

“THAT BLESSED HOPE.”

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God:” I trust therefore that I need not apologize to my brethren in Christ, in directing their attention to that large portion of it which relates to God’s future dealings with his church and with the world. In this every Christian is deeply and practically concerned, for without a just view of the scope and tenor of unfulfilled prophecy, he cannot rightly understand the nature of his position in the world or of his relation to it—to say nothing of the glory that is yet to be revealed. But as a habit of wresting every thing to preconceived notions has betrayed us into much error on these points, and as many children of God (like the Bereans) may be desirous of searching the Scriptures to ascertain the truth concerning them, who yet have neither time nor inclination to wade through the books that have been written on the subject, it has been the writer’s endeavour to afford to such the means of examining it for themselves by the light of God’s word. To them therefore and to His blessing he commits this imperfect attempt to aid their inquiries.

I. The study of Prophecy is enjoined by God upon all Christians; the wilful neglect of it is therefore sinful.

Matt. xxiv. 15. 2 Pet. i. 19—21. iii. 2. Rev. i. 3. xxii. 7—10. See also Acts xvii. 11, 12. Rom. xv. 4.

II. Prophecy is the disclosure of God’s will concerning the future, and may therefore be generally understood by him who reads in dependence on the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Deut. xxix. 29. Dan. ix. 2. xii. 10. John xvi. 13. 1 Tim. iv. 1. and see 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. 1 Pet. i. 10—12. In reply to the assertion, that prophecy is not intended to be understood till its accomplishment, it may be remarked, that if so, it is not a part of *revelation*, for that means an unveiling and not a hiding of truth; but granting it to be a part of the unfolding of God’s mind and purpose towards man, it is plainly our duty to endeavour to understand it. Besides, prophecy is not for the world, but for the church, to whom it is to be as “a LIGHT in a dark place *until* the day dawn.” Further, the assertion is falsified by the practice of those who make it, for whenever resurrection, judgment, &c. are spoken of, it is on the credit of unfulfilled prophecy.

III. The second coming of Christ in glory is set forth in the New Testament as *the* hope for which the church is ever to be in a waiting posture: accordingly it is made the motive to various duties.

That an interval will take place (God only knows how long) between the *presence* of Christ for the gathering out of his Church, and his *manifestation* to the world in judgment, will appear on comparing the *exhortations* grounded in the first, with the prophecies which speak of

events necessarily to precede the second. Comp. 1 Cor. i. 7, 1 Thess. i. 10, with 2 Thess. ii. 1—3. It is used as a motive to *Repentance* Acts iii. 19—21. 1 Thess. i. 9, 10. *Love to Christ* 1 Cor. xvi. 22. *Abiding in Christ* 1 John ii. 28. *Purity of heart* 1 John iii. 2, 3. *Holiness* 2 Pet. iii. 11—14. *Good works* Rev. xxii. 12. *Mortification and Spirituality* Col. iii. 2—5. Tit. ii. 11—13. Phil. iii. 20, 21. *Patience, &c.* Luke xviii. 7, 8. 2 Thess. i. 4—7. 2 Tim. i. 12. Heb. x. 36, 37, (compare Isa. viii. 17.) James v. 7, 8. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. iv. 12, 13. *Watchfulness* Matt. xxiv. 42—44. xxv. 13. Luke xii. 35—40. 1 Thess. v. 1—8. Rev. xvi. 15. *Moderation* Phil. iv. 5. 1 Pet. i. 13. iv. 7. *Fidelity, &c.* Matt. xxiv. 45—51. 1 Thess. ii. 17—20. 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. 1 Pet. v. 1—4. *Observance of the Lord's Supper* 1 Cor. xi. 26. *Love to the brethren* 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13. *Comfort under bereavement* 1 Thess. iv. 13—18. *Against censoriousness* 1 Cor. iv. 5.

IV. But if the realization of this hope is to be postponed till after the millennium has passed away, its use as a motive to patience and watchfulness, &c., is evidently frustrated.

The New Testament is remarkably free from every thing that might give colour to the notion, that Old Testament predictions of glory will be realized during the present dispensation. Its burden throughout is apostasy and judgment, (see VIII. 4. and XII.) and the great and only relieving object of anticipation is the return of the Lord.

V. When the literal sense of a passage involves no absurdity, or manifest figure, it is in the first place to be held as the true and right sense.

This applies strictly only to prophecies delivered in simple language, upon which class alone the millennial argument may be safely rested. But the Holy Spirit has also employed figurative language and symbols, to describe the same events, or circumstances connected with them; for example, the same event is predicted in *simple language* Jer. xxxi. 38—40. Zech. xiv. 10, 11, and in *figurative* Isa. lii. 1, 2, 9; and see an instance of *symbol*, Ezek. xxxvii. 16, 17, accompanied by its explanation, ver. 18—22. Hooker says of the system of departing from the literal construction, "There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the meaning of words, maketh of any thing what it listeth, and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing."

VI. The terms Israel, Jerusalem, Zion, &c., when they occur in the Old Testament, must be understood in their strict and literal sense, the New Testament affording no authority for their exclusive application to the Christian church.

See Matt. xxi. 4, 5. Rom. xi. 26. xv. 8—12. The origin of this perversion may be traced to the allegorizers of the third century, who thus prepared the way for Rome, in the progress of her usurpations, to arrogate these terms to herself. And although light broke in at the Reformation on this as on other subjects, yet the prejudice unhappily still continues to operate to the obscuring of much important truth. The divisions and headings of chapters also, have in some measure assisted to perpetuate this error, which in several instances might have been seen through, had the

connection been preserved. See for example Isa. xlii. 22—xliii. 7. xliii. 21—xliv. 1. &c. Mic. iii. 8—iv. 2. with their headings.

An instance of the applicability of a Jewish promise to the Christian church occurs in 2 Cor. vi. 16, &c., which the Holy Spirit has taught us does not find its proper fulfilment till the New Jerusalem descends out of heaven from God; see Rev. xxi. 2, 3. and comp. Ex. xxix. 45, 46. Lev. xxvi. 11, 12.

VII. The comparison of events recorded as fulfilled in the New Testament, with their respective predictions in the Old, is the surest guide to the understanding of unfulfilled prophecy: it will also illustrate and prove the foregoing rules.

Compare the following predictions and fulfilments.

Ps. xvi. 10. = Matt. xxviii. 6.	Isa. liii. 2. = John i. 11.
Ps. xxii. 6. = Luke xxiii. 11.	Isa. liii. 3. = Mark xv. 9—14.
Ps. xxii. 7, 8. = { Matt. xxvii. 43.	Isa. liii. 4. = Matt. viii. 17.
	Isa. liii. 6. = 1 Pet. ii. 24, 25.
Ps. xxii. 16, 17. = { John xix. 14, 18.	Isa. liii. 7. = Matt. xxvii. 12.
	Isa. liii. 8. = { Matt. xxvii. 21.
Ps. xxii. 18. = John xix. 23, 24.	
Ps. xxxiv. 20. = John xix. 33, 36.	Isa. liii. 9. = Matt. xxvii. 57—60.
Ps. xli. 9. = Matt. xxvi. 26.	
Ps. lxviii. 18. = { Acts i. 9.	Isa. liii. 12. = { John xix. 30.
Ps. lxxviii. 1, 2. = Matt. xiii. 34, 35.	
Isa. vii. 14. = Matt. i. 21—23.	Zech. ix. 9. = Matt. xxi. 1—5.
Isa. ix. 1, 2. = Matt. iv. 13—16.	Zech. xi. 12. = Matt. xxvi. 14, 15.
Isa. i. 6. = { Matt. xxvi. 67.	Zech. xi. 13. = Matt. xxvi. 7—9.
	Zech. xii. 10. = John xix. 34, 37.
	Mic. v. 1. = Matt. xxvii. 30.
	Mic. v. 2. = Matt. ii. 1—6.

If every instance of the fulfilment of prophecy on record has been a literal fulfilment, upon what authority are we told that though Zion's King *did* "come to her lowly and sitting upon an ass," he will *not* also "reign in mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before his ancient people gloriously?" Isa. xxiv. 23.*

The reason then why he was not recognized by the Jews, before whose eyes the very letter of their prophets thus found its accomplishment, was because darkness had blinded their eyes to the literal interpretation of a large portion of their writings, although to a great extent they seem to have understood those parts relating to his reign, (Matt. ii. 4—6.) And it has been well remarked by an eminent converted Israelite, that Christians are almost as ignorant of the circumstances of their Lord's second coming as the Jews were of his first, and for the same reason.

* If human authority can add weight to plain truth, it may be well to observe, that these views were held by all the fathers who allude to the subject, from the Apostles' contemporaries to the middle of the third century, Papias, Irenæus, Justin Martyr, and Tertullian, and later by Lactantius, Apollinarius, and many others. Justin, of the second century, tells Trypho the Jew, that if he met with any who denied these truths they were not pure and orthodox Christians—so generally were they received. Of the moderns, it may suffice to mention Sir Isaac Newton, Mede, Bishop Horsley, Cowper, Fletcher of Madeley, Dr. M'Caul, Bickersteth, Greswell, &c.

VIII. We are taught by the Word of God to expect the following events.

1. A future coming of the prophet Elijah.

Compare Mal. iv. 5. with Matt. xvii. 10, 11. Elias *himself* is promised, who is to come "before the great and dreadful day of the Lord," and Jesus here speaks in the future, and that the year after John the Baptist was beheaded. But John was only Elias in "spirit and power," (see Luke i. 17. and John i. 21), the period of his ministry and the nature of his office constituting him a fit pattern and type of Elias in person. It was the universal opinion of the primitive church that Elias would be one of the witnesses: some thought that Moses would be the other. See Rev. xi. 5, 6. and compare Luke ix. 27, 30, 31. 2 Pet. i. 16.

2. The restoration of Israel and Judah to the land of their fathers, the reunion of the two kingdoms, and their subsequent national conversion.

The promise of the land was unconditional: Gen. xii. 7. xiii. 15. xv. 18—21. xvii. 8. xxvi. 3. xxviii. 13. xxxv. 11, 12. and see Rom. xi. 28, 29. God foresaw their apostasy and dispersion: Deut. xxviii. 29. xxxi. 16, 17. Jer. xxiv. 9, 10. Lev. xxvi. 21—40, but see ver. 40—45. and Deut. xxx. 1—6. xxxii. 43; and see the unconditional promise confirmed, Jer. xxxi. 31—34. Rom. xi. 25—27. (compare Acts xxvi. 6, 7. Ps. xiv. 7.) Further prophecies of *restoration to Palestine*: Jer. xxiv. 6. xxxi. 7—13, xxxii. 37—41. xxxiii. 7—9. l. 4, 5. Ezek. xi. 15—20. xx. 42. xxviii. 25, 26. xxxiv. 11—13. xxxvi. 23—28. xxxix. 28. Zech. viii. 7, 8. Compare Zech. iii. 9, 10, with xii. 10, xiv. 4, 5. and Rom. xi. 26. Matt. xxiii. 39. *Reunion of Israel and Judah*: Isa. xi. 10—12. xxvii. 12, 13. Jer. iii. 18, 19. xxx. 3. xxxiii. 7—9. Ezek. xxxvii. 15—28. Hos. i. 10, 11. Mic. iv. 6. Zeph. iii. 19, 20. Zech. viii. 13. *Perpetual possession of the land*: Ps. cv. 10, 11. Isa. lx. 21. Jer. xxxi. 35—37, 40. xxxii. 40. Ezek. xxxvii. 25, 28. xxxix. 21—29. Joel iii. 20, 21. Amos ix. 14, 15. Mic. iv. 7. Zeph. iii. 14, 15. Zech. xiv. 11, 21. A small company only of Judah and Benjamin, with a few stragglers of the remaining tribes, returned from Babylon, and they to be again rooted out, but by far the greater part never returned; therefore the above places have not had the shadow of a fulfilment. Besides, Zechariah prophesied *after* this return. The promises of their conversion, under the NEW COVENANT, are interwoven with those of their restoration.

The land in its whole extent, as promised Gen. xv. 18, &c., was to be dispossessed of its inhabitants in order to be occupied by Israelites: but much territory has ever remained in possession of the heathen; they were only subdued and placed under tribute by Israel: therefore the promise still wants its accomplishment. Compare Ex. xxiii. 28—33. Deut. vii. 2—6. xx. 16, 17. xxxi. 3. Josh. i. 1—6. ix. 24. xiii. 1—6. Jud. i. 27—35. ii. 1—3. 1 Kings ix. 20, 21. But see also Deut. xxxiii. 26—29. Isa. xi. 14. Ezek. xlvii. 13—21. Obad. 17—21.

3. The rebuilding of Jerusalem and of the temple, and restoration of prosperity to the land and people.

Deut. xxxii. 43. Ps. l. 1—6. li. 18, 19. lxxviii. 29, 31—35. lxxix. 34—36. lxxviii. 68, 69. cxxxii. 13—16. Isa. i. 25—28. ii. 2, 3. iv. xxv. 9—12. xxvi. 1, 2, &c. xxvii. 5, 6, 12, 13. xxviii. 5. xxx. 18—26.

xxxvii. 31, 32. xlv. 17, 25. xlix. 13—26. li. 3. lii. 1—9. lx. lxi. 4—11. lxii. lxx. 9, 10, 18—25. Jer. xxx. 18—24. xxxi. 27—40. xxxii. 37—44. xxxiii. 10—14, 18. l. 19, 20. Ezek. xxxiv. 25—31. xxxvi. 8—12, 28—38. xxxvii. 26—28. xlvii. 1—12. (read also xl.—xlviii.) Hos. ii. 14—23. xiv. 4—8. Joel iii. 16—21. Amos ix. 11—15. (compare Acts xv. 16. Luke xxi. 24.) Mic. iv. 1—4. Nahum i. 15. Zech. i. 16, 17. viii. 3—6, 11—15. xii. 6—8. xiv. 8—11, 20, 21. Mal. iii. 11, 12. Matt. xxiii. 38, 39. Compare also Hag. ii. 3, 6—9. with the place as quoted by St. Paul, Heb. xii. 26, 27, thus proving the fulfilment to be future. The same may be said of Mal. iii. 1—4. Read also Ps. xlvi. xlvii. xlviii. lxxx. 17, 18. lxxxv. lxxxvii. cii. 13—22. cxviii. cxxii, cxxv.

4. A general apostasy, ending in a confederacy against the restored Jews, and the full revelation of Antichrist.

Matt. xxiv. 11—13. Luke xviii. 8, (THE faith.) 2 Thess. ii. 3. 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. 2 Tim. iii. 1—5. iv. 3, 4. 2 Pet. ii. 1, &c. iii. 3, 4. 1 John ii. 18. iv. 3. Jude 17, 18. (Acts xx. 29, 30.) On the gathering of the nations against Jerusalem, see Isa. lxvi. 16, 18, 19, 24. Ezek. xxxviii. 14—23. xxxix. Joel iii. 1, 2. Mic. iv. 11—13. Zech. xii. 2—9. xiv. 2, 3; and comp. Matt. xxiv. 19, 21, 22; it seems probable that ver. 15 downwards contain an answer to the second part of the question in ver. 3, and if so, their fulfilment is to be looked for in the future siege of Jerusalem: compare also Jer. xxx. 6, 7, &c. and Dan. xii. 1.

Although Antichrist was to be the head of the Roman power, and the pope bears many of the marks of his character, a minuter acquaintance with prophecy is inducing many to embrace the opinion of the ancient church, that *the* Antichrist will be a single individual, the head of the apostasy and its acting power, to arise shortly before the second coming of Christ and to be destroyed by that coming itself. See, on his character and doom, Isa. xi. 4, (the wicked ONE.) xiv. 4—21. xxx. 30—33. (Jer. vii. 32—34. xix. 3—13.) Dan. vii. 8, 20, 24, 26. viii. 9, 12, 19—25. xi. 36—45. 2 Thess. ii. 3—12. 1 John ii. 18, 22. iv. 3, (compared with Jude 4.) Rev. xiii. xix. 11—21. and comp. Isa. viii. 5—18.

5. The personal return of Christ in the clouds of heaven to the destruction of Antichrist and his confederates.

He shall come in the clouds: Isa. xix. 1. Dan. vii. 13. Matt. xxiv. 30. xxvi. 64. Luke xxi. 27. Acts i. 9, 11. Rev. i. 7. xiv. 14, 15, 16. *He shall come with fire:* Ps. xviii. 8, 9. l. 3. xcvi. 3—5. cxliv. 5, 6. Isa. xxx. 27, 28, 30, 33. xxxi. 9. lxvi. 15, 16. Dan. vii. 9—11. Mal. iv. 1. 2 Thess. i. 8. ii. 8. (compare Zeph. iii. 8. 2 Pet. iii. 10, 12.) *His coming shall be sudden:* Matt. xxiv. 37—51. xxv. 6, 13. Mark xiii. 32—37. Luke xii. 35—40, 46. xvii. 26—30. 1 Thess. v. 2, 3. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. iii. 3. xvi. 15. *He shall come with his saints:* Zech. xiv. 5. 1 Thess. iii. 13. Jude 14. Rev. xix. 14. Dan. vii. 10. (and see below, No. 7.) *Signs in the sun and moon and desolating judgments:* Isa. ii. 10—22. xiii. 6, &c. Joel ii. 10, 11. iii. 9—17. Amos v. 20. Matt. xxiv. 29—33. Mark xiii. 24, &c. Luke xxi. 25, &c. Acts ii. 20.

Consult also Deut. xxxii. 35, 36, 40—43. Ps. ii. 9. xlvi. xcvi. (compared with Heb. i. 6, "And when he bringeth in again the first begotten into the world.") Ps. cx. Isa. viii. 17. ix. 5. xxiv. 1—23. xxvi. 20, 21. xxviii. 17—22. xxix. xxx. 27—33. xxxi. 4, 5. xxxiv. 1—8. xl. 9—11. xlii. 13—15. lix. 20, (compared with Rom. xi. 26.) Jer. xxiii. 19, 20. l. ii. (comparing vers. 63, 64. with Rev. xviii. 21.) Ezek. ix. Nahum i.

Hab. iii. 3-6. Zeph. i. 2, 3, 14, 18. iii. 8, 9, &c. Zech. xii. 2-9. xiv. Mal. iv. 1, &c. Matt. xvi. 27. 2 Thess. i. 7-10, ii. 8. Rev. ii. 27. xii. 5. xix. 15. And compare especially Isa. lxiii. 1, &c. and Joel iii. 13, &c. with Rev. xiv. 14, &c. and xix. 11, &c.

6. His reign in Jerusalem as king of Israel and of the whole earth.

Ps. ii. 6, 8. xxii. 28. cxxxii. 13, 17, 18. cxxxv. 21. cxlvi. 10. cxlix. 2. Isa. xii. 6. xxiv. 23. xxxii. 1. lx. 13. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. xxx. 7-9. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. xxxvii. 22, 24-28. xliii. 1-9. Dan. vii. 14. Hos. iii. 4, 5. Joel iii. 16, 17, 21. Obad. 21. Mic. iv. 7, 8. v. 2. Zeph. iii. 15, 17. Zech. ii. 5, 10-13. vi. 12, 13. viii. 3, 6. Matt. xix. 28. xxv. 31. (To judge is a part of the kingly office, and often means to rule, see Jud. ii. 16, 18. 1Sam. viii. 19, 20.) Acts i. 6, 11. Heb. ii. 5-9. *The nations shall come up to worship at Jerusalem*, (perhaps persons of all nations, or the representatives of every nation :) Isa. ii. 2, 3. lxvi. 23. (compare Ps. lxxv. 1, 2. cii. 21, 22.) Jer. iii. 17. Mic. iv. 1, 2. Zech. viii. 20-23. xiv. 16-19. For more on the reign of Christ, see Ps. xlv. xlvii. lxxvii. lxxviii. 15, 16. lxxii. lxxxii. 8. lxxxv. lxxxvii. xciii. xcvi. 10-13. xcvi. cxlv., and see below under IX.

7. The resurrection and transformation of the saints, and their reign with Christ over the earth.

It is allowed by all that such a resurrection will take place at the return of Christ. But it has been elsewhere shewn (under XII.), that this return will be at the beginning and not at the close of the millennium: it follows therefore that the resurrection and transformation of the saints will take place at the commencement of that period. These texts however seem distinctly to point to the FIRST RESURRECTION (Rev. xx. 5, 6.), and will still further illustrate the doctrine: Isa. xxvi. 19, as opposed to ver. 14. Dan. xii. 2, the true force of the Hebr. is . . . "these to everlasting life, but the others to shame" &c. Luke xiv. 14. xx. 34-38. John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54. Rom. viii. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 23, 50-52. Phil. iii. 11, the Greek is clear and decisive "... resurrection out from among the dead," (compare Ps. xvii. 15.) 1 Thess. iy. 13-18. Heb. xi. 35.

It is worthy of notice that the New Testament alludes to the happiness of departed souls only in the following places: Luke xvi. 23, 25. xxiii. 42, 43. Acts vii. 59. 2 Cor. v. 8. Phil. i. 22, 23. We hear nothing of "glorified spirits" in the Scriptures.

The church will reign with Christ. Ps. xlix. 14. cxlix. 5-9. Isa. xxxii. 1. Dan. vii. 18, 22, 27. and compare Luke xii. 32. xxii. 29, 30. Rom. viii. 17. Matt. v. 5. xix. 28. xxiv. 46, 47. 1 Cor. vi. 2. Jude 14, 15. Rev. ii. 26, 27. iii. 21. v. 10. xx. 4, 6. xxii. 5. Compare also 2 Tim. ii. 7-12. with Acts ii. 30-32. If the kingdom belongs to the saints and they are to reign with Christ, they are not themselves subjects: accordingly it is nowhere said that Christ is king over his church; but he is represented as their brother, husband, coheir, &c., to share his throne *with* them.

8. A new heavens and new earth, removal of the curse, universal holiness, and happiness of all creatures.

Compare Isa. lxxv. 17, 16. lxvi. 22. with Ps. cii. 25-28. civ. 30, 31. 2 Pet. iii. 13. and Numb. xiv. 21. Isa. xi. 9. Hab. ii. 14. with Rev. xi. 15. xii. 10. xx. 1-3. xxi. 1, &c. And see Ps. xxii. 27, 28. xlv. 9. lxxvii. lxxii. lxxiv. 20-23. Isa. ii. 4. xxv. 6-8. xxxv. 1, 2, 6, 7. xli.

18, 19. xlv. 23. lv. 13. lxi. 11. Mic. iv. 3, 4. Zeph. iii. 9. Zech. ix. 10. xiv. 20. Matt. vi. 10. Acts iii. 21. Rom. viii. 18—22. xi. 12, 15. Compare together Isa. xi. 6—9. lxv. 25. Ezek. xxxiv. 25—28. Hos. ii. 18; also Gen. xxviii. 12. with John i. 51. On the *casting out and binding of Satan* compare Rev. xii. 7—12. xx. 1—3. with Isa. xxiv. 21, 22, (see Eph. ii. 2. vi. 12.) On the *Heavenly Jerusalem* see Gal. iv. 26. Col. i. 5. Heb. xi. 10, 13—16, 39, 40. xii. 22. xiii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 4. Rev. iii. 12. xxi. xxii.

IX. The throne of David belongs to Christ by right of descent as the Son of David, and is confirmed to him by the oath of God the Father.

David's throne was to be established for ever: 2 Sam. vii. 12—16, which the Spirit taught him to understand literally, ver. 24—29. Compare Ps. lxxxix. 26, 27. Heb. i. 6. and see Num. xxiii. 21. 1 Sam. ii. 10. Ps. cxxxii. 11, 17, 18, lxxxix. 3, 4, 29, 36, 37, vers. 38—44 seem to be a complaint of the apparent nonfulfilment of previous promises; but see Acts ii. 29, 30. and Isa. ix. 6, 7. xvi. 5. Jer. xxiii. 5—8, xxxiii. 15—17, 19—21. Matt. ii. 2. xxi. 5. Mark xi. 10. Luke i. 32, 33, and compare Isa. xxii. 22. with Rev. iii. 7. xxii. 16; also Matt. xxvii. 11. with 1 Tim. vi. 13. See also under VIII. 6.

X. But the throne of David is the rule set up by God over Israel in the hand of a king, to be exercised at Jerusalem, and the throne which Christ now occupies is the throne of his Father in heaven (Rev. iii. 21.): therefore the promise to Christ remains to be fulfilled.

XI. The declarations of Scripture as to the progress of evil during the present economy are so distinct as utterly to condemn the expectation of progressive improvement as unscriptural and delusive.

The present world* is under the power of Satan: Matt. iv. 8, 9. John xiv. 30. xvi. 11. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Eph. ii. 2, 3. vi. 12. 1 John v. 19. And compare Matt. vii. 13—20. John xiv. 17, 18. xv. 18—21. xvi. 33. xvii. 14—16. Tim. iii. 12, 13. Heb. xiii. 13, 14. 1 Pet. ii. 9—11. Tit. ii. 14. These and many similar passages, which abound in the New Testament, would gradually become obsolete were this expectation well founded: but, to put the matter out of doubt, we have in James v. 7. and the context a direct assurance that suffering is the lot of the church up to the time of the "coming of the Lord."

Again; comparing 2 Pet. iii. 2—7. and Jude 14, 15, 17, 18. with 2 Thess. ii. 1—8. 1 John ii. 18, *it plainly appears that evil then at work was to continue and increase UNTIL the second appearing of Christ, that the reason why this event is delayed is God's long-suffering, and that nevertheless it will come when the iniquity of the world is ripe: but a period of universal blessedness is no less distinctly promised (see VIII. 8.): The conclusion is inevitable, that this period will not arrive until AFTER the "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."*

*The two Greek words, *kosmos* and *aiōn*, which in our version are rendered indiscriminately *world*, have each a different meaning: as, "The field is the *world* (*kosmos*), the harvest is the end of the *age* (*aiōnos*.)"

XII. The end of preaching during the present dispensation is not the conversion of the world, but the calling of a people for God out of the world.

See Matt. xxiv. 14. Mark xiii. 13. Acts xv. 14. Consult also the parable of the tares, Matt. xiii. 37—43, and of the net, verse 47—50, and compare the preceding article, XI. As some have thought this view unfavourable to missionary efforts, the reader is referred to a letter to Dr. Harris, prefixed to an excellent tract entitled “the throne of David, the throne of Christ.”

XIII. But the Scriptures reveal to us a dispensation yet future, characterized by the visible erection of the kingdom of God, and the universal prevalence of true religion.

To get a right notion of the terms “kingdom of heaven” and “of God,” examine and compare Dan. vii. 13, 14, 18. Matt. v. 3, 20. vi. 10, 33. vii. 21. viii. 11, 12. xiii. 38, 43. xvi. 28. xvii. 2. xviii. 1, 3. xix. 13, 14, 23, 24, 28. xx. 20—23, xxi. 43. xxiii. 13. Mark ix. 47. xiv. 25. Luke xii. 31, 32. xiii. 28—30. xiv. 15—24. xvii. 20—25. xix. 11, 12. xxii. 16—18, 29, 30. xxiii. 42. John iii. 3, 5. Acts i. 6—8, 11. 2 Pet. i. 11. Thus it appears, that, 1. It is a *future* kingdom. 2. The terms were familiar to the Jews. 3. Our Lord assented to their notion of it, except as to the time of its setting up, and the qualification for its enjoyment. 4. It must be *received* before it can be *entered*. Compare, in proof of all that has been said, Dan. ii. 31—45. especially verses 38, 44, 45. The ten kingdoms are generally allowed to be those into which the Roman empire was divided and under whose dominion we live, and it is in their time that the kingdom is to be set up which is to “break in pieces and consume them all.” And to this agree the words of the Apostle, Rom. xi. 22, where he threatens the cutting off of the professing Gentile church in default of “abiding in the goodness of God,” which condition has been long since forfeited. Compare Matt. xxi. 44.

XIV. Such then being the events predicted as essential to millennial blessing, it is plainly out of the power of any human instrumentality to bring them about.

Believing that all the foregoing propositions are proved by the Scriptures brought together, we are not anxious to meet objections or to repel cavils. Some of the passages may admit of a different construction, but the many are sufficiently plain, and need no comment. Difficulties, however, *will* occur to two classes of readers—those who by their manner of treating the subject shew too plainly how little they desire the return of their Lord (2 Tim. iv. 8. Heb. ix. 28.), and those who wishing to learn the truth are willing to take God at his word, leaving the consequences to him. Upon the former, argument would be thrown away: the latter may be safely left to wait till God shall grant them a fuller understanding of his word.