

THE
QUESTION ANSWERED :

WILL THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF CHRIST BE
SPIRITUAL ALONE, OR BOTH SPIRITUAL
AND PERSONAL ?

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“Thy kingdom come.”

—*Lord's Prayer.*

“Though I have not skill enough in the exposition of hard prophecies, to make a particular determination about the thousand years reign of Christ on earth, before the final judgment, yet I may say, that I *cannot confute* what such learned men as Mr. Mede, Dr. Twisse, and others (millennarians) after the old fathers, have hereof asserted.”

—*Richard Baxter.*



THE QUESTION ANSWERED.

LUKE XIX., 11—27.

And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and TO RETURN. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy TILL I COME. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was RETURNED, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant : because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin : for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man : thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee ; thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow : Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury ? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they say unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given ; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

THERE is no controversy amongst evangelical Protestants which has generated so much theological spleen (*odium*

theologicum) as the question of the Personal Reign ; and as I do not profess to be less human than my brethren, I have no doubt that I have exhibited my full proportion of this evil. The flinty heads, on either side, have come into collision, and struck out sparks of wit and satire, which had better have remained latent ; for sparks are dangerous things ; “ behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth ” ; and certainly, the “ little fire ” that emanated from my warm brain on this subject, has kindled a conflagration of fierce reviews and furious lectures, which are neither seemly to the world, nor edifying to the church. In this additional attempt, therefore, to settle the momentous question referred to, the only light I shall endeavour to strike out, will be the light of truth. I shall strictly confine myself to argument, and administer no side-hits against opponents, leaving the validity, or the fallacy of my reasoning, to the un-biassed judgment of all.

II. The question to be discussed is this—Is the *proper* kingdom of Christ already set up and administered, or will the establishment and administration of that kingdom be deferred till he, *in person*, returns to reign ? Let us see, then, what light the parable in the text throws on this question.

III. When these words were spoken, the Lord Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem for the last time ; and the *express* reason of his speaking them was 1st, because he was nigh to that capital, and 2nd, because they thought—*i.e.*, his disciples—that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.—v. 11. The only criticism I shall make on this passage, is on the word “ appear.” I say, then, that it is by far too feeble for the original, and that it would be better if it were substi-

tuted by "displayed,"—thus—"that the kingdom of God should immediately be displayed." *

IV. It is obvious, from the reason above given, that the *occasion* of this thought was the *nearness* of Jesus to Jerusalem—they expected that now, at length, the promised kingdom would be proclaimed, and that the holy city would be its capital; long had they cherished this hope, grounded either on a true, or a false interpretation of the old prophets; and now they looked for its *immediate* fulfilment, or, as it might be rendered, *on the spot*—(*parachrema*.) In *some* respects, however, this hope was false, but the question is—in *what* respects? It cannot be denied that the parable of Jesus was spoken to correct *some* error, but *what* error is the point in debate. To me it seems clear, that the whole drift of the parable is to correct—not the expectation itself—but that it would be *immediately*, or on the spot, fulfilled,—just as when, from the very same thought, after the resurrection, the disciples asked Jesus—"Wilt thou *at this time* restore the kingdom to Israel," he did not deny, much less contemn, the idea of such a restoration, but the notion that it would, *at that time*, be accomplished: "It is not for you, says he, to know the *times or the seasons*,"—or, perhaps, better "times or seasons," for there is no article in the Greek.—Acts i. 6. 7.

V. Now I presume that no one will dispute that what

* (*Anaphaino*) to make shine, or blaze up, to display.

II. 11. 62—a star comes in sight.—*Liddell and Scott's Lexicon*.

"Regnum Dei manifestaretur."—*Vulgate*.

(*Anaphaino*) Luke xix. 11.—*Illico sollemni et adspectabili modo Messiam regnum suum esse instauraturum*.—*Schleusner's Lexicon*.

the disciples looked for on both these occasions, was, not a purely spiritual and invisible reign, but something *great and glorious to the outward eye*—for, 1st, the very word rendered “appear” denotes outward and visible display ; 2nd, *such* a display was the common expectation of the Jews ; 3rd, if a purely spiritual reign were intended, then, according to my opponents, *they were not mistaken*, for *such* a reign was established shortly after ; and consequently they had no need of correction by the parable of Christ. Very well ; does our Lord teach that this hope was erroneous ? or rather, does he not *confirm* it in the parable, and correct them on the single point of *the time* of its fulfilment ? They expected that the kingdom of God would be *there and then* gloriously displayed, with Jesus, *in person*, as its head ; but does the ensuing parable teach that they were *all wrong* in this hope—that no such kingdom ever would be displayed on earth, either at Jerusalem or elsewhere ? Let us see :—“A certain nobleman went into a *far country*.” In this brief sentence we have the correction of the disciples’ error—the “*far country*” rectifies the “*immediately appear*” ; but so far is our Lord from subverting their hope of an *ultimate* display of the kingdom, that he confirms it in the strongest manner. On the 10th verse, Albert Barnes, an Anti-Millennarian, thus remarks :—“He was now near Jerusalem. . . His disciples regarded him as the Messiah ; and by this they understood a temporal prince, who should deliver them from the dominion of the Romans, and set them at liberty. They were anxious for that, and supposed that the time was at hand, and that *now*, as soon as he entered Jerusalem, he would assume the appearance of such a prince, and set up

his kingdom. *To correct that notion* seems to have been the main design of his parable." Then, on the words, "A certain nobleman went into a far country," he observes :—" This expression is derived from the state of things in Judea, in the time of our Saviour. Judea was subject to the Romans, having been conquered by Pompey above sixty years before Christ. It was, however, governed by Jews, who held the government *under* the Romans. It was necessary that the prince or king should receive a recognition of his right to the kingdom, by the Roman Emperor, and in order to this, that he should go to Rome, or, as it is said here, that he might receive to himself a kingdom. This actually occurred several times ; Archelaus, a son of Herod the Great, about the time of the birth of Christ, went to Rome to obtain a confirmation of the title which his father had left him, and succeeded in doing it. Herod the Great, his father, had done the same thing before, to implore the aid and countenance of Antony. Agrippa, the younger, grandson of Herod the Great, went to Rome also to obtain the favour of Tiberius, and to be confirmed in his government. Such instances having frequently occurred, would make this parable perfectly intelligible to those to whom it was addressed. *By the nobleman here, is undoubtedly represented the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ ; by his going into a far country, is denoted his going to heaven to the right hand of his Father, before he should fully set up his kingdom, and establish his reign among men.*" To these concluding words I call the attention of my readers ; and I think they will admit that, instead of solving, they flatly contradict the parable. The nobleman, we are told, went into a far country to receive for himself

a kingdom, AND TO RETURN : that is, as the whole context proves, to return to REIGN, *after* he had received the kingdom ; but Mr. Barnes says nothing about the nobleman's *return*, for if he had, he would have found it difficult to avoid noticing the return of Jesus as well. All he remarks is the nobleman's *going*—not his *returning*—and that “ by his going is denoted Christ's going to heaven, to the right hand of his Father, *before* he should *fully* set up his kingdom, and establish his reign among men.” Observe his words, “ *before* he should *fully* set up,” &c.,—how does this explain the parable ? Did the nobleman set up his kingdom either *fully* or *in any degree* till he returned ? If not, then consistency requires us to understand that Jesus did not either “ *fully*” or in any degree, set up his kingdom, either before or since his departure to heaven ; but that this glorious consummation will be deferred till his *return*.

VI. But let us take Barnes' own illustration of the Kings of Judea. He says, “ Judea was governed by *Jews*, who held the government *under* the Romans. It was necessary that the prince or king should receive a recognition of his right to the kingdom by the Roman Emperor, and in order to this, that he should go to Rome.” I ask, then, did these kings actually reign in Judea *before* they went to Rome ? did they reign in Judea whilst they *remained* at Rome ? did they reign in Judea till they *returned* from Rome ? were Herod the Great, Archelaus, and Agrippa *de facto* kings till their authority was recognized by the Emperor, and established AT THEIR RETURN ? Let Barnes himself answer these questions. On verse 14 he says :—“ Archelaus went to Rome to obtain from Augustus a confirmation of his title to

reign over that part of Judea which had been left him by his father, Herod the Great. The Jews, knowing his character, sent an embassy of fifty men to Rome to prevail on Augustus *not* to confer the title on him, but they could not succeed. He *received* the kingdom, and reigned in Judea in the place of his father." From this illustration it is clear that Archelaus' authority was *in suspense* till it was recognized by Augustus ; that it was in *no degree* exercised in Judea, till that recognition was made known—and that he did not actually reign in his native country till he *returned*. But if so, does not consistency require us to understand, that Jesus does not reign on earth whilst he is in the "far country" of heaven, any more than Archelaus reigned in Judea whilst he was in the "far country" of Rome? From the moment that the Jewish prince was invested with regal authority by Augustus, he was *de jure* king—but he was not *de facto* king till he came home. In like manner, from the moment that Jesus took his seat at the Father's right hand, he was *de jure* king ; but he is not *de facto* king till he *returns*.

VII. And yet the common notion is, that Jesus is actually reigning in his own proper kingdom on earth, as truly, though not as extensively, as he ever will reign—that is, he is reigning by His Spirit, and will cease to reign altogether in this world, when he *returns* to judge the quick and the dead. But does this view consist with the above illustration of Barnes ? In what sense did Archelaus depart to Rome ? *personally*, not by *proxy*—in what sense did he *return* to Judea ? *personally*, not by *proxy*. In what sense did Jesus depart into the "far country" of heaven, to be invested with

regal authority? No one denies that he departed *personally*, that is *bodily*. Does not consistency, then, require us to understand that before he sets up his proper kingdom, he must *return* in the same way, viz. : *personally* and *bodily*? but if so, then the question we have been discussing is settled in favour of the *personal* reign; for as there was no “spiritual coming” of the nobleman—no “*spiritual* coming” of Herod, Archelaus, and Agrippa; so, analogy forbids us to suppose there will be a “spiritual coming” of Christ.—See Acts i. 14.

VIII. In perfect concord with this view of the connection between the *personal* coming, and proper kingdom of Christ, are the following passages of Scripture. “The Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead (or rather “living and dead,” for there is no article in the Greek, and the difference is important) at HIS APPEARING, AND HIS KINGDOM.”* Here the *personal* appearing of Christ is *synchronous* with the commencement of his reign; for if he had been reigning in his own proper kingdom during the whole period between his first and second advents, how could the apostle declare that his appearing the second time to judgment was *simultaneous* with his reign? Moreover, if at Christ’s coming to judge the world, he is, according to the common, but, I conceive, erroneous interpretation of 1 Cor. xv. 24—“to deliver up the kingdom to God the Father,” how could Paul assure Timothy that his coming and his kingdom would occur together? “He shall judge, &c., at *his appearing* and at *his kingdom*,” is a very different statement from he shall judge “at his appearing, and at *the delivering up of his kingdom*.”†

* 2 Tim. iv. 1. † This is an *argumentum ad hominem*.

Nor can any interpretation, I think, but the millenarian, reconcile these two passages. According to it, the first passage refers to the *commencement* of Christ's reign, when he shall judge *some* of the living and the dead—whilst the latter refers to the *termination* of his reign, when having judged the *whole* human race, "he shall deliver up" the dominion to the Father, "that God may be all in all." This text, then, perfectly coincides with the parable in teaching that the Lord Jesus must RETURN, before he sets up his reign.*

IX. We have the same connection between the *coming*, and the *kingdom* of Christ in the prayer of the dying thief, a prayer which, we may safely say, was put into his mouth by the Holy Spirit, for how otherwise could he believe that the crucified one by his side would rise from the dead, and *come and reign*?—"Lord remember me when thou COMEST" not into, but "*in thy KINGDOM.*" (*en te basileia sou.*)—Luke xxiii. 42.

X. The same synchronism is presented in Zech. xiv. 5-9. "And the Lord my God SHALL COME, and all the saints with thee. . . And the Lord shall be KING over all the earth."† Here again is the nobleman's RETURN before he begins to *reign*.

* Happy with those *that first arrive*,
Might I my lot obtain,
When Christ descending from the skies,
BEGINS his glorious reign.

—C. WESLEY.

† See my Lecture on this chapter, entitled, "The Personal Reign Demonstrated." Sunderland: W. H. Hills. London: R. Theobald.

XI. Then there is the Lord's prayer—"Thy kingdom COME,"—that is, "*let it come*,"—but if it is *come* already ; if it has been established 1800 years ; why pray that it may *come* ? If it be answered, we *mean* that it may be *extended* ; I reply, that is another petition altogether, and is not in the Lord's prayer.

XII. In confirmation of the view above advocated, I call attention to Christ's own promise in Rev. iii. 21—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me ~~IN MY THRONE~~, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father ~~IN HIS THRONE~~." Here is an express distinction between *two* thrones—"my throne," and "my Father's throne"; and it is plainly implied that though Jesus is actually sitting on the latter, yet he is *not* sitting on the former, viz., HIS OWN. But if Christ himself declares that he is *not* on his own throne, it seems rather hazardous for my opponents to maintain that *he is* ; and they can only get out of the difficulty by affirming that he is sitting on *both thrones at once* ; but if they affirm this, I ask, what is the difference *at present* between Christ's sitting on his own throne, and on his Father's ? He is, we all admit, at the Father's right hand ; but I enquire, does he there administer *two* such various kingdoms, that the one may be called his Father's, and the other his own ? To my mind this promise beautifully illustrates the parable we are considering ; as Archelaus was not on *his own throne* while he was at Rome—as the nobleman was not *de facto* king in his own land and on his own throne, whilst he was in "the far country," to receive the kingdom, i.e., to be invested by superior authority with regal power ; so Christ is not *de facto* king on earth, seated on his own throne,

in his own proper kingdom, whilst he is on his Father's throne in heaven.* The nobleman, Herod the Great, Archelaus, Agrippa, and Christ, must all RETURN, ere their kingdoms can be established; and the only error that the parable corrects is the false notion as to the *immediateness* of that return.

XIII. Again, in Luke ix. 27-35, we read—"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. *And* (mark the connection) it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James (the "*some*" above referred to), and went up into a mountain to pray." Then follows the account of the transfiguration. Here then was the fulfilment of the fore-named promise; here was the vision of the *crown* to the three chosen witnesses of the *cross*. See Matthew xxvi. 37. And observe, that what Luke calls "the KINGDOM of God," Peter, one of the witnesses, affirms was the power and COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ,"—2 Peter i. 16-18—the very same synchronism as that of Paul in 2 Tim. iv. 1—"At his APPEARING and at his KINGDOM." Matthew too agrees with Peter and Paul as to the simultaneousness of these two events, for in the parallel passage, xvi. 28, he describes the vision as "the Son of Man COMING in his KINGDOM." But further, as no one will dispute that Christ's "appearing to judge living and dead," 1 Tim.

* Father, now to Israel raise
Thy servant and thy son,
Christ, our heavenly David, place
On his *terrestrial throne*—(*his own throne.*)

—C. WESLEY.

iv. 1., is his *personal* coming—so, I suppose, no one will deny that Christ was *personally* present on “the holy mount,” or that he was there *bodily* glorified. Very well; but Matthew and Peter declare that this vision was, in some sense, “the COMING and KINGDOM of Christ”—that is, of course, a *sample* or *specimen* of his kingdom; for, interpret it as you will, you cannot make it the kingdom itself. It follows, therefore, that Christ’s “coming and kingdom” must be *synchronous*, *personal*, and *visible*, and that he never will sit on his own proper throne, till, in the most literal sense of Heber’s beautiful words :—

“ Till o’er our ransomed nature,
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, KING, Creator,
In bliss RETURN to REIGN.”

Who will not add with that “sweet psalmist,” Charles Wesley :—

“ Come then our heavenly friend,
Sorrow and death to end;
Pure *Millennial* joy to give,
Now appear on earth again;
Now thy people saved receive,
Now BEGIN thy glorious reign.

“ Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Amen.”

XIV. Once more, a very striking example of the synchronism so often presented, and, at the same time, a notable confirmation of the view already given of Christ’s promise in Rev. iii. 21, is to be found in Matthew xxv. 31–34—“*When the Son of man SHALL COME in his glory, THEN he shall sit on the throne of his glory.*” Here too his *personal* coming is *simultaneous* with his sitting on the throne of his glory; he

will not therefore sit on this glorious throne till he *comes* in person again ; and yet the common idea is, that he is *now* sitting on the throne of his glory ; whereas he himself in the two places above mentioned, says *he is not*. “ *I am*,” he says, in the one passage, “ on *my Father's* throne ” ;— “ When,” says he, in the other, “ the Son of man **SHALL COME** in his glory, **THEN** (not before) shall he sit on the throne of his glory.” And what follows ? the judgment of the *living*, not the dead, for there is no resurrection here ; “ all nations,” or rather “ *all the Gentiles*,” (*panta ta ethne*)—not the church of God—nor yet the Jews—(see the distinction between the three in 1 Cor. x. 32) “ all the Gentiles shall be gathered before him.” Now for the setting up of the kingdom— “ Then shall the **KING** say,” &c. Here is the nobleman *returned* with authority to **REIGN**, and to reward his subjects according to their deserts whilst he was away.

XV. Let us take another view of the parable. Before the nobleman departs he calls unto him his *ten servants*—mark that—he is not *king* yet, so he does not pretend to exercise authority over any but his own *household servants* ; and it is for the same reason that his enemies are called “ *his citizens*”—not his *subjects*. Their guilt did not consist in refusing him *obedience* so long as he was a mere “ nobleman ”—for in *that* capacity he had no right to expect it ; but in “ *hating* him, and sending a message after him, saying, We do not wish—(*ou thelomen*)—this man to reign over us.” Much less does he *punish* them for their ill-will *before* his right to reign is confirmed. Now, this exactly agrees with the position of Jesus during the interval between his two advents. Properly speaking, he has no *subjects* yet, though,

thank God, he has multitudes of *servants*, some good and some bad, like those of the nobleman ; he is therefore in the New Testament never called the *king* of his church—he is indeed termed “our Lord,” as the nobleman was termed “the Lord” of his servants, but not once “our *king*.”* Christians stand in the same relation towards Christ whilst he is in heaven, that the servants stood in towards the nobleman while he was in the “far country,”—they obey him in the midst of enemies who refuse to bear his yoke ; and as the one called his ten servants, prior to his setting out, and entrusted them each with a sum of money, saying, “Occupy,” or rather, “Do business with it” (*pragmateusasthe*)—till when ? “TILL I COME”—not till you go ; so the other, before his ascension, called unto him his disciples, and gave them instructions how to act during his absence—see Acts i. 3 ; nor was *their* departure to be regarded as the termination of their service, *but his return*. “Watch,” says he, again and again, “for ye know not what hour your Lord doth COME.” And lest this “coming” should be explained away by spiritualization, the Apostles give us the same warning in language which it is impossible to misinterpret ; for example, “Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, AND TO WAIT FOR HIS SON FROM HEAVEN”—1 Thess. i. 10. Again, “I pray God your whole spirit and soul and BODY be preserved blameless” until when ? until death ? no ; “until the COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ”—1 Thess. v. 23.

* In Rev. xv. 3, we read, “Just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints,”—but this may apply to the Father, and not to the Son. Besides, the best critical editions of the Greek Testament, e. g, those

Again, speaking to Timothy *as an individual*, and not to the collective Church, the apostle says, "I give THEE charge * * that THOU keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable." Until when? until death? No; "until the APPEARING of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Tim. vi. 14. This passage convincingly shows that the object of hope to *individuals* of every age, no less than to the whole church, is "the APPEARING of Christ." But proofs of this are numberless in the New Testament, and are all in perfect harmony with the nobleman's injunction, "Do business with it TILL I COME." I give one more instance: "As often as YE eat this bread, and drink this cup, YE do shew the Lord's death TILL HE COME." To do away with the perpetuity of this institution, the Society of Friends spiritualise the words "TILL HE COME;" that is, say they, "till he come *into the heart*!"*—but I ask my opponents whether this interpretation be not quite as legitimate as to explain the frequent warnings to watch for the coming of the Son of Man, by the gloss—"that is, for his coming—at death; for he *cannot* come *personally* until many hundreds of years have elapsed." I confess it seems to me rather hazardous, when Jesus himself says, "Lo! I come quickly," to interpret it "Lo! I will not come till at least ten centuries shall have expired after your death."

XVI. Again, *when* did "the nobleman" commence his reign? The answer is in the 12th verse—"And it came to

of Griesbach and Scholz, reject this reading, and substitute it by "king of nations." The saints reign *with* Jesus, *i.e.*, they are fellow-kings.—Rev. i. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 12.

* See Barclay's Apology, proposition xiii.

pass, when he was *returned*, having received the kingdom." Then he *begins* to exercise regal authority ; and *first*, he judges his servants according to their conduct whilst he was away ; afterwards he executes vengeance on his avowed foes. "Those mine enemies, who *did not wish*—(*tous me thelesantas*)—that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay before me." Surely, then, consistency requires us to believe, that the reign of Christ does not, properly speaking, *commence*, till he returns to reward his friends, and punish his foes. This order, too, agrees with Matthew xxv. It is when THE KING gives their due to the righteous and the wicked that he *sits on the throne of his glory*. As the nobleman's "*appearing and kingdom*" came together, so do "the appearing and kingdom of Christ." 2 Tim. iv. 1.*

XVII. But take another line of argument to show that Christ's proper reign is deferred till his return. When "the nobleman" began to reign, he openly took the part of his friends ; during his absence, no doubt, they were sneered and scoffed at for their loyalty to one whom the vast majority "hated ;" but "his appearing," i. e., the commencement of his *de facto* reign, soon altered the phase of things—the despised are honoured, and the despisers are put to shame.

* If it be objected that Christ must be reigning in power now, because he himself says—"All power is given unto me in heaven and earth"—and again, "Thou hast given him power over all flesh," I answer, that though, on "his Father's throne," he *providentially* administers the government of this world, for the express purpose of securing the salvation of his elect,—John xvii. 2,—yet this is a very different thing from "sitting on his own throne" as *the Son of David*. See Luke i. 32. On the former, he *acts* in secret without the recog-

Yet, in opposition to all analogy between a parable, and its signification, the common idea is—that, whilst he is in heaven, Jesus is actually reigning, with as much authority as the nobleman did *after his return* ; though his servants are meanwhile “the offscouring of all things, and the scum of the earth,”—though they are liable every day to be buffeted and tormented, and crucified ; and though his enemies openly declare “they do not wish him to reign over them !” Why, what sort of a *reign* is that in which the *King* either cannot or will not protect his friends ; in which he cannot, or will not, save them from imprisonment and death *for his sake* ? What sort of a kingdom is that in which a *rebel* has the chief sway, and in which ninety-nine out of a hundred of the population refuse allegiance to their rightful lord ? Does Jesus *reign* in such a kingdom as this ? Does he *reign* on earth, whilst Satan is the God and the prince of the world ? John xiv. 30 ; 2 Cor. iv. 4. If there is any analogy between a parable and its signification, Jesus, like the nobleman, must “gather *out of his kingdom* all things that offend, and them that do iniquity,” before he begins to reign. Matthew xiii. 41.

XVIII. Having thus, by a series of distinct arguments, proved, as I think, that the proper reign of Jesus will be deferred till he returns, I now desire to notice a few common objections to this view.

1st. How can it be said that Christ does not actually reign when, in numerous passages, we read such words as these,—

“*He will act openly, judicially, and with universal consent. Now he bears with his enemies ; then he will “gather out of his kingdom all things that offend.”*”

“The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Again,—“The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” Again,—“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man who sowed good seed in his field.” Do not these passages imply that the kingdom of God is actually here? I answer, that there are quite as many texts to show that, in another sense, the kingdom of God is *not* actually here, viz.—“The Lord will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.” Again,—“Thy kingdom come.” Again,—“Know ye not that the unrighteous *shall not* inherit the kingdom of God.” Again,—“This ye know that no whoremonger, &c., hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God.” Again,—“It is better to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, &c.” Once more,—“Ye shall see *all the prophets* in the kingdom of God.” These, and many more texts, demonstrate that, in some important sense, the kingdom of God is *future*. The explanation is, that the *principles* of the kingdom are already here, and are planted in every believer’s heart, viz., “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;” and *in this sense*, the kingdom of God is actually come,—but the *power* of the kingdom, and the *glory* of the kingdom have not yet appeared. The King’s friends are persecuted, his enemies, triumph, and He himself is far away,—and in this sense, the kingdom is future. The connection between the exercise of *judicial power*, and the setting up of the proper reign of Christ is clearly brought out in Rev. xi. 17,—“Thou hast taken to thee thy great POWER and hast REIGNED.” To my mind, the Scriptures seem everywhere to teach that as soon as Christ comes, he *begins* to reign in his own proper king-

dom ; whereas the view of my opponents is, that as *soon as he comes*, he *ceases* to reign in his own proper kingdom, for “he delivers it up to the Father.” To *me* the Bible says, “his appearing and kingdom ;” to *them* it says, “his appearing and *termination* of his kingdom.”

2nd. The tendency of this view is to relax effort for the conversion of the world. I answer, that doctrines must be tried, not by their supposed tendencies, but by the dogmatic teaching of God’s word. No doubt, the *real* tendency of truth is to good, not to evil ; but its *alleged* tendency to evil is often exhibited to frighten people from its reception. For example :—the *alleged* tendency of the doctrine of Election is to make no effort to save souls ; but where is this result actually found ? No doubt, some *extremists* are exceedingly indifferent to the use of means ; but the vast majority of Calvinists are as active and energetic in their efforts to convert sinners as their opponents. In like manner, I ask, where is it actually found that Millennarian views relax effort to bring souls to Christ ? It cannot be denied that some of the most laborious ministers in the Establishment of England, and in the Free Church of Scotland, are Millennarians ; and no wonder, for the tendency of their view is to *increase* effort, believing, as they do, that the time of Christendom is short. If it be objected, but their efforts are not backed by the hope of the *world’s* conversion,* I answer,

* Dr. Chalmers says, (and he was no heretic,) in his letter to Mr. Bickersteth :—“*I utterly despair* of the universal prevalence of Christianity—as the result of a pacific missionary process. . . . I look for its conclusive establishment through a widening passage of

neither are *yours* ; your efforts are directed towards your own immediate sphere, a mere speck on the world's surface ; and you do not hope to convert *all* even there. What minister of the gospel in Sunderland hopes to convert, or even to see others convert, *all* the souls in the borough ? And yet, I suppose no preacher relaxes his effort to save sinners on that account. What would become of "justification by faith alone" if we were to listen to Romanist allegations of its tendencies ? According to them, it discourages good works, and opens the floodgate to all iniquity. Yet what Protestant is afraid of this bug-bear ? The "iniquity" is with those who deny the doctrine, not with those who defend it.

3rd. "You hold," as one of my opponents has said, "that the agency which won its victory on the day of Pentecost *must be helped and supplemented*, or it will never convert the world." He means that it must be "*helped*" by the personal appearance of Christ. To this objection I simply reply, *we hold no such thing*. We hold with Paul, "that the gospel is the *power* of God unto salvation, unto *every one* that believeth ;" and yet we hold that God may employ diverse agencies in the *application* of the gospel. Was not Paul himself converted by the *agency* of Christ's personal appearance—not as the *exclusive* agency I grant, but as one of the number ? How often are sickness, bereavement, or deliverance from peril, employed by God as *instruments* of conversion ? Yet who would mock their instrumentality by ask-

desolating judgments, with the utter demolition of our present civil and ecclesiastical structures."—*Bickersteth's Memoirs*.

ing—"Must the agency, which won its victory on the day of Pentecost, be *helped* and *supplemented*" by such means as these? In like manner, we hold with Zechariah xii. 10, that as with Paul, so with the Jews as a nation; Christ's personal appearance *will*—not *must*—be an instrument in their conversion.*

XIX. There are other objections, no doubt, to the Millennarian scheme, but I have neither time nor space to notice them; nor do I regard them as particularly worthy of attention; because, for the most part, they are *argumenta ab ignorantia*—mere difficulties as to the *how?* and *why?* If, however, any of my readers should desire to see every imaginable objection discussed, I recommend them to peruse "Objections to the Pre-Millennial Advent Considered," by G. K. Ogilvy. London: Nisbet.†

XX. And now, in conclusion, I have two requests to make, and they are,—first, that if any one attempts to answer this pamphlet, he will be kind enough to handle every argu-

* *Clement*, in his "Spiritual Reign," asserts that Pre-Millennialism "casts discredit on the work of the Holy Spirit, as unable to accomplish the conversion and consolation of mankind upon an extensive scale." This is pure fancy, a mere inference of his own, which it is not charitable to charge us with. Because *he thinks* we do so and so, is it, therefore, the case? No Millennarian ever held these things imputed to us; many have openly disclaimed it; but still *Clement* asserts it is true.—*Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*.

† The best book I ever read on the whole subject of Prophecy is entitled *Plain Papers on Prophetic and other Subjects*,—Nisbet or Theobald, London. W. H. Hills, Sunderland. Its arguments are fair, clear, and convincing; its style neat and flowing, and its spirit a pattern for controversialists.

ment *seriatim*, and not take up some one or two really, or pretendedly, weak points ; and having, as he supposes, demolished them, triumph as if he had upset the whole. If he will *prove* me wrong, first, in my interpretation of the parable, and afterwards, in my exposition of the several passages adduced in its corroboration, I will sincerely *thank him*.

2nd. If this pamphlet is answered, I request that the two publications be read *together* ; for if the latter be perused without the former, it is easy to conjecture the conclusion. Nothing is more common in controversy than to make garbled extracts from an opponent, which are not representations, but *mis*-representations of his views ; and having thus raised a man of straw, to blow him away with a puff, to the great amusement of the *one-sided*, and to their champion's great delight. To judge fairly, both parties must be heard *in propria persona*, and not out of each other's mouth.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,
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