ESSAYS

ON THE

COMING OF CHRIST.

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COMING OF CHRIST.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

The present is truly an age of inquiry, and religious investigation. Reason, which has for ages been chained in darkness by the creeds and traditions of men, is beginning to burst its fetters, and to lend its aid to the human mind. On no subject is the free and full exercise of unbiased reason more absolutely necessary than on that of religion; and yet, on no subject have mankind in ages past, been less disposed to exercise it. As it was anciently supposed that none but the regular priests of Apollo could understand and explain the mysterious language of the Delphian Oracle; so Christians have been made to believe that none but the regular orthodox clergy were capable of understanding, or explaining correctly the lively oracles of God. Hence the clergy of this stamp have obtained and exercised an almost unbounded influence over the minds of their fellow men; and hence, also, human creeds and confessions of faith, have obtained, in the minds of
thousands, a veneration and authority due only to the sacred scriptures.

A comparison of the principles of doctrine which prevailed among christians half a century ago, with what is now believed, will be sufficient to convince us that the present is not only an age of investigation, but of improvement in the science of theology. Fifty years ago, christians generally believed in a local hell, burning with literal fire and brimstone.—Now we are told that the punishment of the wicked—the torments of hell, will consist in the horrors and stings of conscience. At that time it was believed that by far the greatest part of the human family would be the subjects of endless punishment. Now, some of those who stand highest in the ranks of orthodoxy, tell us that the number of those who will be finally lost will not be greater in proportion to the whole number of mankind, than the convicts in the state prison to the population of the state. Then, infant damnation was a sentiment which prevailed, almost, if not quite universally among the orthodox; but now, they reject it with merited abhorrence. Then also, to doubt the existence of a personal devil, who was once an angel of light, would be considered almost blasphemy, and a denial of Christianity. Now, it is believed, but very few among the learned can be found, who would hazard their reputation by advocating or defending this sentiment.—
The above are some of the changes which the last fifty years have effected; and it is not unreasonable to believe that the next half century will bring about still greater changes in the opinions of christians. A spirit of deep and persevering inquiry is awakened in the christian world; and it will not rest satisfied, nor cease to exert itself, until divine truth shall shine forth in meridian splendor.

Professor Stuart, who has himself done considerable by his writings to enrich the theology of the present century, when speaking of bringing "every principle of the creed of the Protestant churches to the test of the divine word," says, "It is not only lawful then to put them to the test; but it is an imperious duty for every man to do it, who is able to do it. There may be a show of modesty and humility in receiving what others have believed, without examination and without scrutiny; but in every case, where there is ability to investigate and bring to the scripture test, a failure to do it must arise from an undue regard to the authority of fallible men, or from mere inaction—from absolute sloth."

No principle, however generally it may have prevailed, however long it may have been believed, and however it may have received the sanction of exalted talents, piety or learning, should be embraced without a candid and thorough investigation. Such investigation will tend, not only to remove error from the understand-
ing, but to fix the important truths of Christianity more firmly on the mind.

Among the interesting and important predictions contained in the New Testament, those which relate to the coming of Christ, hold a conspicuous place; but, like many other parts of the scriptures, we have reason to believe they have been very generally misunderstood and misapplied. In the minds of most Christians, this event is inseparably connected with the raising of the dead, the destruction of the material universe, and the general and final judgment of the world.—That judgment and punishment are mentioned in the scriptures in connexion with the coming of Christ, will not be disputed. Neither can it be denied that a coming, or descending from heaven of the Saviour is predicted in connexion with the resurrection of the dead. But the question arises, are we to refer those passages which speak of his coming to judge mankind, or, in other words, to "reward every man according to his works," and those which treat of the resurrection of the dead, to the same period of time and to the same coming? If this be the fact, the doctrine of a judgment and punishment at, or after the period of the resurrection, is clearly revealed in the scriptures; and we may as well follow on in the old beaten path—the tradition of our fathers, as to pursue our investigations on this interesting point any farther. But, on the other hand, if differ-
ent comings of Christ, which are to take place at different times, and under different circumstances are predicted by the inspired writers, a wide field of investigation is opened before us; and it becomes our duty as Christians, to examine the subject with that candor and attention which its importance demands: to "prove all things, and hold fast" that which is clearly established as truth by the word of God.

That different comings of Christ are predicted in the New Testament, is a point, which, I believe, is conceded by all modern commentators; indeed, it is so obvious from the language used by our Saviour and the Apostles, that none can with propriety dispute it. Dr. Macknight, as quoted with approbation by Dr. Adam Clarke, says, "there are other comings of Christ spoken of in the scripture, besides his coming to judgement, and there are other things besides this mundane system, whose end is there foretold."—The Dr. then proceeds to enumerate these comings; and says,—

1. "In the prophetic writings of the Jews, great exertions of the Divine power, whether for the salvation or destruction of nations, are called the coming, the appearance, the presence of God. Hence it was natural for the Apostles, who were Jews, to call any signal and evident interposition of Christ, as governor of the world, for the accomplishment of his per-
poses, *his coming and his day*; accordingly, those exertions of his power and purposes, whereby he destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple—abrogated the Mosaic institutions, and established the gospel, are called by the Apostles, *his coming and day*, not only in allusion to the ancient prophetic language, but because Christ himself in his prophesy of these events, has termed them the *coming of the Son of Man."

2. "There is another coming of Christ spoken of by the Apostles, different likewise from his coming to judge the world, and to put an end to the present state of things; viz; his coming to destroy the *man of sin*. 2 Thes. ii: 8. 'Him the Lord will overcome by the breath of his mouth, and will render ineffectual by the bright shining of his coming.'"

3. "There is likewise a *day* or *coming* of Christ, spoken of by Paul, different from his coming to judgment, and from both the former comings; I mean his releasing his people from their present trial, by death."

4. "Besides all these, there is a *day*, or *coming of the Lord*, to judge the world, and to put an end to the present state of things. This coming, Christ himself hath promised. Matt. xvi: 27. 'For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.' Thus it appears that when the apostles
wrote, there were four comings of Christ to happen; three of them figurative, but the fourth a real appearance."

With the above opinion, Dr. Warburton, Bishop Newton, Dr. A. Clarke, and other learned Commentators agree; and it may be considered an unjustifiable presumption, especially in an obscure and humble individual like myself, to call in question its correctness, or to attempt the establishment of any opinion in opposition to it. But, as Chillingworth has observed, "the Bible is the religion of Protestants," so I am determined the Bible shall be the only standard of my faith—the only conductor of my belief. Wherever that leads, I am determined, by the blessing of God, to follow; and if, on a careful and candid investigation, I find that any sentiment, or principle of doctrine which I have embraced, is not supported, or is contradicted by the Divine testimony, I will cheerfully renounce it. To the testimony of the scriptures, then, I invite the attention of the candid reader; and if, on a full and faithful examination of those passages which treat of the coming of Christ, the day of Christ, &c. it shall be found that the common opinion on this subject is correct, then let us receive it as truth, regardless of the consequences it may have on our creeds or professions of belief. On the other hand, if we shall be satisfied that this opinion rests on mere human authority, let us reject it as totally unworthy of our confidence.
Although some of the most prominent passages, in which judgment and punishment are mentioned in connexion with Christ's coming, such as Matt. xxv: 31, 46. 2 Thes. ii: 6, 10, and some others, have been examined and ably explained by writers who are much better qualified to do justice to them than myself, yet, I know of no one who has ever undertaken to examine and compare all the passages of Scripture which speak of this event.—It will, therefore, be my object, in a series of numbers, of which this is the commencement, to notice every passage in the New Testament in which the coming of Christ is predicted, either directly or indirectly; or, from which an inference of that event can be fairly drawn. In my attempts to investigate this subject, altho' I shall occasionally avail myself of the labors of others who have written upon it, I shall endeavor, in establishing my premises, to be guided entirely by the plain and obvious meaning of the inspired writings. In attempting to ascertain the true import of any passage of scripture, the following plain and simple rules must be constantly kept in view.

1. We must take into consideration the character and authority of the speaker or writer.

2. The character and condition of the person or persons addressed, or spoken of, must be constantly kept in view.
3. The subject matter of which the writer or speaker is treating, must, in no case, be disregarded. This can always be ascertained by the connexion in which any passage stands.

4. Instead of attempting to explain passages, the signification of which is plain and obvious, by those which are dark or ambiguous in their meaning, passages which appear obscure and intricate should be explained by those relating to the same subject which are plain and explicit. A constant attention to, and a careful application of these rules, connected with a sincere desire to know the truth, will enable any person of common capacity to understand all that is necessary in the scriptures, to form his faith, or to regulate his conduct; and without this attention, however great may be the learning, or bright the genius of an individual, he will surely run into error; and all his investigations will be vain and fruitless.

I design, in the first place, to bring forward all those passages in which judgment and punishment are obviously connected with the coming of the Lord; and endeavor to fix the time of their accomplishment, by reference, either to the connexion in which they are found, or to other passages, in which the time when their predictions should be fulfilled, is plainly expressed. In this part of my subject, I shall notice a number of passages which have been generally referred to the close
of time, and the general resurrection of the dead; and shall endeavor to show, from their contexts, and from other scriptures, that the common application of them is incorrect. I shall next notice those passages which speak of the coming or descending of Christ in connexion with the raising of the dead. Besides these, there are a number of passages which speak of the coming or day of Christ, in which neither judgment, nor the resurrection is mentioned; these will also be presented to the reader; most of them, probably, in the illustration of other passages.

By confounding those passages which treat of judgment or punishment, with those which speak of the resurrection in connexion with the coming of the Saviour, much confusion, as I conceive, has been introduced into the interpretations of scripture; and infidels have been furnished with arguments, which they have not failed to use to the detriment of the Christian system. To do away, in some degree, this confusion—to obviate, in part, the difficulty of understanding the language of the inspired writings, and to wrest from the hands of the opposers of Christians, some of the weapons with which they have been furnished by its friends, are the principal motives which have induced me to undertake the present investigation; and I only regret my inability to do justice to so important a subject. But, if these
numbers shall be the means of inducing some one who is better qualified for the task than myself, to investigate the subject, or, if any of my readers shall derive instruction or satisfaction from the perusal of them, I shall be fully satisfied. I write not for the purpose of controversy; neither for the sake of bringing myself into public notice as a writer. Truth, plain simple and unadulterated truth is my object; but how far I shall obtain this object in my present attempt, the public must decide. As I make no pretensions either to a divine inspiration, or infallibility in my opinions, should I misapply any passages of scripture, I shall be happy to see the misapplication pointed out, and all errors corrected.

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ESSAY I.

I shall commence the direct examination of those passages of Scripture, which speak of the Coming of Christ in connexion with judgment or punishment, by the introduction of two passages, which will undoubtedly be considered and acknowledged the strongest of any which the New Testament furnishes on this subject.

"When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gath-
ered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; and was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or, when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when
saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.”—Matt. xxv: 31—46. “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation against them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, 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; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”—2 Thes. i: 6—10. On the above Scriptures I remark:—

1. Although one part was spoken by our Saviour, and the other is the language of the Apostle, they both obviously refer to one time, and to one and the same coming of Christ. The time mentioned in the parable is “when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him;” and the apostle evidently alludes to the same time in the expression, “when the Lord Jesus shall be
revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,” &c. But, as this is a point conceded by all commentators, no further arguments will be necessary to substantiate it.

2. The judgment, or punishment denounced was to be inflicted at the time “when the Lord Jesus should be revealed from heaven,” “in his glory,” with his “holy” or “mighty angels.” This is plain, both from the language of Christ, and the Apostle. Our Saviour says, “then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory,” &c. Paul informs his Thessalonian brethren, that God would recompense rest to them from their troubles” when the Lord Jesus should be revealed from heaven—taking vengeance,” &c.

3. The judgments, or rewards and punishments which were at that time to be dispensed, were to be according to the works of the individuals who were to be their subjects. In the parable, the invitation “come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom,” is expressly represented as a reward for deeds of charity which those who were pronounced blessed had performed; and on the other hand, the sentence “depart ye cursed into everlasting fire” is declared to be for the want, or neglect of those good works, or charitable deeds for which the others were commended and rewarded. The apostle represents God as recompensing tribulation or taking vengeance on those “who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;”
who, instead of performing those acts of kindness and charity which the gospel inculcates, afflicted and troubled those who believed in the Redeemer, and embraced his religion.

4. It is worthy of remark, that altho' the above passages have both been understood by commentators generally as having express reference to the close of time, the dissolution of the material universe, and the general resurrection of the dead, in neither of them, nor in the context of either, is there the most distant allusion to either of these events. If events so important as the resurrection of the dead, and the destruction of the whole visible creation were to transpire simultaneously with the coming of the Saviour, and the infliction of punishment on the guilty, how can we account for the silence, both of Christ and the Apostle on these subjects? Were they ignorant of the whole truth? and has it been reserved for modern divines to make discoveries of facts or principles unknown to the eminent and inspired individuals by whom this language was originally spoken? Or, were they less faithful in declaring "the whole council of God" than commentators and preachers of the present day? Perhaps it will be said, in the same discourse in which our Saviour uttered the parable of the sheep and the goats, he spoke with express reference to the close of time, or "the end of the world," and this in an-
swer to a question proposed to him by his disciples, who requested him to inform them when this event should take place. This objection will be fully considered in my next number; and I think I shall be able to show that the question proposed to Christ by his disciples had not the least relation to such an event; and consequently, that the language he used in answer to their question cannot, by any fair rules of interpretation, be construed as teaching a principle of this kind. I shall also show, in the course of my investigations on this subject, that if Christ and the Apostle, in the passages under consideration, taught the doctrine of the literal resurrection of the dead, it was in direct contradiction to what they taught in other passages, where the subject of the resurrection is mentioned in a clear and unambiguous manner.

I now proceed to a more direct investigation of the passages under consideration; and in order to determine the time meaning and application of these scriptures, it will be necessary, in the first place, to ascertain the time when the events predicted in them were to transpire; or in other words, when the predictions themselves were to be accomplished. Without a correct understanding of the time alluded to by our Saviour and the Apostle, it is obvious that all our inquiries relative to the proper application of the passages must be in vain; and I
would here remark, I am fully persuaded that all the erroneous views which prevail amongst Christians on this subject are entirely owing to a want of sufficient attention to this one point. The plain and direct question, therefore, which presents itself for solution, and which I shall attempt to answer by positive and unequivocal evidence from the scriptures of divine truth, is the following: At what period of time were the predictions contained in the passages under consideration to be fulfilled?

The first passage in the New Testament in which our Saviour mentions his coming is Matt. x: 23. In this chapter we have an account of the first commission given to his disciples to preach the gospel, or the Kingdom of Heaven to the Jews. After giving them directions for their conduct, and telling them when and what to preach, he proceeds to inform them of some of the dangers and persecutions which awaited them; and also, of the punishments which should be inflicted on those who should reject them and their testimony. Speaking of this punishment, Christ says, verses 14, 15:—“And whosoever shall not receive you, nor your words, when ye depart out of that house, or city, shake off the dirt of your feet.—Verily, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment (en heme-ra kriseos, in a day of judgment) than
for that city." In order to encourage them to perseverance in their duty, amidst the dangers and difficulties with which they should have to contend, he tells them, ver. 23:—"But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come." Although this passage does not fix, with any great degree of precision, the time of Christ's coming, yet I conceive it has a direct and important bearing on the question before us. It has already been shown that the punishment denounced in the parable, and in the language of Paul to the Thessalonians, was to be inflicted on those who should be its subjects, in consequence of their rejection of the gospel, or because they afflicted and troubled those who embraced it; and it is obvious that "the day of judgement," and the coming of Christ mentioned above, before his disciples should have "gone over the cities of Israel," both refer to the coming and judgement where he should give his faithful followers rest from their tribulations; and reward them with the joys of his kingdom for their services in his cause. Were we to adopt the opinion that our Saviour was telling his disciples what should be the fate of their persecutors, thousands of years after they should have done troubling them, it will be difficult to imagine what encouragement this circumstance
would afford them for perseverance; unless, indeed, we suppose the hope or prospect of revenge would give them this encouragement. But, on the supposition that they understood his words as affording them an assurance that they should live to see the power of their enemies destroyed, and the kingdom of their Lord and Master triumphantly established in the world, by their continued and faithful exertions, we readily discover the propriety of his language.

The next testimony which I shall introduce is Matt. xvi. 27—28. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. 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." As I design to bring into view all the passages in the New Testament, in which the coming of Christ is mentioned, I will here transcribe the parallel texts from the other Evangelists. Mark viii. 38—9: 1. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said unto them, verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come
with power.” Luke ix: 26, 27. “For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God.” Here it may perhaps be proper to remark, that although the language of Mark and Luke varies in some degree from that which is employed by Matthew; they all profess to relate the same expressions of the Saviour. By consulting the contexts of the three passages, we shall find in each case almost precisely the same language preceding and following the words quoted. We may therefore with propriety consider them as parallel texts; and although at first view, there may be a seeming discrepancy in the testimony of the Evangelists, a little reflection will be sufficient to convince us that the sentiment expressed by them all, though conveyed in a little different language, is substantially the same. Those who were “ashamed” of Christ and his “words,” were unquestionably the same as those mentioned by the apostle, who obeyed not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and who, in the parable, are represented as having neglected the duties enjoined by the gospel; and without doubt, they were the same persons who troubled and persecuted the Christ-
ians. It will also be admitted that a part, at least, of the punishment which was to be inflicted on them consisted in their exclusion from the blessings of the kingdom of heaven, or the gospel dispensation. We may therefore consider the expression of Mark and Luke, where our Saviour is represented as saying he will be ashamed of them, and consequently reject them from his kingdom, as conveying precisely the same idea as is contained in the words of Matthew, which represent him as saying he will "reward every man according to his works." Taking the language of Matthew, which is rather the most explicit, as the true expression of our Saviour, we cannot but discover its relevance to the question before us; indeed, were I to frame a sentence for the express purpose of putting this question at rest forever, I know of no language which could be used,—words which could be put together, more perfectly adapted to this purpose than what is contained in this declaration of our Lord. A very few remarks will suffice to exhibit this subject in its true light to every sincere inquirer after truth.

1. The similarity of the language used by our Saviour on this occasion and in the parable, and also that used by the apostle is such as must force conviction on every unprejudiced mind, that the same coming and judgement were alluded to in each and all of the three passages. In the
passage I am now considering, Christ says, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." In the parable, he says "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations, &c." He then proceeds to point out the manner in which rewards and punishments would be dispensed to "every man according to his works." In the language of the apostle, we are expressly informed that God would "recompense tribulation" to those who troubled the believers, and rest to those who were troubled; "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels."&c. All these expressions clearly indicate that the speakers had one and the same time in view.

2. The judgment foretold in each of the passages, is evidently a judgement predicated entirely on works, without the least reference to faith, or the grace of God; even the "life eternal" mentioned in the parable, is promised as the reward of charitable deeds. Now there is no principle of doctrine more clearly taught in the scriptures, than that salvation is by the grace of God; and that immortality in the coming and eternal world, is the free unmerited gift of God to man through
the Redeemer. This consideration, were there no others, would be sufficient to show that the passages under examination do not relate to the final and unalterable condition of mankind.

3. The language of Christ relative to the time of his coming "in his glory,—with his angels," and when he would "reward every man according to his works," is such as cannot, without the greatest violence, be referred to any other state of existence than the present. Whichever of the evangelists we take as our authority, the principle established is the same, viz. that some of those who heard him speak should be alive on the earth at the time of his coming and kingdom.

I will now introduce the further testimony of our Saviour, contained in the same discourse in which he spake the parable of the sheep and goats. This conversation, which is continued through the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew, was introduced by the following question from his disciples,—"Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Matt. 24: 3. Parallel passages, Mark 13:4. "Tell us when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? Luke 21:7. And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? And what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?" Passing over that part
of the answer in which Jesus foretells events which should take place previous to the time of his coming, and alludes to the signs that should accompany them, (which I shall notice in my next number, and also the phrase “end of the world” which closes the question of the disciples,) I come to that part in which he fixes the time of his coming. After informing them that there should be a time of tribulation, such as never had been in the world, and never should be after, he adds, from verses 29 to 35 inclusive, “immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; 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. Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall
coming in his kingdom and glory, and in judgment on the children of disobedience. By adopting this opinion, do we not effectually destroy the validity of their testimony? and furnish the infidel with an argument against the authority of the apostolic writings which cannot be easily answered? That the apostles did understand our Lord as referring to a time near at hand, in all those expressions in which he speaks of coming to judge or “reward every man according to his works,” is apparent from many expressions in their writings. 1 Cor. i. 7, 8. “Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Phil. iv. 5. “Let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand.” 1 Cor. xvi. 22. “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed; our Lord cometh.” (Anathema Maranatha) 1 Tim. vi. 14. “That thou keep this commandment without spot unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” James v. 7, 8. “Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Be ye patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” 1 Pet. iv. 17. “For the time is come that judgment must take place at the house of God.” Many more passages of the same import might be quoted, but the above are sufficient. By adopting the supposition that Christ and
not pass away.” The parallel passages are Mark, 13:24—31, and Luke 21:25—33, which are essentially the same as the one quoted from Matthew.

On the above passage, Bishop Newton observes, “Commentators generally understand this and what follows, of the end of the world, and of Christ coming to judgment; but the words immediately after the tribulation of those days show evidently that he is not speaking of any distant event, but of something immediately consequent upon the tribulation before mentioned; and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem.” Dr. A. Clarke, in his commentary on the same passage, quotes and adopts as his own the above remarks. Dr Warburton has also, with great ability, defended the same opinion; and I believe it is pretty generally admitted by commentators and critics of the present age, that this prediction of our Saviour refers to that event. But if any doubts can remain on the subject, the declaration “this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled,” is sufficient to remove all those doubts from every candid mind. In further confirmation of this opinion it may be observed, that in all the subsequent parts of this conversation, Christ most obviously alludes to the time specified in the above quoted passage.

It has been supposed by many that the disciples of Christ did not fully understand what he said to them concerning his
the apostles did perfectly understand what they said and wrote on the coming of the Lord, and that modern Commentators have been in an error on this point, all difficulty in rightly understanding this subject disappears; all ambiguity is removed from the passages, and a powerful argument is wrested from the enemies of Christianity.

I have now, as I conceive, furnished a direct answer to the question proposed; and have shown from the clear testimony of inspiration that the events predicted in the passages under examination, were to take place during the lifetime of the generation then on the earth. It remains with the reader to receive, or reject these testimonies.

ESSAY III.

In my last number, I introduced two of the strongest and most noted passages in the New Testament, in which the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned in connexion with judgment, and the punishment of the guilty. In the discussion of the subject thus far, I have confined myself to a consideration of the question, At what period of time are the predictions contained in those passages to be fulfilled? and from the testimony of Christ himself, as well as of the apostles, I have shown that those predictions were to be fulfilled
during the then present generation. Ad-
mitting then, that the true time of the ful-
filment of these predictions is ascertained,
the next question which naturally pre-
sents itself is, Of what coming and judg-
ment were our Saviour and the apostle
speaking? The opinions of Bp. Newton,
Dr. A. Clarke and Dr. Warburton that the
declaration of Christ, quoted from Matt.
xxiv. had express reference to the destruc-
tion of Jerusalem, have been already in-
troduced, and it has also been shown that
our Lord in the parable of the sheep and
the goats, which formed a part of the
same discourse, must have alluded to the
same event; and as it is conceded by all,
that the language of Paul, quoted from 2
Thes. refers to the same coming of Christ
as is mentioned in the parable, it must, I
think, be apparent that the predictions
contained in the passages I am consider-
ing, had their complete fulfilment in that
event. I am fully aware of the accusa-
tion which is brought against Universal-
ists by their opponents, that they refer all
the threatenings of judgment and punish-
ment contained in the New Testament to
the destruction of Jerusalem; and were
there no other important events connect-
ed with this circumstance, the objection
would have some force. But, when we
take into consideration all the circum-
stances connected with this event—that
at the same time, a people who had been
for about two thousand years (reckoning
from the call of Abraham; a chosen and favorite people of God, were rejected; that the Mosaic economy, a dispensation introduced and established in the world by the Almighty himself, was then forever abolished, and the dispensation of the gospel—the covenant of God's impartial and unchangeable grace, was at the same time finally established in the earth, the objection must, in the minds of all who are acquainted with the strong, figurative language of the scriptures, lose all its force.

In confirmation of the opinion advanced above, I will here introduce a short extract from Dr. Warburton. After stating that the kingdom of Christ was commenced on the cessation of the theocracy, he says, "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 truth, had then its first beginning. His was the true establishment of christianity, not that effected by the donations or conversions of Constantine. Till the Jewish law was abolished, over which the Father presided as king, the reign of the Son could not take place; because the sovereignty of Christ over mankind, was the very sovereignty of God over the Jews, transferred and more largely extended. This therefore being one of the most important eras in the economy of grace, and the most awful revolution in all God's religious dispensations; we see
the elegance and propriety of the terms in question, to denote so great an event, together with the destruction of Jerusalem, by which it was effected."

That part of our Saviour's answer to the question of his disciples, in which he fixes the time of his coming "with power and great glory," &c. has already been noticed; and I now proceed to a consideration of the other parts of this answer, in which he mentions certain signs and occurrences which should precede that event; and also, to notice the phrase "end of the world" in the question of the disciples.—The manner in which this question is rendered in the common version of the New Testament, is unquestionably what has led to the belief that Christ spoke, in this discourse, of the close of time. The words in the original, which are translated "the end of the world," are sundeia tou aionos. They are rendered by Dr. Campbell "the conclusion of this state;" and by Macknight and Wakefield, "the end of the age." Dr. Clarke adopts the latter translation; and explains it as signifying "the end of the Jewish economy." The same phrase occurs in several other passages, and is rendered "the end of the world," when it is obvious there is no allusion to the end of time, or, of the material creation. Heb. ix: 26, "But now once in the end of the world (sundelia tou aionos) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." It would be idle to con-
tend that the apostle here alluded to the end of time; and yet, the language is precisely the same as in the question I am considering. In 1 Cor. x: 11, the apostle speaks of "the ends of the world" as having already come on himself, and brethren; but it will not be contended that they had witnessed the end of time, or the dissolution of the material universe. In addition to this, I will merely observe, that the Greek word for the material world is kosmos, and not aion or aionos.

I now pass to a consideration of the signs and events which were to precede and accompany the coming of Christ; and in doing this, I shall avail myself of the labors of Bishop Newton, and such other helps as are within my reach.

1. The first sign mentioned by our Saviour was the appearance of false Christs: "Take heed that no man deceive you; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many." verses 4, 5. Shortly after the crucifixion of our Saviour, the noted impostor, Simon Magus, made his appearance; and "bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one; to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God."—Acts viii: 9, 10. He likewise boasted among the Jews, that he was the Son of God." Of the same character was Dosithesus the Samaritan, who pretended that he was the Christ foretold
by Moses. About twelve years after the death of our Lord, an impostor named Thaddeus persuaded a great multitude to follow him to the river Jordan; persuading them that he was a prophet, and promising to divide the river for their passage; but he himself and most of his deceived followers were taken and put to death. A few years after this, and under the reign of Nero, impostors of this stamp were so frequent, that Joshua informs us some of them were taken and killed almost every day.

2. The next signs mentioned are wars and rumors of wars; nation rising up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.—verses 6, 7. These wars were so frequent from the time of our Saviour's crucifixion to that of the destruction of Jerusalem, that the history of this period is little else than a history of continual war and bloodshed. At Cesarea there was a contention between the Jews and Syrians about the right of the city, which terminated in the total expulsion of the Jews, more than two thousand of whom were slain. The whole Jewish nation being exasperated at this, flew to arms, and burnt and plundered the neighboring cities and villages of the Syrians, making an immense slaughter of the people.—The Syrians, in return, destroyed not a less number of the Jews. At Scythopolis they murdered upwards of thirteen thousand. At Ascalon, two thousand five
hundred. At Ptolemais, two thousand, and took many prisoners. At Demascus, the people conspired against the Jews, and assaulting them unarmed killed ten thousand of them. At Alexandria, the Jews and heathen fought, and fifty thousand of the former were slain. Besides these, there was a war in which the Jews and Gallileans united against the Samarians; another in which the whole Jewish nation fought against the Romans and their allies; and another in which the Romans fought among themselves, while Otho and Vitellius were contending for the empire.

3. Famines and pestilences were also predicted by our Saviour—verse 7. This prediction was also literally and extensively fulfilled. The historian Dion Cassius mentions a severe famine, which prevailed at Rome and in various other places, during the first year of the reign of Claudius Caesar. Another which happened in the eleventh year of the same reign is mentioned by Eusebius. But the principal one was that which was foretold by Agabus, (Acts ii: 28.) which is mentioned by Seutonius, Tacitus, and Eusebius; which was so severe, that Josephus says many died at Jerusalem for lack of food. Pestilences are the usual attendants on famines; as the scarcity and badness of provisions generally produce epidemic disorders.

4. Earthquakes were to happen in di-
vers places before the coming of the Son of man. Of these there were several during that period of time. One at Crete in the reign of Claudius mentioned by Philostratus. Another mentioned by the same historian, at Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, and Samos, in all of which places some Jews were inhabitants. Several at Rome mentioned by Tacitus; one at Laodicea, in the reign of Nero, mentioned also by Tacitus, in which that city, together with Hieropolis and Colosse were overthrown. One at Campania, mentioned by Seneca. One at Rome, in the reign of Galba, mentioned by Seutonius; and a most tremendous one in Judea, mentioned by Josephus, accompanied by a dreadful tempest, violent winds, continued lightnings and thunders, and a prodigious bel lowing of the shaken earth; which led many to believe that some uncommon calamity was approaching.

5. To the above, Luke adds, "And fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven."—Chap. xxi: 11. Josephus, in the preface to his history of the Jewish war, gives us an account of these extraordinary signs and portents.—

1. A star, like a sword, hung over the city, and continued a whole year. 2. The people being assembled at the fast of unleavened bread, at the ninth hour of the night, a great light shone about the altar and temple, and continued like the light of day, for the space of half an hour.
3. At the same feast, a cow led forth for sacrifice, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple. 4. The eastern gate of the temple, which was of solid brass, and so heavy that it could hardly be shut by twenty men, fastened by strong bars and bolts, at the sixth hour of the night, opened of itself, and could with difficulty be shut again. 5. Before the setting of the sun, there were seen all over the country, chariots and armies fighting in the clouds, and besieging cities. 6. At the feast of Pentecost, as the priests were going into the inner temple as usual by night, to attend to their service, they heard at first a motion and a noise; and then a voice as of a multitude saying, *let us depart hence.*

7. What Josephus reckons one of the most terrible signs of all was, that one Jesus, a countryman, four years before the war began, and when the city was enjoying peace and plenty, came to the feast of the tabernacles, and ran crying up and down the streets, day and night: "A voice from the east! a voice from the west! a voice from the four winds! a voice against Jerusalem and the temple! a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides! and a voice against all the people!" This he continued to do for seven years and five months together, especially at the great festivals; and though the magistrates endeavored by stripes and tortures to restrain him, he continued with a mournful voice to exclaim, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem! woe, woe to the city, and to the peo-
ple, and to the temple;" and as he added, "woe, woe also to myself," a stone, from some sling or engine, immediately struck him dead. It is worthy of remark, that Josephus, in giving this relation, appeals to the testimony of others, who saw and heard these fearful things; and Tacitus, the Roman historian, gives a summary account of these same occurrences. He says, "There happened several prodigies; armies were seen engaging in the heavens; arms were seen glittering, and the temple shone with the sudden fire of the clouds; the doors of the temple were opened suddenly; and a voice, greater than human was heard, that the Gods were departing, and likewise a great motion of their departing." The fact that both of those eminent historians were opposed to Christ and his religion adds considerable weight to their testimony in confirmation of the fulfilment of our Saviour's predictions.

6. Divisions, hatred and lukewarmness are also mentioned by our Saviour as signs which should precede his coming—verses 10, 12. In order to show the fulfilment of these predictions, we have only to refer to the history of the Acts of the Apostles, and the declarations of Paul in several of his epistles, where he complains of several individuals by name, who had forsaken him and abandoned the gospel. Tacitus also, when speaking of the persecution under Nero, says: "at first several (christians) were seized, who
confessed; and then by their discovery, a great multitude of others were convicted, and barbarously executed."

7. Another, and last prediction of our saviour which I shall notice—a prediction which is supposed by many to furnish indisputable evidence that the coming of Christ in judgment was not an event that was then near at hand, is found in verse 14. "And this gospel of the kingdom Shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." As there are many nations, even at this day, where the gospel has never been preached "for a witness," it is contended that the "coming," and "end of the world" spoken of must be yet future; but, I conceive, it will be easy to show the complete fulfilment of this prediction previous to the final overthrow of the Jewish nation and polity. The phrase "all the world" may possibly signify no more than the Roman empire, which at that time included many nations. The same phrase occurs, Luke ii: 1, and there can be no doubt but its signification is there confined to the empire of Rome; as the decree of Augustus for taxation, or enrolment, could have no authority but in the Roman dominions. Adopting this as the meaning of the phrase, the evidence is clear and conclusive as to the fulfilment of the prophecy. The Acts of the Apostles, which, as Bishop Newton justly observes, "contains only a small part of the history of a small part of the Apostles,"
show clearly that the gospel, during this period, was widely disseminated, and had taken root in the most considerable parts of this vast empire. In addition to this, Tacitus informs us that as early as the reign of Nero, the christians had become so numerous at Rome, as to excite the jealousy of the government; and in other parts, they were in proportion. But, we are not under the necessity of confining the phrase to the Roman empire; as previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, the gospel was not only preached in Asia Minor, Greece and Italy, the theatres of action then in the world; but was likewise propagated as far north as Scythia; as far south as Ethiopia; as far east as Parthia and India; and as far west as Spain and Britain. Clement, who was a contemporary and fellow laborer with Paul, says of him, that he was a preacher both in the east and in the west; that he taught the whole world righteousness, and travelled as far as the utmost corners of the west. Eusebius informs us that the Apostles preached the gospel in all the world; and some of them passed beyond the ocean of the Britanic Isles. Theodoret affirms, that the Apostles induced every nation and kind of men to embrace the gospel. Paul himself says, Rom. i: 18, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." And again, x: 18,— "But I say unto you, have they not heard? yes, verily, their sound went into
all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." By consulting the context, we find the Apostle was speaking expressly of the preaching of the gospel; and in Colossians, i: 23, he tells us that the gospel "was preached to every creature which is under heaven." Thus, by the testimony of the most credible writers, both sacred and profane, we learn that this important prediction was completely fulfilled previous to the time when the long continued iniquity of the Jews was visited upon them, and their city and temple utterly destroyed.

The complete, and in most instances, literal fulfilment of the above predictions, particularly the last, and at the very time when it was declared they should be accomplished, by him who uttered them, affords the strongest and most satisfactory evidence in support of the divine authority of this portion of the holy scriptures. As our Saviour therefore expressly declares, when the gospel of the kingdom shall have been preached in all the world, "then shall the end come," what reason have we to say that this part of his language was less true than the other parts? or, that he was speaking of any other "end of the world" than the end of the Jewish age, or dispensation which did then come?
ESSAY NO. IV.

Having noticed the signs which our Saviour informed his disciples should precede his coming, and the "end of the world" or age, and shown that they were all accomplished previous to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the abolition of the Mosaic dispensation; I now proceed to a further illustration of the subject; and shall endeavor to show that the judgment, punishment and tribulation, or vengeance denounced in the parable and in the words of the apostle under consideration, actually came on the unbelieving Jews, at the time already specified, viz: during the continuance of the then present generation on earth.

By consulting the language of scripture, we shall find expressions, equally strong with those used by Christ and the apostle, applied to the destruction and overthrow of other cities and nations. Thus, Isaiah, in foretelling the destruction of Babylon by the Medes, says, "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 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; and I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will
lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore, I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger."—Isa. xiii: 9—13. The same prophet speaking of the overthrow of Idumea uses language if possible, still stronger: "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken ye people; let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies; he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their hosts shall fall down as the leaf falleth from the vine, and as the falling fig from the fig-tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.—The sword of the Lord is filled with blood; it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of kidneys of rams; for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. And the unicorn shall come down with them, and the bul-
locks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch; it shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever.”—Isa. xxxiv: 1—10.

Ezekiel, predicting the downfall of Egypt, says: “And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and 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, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God.” Ezekiel 32: 7, 8. And the prophet Joel, speaking of this very destruction of Jerusalem, says: “And I will show wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke:—The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.”—Joel, ii: 30, 31.

No one unacquainted with the expositions commonly given of our Saviour's words in the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew, would hesitate a moment in considering the above language of the prophets altogether more descriptive of the
close of time, and the dissolution of the material universe, than any thing which is contained in those chapters; and yet it is admitted by all, that the prophets speak wholly in reference to particular cities, or nations; at the same time it is contended that Christ, in language equally figurative, and less strong, predicted, not only the close of time, but a judgment beyond this state of existence. If the prophets, when foretelling the desolation of Babylon and Idumea could, with propriety, use language like the following: “The earth shall remove out of her place”—“The heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll”—and “the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies,” &c. might not our Savieur, with at least, equal propriety, when predicting the destruction of the holy city—the entire dispensation of God’s ancient covenant people—the abolition of the Theocracy, and the heavy judgments which were coming on the unbelieving and hard hearted Jews, say:—“The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken,” and “before him shall be gathered all nations?”

I shall now, for the purpose of more clearly illustrating the subject, introduce a brief sketch from the history of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, and the final overthrow of the Jewish nation;
from which it will appear that there never was, before nor since that period, a time of tribulation which could be compared to that; and that Josephus has not exaggerated when he has said: "Our city, of all those which have been subjected to the Romans, was advanced to the highest felicity, and was thrust down again to the extremest misery; for if the misfortunes of all from the beginning of the world were compared with those of the Jews, they would appear much inferior upon the comparison;" and again: "To speak brief, no other city ever suffered such things, as no other generation from the beginning of the world was ever more fruitful of wickedness."

Previous to the final investment of Jerusalem by Titus, two Roman armies had entered Judea, and ravaged the whole country. Eleazer, the son of the high priest, having persuaded those who officiated in the temple to reject the sacrifices of the Romans, and the people being in a state of confusion among themselves, and of revolt against the government of Rome, Cestius Gallus, then president of Syria, marched an army into Judea, whose course was every where marked with blood. He plundered and burnt the cities of Zebulon, Joppa, and Lydda, and destroyed all the villages in his way; and after having laid waste a considerable portion of the country, and put to death many thousands of the inhabitants, he finally entered Jerusalem, and burnt three divisions of the
city. At this time, he might easily have put an end to the war; but instead of pursuing the advantage he had obtained, by the treacherous advice of some of his officers, he precipitately fled from the city, and was followed by the Jews, who overtook him, and slew six thousand of his army. At this time it is supposed that many of the christians, remembering the admonition of their Master, ("then let them which are in Judea flee into the mountains") fled from the devoted city, and found safety in Pella, a mountainous country beyond the river Jordan.

When Nero was informed of the fate of his army under Cestius, he appointed Vespasian to prosecute the war against the Jews; who, with his son Titus, in the spring of A.D. 67, entered Judea at the head of an army of sixty thousand men. For fifteen months, he continued to spread horror and devastation through the country, sparing neither age nor sex; he reduced all the strong towns in Galilee, and most of those in Judea, putting to death at least one hundred and fifty thousand of the inhabitants. While at Cesarea, making preparations for an attack on Jerusalem, he received intelligence of the death of Nero, and suspended all further hostile operation. Thus a second respite, which continued for nearly two years, was granted to this devoted people; but instead of repenting and turning from the evil of their ways, they only seemed to increase in their wickedness,
and the enormity of their crimes. During this interval, it is probable that such christians as remained in the city and country secured their safety by a timely removal; for it is an historical fact, and one that should fill every pious bosom with devout admiration, that not even one christian was known to have perished in the siege and destruction of the ill-fated city.

At this period the flames of civil discord burst forth with the most destructive fury. The inhabitants of Jerusalem were divided into three great factions, who fought against each other with the most deadly hatred; houses were plundered; their chief priests were slain, and their unburied bodies treated with the greatest indignity: the noble were imprisoned, scourged, and finally, as a matter of favor, put to death; the common people were butchered as unfeelingly as if they had been a herd of swine; heaps of dead bodies lay on all the public roads; every feeling of humanity was extinguished; and all authority both human and divine was utterly contemned. At the same time the whole of Judea was ravaged by hordes of merciless robbers and murderers, who, regardless of age, sex, or condition, committed their horrid depredations with the utmost impunity. In the city and country, a ceaseless cry of warriors, and the plaintive wailings of the mourners were made day and night; and many of the inhabitants earnestly wished for the interference of some foreign enemy to effect
their deliverance from such unheard-of wretchedness.

Such was the situation of Jerusalem, when, at the feast of the Passover, the anniversary of the day on which the Jews crucified their Messiah, Titus encompassed it round with his army; and notwithstanding the civil war which had so long and violently raged, multitudes from the surrounding country, and Jewish strangers from among all nations were assembled in the city to celebrate this great national feast; so that it might be said the whole nation was shut up in one vast prison, preparatory to the execution of the divine sentence against them. Soon after the commencement of the siege, as the infuriated leaders of the different factions had previously destroyed most of the storehouses and provisions in the city, famine made its appearance in the Jewish army; and as they were entirely cut off from the possibility of obtaining any supplies from without, hundreds perished daily for the want of necessaries. At length, whole families were swept off at once by starvation; the tops of houses, and the recesses of the city were covered with the dead bodies of women, children, and old men; the young men appeared like mere spectres, and were often seen dropping down dead in the streets; lamentation was hushed to silence by horror; the black night of death was spread over them, until despair induced multitudes to leave the city and throw them-
selves into the camp of their enemy, where the Romans crucified them in such vast numbers, that Josephus says: "space was wanted for the crosses, and crosses for the captives!" Such was the unparalleled mortality in consequence of famine, that a Jew who fled to Titus informed him, that from the commencement of the siege, (April 14th) to the first of July following, one hundred and fifteen thousand, eight hundred and eighty dead bodies had been carried out thro' one gate which he guarded; and soon after several individuals who had deserted to the Romans declared that the whole number of the poor who had been carried out at the different gates was not less than six hundred thousand.

One circumstance related by Josephus will serve to give some idea of the intense wretchedness of this unhappy people. A Jewish lady, named Mary, of a noble family, was driven by hunger to such an awful extremity that she killed her own child and ate it! and thus was literally fulfilled a prediction of Moses.—Deut. xxviii: 56, 57. "The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot on the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward *** her children which she shall bear; for she shall eat them for want of all things in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates."

While the famine was thus spreading
death and destruction through the city, the Romans, at length, succeeded in demolishing a part of the inner wall; they possessed themselves of the great town of Antonia, and advanced towards the temple, which Titus had resolved to preserve as an ornament to the empire, and a monument of his success; but it was otherwise determined in the councils of the Most High; for, on the fatal 10th of August, the same day and month on which the first temple was destroyed by the king of Babylon, a Roman soldier, urged on, as he declared by divine impulse, regardless of the commands of Titus, threw a flaming brand into the golden window, and this vast edifice was instantly enveloped in flames. While the temple was burning, and the Jews, filled with the utmost consternation were uttering their cries and lamentations, the Roman soldiers, uttering the most horrid shouts, rushed forward to the work of death with a resistless impetuosity; driving many into the fire, and plunging their swords into the bodies of all whom they could overtake, until the ground could not be seen for the dead bodies over which they trampled; while the crackling of the flames, the clangor of arms, the groans of the dying and the shrieks of the fugitives, altogether furnished a scene of horror to which the pages of history afford us no parallel. Some who had taken refuge in towers deemed impregnable by human force, fled panic struck from their places of safety,
and sought concealment in caverns and subterranean passes; in which dismal retreats no less than two thousand dead bodies were afterwards found; thus fulfilling the predictions of Christ, that they should "say to the mountains fall on us; and to the hills, cover us." Luke xxiii. 30; and also of the Revelator, who in prophetic language said, they "hid themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. vi: 16, 17. Truly said our Saviour, these were "the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled." Luke, xxi: 22.

On the eighth day of September, nearly five months from the commencement of the siege, Jerusalem, once the holy city, and "a praise in all the earth," sunk into hopeless ruin and utter desolation; and well might its once proud but now humbled inhabitants exclaim, "where is our great city, which, it was believed, God inhabited? It is altogether rooted and torn up from its foundations; and the only monument of it that remains, is the camp of its destroyers, pitched amidst its relicts!" The number of those who were destroyed at Jerusalem during this siege, is computed by Josephus at no less than one million and one hundred thousand; to these must be added more than two hundred and thir-
ty-seven thousand, who were known to have perished during the war in other places, besides an innumerable multitude swept away by famine and pestilence, of which no probable calculation could be made; add to these ninety-seven thousand, who were carried away captive, and sold as slaves, or put to death according to the caprice of their unfeeling masters, and it will be obvious that the destruction of human life which there took place is unparalleled in the annals of nations. Well might the compassionate Redeemer in view of these sufferings, say to the sorrowing women who followed him to his crucifixion, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children."

From the above brief sketch, it will be perceived that the judgment of Heaven which for ages had impended over this hardened people, burst, in the fulness of time, with a resistless fury on their devoted heads. By the rejection and crucifixion of their promised and expected Messiah, the measure of their iniquity was filled up; the time had now arrived when the sceptre should forever "depart from Judah, and a law-giver from between his feet;" the kingdom was "taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof;" they were then, as our Saviour expressed it (Matt. xvi: 27) rewarded "every man according to his works;" the dread sentence "depart ye cursed" was pronounced against them,
and they were sent "away into everlasting punishment." Should it be objected to this application of the parable, that, as there is a promise of deliverance and final salvation to the Jews, therefore, the punishment they are now suffering cannot be properly called an everlasting punishment; I answer, this punishment has already continued nearly as long as their everlasting covenant of circumcision, (Gen. xvii: 13.) and considerably longer than they inhabited their everlasting possession in the land of Canaan (Gen. lxviii: 4.) or, than the everlasting priesthood of Aaron and his descendants was continued to them; (Exod. xl: 15.) and how much longer they will endure it, God only knows.

But, another objection may arise. It may be said, although the declarations of Christ, in the parable of the sheep and the goats had their accomplishment at this time, this could not be the case with the language of the Apostle under consideration; as the overthrow or destruction of the Jewish nation could not affect the condition of the Thessalonian christians. In answer to this objection, I remark, 1. It has already been shown, from the similarity of the language used by Christ and the apostle, also from the general consent of commentators, that those passages both allude to one and the same coming of the Son of man, "in his glory," "with his angels," &c. If, therefore, we admit the fulfilment of one of these predictions, we must necessarily the other. 2. By refe-
rence to the account of Paul's visit and preaching at Thessalonica, we shall find it was the unbelieving Jews who troubled the believers and "the people." While Jerusalem and the temple continued, the Jews unquestionably exercised a considerable influence in all nations where they resided. Historians inform us, that in all parts of the Roman empire they were much respected on account of their religion; and it is certain that decrees favorable to them were issued by some of the Emperors, after the crucifixion of Christ. As the Jews, from the first, were the determined persecutors of Jesus and his followers; it is reasonable to conclude that many of the persecutions that were set on foot against the Christians were at their instigation, and through their influence. When, therefore, the whole nation lost the favor and respect of the Romans, and when God recompensed tribulation to them for their sins, the christians would naturally enjoy rest from their persecutions, and from those they had endured at their instigation. Accordingly we find, that from the death of Nero until the latter end of the reign of Domitian, altho' the laws against them were still in existence, they were seldom or never enforced. 3. If, as Dr. Warburton pertinently remarks, (See No. 3.) "The kingdom of Christ commenced on the cessation of the Theocracy"—if his reign "in spirit and in truth had then its first beginning," and
if that was "the true establishment of christianity" in the world, we at once discover the deep interest which the Thessalonians and all other christians must have had in those important events.

I have now brought my remarks on these two important passages of scripture to a close. I am sensible they are very imperfect, and that much more might profitably be advanced in relation to them than what I have written; but in preparing these numbers for publication in a weekly paper, I have been compelled to study brevity. If the views which have been advanced are correct, considerable difficulty in reconciling many of the expressions of our Saviour and his apostles is removed, and the language of the scriptures appears plain and consistent. On the other hand, I conceive that the common application of these passages to events yet future, renders the prediction relative to the coming of Christ in judgment, and rewarding "every man according to his works" not only obscure, but contradictory and absurd.

ESSAY NO. V.

As the 24th chapter of Matthew, to ver. 36, has been considered in the illustration of the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, and of Paul's language to the Thessalonians, it may perhaps be proper, before proceeding to any other, or a different
subject, to notice the remainder of this Chapter, and the parallel passages in the other Evangelists. As Christ speaks of his coming and the consequences of it, in almost every remaining verse in the chapter, it will be necessary to cite the whole of what remains, commencing at verse 36.

"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, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. 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. But know this, if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing.
Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." To this agrees Luke xvii., 20—31, with this exception, that Luke tells us the Pharisees demanded of Christ "when the kingdom of God should come." See the whole passage; and likewise ch. xii., 35—40, which is also similar to some part of what I have quoted from Matthew.

The opinion of commentators, that at the time the apostles wrote, there were four different comings of Christ to happen, has already been noticed. See No. 1. These different comings were supposed to be: 1. His coming to destroy Jerusalem, abrogate the Mosaic institutions, and establish the gospel in the world. 2. His coming to destroy the man of sin. 3. His coming to release his people from their present trials by death; and 4. His coming to raise the dead, judge the world, and put an end to the present order of things. Most of the language which I have now quoted, together with some of the expressions of the apostle, have been
supposed to relate to what is above termed his 3d coming; i.e. to every man at death; and hence these words have, some of them, furnished occasion, especially at funerals, for pathetic exhortations to be ready, and prepared to meet the Lord.

But let us inquire, is this application of these words of Christ correct? Is it warranted, either by the language itself, or the connexion in which it is found? A very brief examination will, I think, be sufficient to set the subject in its true light, and convince us that this opinion is entirely groundless. Our Saviour, continuing the same conversation in which he had expressly told his disciples that his coming should be during the continuance of that generation, goes on to say that the "day and hour," or the precise time of his coming was not known, either to men or angels; and according to Mark, it was also unknown to himself. He had faithfully warned them of the dangers which should surround them when that time should come—pointed out to them the signs which should precede that event, and given all necessary instructions to enable them to provide for their safety; and he now proceeds to urge the necessity of vigilance, and continued watchfulness, for the very reason that the precise time could not be known. This time, he informed them, would come suddenly and unexpectedly; as did the deluge upon the Antediluvians; or, (according to Luke)
the rain of fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah; so suddenly, that of two who should be at work together, one should escape and the other perish. He tells them therefore, to watch—to observe the signs of the times, and to be ready,—ready to flee from that devoted city, whenever the fatal time should come; and to enforce his admonitions, he tells them also, it should come "in such an hour as they thought not;" or when it should not be expected. And he further assures them, that such as remained faithful should be rewarded with the approbation of their Lord, and the joys of his kingdom; but such as disregarded his warnings, should share the portion of hypocrites, where there should be "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The parable of the virgins, and also of the talents in the next chapter, are a continuation of the same discourse; and they illustrate, more fully and forcibly, the necessity of watchfulness, and of faithfulness in the use of the means of safety and happiness which they possessed. Those who continued to watch for the coming of the bridegroom, are represented as being received by him: or as entering into the life and joy of his kingdom; and those who faithfully improved the talents entrusted to them received a rich reward; whilst the careless and unfaithful suffered the consequences of their neglect. What has now been advanced on the 24th chap-
ter, and on the parable of the sheep and goats in the 25th, will he sufficient to explain these two parables, which are parts of the same conversation, and relate to the same subject. The parallel to the parable of the talents is Luke, xix: 11—27, which I need not transcribe.

Matt. xxi: 33—41: "Hear another parable: there was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine press in it; and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country; and when the time of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, this is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, he will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruit in their seasons." Mark xii: 1—9, and Luke xx:
9—16, are the parallel passages; and as they are substantially the same as the above, I need not quote them.

Perhaps it may be doubted whether our Lord in this parable, intended to represent his coming in any manner; as by the "householder," and "Lord of the vineyard," he evidently meant one and the same person; and as the "householder" who is said to have planted the vineyard, and sent his servants, and finally his son to receive the fruits was God himself, and not the son who had been sent, and been killed by the husbandmen. But this objection, should it arise, will lose much of its force, when we consider that it was the main object of the parable to show the certainty of the punishment which awaited the guilty husbandmen, notwithstanding they had succeeded so long in avoiding it. The different characters and offices ascribed to Christ may be noticed in confirmation of the opinion that he does refer in the parable to his coming in judgment, to punish the guilty. He is not only the "appointed heir of all things," but he tells us, John v: 27, the Father had "given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." He is likewise said to be "Lord of all;" and Paul says, Rom. xiv: 9, "for to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." It may also be observed that God is said to do many things by
Christ. Thus, Heb. i: 2, "by whom also he made the worlds," or "settled the ages," as it is rendered by Wakefield. Again, Acts xvii: 31, "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;" and Rom. ii: 16, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."

From these, and other similar expressions I am clearly of the opinion, that this parable contains a plain allusion to the coming of the Son of man, and do not therefore, feel at liberty to pass it by without notice.

It will probably be admitted on all hands, that our Saviour borrowed this parable from Isa. v: 1, 2. "Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill; and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine press therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes." By consulting the contexts of these two parables, their true application, and consequently the time predicted in them, will be easily and satisfactorily ascertained. God, by the mouth of the prophet, in the words immediately following the last cited parable, calls on those to whom it was addressed, as our Saviour does to those to
whom he spoke his parable, to decide, or judge between him and his vineyard. “And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? He then proceeded to inform them what he would do; “And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down; and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.”

A direct application of the parable is then made to those who were represented by it; “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, and behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.”

Here is a clear and striking prediction of that awful judgment, and entire desolation with which God afterwards overwhelmed this corrupt nation for their sins. They had been “exalted to heaven,” in point of privileges; the nations inhabiting the land had been driven out, or destroyed before them; they had often, by the strong arm of Jehovah, been deliv-
ered from the power of their enemies; and to use the emphatic language of the Psalmist, God had not "dealt so with any nation" under heaven as he had with them. But for all that, they "hardened their hearts" continually before the Most High; they contemned his authority, and despised his reproofs; and instead of rendering to him who had done such "great things" for them, that righteousness and obedience which he required, they were filled with pride, ingratitude, and all kinds of iniquity; until at length, he withdrew from them the privileges they had enjoyed with unthankfulness, and thrust them "down to hell" for their unrighteousness.

We may now consider the application which our Saviour made of his parable. I would, however, previously observe, that from the 23d verse, and onward to the commencement of the parable, we learn to whom it was addressed. Christ came into the temple, and the "chief priests and the elders of the people," who were always his most violent enemies, came to him, and as was their custom whenever an opportunity presented, began to question him respecting his authority for teaching; and attempted to entangle him with their questions. He then commences a conversation with them, which continues to the last verse but two in the chapter. After compelling them to make an application of his parable, and to pronounce against themselves
a just sentence of condemnation for their rejection of him as the Son of God, and their expected Messiah, he says to them, ver. 42, "Did ye never read in the scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" Dr. A. Clarke here observes, "The 44th verse should certainly come before verse 43, otherwise the narration is not consecutive;" and I think any one, by examining the passage, will be convinced of the correctness of this opinion. Considering it in this light, Jesus, continuing the similitude of the stone which was rejected, next says to them, "And whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder;" i.e. as Dr. Clarke observes, "it shall make him so small, as to render him capable of being dispersed as chaff by the wind." He then continues—"Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Christ here ends this conversation; and the historian informs us, "when the chief priests and pharisees had heard his parable, they perceived that he spake of them."

The application of the parable being furnished us, the principles taught in it, and the time when its predictions were to be fulfilled, appear perfectly obvious.
By the vineyard which was let out to husbandmen, we may undoubtedly understand the Mosaic, or legal dispensation; together with the blessings and privileges enjoyed by the Jews, or the whole house of Israel under this dispensation. The servants who were sent to receive the fruits in the name of the householder, were the prophets, who from time to time were raised up and sent to the people, to admonish them of their sins, and guide them in the ways of judgment and righteousness. These prophets were persecuted and slain by the Jews; and hence Stephen says to them, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One." Of John the Baptist it was said, "among them that are born of woman," there were none greater. He also was sent to them, as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, to prepare the way of the Lord," to "turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers," and "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." He had also been wantonly and cruelly put to death. And, "last of all," the "only begotten of the Father," his "beloved Son," was sent to them; but although they were anxiously waiting for his appearance, when he demanded of them "fruits meet for repentance," and openly reproved them for their sins, they rose
against him: and notwithstanding he was the Son and heir, they said by their conduct, "we will not have this man to reign over us;" nor was their malice satisfied, till they had shed his blood.

We may now notice the fulfilment of the prediction, contained in the parable, of judgment or destruction which was denounced against those husbandmen. Jesus had told them, on whomsoever the stone should fall, it should grind him to powder; and we find, that when he did fall in judgment on this corrupted people, he ground them to powder; or made them so small, that like chaff before the wind, those of them who survived the destruction of their city and polity, were dispersed among all the nations of the earth; where to this day they remain, an everlasting monument of the justice of God. He also told them "the kingdom of God should be taken from them, and "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This event he had predicted on other occasions. Matt. viii: 11, 12:—"And I say unto you, that 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 shall be cast out into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Luke, xiii: 28:—"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets
in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." The apostles also continued to warn them of their impending destruction; and to admonish them of the irreparable loss they must sustain, if they continued in unbelief and hardness of heart. Hence we find them at Antioch, first preaching salvation through Christ to the Jews; but when they "spake against those things which were spoken by Paul and Barnabas, contradicting and blaspheming," these faithful messengers of peace boldly declared to them, "it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it far from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."—Acts, xiii: 46. And again: Acts, xxviii: 28, Paul, addressing this same people at Rome, says to them, "be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it."

The signification of the phrases "kingdom of God," and "kingdom of Heaven" in the above passages, is too plain and obvious to be easily misunderstood. During the continuance of the legal dispensation, the government of the Jews, although administered by men, was properly a Theocracy; as the laws by which they were governed were directly from God. There was, therefore, a kingdom, or reign of God established in the earth; and these people were the subjects or
children of this kingdom. After the abolition of this dispensation, or economy, the authority which God had exercised over the Jews was transferred to Christ, and extended to the Gentiles; and God is now judging or governing "the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." He has now established a kingdom, embracing "all people, nations, and languages;" but to the laws of this kingdom, and the authority of the Son of God, the stubborn and rebellious Jews will not submit. Hence, the kingdom they once enjoyed is taken from them, and given to other nations: or, in other words, they, the former "children of the kingdom," are "thrust out" from its privileges and enjoyments; and the Gentile nations are brought in.

Matt. xxii: 2—14, comes next under consideration "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a marriage for his Son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, tell them which are bidden, behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise; and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard
thereof he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, the wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy; go ye therefore into the high ways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the high ways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment; and he said unto him, friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? and he was speechless. Then said the king unto his servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for many are called, but few are chosen."

The only part of this parable from which it seems possible to draw an inference, that it applies to a coming of Christ yet future, is the latter part, in which the king is represented as coming in to see the guests,—finding one without a wedding garment, and ordering him to be cast out, &c. But a very few remarks will be sufficient to show the impropriety of this application. And—

1. It appears that when our Saviour spoke this parable, he resumed the con-
versation, with the same persons, and on the same subject; in which he spoke the one already considered. In the last verse of the preceding chapter, the Evangelist says "when they (i.e. the chief priests, Pharisees, and elders of the people,) sought to lay hold on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet;" and in the next words, which are those immediately of the parable under consideration, he tells us,—"Jesus answered, and spake unto them again by parables." Then follow the words of this parable. From this it appears, that this parable was addressed to the same individuals as the preceding; and there is no intimation of a change in the subject of conversation.

2. Neither in this parable, nor in the preceding one, is there the most distant allusion to a future state of existence; nor is there any thing in the context of either from which an inference of this kind can be drawn, until we come to the 23d verse, where we are informed the Sadducees came to him, and commenced questioning him on the subject of the resurrection.

In the parable of the vineyard, it appears to have been the design of our Lord to point out to the Jews, especially their leaders, the justice of God in withdrawing from them the blessings and privileges they had enjoyed under the Mosaic covenant, or dispensation; and in punishing them
for their sins, and their abuse of those privileges; and in that of the marriage feast, to exhibit the kind and merciful invitations which were still extended to them, to embrace the gospel, and to turn from their iniquities and live. The following therefore, we may perhaps consider a correct application of this parable. The marriage which the king made for his son—the gospel dispensation, with its attendant joys and blessings. Those who had been bidden, and who were now called by the king’s servants—the Jews in general, to whom this gospel had been previously preached. Their refusal to come—their rejection of the testimony of their own prophets—the calls of John the Baptist and the seventy disciples who had been sent out to preach the kingdom of God to them. The other servants who were sent forth—the apostles; who, tho’ they were to preach the gospel finally to all nations, were to begin at Jerusalem, and among the Jews. Their making light of the invitation, and spitefully using the servants—their neglect of the gospel salvation, and their violent persecution of its defenders. The sending forth of the armies to destroy those who had been invited—the destruction which afterwards came upon them by the Roman armies under Titus; when their city was burned, and their whole country laid waste. The sending forth of the servants to the highways, to bid all they should find—the
calling of the Gentiles, after the final rejection of the Jews. The man who had not on the wedding garment—any one, who, after professing Christianity, depends still on legal righteousness for salvation, and acceptance with God; but especially those Jewish converts who adhered to all the rituals of Moses. See Rom. 10, 3. The order to bind, and cast out this man—the entire abolition of everything on which the Jews had depended for salvation; and the utter darkness into which he was to be cast—the darkness of mind under which they still continue, in consequence of their unbelief, and rejection of the Messiah.

ESSAY NO. VI.

In this number I shall notice those passages in which judgment, or the judging of quick and dead is mentioned in connexion with the coming of Christ; and also, those which relate generally to his judging the world, or the quick and dead, without speaking expressly of his coming. An understanding of the latter class of passages being necessary to an explanation of the former, no apology will be necessary for introducing them. The passages are not numerous; and I shall notice them without regard to the order in which they occur in the Scriptures.
2 Tim. iv: 1:—"I charge thee therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom."—Three particulars embraced in the foregoing passage will demand attention.

1. The character ascribed to Christ as Judge. A judge in the common acceptation of the term, is one who decides judicially—administers existing laws, and apportions the rewards and punishments prescribed by those laws. To judge usually signifies to try and determine a cause; to pass sentence; to examine authoritative; and to determine finally. But altho’ such are the usual acceptions of these terms, when used in reference to the ordinary affairs of life, yet we find them used in a very different sense in the scriptures, especially in the Old Testament. There, those who governed, or exercised authority were called judges; thus, Othniel, Deborah, Jephthah, Samson, and others were said to have been judges, i. e. governors, or rulers in Israel. Absalom also, when attempting to steal the hearts of the people from his father David, says, "O that I were made judge in the land." To judge signified, not only to rule, or exercise authority, but also to protest, defend, and assist the poor and the helpless. Thus, Isa. i: 17:—"Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow;" and again: ver. 23, speaking of
the princes of Israel, the prophet says, "they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them." In the New Testament also, these words, together with judgment, have frequently the same signification. Acts, xxiv: 10:—"Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation." Matt. xxiii: 23:—"And have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." Luke xi: 42:—"And pass over judgment and the love of God."

There are two other passages in the New Testament, besides the one I am now considering, in which Christ is mentioned as judge of the "quick and dead;" and which will assist in the inquiry before us. The first I shall notice is Acts x: 42, 43:—"And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness," &c. From this expression it appears, not only that Christ was "ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead," but that the prophets gave witness of him in this character; it will be necessary, therefore, to examine the testimony of the prophets on this point. Isa. ix: 6, 7:—"For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder—of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; upon the
throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment, and with justice from henceforth, even forever.” Chap. xlii: 1—4. “Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, until he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law.” Jer. xxiii: 5, 6:—“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch; and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called:—THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Ezek. xxxvi: 24;—“And David my servant shall be King over them; and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in my judgements, and observe my statutes and do them.” I need not prove that Christ is here mentioned by the prophet, by the name of David. Dan. vii: 13, 14:—“I saw in the night visions, 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." Micah, v: 2:—"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though though be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." Zech. ix: 9:—Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation." From the above, and many other similar expressions, which might be quoted from the prophets, it plainly appears that the character ascribed by them to Christ as judge, was that of a ruler, governor, king, or lawgiver; and it is worthy of remark, that in no passage in the prophets, where Christ is promised, or his character described, is he represented as a judge, in the present usual acceptation of that term. It is the opinion of most Christians, that where the scriptures represent Christ as judging mankind, we are to understand something like a judicial trial, and passing a sentence according to the characters and conduct of the different individuals who are the subjects of this judgment; but after a careful examination of the various passages adduced in support of this opinion, I am convinced that it is, in general, unfounded. Perhaps the parable of the sheep and goats, already considered, may be an exception; and this has been shown to relate to an event long since past.
2. What is signified by the "quick and the dead," whom Christ should judge "at his appearing and kingdom?" By the phrase "quick and dead" is generally understood those who are literally alive in the earth, and those who have suffered natural death, or the dissolution of the body. The only passage in the New Testament where this occurs, excepting that under consideration, and the one quoted from Acts x: 42, which has already been noticed, is 1 Peter iv: 5:—"Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." On this passage, Dr. A. Clarke has the following observations:—"They shall give account of those irregularities to him who is prepared to judge both the Jews and the Gentiles. The Gentiles, previously to the preaching of the gospel among them, were reckoned to be dead in trespasses and sins. Eph. ii: 1—5. The Jews had at least, by their religious profession, a name to live; and, by that profession, were bound to live to God." The verse following seems to confirm this view of the learned Dr’s. "For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that were dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." Various opinions exist respecting the true signification of this verse. The following are the translations of it by three very learned and able critics:—
"For this indeed was the effect of the preaching of the gospel to the dead, (the unconverted Gentiles,) that some will be punished as carnal men; but others, (those converted to christianity,) lead a spiritual life unto God."—Wakefield.

In his note on this passage, this translator observes: "By the living, I understand Christians; and by the dead, the unconverted Gentiles; and upon this idea have attempted to give some meaning to a passage, which is, to me at least, otherwise unintelligible."

"For this purpose hath the gospel been preached even to the dead (i.e. the Gentiles,) that although they might be condemned, indeed, by men in the flesh, (their persecutors;) yet they might live eternally by God in the spirit."—MacKnight.

"For this cause was the gospel preached to them that were dead; that they who live according to men in the flesh, may be condemned; but that they who live according to God in the spirit, may live."—Knatchbull.

With the above exposition of the term dead, the language of our Saviour and the apostle perfectly agrees. John xi: 25:—"He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Eph. ii: 4, 5, 6:—"For God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with
Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." See also, to the same purpose, Colos. ii: 13. Here it is evident the apostle speaks of the unconverted, as dead; and those who had been truly converted to Christianity, as being quickened to life, and raised up to the enjoyment of spiritual blessings in Christ. But I need not multiply quotations nor arguments to prove that believers in Christ and his gospel, are represented in scripture as being alive; and that unbelievers are considered dead. And I would ask, what reason have we to attach a different meaning to the words quick and dead in the passage under consideration? It has already been shown that the character ascribed to Christ as judge, by those inspired prophets who foretold his coming into this world, was that of a ruler, king, or lawgiver. The kingdom he received from God embraces "all people, nations, and languages" as its subjects; and consequently, all men, Jews and Gentiles, whether quickened to spiritual life by faith, or dead in unbelief and sin, are under obligation to obey him as their "Lord and Master;" and his government, or authority extends equally to "the quick and the dead" in the sense I have considered. But this will appear still more obvious when we consider:—
3. The time specified by the apostle; when Christ should "judge the quick and the dead;" which was to be "at his appearing and kingdom." By attaching a literal signification to the words quick and dead, and by supposing that "to judge" necessarily signified to try, or decide judicially, and to pass sentence on those who were to be judged, this passage has been referred to the close of time, and the final consummation of all things. But, if the remarks which have been made on the character of Christ as judge, and on the signification of the phrase "quick and dead" be correct, it is evident, that so far as it has been considered necessary, in consequence of the common opinion of the meaning of these terms, to refer the "appearing and kingdom" mentioned, to the literal end of the world, or to any time yet future, this necessity is entirely done away; and we are prepared to enter more understandingly into the inquiry relative to the time predicted. On this point, I shall be under the necessity of repeating some of the testimonies which have been introduced in former numbers.

Previous, however, to the introduction of the testimony on this point, I would remark, that what is generally styled the "kingdom of God," and "kingdom of Heaven" in the scriptures, Christ sometimes calls "his kingdom;" we may therefore consider them all synonymous.
expressions. Our Lord's authority for calling this kingdom his, we find in Luke xxii: 29, 30. Addressing those who had continued with him in his temptations, he says:—"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." It has before been observed, that the same authority which God had formerly exercised over the Jews, was transferred to Christ on the abolition of the theocracy, and extended so as to embrace the Gentiles also; and this will probably account, in some measure, for the promiscuous use of these terms by Jesus and the inspired writers. That the coming and establishment of this kingdom was soon to take place at the time the apostles and evangelists wrote, I shall now proceed to show.

Matt. iii: 2:—"Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 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." Mark ix: 1:—"Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Luke xxi: 31 "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." The words immediately following the passage before quoted from 1 Peter, iv: 4, 5, 6, are also worthy of at-
tention; and that the reader may the more readily discover their direct application to our subject, I will here quote the whole passage in connexion:—"Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

From the above it appears plain that the coming of Christ "in his kingdom," was an event which, in the days of the apostles, was near at hand; and from the last cited passage, we learn that the judge was then prepared, or ready to execute his office towards "the quick and the dead." Peter also tells us that the "end of all things," i.e. all things established in the Mosaic covenant, was then "at hand;" and these expressions agree, not only with what Christ taught, but with the further language of this apostle in the 17th verse of the same chapter:—"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God."

Having now examined all the passages in which the judgment of the dead, or the "quick and dead" by Christ is mentioned; and having shown that none of them relate to an event yet future; I might, perhaps with propriety, dismiss this subject. But as there is one other passage,
which has been applied in the same manner as those I have considered, viz: to a judgment of the whole world by him, at a particular, specified period yet future, it will not be improper to notice it in this place; and this I do the more readily, as I conceive it will throw additional light on those passages which have been examined, and confirm the views given of them. The passage to which I allude, is Acts, xvii: 30, 31:—“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” On this passage, the following particulars will claim attention:—

1. The times of ignorance which God winked at. Paul, in these words, was addressing the Athenians, who, although enlightened by science and philosophy, were entirely ignorant of the true God, and sunk in the grossest polytheism and idolatry. This is apparent, not only from history, but from the fact, that the apostle found in the city, an altar inscribed “to the unknown God.” Taking advantage of this inscription, he proceeded to declare unto them the true “God that made the world;” who had given to them “life, and breath, and all things”
to enjoy; in whom all creatures "live, and move, and have their being," and whose offspring they were. From God, he at length directed their minds to Christ, and to his resurrection from the dead, as the grand foundation of gospel truth. Previous to the mission of the Saviour, and the introduction of the gospel, the Jews were the only people who had been favored with any revelations from God; and consequently, all others remained in ignorance. That this ignorance was permitted, or "winked at," we learn, not only from the above expression, but from the language of Paul on another occasion. At Lystra, when the idolatrous inhabitants would have offered sacrifices to him and Barnabas, he told them, that God had "in times past, suffered all nations to walk in their own ways"—ch. xiv: 16. As God had not, until that time, favored the Athenians, and other Gentile nations with a revelation, he is said to have "winked at," or permitted, not only their ignorance of him, as the Creator and Supreme Judge of the Universe, but also the neglect of those duties which he requires of all to whom he has revealed himself; his character, and authority.

2. The command for all men, every where, at that time to repent. By repenting, as it is here urged by the apostle, I understand, not merely a sorrow for sin, or a turning from evil; but an increase of
knowledge, or understanding; and this opinion, I think, is authorized by the signification of the word in the original rendered to repent. This word signifies, literally, an after-thought; and has been defined, not only to change one's mind and conduct, but also to know, or to understand afterwards; and from the language of the apostle, we very naturally infer, that the repentance which God then required of all men was something opposite to the ignorance, which, till then, he had suffered to continue. By the command, therefore, to repent, we may understand the apostle as calling on the Athenians, and all other Gentiles, to know, to make themselves acquainted with the character and authority of the true God; and to obtain an understanding of the principles of that kingdom he was about to establish in the world by Christ; and as they were to be the subjects of that kingdom, he also calls on them to conform themselves in their lives and conduct to its principles and requirements.

3. We may notice the reason assigned for the commands, "because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." By this language it is generally understood, that a day yet future is appointed, when God will judge, or try judicially, all mankind by Christ, and reward or punish them according to their works in this life. But we
may ask, if at this supposed day of judgment, all who have ever existed in the world are to be brought to trial for their conduct in life, and if all who shall have lived and died impenitent are then to be punished for their impenitence, what reason was there, in the days of the apostles, for calling on "all men everywhere to repent," which had not existed from the beginning of the world? Are men to be punished by God for not doing that which he never required of them? Will the gracious "Father of spirits" doom to remediless woe, millions of his own offspring, for not performing a duty which he had never made known to them? The thought is blasphemous. It is obvious that a reason existed at the time Paul addressed the Athenians, why all men should repent which did not exist previously; and what was that reason? If the view which has been given of the character of Christ as judge, and the above definition of repentance be admitted correct, we readily discover the reason of the command. God had given to Christ a kingdom embracing Jews and Gentiles; and no one can enjoy the blessings of this kingdom, without understanding and conforming to its principles. It therefore became necessary, on the establishment of this kingdom in the earth, that all its subjects should repent. But on the common view of this subject, the
apostle’s language is without meaning; it is absolutely absurd.

4. The day appointed for God to judge the world by Christ. Day, in scripture language, signifies, not only a literal day of twenty-four hours, but also a period of time, an age, or dispensation. Thus Christ, addressing Jerusalem, says:—"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace." By day, our Saviour here undoubtedly meant the day or dispensation of the Jews. Paul, to the Romans, says:—"thy night is far spent, the day is at hand;" i.e. the night of Jewish and heathenish darkness is drawing to a close; and the day of gospel light is fast approaching; for although the Jewish dispensation was called a day, yet, when compared with that of the gospel, it was as night to day. It will be recollected that Christ was to "judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom;" and this appearing, and the establishment of his kingdom in the earth, it has been shown were events long since transpired. The day, therefore, in which God was to "judge the world in righteousness" by Jesus Christ, we may consider the gospel day. This glorious day has commenced; and it will continue, shining brighter and brighter, until all shall confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father;" for he must continue to judge, or "reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet."
5. Lastly, we may notice the assurance which God hath given to all men, that he will thus judge, or govern the world in righteousness by Christ. This assurance was the raising of Christ from the dead; but, on the common view of the character of Christ, as God, and as judge, what assurance could his resurrection give to all men, that he would judge the world in the manner which is generally believed? If he were really God, as well as man, as his divine nature was impassible, and could not suffer, when his human nature expired on the cross, this must have departed from him and gone to heaven, where it eternally remains, seated on the throne of judgment; and if, as God, he is to judge the world, and condemn the wicked, where was the necessity of a resurrection of his human nature? and what assurance could this give, that he would finally judge all mankind as God? But on the supposition that as a judge, he was to rule or govern the world, by virtue of authority delegated to him from the Father, we at once discover the force and propriety of this language of the apostle. He was predicted by the prophets in the character of a king, or lawgiver; and in this character the Jews expected him to appear. But when they saw that he made no pretensions to earthly power, and that he was not likely to deliver them from their temporal enemies, they rejected all his authority as a spiritual ruler and
teacher; and in order to evade all his pretensions, they put him to death; and by this act flattered themselves they had forever avoided his attempts to judge or rule them in any manner. His resurrection from the dead was therefore necessary to assure all men of the divinity and authority of his mission; and hence Paul says of him, Rom. i: 4, that he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Had Jesus remained under the power of death, all his pretensions to authority as the Son of God, and the promised Messiah, would have been proved false; and his name would either have been soon forgotten, or handed down on the pages of history, as that of a vile impostor, who had met his just reward. But, as the bars of death could not retain him, and as he had arisen a triumphant conqueror over the grave, this fact gives us the strongest possible assurance, that as a Lord and King he will continue to exercise his high authority over all things, until he shall have accomplished the glorious purpose of his Father,—destroyed death, the last enemy of man, and reconciled a world to God through the blood of his cross. And then, but not till then, will he deliver up his kingdom to the Father from whom he received it.
ESSAY NO. VII.

Matt. xxvi: 64.—"Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." These words were spoken by Jesus, on his examination before the high priest, who had adjured him by the living God, to tell whether he was the Christ, the Son of God. In answer to this adjuration, Christ says, "Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see," &c. On this passage, Dr. A. Clarke has the following remarks: "Thou hast said; that is, I am the Christ, the promised Messiah; and you and this whole nation shall shortly have the fullest proof of it; for hereafter, in a few years, ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, fully invested with absolute dominion, and coming in the clouds of heaven, to execute judgment upon this wicked race." Wakefield translates the passage as follows:—"Moreover I tell you, ye will soon see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of divine power; and coming upon the clouds of heaven." The parallel passages are Mark, xiv: 62, which is precisely the same as in Matthew, and Luke, xxii: 69, which varies a little from the others. "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power
of God." This passage Wakefield renders, "Henceforth will the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God;" and Dr. Clarke, instead of hereafter, or henceforth, says, "from this very time, (apo ton nun) the kingdom of God is now going to be set up." No arguments can be necessary to show that this prediction was long since fulfilled.

John xiv: 3, 28, are the next passages in order; but as they evidently relate to a different subject, they will be reserved for a future number. John xxi: 22.—"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." On this passage there is a great diversity of opinion amongst commentators; and without expressing any decided opinion of my own, I will give a brief abstract of those which have been advanced by others, and leave my readers to make their own deductions.

1. Some have supposed from these words, that John, the beloved disciple, concerning whom they were spoken, should never die; but should live in the earth until the close of time and general resurrection of the dead, when he should be changed from corruptible to incorruptible without suffering natural death. The next verse, however, does not seem to countenance this opinion, although it shows its existence at that period; for we there read,—

"Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, he shall
not die; but, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” 2. Others suppose our Lord intimated that John should live till he came to destroy Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. If this opinion should be adopted, we shall then find in our Saviour’s language, a prediction which was literally fulfilled; for John, and he alone survived this calamitous event; and afterwards wrote the gospel and epistles bearing his name. 3. It is contended by some, that this language of our Saviour should be understood as follows:—If I will that he tarry till I come and take him away by a natural death, what is that to thee? follow thou (Peter) me to thy crucifixion. In support of this opinion, it is urged, that John was the only one of the twelve who died a natural death; all the others having been put to death by violence. 4. Others supposed that our Lord wished to take Peter aside, for the purpose of saying something to him in private; and that by this expression we are to understand him as directing John to remain in the place where he then was, until he and Peter should return. It is not material to the inquiry before us, which of these opinions, if either, we adopt; for I do not conceive that the passage can be possibly so construed as to teach a future coming of Christ, either to judge, or punish any portion of mankind. Passing over, for the present, two passages in the Acts of the Apostles,
which I shall apply to a different coming of Christ from what has been yet considered; the next in order which occurs is 1 Cor. iv: 5.—“Therefore judge nothing before the time; until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God.”

This passage, I believe, is generally applied to a coming of the Lord yet future, and to a general judgment of all mankind; when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open before an assembled universe; and every individual receive a just retribution, not only for his works, but for all his thoughts. Against this application I shall oppose the two following objections: 1. If, at Christ’s coming, he were to judge all men in this manner, we should rationally suppose he would himself have mentioned it in some of his teachings, when he foretold his coming to judgment. Every passage in the New Testament in which he speaks of coming to judge, or reward men according to their works, has been examined; and it has been shown that none of them, without expressly contradicting his own declarations, can be applied to a coming, or judgment yet future. On the contrary, we have seen that he unequivocally declared he would come in his glory, with his angels, and reward every man according to his works, during the continuance of the generation,
then alive on the earth. How then, I ask, on the common application of this passage, can we account for the silence of the divine teacher on so important a point? and how can we account for the fact, that this sentiment, if true, should, for the first time in the New Testament, be mentioned in the very indefinite manner it is mentioned in the language of the apostle now under consideration? Paul speaks of the Lord's coming as an event which was well understood by those he addressed; and if they understood what was meant by his coming, they undoubtedly understood likewise, the nature of the judgment which was at the same time to take place. But, how could they understand anything of a judgment, which neither Christ nor the apostle had ever mentioned before? I leave it to those who apply the passage in this manner, to remove this objection. 2. Admitting this application of the passage to be correct, it would prove something very different from what is generally understood by it. The apostle says, "and then"—when the Lord shall come—at the very time he shall "bring to light the hidden things of darkness," and "make manifest the counsels of the hearts,"—"shall every man have praise of God." Universalists, I believe, have never been in the habit of applying this passage in proof of their doctrine; but admitting the application of it which we are now considering to be the true
one, it would furnish irrefragable proof of the truth of their sentiments; for, when every man shall have praise of God, certainly there can be none under his eternal "wrath and curse."

By consulting the context we learn that the Apostle had been reproving his Corinthian brethren for their carnality, which was manifested in the envyings, strifes, contentions, and divisions which prevailed amongst them; for while some professed to be his disciples, others said they were of Apollos; and having introduced these names, party contentions were the consequences. He next directs their attention to the only foundation of faith which could be laid, and on which alone they could build their hopes, viz: Jesus Christ; and tells them that whatever works they should build on this foundation should be tried by fire, and that the day should declare them; that if any man's work should stand the test of that day, he should receive a reward; but if any man's work should be burned, he should suffer loss, &c. What day had the Apostle here in view? The obvious answer to this question is, the day when Christ should "come in the glory of his Father, with his angels," and "reward every man according to his works;" which day Christ himself declared should come before some who heard him should "taste of death." See Matt. xvi: 27, 28. As this day, at this coming of the Lord, was to reveal, or de-
clare every man's works; as it was to be a day of affliction and severe trial even to true christians, "the house of God," at which the judgment was to begin; and as it was to test the sincerity of the professions of all, and determine who were the true followers of Christ, and who were not, it was natural for the apostle, using the peculiar and strong language of the age, to say that Christ, at that day, should "bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts;" and that each (as Wakefield renders it, instead of every man,) who should be proved a sincere follower of Jesus, by the trial of that day, should then have "praise of God." If the above views should be considered erroneous, and it should still be contended that the passage applies to an event yet future, when the secret conduct and thoughts of all men shall be made manifest; I have only to observe, it incontestibly proves that when that period arrives, "every man shall have praise of God;" and not that a part shall be subjected to such judgment and condemnation as is generally contended for.

1 Cor. xi: 26.—"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." As there is nothing said in this passage, either of judgment, punishment, or the resurrection of the dead, in connexion with the coming of the Lord; and as it is im-
material to the inquiry before us to determine what coming is here intended, I shall pass it over without further remarks.

Besides these passages in which the coming of Christ is directly mentioned, there are several of similar import, which speak of the day of Christ, and the day of the Lord; all of which, excepting one in 2 Thess. ii: 2, I shall now proceed to notice, together with some others which mention the coming of Christ. Phil. i: 6. “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Christ.” Ver. 10, “That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.” ii. 16, “That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.” From the context of the last cited passage it is plain that the apostle alluded to a day of Christ then near at hand. Commencing at ver. 14, he says, “Do all things without murmurings and reproaches; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ,” &c. No argument can be necessary to show that the day of Christ was to come whilst those he addressed should continue “as lights” in the midst of that “crooked and perverse nation;” and therefore it must have been during
their lives on the earth; and we have no reason to believe he would have mentioned different comings, or days of Christ, in such similar language, so nearly together in the same epistle. By comparing 1 Cor. i. 7, 8. 1 Tim. vi. 14, and James v. 7, 8, with the passages under consideration, we shall readily perceive that the phrases coming of Christ, and day of Christ are synonymous expressions; and are used indiscriminately in the scriptures, to denote one and the same event.

To the above passages, we may add the following;—1 Thes. i. 10, “And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” ii. 19, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” iii. 13, “To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” v. 23, “And I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Thes. iii: 5, “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.” 2 Tim. iv. 8, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his ap-
pearing.” Tit. ii. 13, 14, “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Heb. x. 25, “And so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” Ver. 37, “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” James v. 7, 8, “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain; be ye also patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” 1 Pet. i. 7, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” Ver. 13, “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope perfectly for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” iv. 12,13, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” Ver. 17, “For the time is come that judgment must be-
gin at the house of God.” v. 4, “And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” 1 John ii. 28, “And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.” These passages can require no additional observations.

2 Peter i. 16, “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.” In this passage and its connexion, the apostle evidently alludes to the fabulous accounts of the heathen of the descent of their gods on the earth; and he assures his brethren, that in their declarations of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh, and of his power in working miracles, he and his fellow apostles had not followed these fables; but had spoken “the things” which they had “seen and heard.” There is also an obvious allusion to the transfiguration of Christ on the mount, of which himself, James and John were eye-witnesses. See the two following verses, and Mat. xvii. 1—5.

1 Thes. v. 1—4, “But of the times and seasons, brethren; ye have no need that I write unto you, for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; for when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden de-
struction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” This passage would require but few, if any remarks, were it not that the apostle, in the preceding chapter, from verse 13, to the end, had been speaking of a coming, or descending of the Lord from heaven, at the resurrection of the literally dead; and were it not also, that in 2 Peter iii, it is supposed the coming of the day of the Lord as a thief in the night is mentioned in connexion with the close of time, or the destruction of the material universe. I shall only observe, in relation to this passage, that the language used by the apostle perfectly accords with that employed by our Saviour, when predicting his coming to punish that sinful generation for their wickedness. See Matt. xxiv. 38—44, and the remarks on that passage in No. V. The reader will also observe that this language is very similar to what is used in various passages quoted from the writings of the apostles, in this number; all of which most obviously relate to an event which was expected then soon to take place. Should it be said, the apostles were under a mistake respecting the time of the coming of Christ, or the day of Christ, then I reply, we may give up their whole testimony; and abandon at once our belief in Christianity.
2 Peter iii. 10; "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which 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." In order to an illustration of this passage, it will be necessary to quote the apostle's language from the 3d, to the 15th verse of this chapter. 3, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4, and saying, where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the world. 5, For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God, the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; 6, whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; 7, but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the (a) day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 8, But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9, The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10, But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the
which 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.
11. Seeing then that all these things shall
be dissolved, what manner of persons
ought ye to be in all holy conversation and
godliness; 12, looking for and hasting
unto the coming of the day of God, where-
in the heavens being on fire shall be dis-
solved, and the elements shall melt with
fervent heat? 13, Nevertheless we, ac-
cording to his promise, look for new
heavens and a. new earth wherein dwel-
lleth righteousness. 14, Wherefore, be-
loved, seeing that ye look for such things,
be diligent that ye may be found of him in
peace, without spot and blameless; 15,
and account that the long-suffering of our
Lord is salvation."

In verse 3, Peter speaks of scoffers,
who should appear in the "last days." That
the phrases last days, and last times
were applied by the apostles to their own
times, is evident from the following pas-
sages;—Acts ii. 16, 17. "This is that
which was spoken by the prophet Joel,
and it shall come to pass in the last days,
saith God, that I will pour out of my
spirit upon all flesh." Heb. i. 1, 2, "God,
who at sundry times, and in diverse man-
ers spake in times past unto the fathers
by the prophets, hath in these last days
spoken unto us by his Son." 1 Peter i.
20, "Who (Christ) verily was fore-or-
dained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” 1 John ii. 18, “Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there are many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.” As the apostle had predicted the speedy coming in judgment of the Son of God, these unbelievers began to scoff, and to ridicule their predictions, verse 4. In the next two verses, he adverts to the deluge; and says, “the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” What world was it which perished? Certainly not the literal heavens and earth; but the inhabitants of the earth, who, in scripture language, are frequently called the world. This destruction is evidently introduced as an example of the destruction which awaited the ungodly at that time; and had, together with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, been before alluded to by him for the same purpose. See ch. ii. 5—9. Our Lord also, when speaking of this same event, had mentioned the overthrow of the old world, and of those cities as an example. See Luke xvii. 26—30. It has already been shown (No. IV.) that the scripture writers use the terms heavens, and heaven and earth in describing the overthrow, or destruction of nations; they are therefore, in accordance with this usage, very properly introduced by the apostle in predicting, or
rather in describing the approaching over-
throw of the Jewish nation, and the abo-
lition of the Mosaic economy. At verse
13, he says—Nevertheless we, according
to promise, look for new heavens and a
new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” The promise to which he alludes
is found Isa. lxv. 17, 18, and lxvi. 22,
which all commentators agree in applying
to the gospel dispensation, or covenant;
and the reader, by consulting these pas-
sages with their contexts, will I think, be
convinced that this is the only proper ap-
lication which can be made of them. At
verse 7, he proceeds to show, that the
“heavens and earth” which then were,
or the generation then on the earth, were
“reserved unto fire against the (a) day of
judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”
As water was the instrument of the de-
struction of the antediluvians, so fire was
to be the instrument in destroying Jeru-
salem; and it is therefore properly intro-
duced as an emblem of the destruction,
not only of that city, but of the nation at
large. We have also seen, in consider-
ing 2 Thes. i. 6—10, that when our Lord
should come in judgment, he was to be
“revealed from heaven with his mighty
angels, in flaming fire.” That “a day of
judgment and perdition of ungodly men”
did come on that “crooked and perverse
nation” and generation, is a point which
no one will dispute; but if any thing fur-
ther can be necessary to justify the appli-
cation I have made of this language, I would refer the reader to Luke, xxi. 22, when our Saviour, speaking of this very time, says—"for these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled"; and also to 1 Thes. ii. 16, where the apostle, when speaking of the same people, says, as the passage is rendered by Wakefield, "complete punishment is overtaking them."

On the supposition that Peter, in the above passages, was speaking of a day of the Lord then near at hand, and of a destruction which was then coming on that corrupt nation, all his language, in connexion, will appear plain and consistent. In verse 9, he says, God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," as much as to say—he is still waiting to be gracious—still giving them an opportunity, by repenting and embracing the gospel, to escape that heavy judgment which was impending over them. Ver. 12, is a still further confirmation of this view of the subject; "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God." On the supposition that this "day of God" was not to come for thousands of years from that time, with what propriety could he admonish his brethren to be "looking for and hasting to the coming" of that day? He also exhorts them, ver. 14, to "be diligent," that they "may be found of him in peace;" and directs them, ver. 15,
to "account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation." But how could this be in the common view of this judgment? How could the putting off of this day of judgment affect the salvation of those who should have lived and died thousands of years previously? The common application of this chapter not only introduces confusion and inconsistency into the language of the apostle, but the most palpable contradictions into the testimonies of the inspired writers.

Jude, 14, 15: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." The apostle here alludes to an apocryphal book, entitled the book, or prophecy of Enoch. What is contained in this book will probably never be known to the Christian world at large; and consequently, the prediction of the coming of the Lord to which the apostle alludes, cannot be introduced in the illustration of the subject under consideration. On Ver. 15, Dr. A. Clarke observes:—"This is a very strange verse as to its composition, and is loaded with various readings; the MSS. and Versions being at little agreement among themselves, on its phra-
seology." Add to this, the allusion to an apocryphal book of too little value to be preserved, and the doubtful authenticity of the epistle itself, and I think no one will be disposed to predicate any principle of doctrine on the authority of this passage. But, admitting the genuineness and authority of the epistle, and that the prophecy to which it alludes was the true prediction of a genuine prophet, there is no reason to suppose the passage has reference to any other coming of Christ, or any other judgment than what has been already considered. On the other hand, the similarity of the language to that of Peter, and the allusion to the temporal destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, as "an example," are circumstances which go far to confirm the opinion that the judgment predicted was to be temporal. The mention of "eternal fire" will furnish no objection to this view; for it is supposed, that in the days of the apostles, the fire by which those cities were destroyed, was still burning. This fire was probably, at that time, of a volcanic nature; and the place where those cities formerly stood, and where the fire then raged, is now covered by the lake Asphaltites, or dead sea.
ESSAY, NO. VIII.

2. Thess. ii: 1—12.—"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away (apostasia) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way: and then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming; even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for
this cause God shall send them strong de-

cision, that they should believe a lie; that

they all might be damned who believed

not the truth, but had pleasure in unright-
eousness."

Few passages of scripture have given
rise to a greater diversity of opinions
among critics and commentators than the
above. It has already been shown (see
No. 1.) that in this passage the apostle is
supposed to predict a coming of Christ
different from any other coming mentioned
in the New Testament; and consequen-
tly, many attempts have been made to fix
the time here predicted, and to point out
the particular events specified by the in-
spired penman. That the reader may
have some idea of the difficulty which has
attended the attempts to explain this pas-
tage, I lay before him the following ab-
stract of opinions which have been ad-
vanced in relation to it, which I copy
from the commentary of Dr. A. Clarke.

"1. The general run of Protestant writ-
ers understand the whole as referring to
the popes and Church of Rome; or the
whole system of the papacy. 2. Others
think the defection of the Jewish nation
from their allegiance to the Roman em-
peror, is what is to be understood by the
apostacy, or falling off; and that all the
other terms refer to the destruction of Je-
rusalem. 3. The Fathers understood the
antichrist to be intended; but of this per-
son they seem to have formed no specific
idea. 4. Dr. Hammond refers the apostacy to the defection of the primitive Christians to the Gnostic heresy; and supposes that, by the man of sin, and son of perdition, Simon Magus is meant. 5. Grotius applies the whole to Caius Cæsar. 6. Wetstein applies the apostacy to the rebellion and slaughter of the three princes that were proclaimed by the Roman armies, previously to the reign of Vespasian; and supposed Titus, and the Flavian family, to be intended by the man of sin, and son of perdition. 7. Schoelgen contends, strongly, that the whole refers to the case of the Jews, incited to rebellion by the Scribes and Pharisees; and to the utter and final destruction of the Rabbinic and Pharisaic system; and thinks he finds something in their spirit and conduct, and in what has happened to them, to illustrate every word in this prophecy. Dr. Whitby is nearly of the same sentiments. 8. Calmet follows, in the main, the interpretation given by the ancient Fathers; and wonders at the want of candor in the Protestant writers, who have gleaned up every abusive tale against the bishops and church of Rome; and asks them, Would they be willing that the Catholics should credit all the aspersions cast on Protestantism by its enemies? 9. Bishop Newton has examined the whole prophecy with his usual skill and judgment. He applies the whole to the Romish Church; the apostacy, its defection from the pure
doctrines of Christianity; and the man of sin, &c. the general succession of the popes of Rome. The principal part of modern commentators follow his steps."

Such are the opinions which have been advanced by the most eminent commentators on this difficult passage. On a comparison of the above opinions, it will be perceived that the first and ninth very nearly, if not altogether agree; as also the third and eighth, and second and seventh. The fourth, fifth, and sixth, differ essentially, not only from each other, but from all the rest. The different applications, therefore, which have been made of the passage, are in substance included in the six following:—1. To the Jewish nation. 2. To Antichrist. 3. To Simon Magus, and to the Gnostic heresy. 4. To Caius Cæsar. 5. To the three princes, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, proclaimed emperors by the Roman army; and to Titus and the Flavian family; and 6. To the Popes and church of Rome. As the latter opinion appears to be generally embraced by Protestant Christians, and as it has been maintained with great learning and ability, I will, previously to a direct investigation of the scripture testimony, give the reader an abstract of the reasoning of Bishop Newton, abridged from his dissertation on the prophecy contained in this portion of scripture.

Respecting the apostacy, or falling away, mentioned in ver. 3, he says, it is
"plainly not of a civil, but of a religious nature; not a revolt from the government, but a defection from the true religion and worship." The description of the man of sin, ver. 4, he thinks is borrowed from Dan. vii: 25, and xi: 36. This man of sin, he says, "may signify, either a single man, or a succession of men; a succession of men being meant in Daniel, it is probable that the same was intended here also." The "temple of God," in which it is said he shall sit, he considers the church; and by his sitting there, his "ruling and presiding" in the church, and "claiming divine authority in things spiritual as well as temporal." His opposing and exalting himself "above all that is called God," he says signifies, "he shall oppose, and exalt himself, not only above inferior magistrates, (who are sometimes called gods in holy writ,) but even above the greatest emperors; and shall arrogate to himself divine honors." On verses 5, 6, 7, he observes, "it appears that the man of sin was not then revealed; his time was not come; or the season of his manifestation. The mystery of iniquity was indeed already working; the seeds of corruption were sown; but they were not grown up to maturity: the man of sin was yet hardly conceived; it must be sometime before he could be brought forth; there was some obstacle that hindered his appearing." This obstacle, he thinks, with the early Fathers, was the Roman
empire. Ver. 6. "Where the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming." On this verse he remarks, "If these two clauses refer to two distinct and different events, the meaning manifestly is, the Lord Jesus shall gradually consume him with the free preaching and publication of his word; and shall utterly destroy him at his second coming, in the glory of his Father, with all the holy angels. If these two clauses relate to one and the same event, it is a plenitude very unusual in the sacred, as well as in other oriental writings; and the purport plainly is, that the Lord Jesus shall destroy him with the greatest facility, when he shall be revealed from heaven, as the apostle has expressed it in the preceding chapter." After thus noticing the several verses separately, the learned Bishop observes:

"Upon this survey, there appears little room to doubt of the genuine sense and meaning of the passage. The Thessalonians were alarmed, as if the end of the world was at hand. The apostle, to correct their mistakes, and dissipate their fears assures them that a great apostasy, or defection of the Christians, from the true faith and worship, must happen before the coming of Christ. This apostasy, all the concurrent marks and characters will justify us in charging upon the church of Rome. The true Christian worship is the worship of the one only God, through
the one only Mediator, the man Christ Jesus; and from this worship the church of Rome has most notoriously departed, by substituting other mediators, and invoking and adoring saints and angels. And are not the members of the church of Rome guilty of idolatry, in the worship of images, in the adoration of the host, in the invocation of angels and saints, and in the oblation of prayers and praises to the Virgin Mary? This is the grand corruption of the Christian church; this is the apostacy, as it is emphatically called, and deserves to be called, which was not only predicted by St. Paul, but by the prophet Daniel likewise. If the apostacy be rightly charged upon the church of Rome, it follows of consequence, that the man of sin is the pope; not meaning any pope in particular, but the pope in general, as the chief head and supporter of this apostacy. He is properly the man of sin, not only on account of the scandalous lives of many popes, but by reason of their most scandalous doctrines and principles; dispensing with the most necessary duties, and granting, or rather selling, pardons and indulgencies, to the most abominable crimes. He also, like the first apostate Judas, is the son of perdition; whether actively, as being the cause of destruction to others; or passively, as being devoted to destruction himself. He opposes; he is the grand adversary of God and man; perse-
cutting, and destroying, by crusades, inquisitions, and massacres, those Christians who prefer the word of God to the authority of men. The heathen emperor of Rome may have slain his thousands of innocent Christians; but the Christian bishop of Rome, has slain his ten thousands. He exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; not only above inferior magistrates, but likewise above bishops and primates; not only above bishops and primates, but likewise above kings and emperors; deposing some, obliging them to kiss his toe, to hold his stirrup, treading even upon the neck of a king, and kicking off the imperial crown with his foot; nay, not only above kings and emperors, but likewise above Christ, and God himself: making even the word of God of no effect by his traditions; forbidding what God has commanded; as marriage, the use of the scriptures, &c., and also commanding, or allowing what God has forbidden; as idolatry, persecution, &c. His sitting in the temple of God, implies plainly his having a seat, or cathedra in the Christian church: and he sitteth there as God, especially at his inauguration, when he sits upon the high altar in St. Peter’s church, and makes the table of the Lord his footstool; and in that position receives adoration. At all times he exercises divine authority in the church; showing himself that he is God; affecting divine titles, and asserting that
his decrees are of the same, or greater authority, than the word of God. So that the pope is, evidently, according to the titles given him in the public decretals, the God upon earth; at least there is no one like him, who exalted himself above every God; no one like him, who exalted as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. The foundation of popery was laid in the apostolic days; but the superstructure was raised by degrees, and several ages passed before the building was completed, and the man of sin revealed in full perfection.*****The Lord shall consume, &c. This is partly taken from Isa. xi: 4. (And with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked one;) where the Jews put an emphasis upon the words the wicked one, as appears from the Chaldec, which renders it, "He shall destroy the wicked Roman." If the two clauses, (as said in the note on ver. 8.) relate to two different events, the meaning is, "that the Lord Jesus shall gradually consume him with the free preaching of the gospel; and shall utterly destroy him at his second coming, in the glory of his Father." The former began to take effect at the Reformation; and the latter will be accomplished in God's appointed time. The man of sin is now upon the decline, and he will be totally abolished when Christ shall come in judgment."

Such is a condensed view of the opinion of this learned writer on the applica-
tion of the passage under consideration; and with this opinion, Dr. Macknight agrees in general. He also supposes that the apostle alludes plainly to the predictions of Daniel, cited by Bishop Newton; and introduces other expressions from the same chapters, and likewise from chap. viii: which he compares with the language of the apostle; and comes, finally, to this conclusion, that "every impartial person must be sensible that, in the bishops of Rome, all the characters and actions ascribed by Daniel to the little horn, and by Paul to the man of sin and the lawless one are clearly united." Dr. Clarke coincides in opinion with the above; and says—"I must acknowledge, that the most pointed part of the evidence here adduced, tends to fix the whole on the Romish church, and on none other."

It must be confessed that, in the history of the Romish church, especially as this history comes to us from the enemies of that church, we find many circumstances, in the pretensions of the pontiffs, and in the principles and conduct of the church at large, which would, at first view, seem to justify the above application of the predictions of the prophet and apostle. That Paul, in the passage I am considering, had the predictions of Daniel in view; and that his own predictions relate to the same events as those of the prophet, appears too obvious to admit of much doubt. But after a full and careful examination
of all the language of these inspired writers on this subject, with such helps as are within my reach; and after maturely weighing the arguments of the eminent writers whose language I have quoted, I am convinced that the application of these predictions to the bishops and church of Rome is unwarranted by scripture authority, and consequently incorrect.—Among the objections to this application of the passage, I would beg leave to suggest the following, which, in my mind at least, have some weight.

1. The church of Rome, although accused by most Protestant writers, of worshipping saints, angels, images, &c. have at all times strenuously denied the charge. They deny a belief in more than one mediator; but believing that departed spirits are capable of knowing what is transacted on earth; that they feel an interest in the welfare of mortals, and can hear and understand requests made to them; they sometimes, they say, invoke their assistance as intercessors. They say also, that as images and pictures serve to convey to the mind lively ideas of what they are intended to represent, they use them simply as helps in their devotion to God. But, it is not my purpose to defend, either the doctrines or practices of this church; and I have introduced these remarks simply to show that, among Christians, there is a wide difference of opinion respecting matters of fact. If, as Bishop Newton
justly observes, "the true Christian worship is the worship of the one only God, through the one only Mediator, the man Christ Jesus." I would ask, is the Roman church the only church which has departed from this true worship? Do not Protestant Christians, all who are trinitarians, when they worship, and pray to the Son and Holy Ghost, depart from "the worship of the one only God, through the one only Mediator?"

2. The above application makes the pope of Rome "the man of sin, not only on account of the scandalous lives of many popes, but by reason of their most scandalous doctrines and principles." There can be no doubt but many of the popes have lived "scandalous lives;" but this is not true of all popes; on the contrary, many of them have been distinguished, not only for eminent talents, but for piety and philanthropy. Neither can it be doubted but some of the "doctrines and principles" of that church have been, and still are "most scandalous." But some of the greatest corruptions of Christianity were introduced into the church, and enforced by imperial authority, before the papal authority was established. Ecclesiastical history bears ample testimony to the fact, that councils, and other prelates besides the bishops of Rome, have been as much engaged in introducing and defending "scandalous doctrines and principles" as the popes themselves. It
is uncharitable, to say the least, for Protestants, who still pertinaciously adhere to some of the earliest and most essential corruptions of Christianity, to accuse the mother church, and that alone, of gross corruption and apostacy.

3. The apostle, in the preceding chapter had given his brethren an account of the coming of Christ, and of a destruction which should at that time take place. See chap. i: 6—10. This coming, or revelation of the Lord, "from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire," &c. has already been largely considered; and it has been shown, if the united testimony of Christ and the apostles can substantiate any fact, that the coming and destruction there predicted, were then soon to take place. There is not the least intimation in the passage under consideration, neither in its connexion, that the apostle introduced an account of any other, or different coming of the Lord, than the one he had already mentioned; nor does the subject on which he was treating require us to understand any other coming. On the contrary, there is the strongest reason for believing that he continued the same subject which he commenced in the first chapter, through the second; or certainly, as far as I have quoted; and that, instead of introducing a new topic, he simply proceeded to inform them of additional events, which should transpire previously to, and at the time
he had before specified. Wakefield translates the first verse of this chapter as follows:—"Now we entreat you, brethren! concerning this coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our assembling unto him." If we adopt this translation as correct, and substitute this coming for the coming, the question is settled at once; as it will be perfectly obvious, that Paul continued the same subject he had previously introduced.

4. From a careful examination of this prophecy of Daniel, from which the apostle is supposed to have borrowed an important part of his language, I am satisfied that none of his predictions extend beyond the establishment of the gospel dispensation in the earth. Most of his predictions obviously relate to the revolutions of states and empires; and after having seen, in vision, the overthrow of the most powerful kingdoms of the earth, he was permitted to enjoy in the same manner, a view of that kingdom which God himself should establish in the world by his Son, the expected Messiah of the Jews; a kingdom which should not be overthrown or destroyed, nor delivered back to him who gave it, until it should have overcome all opposition to its principles and authority, and brought the whole world into subjection to the Prince of peace.

A direct examination of the language of the prophet and apostle will be best
calculated to set this subject in its true light; but this examination must be deferred to another number.

The first passage in Daniel to which Bishop Newton refers, in his remarks on ver. 3, of the passage under consideration, is chap. vii: ver. 25—“And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws.” In this chapter, the prophet relates a vision with which he was favored; and in which important political events were made known to him. In the vision, which commences at ver. 2, he saw four different beasts rise up from the sea; the first, like a lion; the second, like a bear; the third, like a leopard; and the fourth, diverse from all the others; before which three of the first horns were destroyed, or “plucked up by the roots.” This “little horn” obtained great power, and spake “great words.” During the continuation of the vision, he saw the destruction of all the beasts; and closes the account of what he saw in the following words, verses 13, 14—“I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came in 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: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which
shall not be destroyed."

Such was the end of the vision: and the prophet immediately proceeds to relate the explanation, or interpretation of what had been presented to him in a dream. After showing that the four beasts represented four kings, or kingdoms; the fourth beast, "which was diverse from all the others," representing the last of these kingdoms, he says of the little horn, which rose up among the others, and before which three of the original horns were "plucked up by the roots," ver. 3, or three kings subdued, ver. 24, that he (i.e. the last or little horn) "shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions (or, rulers) shall serve and obey him." Ver. 25—27. Here it may be remarked, that the close of the interpretation perfectly coincides with the close of the vision; and the allusion, in both the vision and interpretation, to the establishment of the kingdom of Christ in the world is too

4. not to need illustration.
In my last, the prophecy of St. Paul relative to the manifestation and destruction of the man of sin, contained in 2 Thess. ii: 1—12, was introduced. The opinions of different commentators on the proper application of the passage were briefly stated; an abstract of the arguments of Bishop Newton, who, with most modern commentators, applies the whole prophecy to the Church and Popes of Rome, was given; and the article was closed by the statement of several objections to this application of the prophecy. In the present number, the investigation of the same subject will be continued by a direct examination of the several passages of Scripture already alluded to, and which are supposed to have an allusion to the subject.

The first passage in Daniel to which Bishop Newton refers in his remarks on ver. 3, of the passage under consideration is chap. vii: ver. 25. "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws." In this chapter the prophet relates a vision with which he was favored; and in which important political events were
made known to him. In the vision, which commences at ver. 2. he saw four different beasts rise up from the sea; the first, like a lion; the second, like a bear; the third, like a leopard; and the fourth, diverse from all the others, having ten horns. He also saw a 'little horn' rise up among the others, before which three of the first horns were destroyed, or 'plucked up by the roots.' This little horn obtained great power, and spake 'great things.' During the continuance of the vision, he saw the destruction of all the beasts; and closes his account of it in the following words—verses 13, 14: 'I saw in the night visions, 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: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed.' This was the close of the vision; and the prophet immediately proceeds to relate the explanation, or interpretation of what had been presented to him in his dream. After showing that the four beasts represented four kings, or kingdoms—the fourth beast, which was 'diverse from all the others,' representing the last of these kingdoms—he says of the little horn, which rose up among the others, and be-
fore which three of the original horns were 'plucked up by the roots,' ver. 8, or, three kings subdued, ver. 24, that "he, (i.e. the last, or little horn) shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."—Verses 25, 26, 27. Here it may be observed, that the close of the interpretation perfectly corresponds with the close of the vision; and the allusion in both to the establishment of the kingdom of Christ in the world is too obvious to need illustration.

The period of time during which the little horn was to exercise his power, and retain in his hand 'the saints of the Most High,' deserves some attention; as also the declaration that when the judgment should sit, they should 'take away his dominion to consume it and to destroy it unto the end.' In the 12th and last chapter of this prophecy, Daniel was directed to 'shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.'—Verse 4.
What time was signified by the end, and also what was meant by the 'time and times and the dividing of time' we learn from the next three verses: "Then I Daniel looked, and behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And said to the man clothed in linnen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linnen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swears by him that liveth forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." That the Jews are here represented by the phrase holy people, and that their power was scattered at the destruction of their temple and city, can require no arguments to prove; for although they had at that time, become altogether corrupt and unholy, yet we find in every passage in the Bible, where the phrase holy people occurs, it is applied to them, and to them only. I would here beg leave to repeat an observation, the substance of which has been introduced before, that it was not until the power of this people was scattered, their civil and political institutions overthrown, and the legal dispensation abrogated, and forever done away, that the gospel was fully
established in the world—the reign of the Messiah in spirit and in truth commenced, and the 'kingdom of God come with power.' I might multiply quotations from the language of the prophets to prove that the phrases end, time of the end, last days, &c. were used to designate the close of the Mosaic dispensation; but the above will be sufficient.

Daniel xi: 36, is the remaining passage quoted from this prophecy by Bp. Newton and Dr. Macknight in illustration of the language of the apostle now under examination. "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods." Here the quotation breaks off abruptly in the midst of the sentence; the remaining part of the verse, which is obviously a continuation of the same sentence, not being in accordance with their application, will probably account for its omission. The whole verse reads thus: "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation shall be accomplished; for that that is determined shall be done." By consulting the whole chapter, we find the prophet was speaking for the express purpose of confirming and strengthening king 'Darius the
Mede; and all that can be necessary to convince any one acquainted with scripture phraseology, that he was not speaking of any period more distant than the establishment of the gospel dispensation in the earth, is the frequent use he makes of the terms end, time of the end, and expressions of similar import.

Having examined the passages in Daniel which are supposed to refer to the same events as the passage under consideration, and from which it is evident the apostle borrowed a part of his language; and having shown, from the language of the prophet himself, that his predictions could not have related to any events subsequent to the abolition of the Jewish economy, and the establishment of the gospel, or kingdom of the Redeemer in the world, we are now prepared for a more direct examination of the language of the apostle; and the apostacy, or ‘falling away,’ will first claim our attention, as on that depends the interpretation of the whole prophecy.

The apostle declares that the ‘day of Christ’ should not come, ‘except there come a falling away (apostasia) first;’ and it appears further, that although the ‘mystery of iniquity’ was then already working, there was some power which hindered the breaking out of the apostacy, and the full revelation of the ‘man of sin,’ who was to be destroyed at the coming of the Lord. Bishop Newton, as al-
ready quoted, observes that "the apostacy here described, is plainly not of a civil but a religious nature; not a revolt from the government, but a defection from the true religion and worship;" and supposes that it was the Roman empire which at that time prevented the apostacy, and the manifestation of the man of sin from immediately taking place. Whatever deference ought to be paid to the opinion of this learned prelate, I must beg leave to dissent from it; for the reasons already assigned in my last essay; and for others, which will now be presented to the reader.

The most literal signification of the Greek apostasia, is, I believe, defectio, a defection, or revolt from government. Circumstances, I admit, may require this word to be understood, even in the scriptures, in its present popular acceptation. But aside from preconceived opinions, which refer this coming of Christ to a time yet future, I can discover nothing in the passage, or its connexion, which requires us to understand it in any other than its most literal and obvious signification; on the other hand, circumstances which transpired within a few years after this epistle was written, as well as the whole scope of the language quoted, seem absolutely to require its literal construction.

About sixty-three years previous to the advent of our Saviour, Jerusalem was taken by Pompey, and the Jews were
made tributary to the Romans. From this period to the time of the entire destruction of their nation and polity, altho' they were permitted to retain their ancient laws and customs, they bore the yoke unwillingly; continually cherished a rebellious spirit, and sought every opportunity of freeing themselves from their subjection. For a considerable length of time, however, the resistless power of the Romans, and the terror of their arms, which had been carried to the remotest parts of the earth, kept them in subjection; nor was it until civil dissensions prevailed in this vast empire, that they threw off all restraint, and, incited by their priests, broke out in open rebellion. The epistle from which the predictions I am now considering are extracted, is supposed to have been written in the year of our Lord 52, or 53, in the twelfth, or thirteenth year of the reign of Claudia; and the general revolt of the Jews took place in the reign of Nero, his successor.

In the address of Titus to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, while he was besieging their city, and when they were reduced to the greatest extremity, there is a passage which appears to throw so much light on this subject, that I cannot forbear transcribing it in this place. After reproaching them for their base ingratitude, and reminding them of the kindness of their conquerors—in giving them the entire and peaceable possession
of their country—setting over them kings of their own nation—preserving to them the laws of their forefathers—and permitting them to gather the tribute which was dedicated to God, until they had become rich, he says to them—“I suppose, therefore, that you might despise the slothfulness of Nero, and, like limbs of the body that are broken or dislocated, you did then lie quiet, waiting for some other time, though still with a malicious intention, and have now showed your distemper to be greater than ever; and have extended your desires as far as your impudent and immense hopes would enable you to do it. At this time, my father came into this country, not with a design to punish you for what you had done under Cestius, but to admonish you; for, had he come to overthrow your nation, he had run directly to your fountain head, and had immediately laid this city waste; whereas, he went and burnt Galilee and the neighboring parts, and thereby gave you time for repentance; which instance of humanity you took for an argument of his weakness, and nourished up your impudence by our mildness. When Nero was gone out of the world, you did as the wickedest wretches would have done, and encouraged yourselves to act against us by our civil dissensions, and abused that time, when both I and my father were gone away for Egypt, to make preparations for this war.”*

*Josephus, War, B. 6, Ch. 6, § 2.*
If we adopt the opinion of Schoetgen and Dr. Whitby, who contend that this whole prophecy "refers to the case of the Jews, incited to rebellion by the Scribes and Pharisees; and to the utter and final destruction of the Rabbinic and Pharisaic system," the above historical facts will appear to correspond perfectly with the predictions of the apostle; and when, in addition to the authority of these eminent commentators, we consider that this is the most literal construction, and natural application of the passage; and that this application is warranted by facts, we need not hesitate to receive it as correct. But there are still other considerations which appear to authorise this view of the subject. And—

1. The language of the apostle, in verses 11, 12, seems to warrant this application, and no other. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned, (or, brought to punishment, as it is rendered by Wakefield) who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." This 'strong delusion,' judicial blindness, or unbelief of the truth, was expressly foretold of the Jews, and of no other people, in ancient prophecy. Isa. vi: 9—11:—"And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their
ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he said, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without men, and the land be utterly desolate.” That this prediction was fulfilled in the case of the Jews, in the last days, we learn from Rom. xi: 8—“According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear.” And again, ver. 25—“For, I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” With this prediction of the prophet, together with its application to the Jews, by the apostle in his own time, and its complete fulfilment with respect to that people, in view, I cannot discover the propriety of referring the strong delusion, in any manner, nor at any time, to the Christian Church.

2. It further appears from the language of Paul, that when he wrote his epistle to the Thessalonians, the mystery of iniquity was already working; and that the apostasy was ready to take place, were it not for some power which then hindered. Now this could not with propriety be said at that time of the spirit of popery,
which is supposable by Bishop Newton and others to be signified by the mystery of iniquity. At this period, the apostles were almost the only preachers of the gospel; and we have no account of any others engaged in the Christian ministry at this time, except such as had received their instructions directly from the apostles, and received at their hands the gift of the Holy Spirit. It was not till long after this period, and when the church had become in a good degree freed from the fear of persecution from the Jews and heathen, that Christian bishops manifested that spiritual pride for which they became afterwards notorious; and aspired to those high honors and distinctions in the world, which they finally obtained. But it is abundantly evident that the mystery of iniquity, the spirit of disobedience, and of revolt from all laws and authority, whether human or divine, was then actively working in the hearts of the whole Jewish people; and it could truly be said of them, in the language of Isaiah, "the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot, even to the head," no soundness was in them.

To the above view of this subject it may be objected, that the apostle clearly intimates that the 'day of Christ,' concerning which he wrote, was not then near at hand. To this objection I would reply, the words at hand, when applied to time, must undoubtedly be understood in a relat-
tive sense. Thus, the close of any period of time, when considered with reference to the whole duration of that period, may with propriety be said to be near at hand; when, if the whole duration be long, several years may intervene before its close. But, if the same close be mentioned in reference to other events, such as the ordinary concerns of life, there would be a manifest impropriety in representing it as being near, or at hand; as many of these events might occur previous to that time. Admitting then the apostle to be speaking of the approaching close of the legal dispensation, when compared with the whole duration of this dispensation, its close was, properly speaking, at hand; it drew near, as James expresses himself in reference to the 'coming of the Lord,' and as Paul himself frequently represents this event. But, when speaking of the same event, in reference to other circumstances, he would, with the same propriety, represent it as not being at hand. Now what were the circumstances under which, and in relation to which he wrote these words? From the language of the apostle, in the commencement of the passage, it appears that the Thessalonians were somewhat 'shaken in mind,' and 'troubled,' in expectation of the speedy appearance of the 'day of Christ;' and as the most stupendous events were to take place at this day, it is probable, as Dr. Clarke says, 'that some of
them, expecting this sudden appearance of the Lord Jesus, had given up all their secular concerns; and thus rendered themselves liable to suffer for want of the necessaries of life. The precise time of this great event, which did not happen under from fifteen to twenty years after the writing of the epistle, was unknown to the apostle; but it had been made known to him, that previous to it, important changes must take place; and that there must be a more full, and open manifestation of the spirit of wickedness in the Jews, than had ever yet been exhibited. They must fill up the measure of their guilt; that the interposition of heaven, in their destruction, might be the more obvious to all nations; and thus a broad and permanent ground would be laid for the establishment of the gospel kingdom in the world. Considering all these circumstances, and that the apostle was speaking of this event, not in reference to the entire duration of the Jewish age, but to the ordinary concerns and avocations of life, we discover the propriety of his language; and that it does not militate, in the least degree, against the application I have made of the whole passage.

I now dismiss this difficult subject; and would only observe, in addition to what has been advanced, that although we may not be able to fix, with certainty, the
meaning of the inspired penman, in the phrases man of sin, son of perdition, him who letteth, or hindereth, &c. we may, nevertheless, be sure that he was not writing of events yet future; or of any 'day of Christ' which is not already past.

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ESSAY NO. X.

Heb. ix: 27, 28. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear a second time without sin unto salvation."

This passage has been so often explained, by writers who are abundantly able to do justice to the subject, that, were it not for the purpose of preserving a connected chain of remarks, and of presenting to the reader every passage in the New Testament which relates, in any manner, to the coming of our Lord, I should be disposed to pass it by, without any observations of my own.

In all ages of Christianity, much has been said, and much written, in relation to what is termed the second coming of Christ; and with this event, in the minds of most Christians, is connected the idea of a retribution, which shall affect the eternal interests of all mankind; and as
his is the only passage of scripture where the term second occurs in connexion with the coming, or appearing of the Saviour, it is matter of considerable importance that it be well understood; and its true meaning and application, if possible, ascertained. By this passage the apostle is supposed to teach, that, by the appointment of God, all mankind must suffer natural death; that subsequently, by the same appointment, all must be brought to judgment, and rewarded or punished according to their works and characters in the present state of existence: that Christ was once offered to bear the sins of the guilty progeny of Adam; and that to those who look for him, or, in other words, have secured to themselves the benefits of his atonement, and thus been prepared by grace to meet him with joy at his coming, he shall appear a second time, when he shall come to raise the dead, and reward every man according to his works, without sin unto their eternal salvation; but to all others, he shall appear as a stern, inflexible judge, ready to pronounce on them the irrevocable sentence of interminable wo. With this application, a majority of professing Christians, even at the present day, appear to be perfectly satisfied; never suffering themselves to call in question the correctness of those sentiments which, from age to age, have been handed down, as undoubted truth, by their religious teachers.
Others consider this application of the passage correct, at least so far as it is supposed to relate to the natural death, and subsequent judgment of all mankind; but deny that the consequence of this judgment will be endless suffering to any. There are others, who believe the whole application to be unwarranted; and consequently, that the passage has no reference to the death of the body, or a judgment beyond the grave. It is not my purpose to discuss the question of a judgment and punishment, in a future and immortal state of being, for the sins of this life; but, leaving this question for discussion to those who have more leisure or inclination to pursue it than myself, I shall simply endeavor, as far as possible, to ascertain what judgments and punishments the inspired writers teach, in connexion with the coming of Christ; and, by the light of the scriptures, to fix the true application of the passage under consideration.

It is readily acknowledged, that by separating the passage from its connexion, reading it as it stands in the common version, and disregarding the force of the corresponding conjunctions as and so which occur in the two members of the sentence, to minds strongly prepossessed in favor of the doctrine of a judgment in the future state of existence, the common application would appear most natural and correct. But it is believed, if the
passage were correctly translated, examined in connexion with its context, and without the influence of preconceived opinions on the mind, this application is the last which any candid person, at all conversant with the scriptures, would be likely to make.

In the common translation of verse 27, the article, which occurs in the original, before *men* (tois anthropois) is omitted; and it is inserted before the word *judgment*, in the latter part of the verse, where it is wanting in the original. The following are translations of this verse by different translators. "And as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that there is a judgment."—Thompson. "And as it is appointed for men once to die, and after this a judgment."—Scarlett. *Wakefield* translates this whole passage as follows: "And, as it remaineth for men once to die, and after this a judgment; so Christ, having been once offered up to bear away the sins of all, will appear a second time, without any sin-offering, to them that are waiting for him, unto salvation."

On these translations, and the common application of the passage, the following observations are submitted:

1. It is obvious, that, by omitting the article before the word *men*, a very different sense is conveyed from what would have been had the article been retained in the translation. As the passage now reads, we naturally infer that all mankind.
or the whole human species is included; and in this sense it has been generally understood. But if, instead of reading, "as it is appointed unto men once to die," we should read, "as it is appointed unto the men," &c. it is believed no one would be likely to understand it in this general sense. I am aware that it may be said, there are many passages in which the article occurs in the original, where it would be improper to insert it in the translation. This I readily admit; and also, that there are passages in which it is necessary to supply the article in translating where it is wanting in the original. But, is this one of those passages? Are there any circumstances, aside from preconceived opinion, which require the omission of the article in translating one part of this verse, and its insertion in the other part, contrary to the original? I think not; for the sense of the passage, altho' different from that usually attached to it, is certainly good with the article inserted in the first part of it, and omitted in the latter part. Without entering into a labored and critical disquisition on this subject, a brief reference to some plain and acknowledged principles of language will be sufficient to set it in its true light; and convince every unprejudiced person, not only of the propriety, but the necessity of inserting the article before men, in the translation of this passage. The Greek, although differing in some re-
pects from the English, has, nevertheless, some principles in common with that and every other language. In the English, the article the (and this is the only article in the Greek) is usually prefixed to a noun, where the reader, either by his previous knowledge, or by the nature of the subject, would understand some specific application. So in the Greek, Winer, in his Greek grammar, says, "the article stands before a noun when a definite object is designated, or is distinguished from all other similar objects." He thinks the noun sometimes designates the object of itself; and sometimes it is rendered definite by the article. In the first case it is superfluous; in the latter, necessary. It is also, I believe, an acknowledged rule in Greek, that where the person or thing signified by the noun has been the subject of previous remark, the article should be used in connexion with it; and this rule is also applicable to the English. Admitting the above principles correct, we naturally inquire, was the nature of the subject on which the apostle was writing such, that it was necessary to use the article in connexion with the noun men? Had his previous remarks a direct reference to some particular men, in contradistinction from other men, and from mankind in general? These questions, especially the latter, must be answered in the affirmative; and I know of no reason why the
the article is not as necessary in the translation as in the original.

2. The apostle evidently draws a comparison between two or more events; and what he says in verse 27, is obviously introduced for the purpose of illustrating what follows in the next verse. But how the natural death of mankind, and a subsequent judgment for the deeds done in the body, can illustrate the offering up of Christ to bear away sin, and his appearing a second time, without a sin offering, unto the salvation of such as should be waiting for him, I confess myself unable to discover. Neither can I see any propriety in the apostle's comparison; and his similitude, to say the least of it, appears to have been fetched, unnatural, and very badly chosen.

3. By the common application of the passage, the inspired writer is made to break off abruptly from a subject which he commences in the beginning of the chapter, and resumes in the very next sentence, and to introduce an entirely new and different topic; and all this without the least intimation of such change. And further, throughout the whole of this chapter, and to the 15th verse of the next, he is evidently pursuing a closely connected chain of argument, on one particular subject; and we have reason to believe St. Paul to have been too good a logician
and too close a reasoner, to make so sudden and wide a digression from his subject, without a sufficient cause; and without giving some intimation of such digression. I leave it with the candid reader to determine, whether it is not more rational to conclude, that, through the influence of preconceptions on the mind, the passage has been misapplied, than to suppose the learned apostle guilty of so flagrant a violation of the plainest rules of argumentation.

Adopting the literal, and, as I conceive the only correct translation of the passage, "And as it is appointed unto the men once to die," &c. the question naturally arises, what men were intended by the writer? An answer is found in the preceding parts of the chapter. It must be recollected that the apostle was addressing Jews, who were all versed in the law of Moses, understood the ordinances of the covenant, and were acquainted with all the ceremonies appertaining to the worship of the sanctuary. Of this circumstance the apostle avails himself in addressing his Hebrew brethren; and through the whole epistle he labors to convince them, from their knowledge of the writings of Moses and their own prophets, that Jesus Christ was their expected Messiah; that by his coming, the legal dispensation was brought to a close; and that by his death, as a perfect offering for the sins of the world, the sacrifices
enjoined under that dispensation were forever abolished. Hence, speaking of the new covenant, or covenant of promise in Christ, he says, "he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Although the rituals of the first covenant continued to be practiced by the Jews, the time was at hand when they should be totally abolished, and the "daily sacrifice taken away," then and forever.

The chapter commences by a reference to the "ordinances of divine service" in the "worldly sanctuary;" and the apostle, after describing the tabernacle, and the different apartments, separated from each other by the vails; the first of which he calls "the sanctuary," or holy, and after the second vail "the holiest of all," and enumerating the several articles belonging to it, says, "Now when these things were thus ordained; the priests (i.e. inferior priests) went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service; but into the second went the high priest alone every year, not without blood which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people; the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing; which was a figure for the time then present in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that
did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience."

Here, it may be observed, the apostle uses the phrase, "holiest of all," twice; and, as I think, in different senses. He first uses it in reference to that part of the worldly tabernacle, in which the high priest offered his yearly sacrifice for himself and the people; and secondly, he evidently applies it to "heaven itself," where Christ has gone "to appear in the presence of God for us;" and he represents the "holiest of all," which was entered by the high priest yearly, with blood, as a figure, (parable, dark, enigmatical misrepresentation) of that "holiest of all" into which Christ has entered by his own blood, "having obtained eternal redemption for us." Hence, he proceeds:—"For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Wherefore, he is the mediator of the new Testament, (diatethke, covenant,) that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first testament, (covenant,) they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For, (as the remainder of the chapter is translated by Wakefield, and
approved by Dr. A. Clarke,) where a covenant is, there must be necessarily introduced the death of that which establisheth the covenant; because a covenant is confirmed over dead things, and is of no force at all whilst that, which establisheth the covenant is alive. Whence even the first covenant was not solemnized without blood. For, after every commandment of the law had been spoken by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, and the book itself, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop; and sprinkled all the people, saying: "This is the blood of that covenant, which God hath appointed for you. And he sprinkled with the blood in the same manner the tabernacle too, and all the vessels of the public service. Indeed, almost all things are cleansed with blood, and without blood-shedding is no discharge, under the law. It is enjoined, therefore, that the patterns of the heavenly things should be made pure; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not gone into a sanctuary made with hands, a pattern only of the true, but into heaven itself, to present himself now before the face of God in our behalf. Nor was he to offer himself often, as the high-priest goeth into the sanctuary yearly with others' blood: (for then must he have died often since the foundation of the world,) but now, at the conclusion of the ages, hath he ap-
peared once for all to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. And, as it remaineth for (the) men once to die, and after this a judgment; so Christ, having been once offered up to bear away the sins of all, will appear a second time, without any sin offering, to them that are waiting for him, unto salvation." In further illustration of the same subject, the inspired writer proceeds:—"For the law having but a shadow of the good things to come, and not the image of the things itself, is by no means able with those sacrifices, which are the same offerings, every year, to make those, who present themselves, perfect forever. For then these offerings would have ceased; because the worshippers, after one purification, would have no more conscience of sins; whereas these offerings are yearly acknowledgments of sins: for it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith: Sacrifice and offering thou dost not choose; but a body hast thou prepared for me: in burnt offerings and services for sin thou hast no pleasure.—Then said I, lo! I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O! God. After saying first, sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and services for sin thou dost not choose, nor hast pleasure in them; (which are offered according to the law,) he saith next, Lo! I come to do thy will, O! God: thus refuting one
point to establish the other. By which will we are made holy, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." 

From this language of the apostle, immediately preceding and following the passage under consideration, it is impossible to mistake the nature of his argument; and it is equally plain, that, throughout the whole, he is drawing a comparison between the sacrifices under the law, or first covenant, and the death of Christ, the mediator of the new covenant, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Should the question now return, who were the men unto whom it was appointed "once to die"? the answer appears obvious: those men of whom he had been speaking, viz: the high priests, (and perhaps the whole congregation of the people,) whose deaths were represented once in each yearly sacrifice for sin.

This conclusion will appear still more evident when the next words are taken into consideration—"and after this a judgment." The nature of that Judgment, which followed the figurative, sacrificial death of the high priest, we learn from the description of the ceremonies attending the sacrifices which it was his duty to make, once in each year, "for himself, and for the errors of the people." In the directions relative to the dress and ornaments which the high priest was to
wear in offering the yearly sacrifice for sin, Moses was commanded to make a breast-plate of judgment; and it was said, "and Aaron (or the high priest,) shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually. And thou shalt put in the breast-plate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord; and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually."—Exod. xxviii: 29, 30. From this passage we learn that the high priest was to bear the judgment (not the sins) of the children of Israel in his breast-plate, continually; but, from the subsequent part of the chapter it appears that he was liable, had he neglected to obey the instructions, and to follow the directions given for conducting the yearly sacrifice, actually to bear the iniquity, and to die literally. Hence, after describing "the robe of the ephod" which he was to wear, it was said, ver. 35, "And it shall be upon Aaron, to minister; and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not." Also, he was to wear a plate upon his mitre, with "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" engraven on it; and of this plate it was command-
ed, verse 38—“And it shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.” Likewise, other garments, which are particularly described, were to be worn by the high priests, “when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place, that they bear not iniquity, and die.” ver. 43. That the priests were liable to die, literally, should they, in offering their sacrifices, disobey the command of God, we further learn from the fact that Nadab and Abiu, sons of Aaron, for offering sacrifices contrary to the requirements of the law, were actually destroyed by “fire from the Lord.” These circumstances will sufficiently illustrate the propriety of applying words, “as it is appointed unto the men once to die” to the high priests, in their annual sacrifices for their own sins, and the sins of the whole congregation.

The inquiry may now be introduced, what judgment followed the figurative death of the high priest, after he had thus offered “the blood of others” as a sin offering unto God? From the preceding remarks and extracts from the law, as well as from the language of the apostle, already largely quoted, the inference ap-
pears plain, that when the sin offering had been offered under the law, according to its requirements, there was "a judgment" of acceptance for that year; and this judgment was announced to the people, who waited without the tabernacle, by the sound of the bells on the hem of the high priest's robe, as he came out from "the holy place" to bless them; and by the appearing of the glory of the Lord unto the people. Lev. x: 23. By this judgment, the whole congregation of Israel was accounted righteous before God; and justified by him, for that year. But had not these sacrifices been accepted, the judgment following them would undoubtedly have been one of condemnation; and not of acceptance, or justification. The remarks of the learned Cruden, relative to the expiatory sacrifices, or sin offerings under the law, are appropriate to this subject. "These offerings signified," says he, "that man is a sinner, and therefore obnoxious to the just indignation and extreme displeasure, of the holy and righteous God; and that God was to be propitiated, and that he might pardon him: that God would not forgive sin without the atonement of justice, which required the death of the offender; but it being tempered with mercy, accepted a sacrifice in his stead."

These yearly sacrifices might, therefore, as already hinted, represent the death, not only of the high priest who offered them,
but also of the whole congregation of the people.

That the representation continued in ver. 27, was introduced to illustrate what follows in the next verse, is evident from the use of the corresponding conjunc-
tions as and so by which the members of this compound sentence are connected. The meaning of the apostle's language appears plainly to be this: "As it is ap-
pointed (in the law) unto the men once to
to die, (in their annual sin offerings) so
Christ was once offered (by the divine
appointment) to bear the sins of many;"
or, "to bear away the sins of all;" and,
as "after this a judgement," (which
has already been shown to be a judge-
ment of acceptance, or justification) so
Christ "will appear a second time, with-
out a sin offering, (as the high priest, af-
ter sacrifice, appeared without his sin
offering, to bless the people) to them that
are waiting for him, unto salvation."

It only remains to notice the coming, or
appearing of Christ, a second time, men-
tioned in the passage.

The opinion of eminent commentators,
that, at the time the apostles wrote, there
were four different comings of Christ
predicted, which were then future, has
already been noticed. His coming in the
flesh will be acknowledged by all to be
his first coming, or appearing in the world.
The commentators to whom I referred in
my preliminary observations, viz: Dr.
Macknight, Dr. Warburton, Bishop Newton, Dr. A Clarke, and, in fact, most others who have been writing on this subject, are unanimous in the opinion, that what is strictly termed the second coming of Christ, or his appearing after the apostle wrote, is to be understood as a figurative coming; (i.e. by his spirit, or power) and that this took place at the destruction of Jerusalem, the abolition of the Jewish dispensation, and the establishment of the kingdom of heaven in the earth. If this opinion be correct, (which I think few will dispute,) the words second time, which, as already observed, occur in no other passage in the New Testament in relation to this subject, are amply sufficient to fix the period for the accomplishment of this prediction beyond a rational doubt.

But there are other considerations which appear to justify the above conclusion. The apostle was addressing a people who had long depended on sacrifices, and offerings for sin, to avert the displeasure of God, secure his favor, and save themselves from impending dangers. Many instances are recorded of this people, in which, when they were nearly overcome by their enemies, and their destruction appeared inevitable, impending judgments were turned away from them, by their repentance, and sacrifices offered in sincerity, according to their law. It was therefore natural to suppose, that
when Jerusalem should be compassed round by the Roman legions, and when no human power could rescue them from destruction, these people would look to their sacrifices and burnt offerings as their only means of deliverance. But the apostle, in his faithfulness, and zeal for his countrymen, wished to convince them of their error; and of the insufficiency of such means to deliver them from impending destruction. Hence he teaches them that those who should regard the instructions, warnings, and admonitions of Jesus, and should consequently be waiting for him at his coming, should, without any sin offerings, be saved from those dreadful calamities, and that total destruction which awaited their unbelieving and hardened countrymen. And this salvation, as has already been shown, they did obtain; not through the efficacy of sin offerings according to law, but by a timely flight, in obedience to the instructions of Jesus, to a place of safety.

It may, however, be contended that the appearing of Christ mentioned in this passage, should be referred to the close of time, when he shall come to raise the dead, deliver his people from the bondage of sin and corruption, and confer on them eternal salvation and uns dạng glory in an immortal state of being. This opinion may be admitted, and still the passage will afford no support to the doctrine of a judgment, in the popular sense
of that term, which shall take place at that time. Drs. Doddridge, Macknight, A. Clarke, and others, who refer this coming to the close of time, suppose that Christ's appearing a second time has an allusion to the return of the high priest from the inner tabernacle. Admitting this supposition correct, we cannot fail of discovering that the comparison introduced by the apostle is altogether inapplicable to the idea of a judgment, popularly so called, at the time of his appearing. When the high priest came out from the most holy place, after having offered the yearly sacrifice for sin, he did not bless a part of the people, and curse the remainder; but he blessed the whole of the congregation, without exception.—What authority have we then, from this passage, to say that Christ, when he shall come, will bless with eternal life, and the joys of heaven, one portion of those he shall raise from the dead, and indiect unending torments on all others? In whichever way, therefore, we apply the expression relative to the appearing of Christ, it affords not the least support to the doctrine of a judgment after the death of the body for the sins committed in this life. I repeat, it is not my intention to discuss the question relative to a judgment, in the popular sense of that term, in a future and immortal state of existence; but this doctrine, if true, must rest for its support on other testimony than the passage I have now considered.
ESSAY...NO. XI.

In the present number I shall notice the several passages which occur in the Apocalypse in relation to the subject embraced in these essays; and were it not for a very generally prevailing impression that the book of Revelation closed the inspired writings, and that it contains predictions which are not to be accomplished until all other prophecies in the scriptures shall have been fulfilled, a few remarks and comparisons of these passages with other declarations of the inspired writers, would be amply sufficient to set them in what I conceive to be their true light.

Various were the opinions prevailing among the ancient fathers, relative to the author, as well as to the genuineness and authority of this book; some, who received it as canonical, ascribed it to John the evangelist, and apostle of our Lord; others ascribed it to John the Presbyter; and others to Corinthas, a Jewish Gnostic, who is said to have been a most violent opposer of John the apostle; while many rejected it altogether, not knowing to whom it should be described.

Nor has there been much less diversity of opinion, in all ages of the church, in relation to the time when it was written. A majority, perhaps, of commentators
and ancient authors, suppose that John was banished to the island of Patmos under the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian, which would fix the date between the years 81 and 96; and it is generally supposed, by these writers, that the true date is about 65 or 96. Other writers, however, and those of the most respectable authority, fix the date previous to the destruction of Jerusalem. Epiphanius says, that John was banished to Patmos, by Claudius Caesar. This would bring back the date to between A.D. 41 and 54. This opinion, however, appears improbable; as it is not likely the churches addressed by the Revelator were all of them in existence at so early a period. Others contend that it was written during the reign of Vespasian, which commenced A.D. 69, and ended in 79. The inscription to this book in the Syrian Version, published by DeDieu, 1627, and afterwards in the London Polyglott, is the following:—"The Revelation which God made to John the evangelist, in the island of Patmos, to which he was banished by Nero Caesar." This places it previous to the year 68, at which time the reign of Galba commenced. That this was the true time of John's banishment, and consequently, that the visions recorded in this book are to be ascribed to this period, is contended by many learned and eminent writers; among Hentenius, Harduin, Grolius, Lightfoot,
Lightfoot, Hammond, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Dr. A. Clarke, and others.

It must be obvious to all, that, in the interpretation of the predictions contained in this book, much depends on the time when it was written. As it contains many undoubted allusions to political, as well as religious revolutions of states and empires; it is important that we should be able to understand what revolutions of these kinds had already taken place, and what were to be accomplished at a period subsequent to this time. It will not, therefore, be deemed improper, in conducting the present inquiry, to take into consideration the internal evidences of the book itself; and to notice its references to the then existing state of things in the world.

In addition to the high authority of those distinguished writers, who have contended that the Apocalypse was written previous to the final overthrow of the Jewish state, and the abolition of the legal dispensation, it appears to me that this book contains several express and direct references to the city of Jerusalem and the temple; the propriety of which I am unable to discover, on the supposition that this city was not then in existence. In chap. xi: 1, 2, we find the following language: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and the angel stood, saying, rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship
therein. But the court which is without the temple, leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.” The above passage contains evident allusions, both to the city and temple; and also, a prediction of the approaching desolation of the city. The court, which was “without the temple,” was unquestionably, what was called the court of the Gentiles, and was peculiar to the temple at Jerusalem; consequently, the allusion to the temple is direct and obvious. No argument can be necessary to show, that, by the phrase “holy city” Jerusalem was intended; but, if any doubts can remain, they must be removed by the words of our Saviour, Luke xxii: 24. “And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” What other inference, then, can we draw from the language of the Revelator, but that at the time he wrote, Jerusalem and its temple were in existence? and that the city was not yet “trodden down of the Gentiles”? At ver. 14, of this chapter it is said,— “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.” Here it may be observed, are two circumstances mentioned, which were literally applicable to Jerusalem, but to no other city. 1. It was declared that their dead bodies
should lie in the streets of this city. That this prediction was literally fulfilled, in relation to Jerusalem and its wretched inhabitants, has been already shown. 2. It is expressly declared that the city, whose inhabitants should thus suffer, was "where also our Lord was crucified." In chap. xiv: 15, there is another evident allusion to the temple at Jerusalem, in contradistinction from the "temple which is in heaven," mentioned ver. 17. The whole of the chap. xviii, apparently refers to Jerusalem, with far more propriety than to any other city or kingdom. My limits will permit me to notice but a very small part. Verses 4, 5, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." This admonition corresponds with the warnings of our Saviour to his disciples, and his instructions to enable them to escape from impending danger. Ver. 8. "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day; death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." The remarks of Dr. A. Clarke on this verse are so appropriate, that I need make no apology for inserting them in this place. [Therefore shall her plagues come.] Death, by the
sword of her adversaries; mourning, on account of the slaughter, and famine, the fruits of the field being destroyed by the hostile bands. Utterly burned with fire. Of what city is this spoken? Rome pagan has never been thus treated; Alaric and Totila burnt only some parts with fire. Rome papal has not been thus treated; but this is true of Jerusalem, and yet Jerusalem is not generally thought to be intended." Again, ver. 24. "And in her was found the bloo dof prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." To what city will this language so properly apply as to Jerusalem? It forcibly brings to mind the words of Christ, addressed to its devoted inhabitants:—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which art sent unto thee," &c. Alluding also to the murder of prophets in this city he says,—"for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." Well might the Saviour declare unto them, that upon them should "come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth." I might multiply quotations, evidently alluding to this city and the temple, but the above are deemed sufficient. And I would now ask, in view of this language, have we not sufficient internal evidence, in the book itself, to satisfy us that it was written while Jerusalem and her temple were yet standing?
To this view of the subject it may perhaps be objected, that at the time this book was written, heresies prevailed—apostacies from the faith of the gospel had taken place—many had fallen away from their first love, and most of the churches addressed were accused of some departure from the gospel faith or practice; and that this was too early a period of time for such charges to be brought against them. To this it may be answered, that even at an earlier period, similar accusations were brought against other churches. In Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, which is supposed to have been written, A.D. 59, he accuses them frequently of envyings, strifes, contentions, and heresies. In his epistle to the Galatians, written still earlier, by one year, the apostle marvels that his brethren should have so soon removed to another gospel, and declares that there were then some among them who troubled them, and "would pervert the gospel of Christ." It is probable, as all the churches addressed by the Revelator were in the immediate vicinity of Ephesus, that they were planted by St. Paul during his two years residence at that city, from A.D. 56, to 58; at which time St. Luke tells us, Acts, xix. 10, "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks;" so that a period of ten years must have elapsed from the time of their formation, to the
time they were addressed by John; and experience, as well as history, teaches us that a church may become lukewarm, and even apostatize from the true faith in less time than ten years.

Nor have the opinions of commentators, been less various in relation to the application of the predictions contained in this book. Almost every one who has undertaken to write upon it at large, has marked out for himself a new, an untrodden path; and hence we find almost as many hypotheses as commentators. Among the various applications which have been made of these predictions, I can mention only the following:

1. The Apocalypse contains a prophetical description of the destruction of Jerusalem, of the Jewish war, and the civil wars of the Romans.

2. It contains predictions of the persecutions of the Christians under the heathen emperors of Rome, and of the happy days of the Church under the Christian emperors, from Constantine downwards.

3. It contains prophecies of the tyrannical and oppressive conduct of the Roman pontiffs, the true antichrist, and foretells the destruction of popery.

4. It is a prophetic declaration of the schism and heresies of Martin Luther, those called reformers, and their successors; and the final destruction of the Protestant religion.
5. A considerable portion of it relates to the introduction and establishment of Mahometanism in the world, and its final overthrow by the subversion of the Turkish empire; and it is supposed the number of the beast, 666, plainly points out Mahomet, as the Greek letters composing his name signify precisely that number.

It is not my design, neither will my limits permit me to enter into an investigation of the merits of these different hypotheses. My only object in alluding to them was merely to show the difficulty of giving a satisfactory explanation of the highly figurative language of this book.

The first opinion mentioned above, is adopted by the learned professor Wetsstein. He thinks the book was written previous to the destruction of Jerusalem and that the principal events predicted in it took place in the space of about three years and a half. He thinks, as the events which took place during that period were the greatest that ever happened since the foundation of the world, and as the affairs of the Church were intimately connected with them, they were worthy of the Divine notice, and of a special revelation; while every other method of interpretation, founded on the hypothesis that the book was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, is utterly destitute of certainty, and leaves every commentator to the luxuriance of his own
fancy. This opinion certainly appears
to derive authority from the book itself;
not only in relation to the date, as the
passages I have already cited fully show,
but also as to the application of the pre-
dictions contained in it. In the intro-
tection to this book, contained in the first
three verses, we have the following words
—"The Revelation of Jesus Christ,
which God gave unto him, to shew unto
his servants things which must shortly
come to pass," ver. 1. And again, ver. 3.
"Blessed is he that readeth, and they
that hear the words of this prophecy, and
keep those things which are written
therein; for the time is at hand." In the
last chapter, ver. 10, the Revelator is di-
rected to "seal not the sayings of the
prophecy of this book, for the time is at
hand." From these and other similar
expressions, we cannot but infer that the
principal predictions of this book, were
soon to have their accomplishment. Nor
will the expression, chap. i. 19, "write
the things which thou hast seen, and the
things which are, and the things which
shall be hereafter," militate in the least
against this application; as the term
hereafter is extremely vague in its signi-
fication, and may denote time near at hand
as well as more remote.

The above remarks were considered
necessary as an introduction to the sev-
eral passages contained in this book re-
lating to the coming, or appearing of
Christ; and the passages may now be introduced, and will require but very few additional remarks.

The first passage which occurs, is chap. i. 7, "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." On this passage Dr. A. Clarke observes, "Behold he cometh with clouds. This relates to his coming to execute judgment on the enemies of his religion: perhaps to his coming to destroy Jerusalem, as he was to be particularly manifested to them that pierced him; which must mean the incredulous and rebellious Jews. And all kindreds of the earth. (Pasai ai phulai tes ges) all the tribes of the land. By this the Jewish people are most evidently intended; and therefore the whole verse may be understood as predicting the destruction of the Jews; and is presumptive proof that the Apocalypse was written before the final overthrow of the Jewish state." Compare this passage with Mat. xxiv. 30, and connexion, where our Lord expressly declares his "coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," when "all the tribes of the earth" should mourn, should take place during that generation on the earth.

In the second and third chapters, which are addressed to the seven churches in Asia, there are several passages which relate to our Lord's coming to some of
those churches. Chap. 11: 5. "Remem-
ber therefore from whence thou art fal-
len, and repent, and do thy first works;
or else I will come unto thee quickly, and
will remove thy candlestick out of his
place, except thou repent." ver. 16, "Re-
pent; or else I will come unto thee quick-
ly, and will fight against them with the
sword of my mouth." ver. 25. "But that
which ye have already, hold fast till I
come." Chap. iii: 3. "If therefore thou
shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a
thief, and thou shalt not know what hour
I will come upon thee." ver. ii. "Behold
I come quickly; hold that fast which
thou hast, that no man take thy crown."
ver. 20, "Behold, I stand at the door and
knock; if any man hear my voice, and
openeth the door, I will come in to him,
and will sup with him, and he with me." 3
No observations can be necessary to
show, that none of these passages can
possibly relate to any coming of the Lord,
in judgment, which is yet future.

Chap. vi: 12, 17. And I beheld when
he had opened the sixth seal, and lo,
there was a great earthquake; and the
sun became black as sackcloth of hair; and
the moon became as blood; and the stars
of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-
tree casteth her untimely figs, when she
is shaken of a mighty wind, and the heav-
ens departed as a scroll when it is rolled
together; and every mountain and is-
land were moved out of their places. And
the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” Although in this passage there is no direct declaration of the coming of Christ, yet as an inference of this event is generally drawn from it, and as it is supposed to refer to the destruction of the material universe, and to what is usually termed the general judgment, I have thought proper to notice it. That it has no reference to such events must be obvious from the fact that the very next vision presented to the view of the Revelator was in the earth, and that one more seal remained to be opened; and also, that afterwards the seven trumpets, followed by judgments and woes, all relating to the earth, were yet to sound. Dr. Dodd, Bp. Newton, and others, refer the whole of this passage to the overthrow of Rome pagan; and with them, Dr. A. Clarke agrees; he however adds, “all these things may literally apply to the final destruction of Jerusalem, and to the revolution which took place in the Roman empire, under Constantine the Great.” And I have already shown that
the prediction relative to the people hiding themselves, and calling on the "mountains and rocks" to fall on them, &c. had its complete, and almost literal fulfilment at the siege and destruction of that devoted city; thousands of whose inhabitants miserably perished in caverns of the earth, whither they fled to avoid the fury of their enemies.

Chap. xvi: 15. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." This the Revelator heard after the sixth angel had poured out his vial of the wrath of God "upon the great river Euphrates." It is supposed by some, that the term Babylon is used in this book in reference to the city of Jerusalem; and as Babylon was situated on this river, and its inhabitants were supplied from it with water, it is concluded that the drying up of the water of the river represents the cutting off of all resources from Jerusalem. Others suppose Baylon represents Rome pagan, and others Rome papal, and think that the river Tiber, on which Rome was situated, is intended by the "great river Euphrates," into which the vial was poured. Whichever opinion we adopt, it is apparent that the Revelator was predicting some important political event, connected with the extension and establishment of the gospel kingdom in the earth, which event was soon to take place.
In the last chapter there are three passages in which the coming of Christ is directly mentioned. The first is at ver. 7. "Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." This expression so nearly resembles the one in Chap. 1. 3, that no further remarks are necessary. At ver. 12, it is said, "And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." This language is so plain, that, were it not for the prevailing opinion among Christians, that the coming of Christ, to reward and punish all men according to their works, is an event yet future, I should pass it by without a single remark. On every other subject but religion, men are disposed to reason correctly; but so strongly has the opinion above mentioned become riveted in the minds of most people, the expression quickly, is construed to signify a period which was not to arrive under thousands of years to come. But it is only necessary to compare this passage with Mat. xvi: 27, 28, to satisfy any unprejudiced mind that both passages relate to one and the same event; an event then near at hand. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you there be some standing here, which shall not taste death, till
they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." The only remaining passage, and one which cannot be misunderstood, is in ver. 20. "He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

I have now noticed every passage in the New Testament, in which the coming of our Lord is mentioned in connexion with judgment or punishment consequent on that event; and also, all the passages relative to his coming, disconnected with a personal appearing, and the resurrection of the dead. If I have arrived at correct conclusions in regard to the proper application of the several passages which have been considered, it must be obvious that the common, and long established sentiment of a general judgment, connected with the coming, or appearing of the Lord, is unfounded in the scriptures of truth; and if not founded on scripture testimony, it cannot be sustained. If I am wrong in any of my conclusions, or if I have misapplied any scripture language, I shall feel truly grateful to any one who will point out my errors. It now only remains to notice those passages which teach the resurrection of the dead, in connexion with Christ's coming; and these will be noticed in my next, and probably last essay.
ESSAY....NO. XII.

It is the opinion of all commentators, that a personal appearing of our Saviour is predicted in the writings of the apostles; and this opinion appears to be fully authorized by the language of these inspired penmen. It is likewise, I believe, generally, if not universally admitted, that, in some of these passages, the doctrine of the resurrection is also taught I shall, therefore, in the present essay, consider the remaining passages in the New Testament in which the coming of our Lord is mentioned; and in which the resurrection of the dead is predicted in connexion with this event.

The first passage which occurs, and which I shall notice, is John xiv: 3.— "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Although this passage, separately considered, does not clearly teach, either a literal coming of Christ, or the resurrection of the dead, yet, when examined in connexion with other passages, an inference of these events seems plainly deducible from it. In the latter clause of the preceding verse, our Saviour tells his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you," evidently alluding to his approaching literal separation from them by death. When, therefore, he tells them, that, when he shall come again,
and receive them to himself, "where I am, there ye shall be also," the most natural inference from these words appears to be, that they should be literally with him, which was not the fact at the time of his coming in his kingdom, and in his glory, already considered. "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you," ver. 28, is an expression somewhat similar to the above, and requires no additional remarks.

Acts i: 10, 11—"And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, 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." As the ascent of Christ into heaven, mentioned in this passage, and ver. 9, was a personal and literal ascending from the earth, so, if he shall "come in like manner," his coming must also be personal and literal. We may now notice the passages, in the writings of the apostle, which treat of this personal coming; and which also teach the resurrection of the dead.

Phil. iii: 20, 21—"For our conversation (politeuma, citizenship, community, or civil rights) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto
his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” 1. Thess. iv: 13—18. “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (anticipate, or go before) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then 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. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.” On the foregoing quotations the following observations are submitted.

1. These passages, viewed in connexion with John, xiv: 3, and Acts, i: 10—11, above cited, teach, that, at the time the Apostle wrote, our Lord was in heaven; and this fact is expressly declared by the same writer, Heb. ix: 24. “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.” Christ was exalted “to be a Prince and a Saviour;” he is “set down at the right hand of the throne of God;” he has “obtained eternal redemption for us;” he has returned to his Father, and is seated on the mediatorial throne, where he will remain until the great work of reconciling the world to God is accomplished. Hence Peter says, Acts, iii: 20, 21, “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.” Similar to the foregoing is the language of Paul, 1. Cor. xv: 25—26,—“For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

2. We learn from these testimonies, that the Saviour, when the object of his mediatorial reign shall be accomplished, shall again come down from heaven, and appear personally on the earth. In the passages before considered, especially Matt. xxv: 31—46, he is represented as sitting “on the throne of his glory,” and commencing his reign, government, or kingdom in the earth at the time of his coming; but in those now under consideration, there is no such representa-
tion. In the former, he is represented as rewarding every man according to his works, and taking vengeance on such as were disobedient; in the latter, there is no intimation of punishment, or judgement in the popular sense of the term; and this manifest difference in the language of the inspired writers leads us to conclude that different comings of Christ are predicted in the two classes of passages.

3. In connexion with the personal coming, or descending of our Lord from heaven, the resurrection of the dead is expressly and plainly taught in these passages. To the Phillippians the Apostle says that Christ "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." In his resurrection from the dead, Jesus became "the first fruits of them that slept;" and his condition, when raised from the grave, is set forth in the scriptures as a pattern, or representation of the ultimate condition of all those of whom he was the first fruits. Hence the Apostle says, 1 John, iii: 2, "but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is;" and that, this change is to be effected by the resurrection we learn from 1 Cor. xv: 51—52. "Behold I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be
changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” To the Thessalonians he says, (as the passage is rendered by Wakefield,) “For, if we are persuaded that Jesus died and came to life again, then must God, through Jesus, bring with him them also, that are asleep.” By the term asleep, there can be no doubt but the Apostle refers to those who were literally dead; and this is the sense which is frequently attached to this word in the scriptures, especially 1 Cor. xv: 18. “Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished; i. e. “if the dead rise not.” It was the condition of such as were literally dead of which he would not have his brethren to remain in ignorance. He did not wish them to believe, like their unconverted countrymen, that death was

“One long, eternal, unawakened sleep;”

and hence he labors to convince them, that, as Christ had died and risen again, so they, and also their departed friends, when the Lord should descend from heaven, should be raised from the sleep of death, and arise together to be forever with their risen Lord. That Paul did not believe in the resurrection of a part of mankind, to immortality and unfa-ding glory, to the exclusion of the rest,
is abundantly evident from his own lan-
guage. 1 Cor. xv: 22,—"For as in Ad-
am all die, even so in Christ shall all
be made alive." It is readily acknow-
ledged on all hands, that the word all,
when applied to those who die in Adam,
signifies the whole human family, with-
out any exceptions; consequently there
can be no doubt but the same word, when
applied to those who shall be made alive
in Christ, is equally extensive in its
signification; for if, in one member of
the sentence, it comprehends the whole,
it must even so in the other. Neither can
there be a reasonable doubt but that
they were to be made alive in, or by the
resurrection from the dead. In his de-
fence against the charge of heresy, made
before Felix, the universality of the res-
surrection is also plainly declared by the
Apostle. Acts xxiv: 15,—"And have
hope towards God, which they them-
selves also allow, that there shall be a
resurrection of the dead, both of the
just and the unjust." Although the Phar-
isees, who were Paul's accusers, allowed
the doctrine of the "resurrection of the
dead," yet they believed none would
be raised but the descendants of Abra-
ham, as they considered them the only
just people on the earth. In opposi-
tion to this particular opinion, the Apos-
tle declared there should be a resurrec-
tion of all men, both just and unjust,
Jews and Gentiles; the words just and
unjust being obviously used in the sense attached to them by the Pharisees.

4. The doctrine of the resurrection, as taught by the Apostle in these passages, is a comforting doctrine; he therefore directs his Thessalonian brethren to "comfort one another with these words." The church at Thessalonica, although comprising a few Jewish converts, was composed principally of proselytes from among the heathen; and these, previous to their conversion to Christianity, believed death to be an endless sleep, or total extinction of being. Hence their grief, on the death of their friends and near relatives, was immoderate; it knew no bounds, was entirely destitute of all hope, and admitted of no alleviation.—Such had been the condition of the believing Thessalonians, previous to their turning "to God from idols, to serve the living and true God;" and such was then the situation of many of their countrymen and friends. As the gospel of Christ, to which they had recently been converted, brings "life and immortality to light," by teaching a resurrection from the dead; and as this doctrine had been fully substantiated and illustrated by the resurrection of Jesus, the Apostle might well exhort his brethren to seek comfort and consolation in their afflictions from this only source of hope beyond the darkness and silence of the grave. But, is the doctrine of the
resurrection, as embraced in the popular theology of the present day, a comforting doctrine? Would it have been calculated to impart comfort and hope, concerning their dead friends, to the Thessalonian Christians? We have no reason to suppose that the departed friends of those to whom the Apostle wrote, and concerning whose condition he would not have them to remain ignorant, had, in their life time, been converted to Christianity; and if all such as die in unbelief, and in ignorance of the Saviour and his religion, must come forth from the sleep of death, with constitutions incorruptible and immortal, only to fit them for the endurance of endless burning, and interminable wrath in hell, could this doctrine impart any comfort or consolation to surviving relatives and friends? Who would not infinitely prefer entire ignorance of futurity, or the belief that parents, children, and companions should sleep in eternal oblivion, to the horrid thought that they must be raised to such an unspeakably awful fate? And could it be considered an act of kindness, or Christian charity in the Apostle to labor, as he did, to remove the ignorance of his brethren? But no such sentiment is taught, or even intimated in the slightest manner, in the passages under consideration; and these are the only passages in the New Testament, in which the resur-
rection of the dead is predicted in connexion with the coming of Christ. We are now impelled to the inquiry, if a general judgement of all mankind is to be the consequence of, and immediately follow the resurrection of the dead, how can we account for the silence of the Apostle on the subject of this judgement? How are we to account for the fact, that, in the only passages in which the coming or descending of our Lord from heaven is connected with the raising of the dead, there is not the slightest intimation, either of judgement, or punishment of any kind? Was Paul ignorant of the fact, that Christ would raise a portion of the dead to judgement and unending wo? Or, was he less faithful in declaring "all the counsel of God" in relation to this great and important event than our modern divines? Let those who are able furnish answers to these questions.

But lest it should be said that an improper application has been made of these passages, and that they have reference only to such as believe while in this life, we will notice the language of our Saviour himself, and the further declarations of the Apostle, when speaking directly on the subject of the resurrection of the dead. On a certain occasion the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, for the purpose of ensnaring Jesus, proposed to him a question
concerning a woman who had been the wife of seven husbands; and asked him, saying, "therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Matt. xxii: 29—30. That these words of Christ were spoken in reference to a literal resurrection of the dead, we infer from the fact that the question which elicited this answer related to those who were literally dead; and it is worthy of particular observation that he makes no distinction. The conclusion is therefore irresistible, that all who shall be raised from the dead will be "as the angels of God in heaven," i.e. pure, spiritual, holy, and happy beings. In perfect accordance with his conclusion is the testimony of the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. From this chapter we learn that Paul predicated the doctrine of an existence beyond the grave wholly on the doctrine of the resurrection; and further, that he predicated this latter doctrine entirely on the fact that Christ had been raised from the dead. After laboring to establish the belief of the resurrection in the minds of his Corinthian brethren, and asserting that, "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;" and
after declaring that Jesus "must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet," and destroyed death, the last enemy; and that, when all things shall be subdued to Christ, "then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all," he treats more directly of the nature and consequences of the resurrection; and after speaking of the different glories of the sun, moon, and stars, he says, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Verses, 42—44. He further declares, ver. 53, that "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." In the four verses following, he describes the glorious consequences of this change which will be effected by the resurrection from the dead, and says, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Here we have a
lively description of the closing scene embraced in the glorious plan of redeeming grace, unfolded in the everlasting gospel of Christ, "the Saviour of the world." This will be the final consummation of God's eternal purpose, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Then, when all who die in Adam shall be raised from the long sleep of death, the "creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." Then sin and death shall be forever destroyed; tears shall be wiped from off all faces; sorrow and sighing shall come to a perpetual end; and a ransomed universe unite in the deathless song of victory over sin, death, and the grave, and of praise "unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

I have now completed my investigation of the important subject embraced in these essays; and I take this opportunity to express my regret that circumstances, over which I could have no control, have so long retarded their completion. I also regret that the subject had not fallen into the hands of some person, better qualified than myself to do it that justice which its importance demands. A very few passages, in which there is
some allusion to the coming of our Lord, may possibly have been inadvertently passed over, although I am not aware of the fact. Of this, however, I feel perfectly confident, that not one passage in the New Testament, in which either judgment, punishment, or the resurrection of the dead is connected with this event, has been omitted. If the conclusions at which I have arrived, in relation to the various passages of scripture examined, are correct, it must be obvious that all the predictions of the coming Christ to judge, or punish any portion of mankind, have already had their complete fulfilment; and that his only coming which is yet future, is when he shall come, at the close of his kingdom, or mediatorial reign, to raise the dead to a state of incorruption, immortality, and glory. It was not my design to discuss, in any manner, the doctrine of future limited punishment, any farther than this doctrine is connected with the resurrection of the dead. Respecting punishment in what is termed the intermediate state, I have nothing to say; and for this plain reason, I am unable, from the scriptures, to obtain any information of the condition of men in this intermediate state. But that man, when he shall be raised, incorruptible, immortal, and glorious, and "equal unto the angels," can be a subject of punishment for the sins of any previous state of being, I can
never admit, without more evidence than I have ever yet been able to discover in the volume of divine truth. If I have arrived at any conclusions which are incorrect; or if I have misapplied any passage or passages of scripture, I shall be grateful to any one who, in the spirit of Christian candor and charity, will point out my error. To discover "what is truth" has been my only object in these Essays; and how far this object has been attained, I leave my readers to judge.