instance, which the system of these brethren furnishes of the havoc it works for all the practice as well as the truth of the church. Indisputably Christians are called to be unworldly, suffering, separate, and subject like the crucified Lord here below. Now if Dan. 2: 44 (p. 140) is thus misapplied to the kingdom already set up, the church has to subdue and destroy the imperial powers, or "anti-Christian systems," as they are styled. That is, it must, like Popery, subjugate and overthrow all opposing powers that be. Thus does the church, through that error, become a rebel in Christ's name, instead of a holy sufferer, as Christ and His servants taught and practiced. Take it as God's kingdom when Christ comes "in the days of these kings," the ten toes of the statue, and all becomes true, plain, and consistent. No need then to metamorphose the instant and irreparable destruction of the powers into the slow dealing of providence, any more than to rob Christ of His prerogative of filling the whole earth with indisputable authority, immediately consequent on His judgment of the quick. Dan. 7 confirms this as the only true interpretation. The Ancient of days comes when judgment is given to the saints of the high or heavenly places. Then they will safely and holily reign with Christ to God's glory. To attempt it now is a sin and a lie; it is in theory if not in fact to play the part of fifth-monarchy men, whether Papists or Protestants, Covenanters or Roundheads.

The truth is that all is vague on this human scheme, which grew up as men neglected scripture, and hope in man supplanted faith in God. Christ personally recedes into the distance; and "His cause," identified with the efforts of men (of ourselves or persons like us), takes the place of Himself with His own. This may please and flatter our nature; but it betrays that sad decay of proper bridal affection which characterized the decline and fall of the church since apostolic days, through the darkness of medieval times, and which, in no way retrieved at the Reformation (however blessed as far as it went), has well-nigh vanished away in the isolating though busy unchurch-system of our century. I regret that I in speaking what is in my judgment unquestionable, one must wound the susceptibilities of many brethren I love and esteem highly.

But let God be true, and Christ's honour above all; and the rather, as it is in their highest interests that, if the truth, it should be spoken out. I repudiate a party or school of doctrine to cry up, and yet more the petty spite or vanity of crying down, those dear to the Lord.

Again, it ought not to be a light thing that the hope of Christ's coming, while owned in word, should become for children of God no more than a dead letter. This it must be where men look and labor avowedly, before Christ can possibly come, for a vainly expected universal diffusion of revealed truth, universal reception of true religion and unlimited subjection to Christ's scepter, universal peace, much spiritual power and glory, inbringing of all Israel, ascendancy of truth and righteousness, and great temporal prosperity over all the earth for a thousand years or more, perhaps much more, as a previously certain and revealed barrier. They may indeed love the Lord's appearing, and long for Him to break the usurper's spell over the world, and establish for rebellion peace, and for wretchedness blessing to God's glory. But it is unreal to profess waiting for One, Who, as you are assured, cannot possibly come yet, nor for a long while, according to this hypothesis. The hope ceases to be a present reality in the soul, as it is supposed to be a mistake of scripture. Watching for Him becomes a poetical idea, an amiable or pious enthusiasm, which, notwithstanding the positive and known hindrances from prophetic light, veers from long to short, and anon from short to long in a seesaw truly marvelous. So apologizes Principal Brown. Prof. Beet speaks with more open plainness of speech.

If we have no reliable proof of the nearness of the visible return of Christ, to speak of it as near is in the last degree dangerous(p. 36). He knows the danger of what the Lord recommends! It represses missionary effort!

To the early christians, although the day of Christ was known to be not close at hand etc. (p. 152)! This error has been already refuted. The apostles speak in a way which a post-millennialist must in honesty avoid.

Like the Master, also the servants will die (p. 154). Not so, says St. Paul, but rather, "We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed." It is appointed unto men, indeed, once to die, but after this the judgment. Faith in Christ and His work alters all for us. That was lost man's sad portion; what is the Christian's? Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear a second time without sin unto salvation. The soul's want was provided for at His first advent, as the body's will be when He shall be seen a second time.

Christ is the Life as well as the Resurrection, and the saints so profit thereby, that according to scripture we ought to wait, as the early Christians did, not for death, but for Christ's coming habitually. It was to be not only a sure goal of their hopes one day, but a practical constant outlook, confirmed, not corrected, even in both the Epistles to the Thessalonians, where, quite different misapprehensions were cleared up. But the divine light vouchsafed then shone brightly on that blessed and living hope, not only not setting it aside, but joining the inspired apostle with the saints alive on earth, as the "we" that wait (for aught that was made known) for His coming. A post-millennialist, if he expressed his creed, must say, They that shall be alive, that remain unto the coming of the Lord; he could not truly and intelligently say, "We." Either he knows better than the apostle, or he ought (as is the truth) to infer that his own system is false. None who holds this system can, ex animo, join the apostle and say, "We that are alive, that remain," etc.

There is another fatal issue of post-millennialism. It presents the kingdom when supposed to be triumphant without the King. It abuses the present abnormal phase of the kingdom to deny its future regular form

according to the Old Testament prophets as well as the New. Now the King, rejected by His earthly people is hid in God above, seated on the Father's throne, not on His own (Rev. 3: 21); and hence we have its "mysteries" made known, as in Matt. 13, to explain its singularities, till this age ends, and the new age displays it and the King reigning in righteousness, times of restoring all things, as God declared from the beginning. But this glorious exhibition before the universe for a thousand years is just what unbelief leaves out: an irreparable blank in God's revealed plan, which cannot be without also introducing confusion every where else. Thus Christ's person is absent from the scene of His exaltation, and the church is no longer to fast but enjoy honour and glory, where He was crucified without. It can be no longer true for the thousand years that His members suffer with Him. They are in idea, what the apostle said as a reproach and not without irony, -- they are reigning "without us," yea, without Christ. But, said the large and true-hearted servant, "and I would that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." When the day really comes, Christ will reign and all His risen saints. The Corinthians had practically dropped into a figurative reign of His cause.

But the word is, as long as there is a member of Christ, "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him." "If so be that we suffer together, that we may be also glorified together." And as they wrongfully exclude Christ from their millennium, so do they keep Satan in the face of positive scripture. The reasoning on 1 John 3: 8-10; Heb. 2: 14, 15, and Rom. 16: 20, is as weak and false as the unbelief of Rev. 20: 1-3, 7, is painful and complete. The issue is worthy of such grounds -- the melancholy fable of the church in Christ's hand not only defeating Antichrist, but for a thousand years never permitting the devil to gain an inch of ground to plant his foot on over the wide world! It must never be the truth of Christ reigning personally. I can conceive no interpretation of Rev. 20 more perverse, nor more at issue with the New Testament throughout. But indeed all that these believers say on the millennium is mere incredulity, a muster of cavils against its revealed character, and a substituted fanciful exaggeration of the present, but no real reign of Christ and the glorified saints, no personal exclusion of Satan, no true deliverance of the groaning creation, though Dr. Brown does admit a sort of restoration of Israel to their land, which ill assorts with his other views.

Nor is there any less loss for the soul now. For the hypothesis of a general resurrection and of a simultaneous universal judgment undermines the distinctive peace, joy, and assurance of salvation for the believer. Confound the two resurrections, enfeeble the resurrection of the saints from among the dead; and the consciousness of present union with Christ is impaired if not lost, and all is confusion as to the future. Christ's coming, and His appearing, the great day and the white-throne judgment, are all huddled together in one lump, so that the poor heart oscillates between hope and fear, the joy of meeting our Lord and the anxiety of judgment. In scripture how different! The saints even now live of the life of Christ risen from the dead (John 20: 20; Col. 3: 4); and accordingly life and salvation in His name both point to those spoken of as quickened with Him, raised up together, and seated together (not yet with, but) in Him in the heavenly places (Eph. 2). Christ has borne the believer's judgment; and so he comes not into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Undoubtedly he will give account of all done in the body (2 Cor. 5: 10), and receive accordingly, no less than the unbeliever who, rejecting Christ, has neither life nor fruits of the Spirit, as the believer has. Hence for the one it is judgment, for the other it is not. And any Christian has but to consider and see the absurdity of being judged after you are justified, and of God too. Yea, the believer is glorified at Christ's coming before he renders an account, which supposes that he is saved, but determines the special position he is to receive in the kingdom. The resurrection of the just is therefore a resurrection of life, as that of the unjust is one of judgment. Believing in Christ, the saints had life here and now; they will be raised when He comes again, to have that life applied to their bodies which they already

know for their souls since He first came. And it is as distinct in time as in principle and results; like His own it is a resurrection from among the dead, even if we were not told that there is an interval of at least a thousand years.

Nor is that interval without grave moral significance. It is a reign over the earth, but of heavenly glory with Christ, for those who suffered with Him, as all saints do till He comes again. The millennial saints do not thus suffer, and hence do not share in this special reign, but enjoy its benefits to the full. In another sense all saints are to reign in life (Rom. 5: 17, millennial with the rest), throughout eternity. It is no question of suffering for Christ, or being martyrs, as many have gathered from a hasty view of scripture, and especially of Rev. 20: 4, though the passage itself leaves ample room for all that had suffered with Christ. For if children, heirs also -- heirs of God and joint-heirs with Him; if we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified with Him (Rom. 8: 17). So, if we endure (and in the millennium it is enjoyment, not endurance), we shall also reign together (2 Tim. 2: 12). Such shall be "accounted worthy to obtain, that age" (whatever they might suffer in this age), and the resurrection from among the dead. They are sons of God being sons of the resurrection. The wicked have no such spiritual relation, and are compelled to rise for judgment at the appointed hour, when that special reign is over, and a large addition is made to their already large ranks from all ages.

But we may go farther. The distinctness of time as well as of character is therefore a weighty part of revealed truth. But it is even to be gathered from a book as ancient as Job (14 and 19). For thence we learn that unlike any vegetable ever shooting "afresh," sinful man as such "lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." Not a word of the Lord's coming then; but there is the very significant synchronism of no more heaven, though it be ordinarily less shaken than the earth: the negative and the positive marks precisely agree with Rev. 20: 11, 12. It is the end, not of "the age," or "this age," but of the kingdom and of the heavens and earth that now are. Then, and not before, "man" shall be raised. How different that which we read of the saint in Rev. 19! "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand up at the last on the earth (or dust); and after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet from (or in) my flesh shall I see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." This is, we may perhaps say, what is appointed for the saint, and evidently before the heavens and earth are no more. It is the first resurrection, as the other will be the second death. To the greatest of all prophecies, closing (as no other book could so well) the canon of scripture, we are indebted for the exact measure of the kingdom in time; but the difference of the two resurrections, and the priority of that of the saints, are as certainly to be gathered from one of the earliest books of the Old Testament, as from the latest of the New. Even the Pharisees did not question a resurrection of both just and unjust. It was reserved for Christendom to confound both in one general resurrection, though Christ (John 5) and scripture so carefully discriminate them. We have seen by the way, how inexcusable is the assumption that the premillennial advent is taught only in one chapter; but of this perhaps enough has been said already.

Now where is even an approach in any text adduced for the desired inference that the millennium precedes the advent? Not a hint of it appears either here or in any other scripture: let it be produced, if there is one. Every one of these texts admits of the millennium after Christ's coming; not one intimates such a thing before it. Instead of so blessed a change for the earth, we are warned of a spoiled crop till harvest-time in the end of the age (Matt. 13), of days like those which brought the judgments in the days of Noah and of Lot (Luke 17), of departure from the faith in the latter times (1 Tim. 4), of seducers waxing worse and worse in the last days, of men having a form of godliness, but denying the power (2 Tim. 3),

and of a mystery of lawlessness to work up, on the removal of a restraint, into the lawless one revealed, who draws down, as Mr. B. confesses, the Lord Jesus personally appearing in judgment (2 Thess. 2). If the Gentile did not abide in God's goodness (and who would dare to say he does?), cutting off would ensue, says Rom. 11, not the millennium. To unsophisticated minds such continuous and prevalent iniquity, till the Lord judges the quick at His advent, excludes a millennium, such as scripture describes, or even Dr. Brown's imaginary amelioration of this age before that day. Nay, some of those very scriptures, with a crowd of others, imply the millennium only when Christ is come.

Again, our Lord and His apostles never once speak of a millennial issue of preaching or the like. Where the millennium is spoken of, prophecy invariably declares that divine judgments introduce it. Compare Isa. 1: 24-31; Isa. 2; Isa. 4; Isa. 9: 4-7; Isa. 11: 4-9; Isa. 24-25; Isa. 59: 16-21; Isa. 60-66; Jer. 10: 7-25; Jer. 23; Jer. 30; Ezek. 20; Ezek. 38; Ezek. 39; Dan. 2; Dan. 7; Dan. 11; Dan. 12; Hosea 2; Hosea 3; Amos 9; Obadiah 15-21; Micah 4; Micah 5; Nahum 1; Hab. 2; Hab. 3; Zeph. 3: 8-20; Haggai 2: 6-9, 22, 23; Zech. 2: 8-13; Zech. 10; Zech. 12; Zech. 14; Mal. 4. The Psalms as well as the Law might be cited; but this will suffice. The gospel was to be preached in the world for a witness unto all the nations; but for this age not a sound of the world being converted or even brought as yet to a universal profession of the Lord's name. This is at best unauthorized enthusiasm, the fruit of unconscious presumption in neglect of scripture, which alone can decide the "how" as well as the "what." That the earth is to be full of the knowledge of Jehovah's glory is certain; that preaching or the church is to effect it is not only without, but against, God's word. It is an honour reserved for Christ in person, Who will execute judgment on His enemies, destroy idolatry, expel Satan, bring Israel and the nations to repentance, bless all creation, and reign in power with His glorified saints till the last foe is annulled, when He will give up the kingdom to Him Who is God and Father, that God may be all in all. The eternal state is not the delegated kingdom, though there will be everlasting glory in the new heavens and new earth.

The gospel mission, as it is of God's grace, could not be other than universal in its scope and call; and the infinite work of Christ's atonement demands nothing less. This for the responsibility of the disciples was to disciple all the nations (Matt. 28), but what a very different thing from the effect in man's hand or from God's counsels! Simeon related (says Acts 15) how first God visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. To this agrees the clear and general testimony of the N. T. It is in vain to oppose vague statements, or fanciful interpretations of "the tree" and "the leaven," as if scripture could contradict itself. Our Lord expressly anticipates some as believing, and some as disbelieving (Mark 16); and such was the fact according to the inspired history (Acts 28). God is not in this age proposing universal blessing under Christ's government in power and glory over the earth; He gathering for heaven saved souls, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, that, when all things are in fact put under Him, they too may be manifested with Him in glory (Col. 3). Thi

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