

much disputation. It is thought by some to favour the notion of the descent of Christ's spirit into hell, and his preaching to the spirits of the damned, during the period of his interment—while his body was confined to the tomb. * * *

It is that the phrase "he went and preached"—necessarily implies that he did it in person. But the same phrase is used where it cannot possibly be so understood. In Eph. ii. 17—the Apostle says, "He (Christ) came and preached to them that were afar off, and to them that were nigh," i. e. Jews and Gentiles. This he is represented as doing after he arose from the dead.—But it is certain that Christ did not go to the Gentiles, nor even to the Jews, in person, after his resurrection, and preach to them. "He went and preached" is a pleonasm for "he preached:" which he did by his Apostles. What the ambassadors of Jesus Christ did, was done by Jesus Christ himself. In this light, let us examine the place before us. To whom did Jesus Christ preach? The Apostle says—"To the spirits in prison."

To what class of them did Jesus Christ preach? The Apostle Peter answers—those, "who formerly were disobedient."—if we could learn when they were disobedient, we could ascertain when Christ preached to them. Is there any clue we can get to this matter? The next member of the sentence explains the whole. When the patience, or long-suffering of God waited.—God has ever been long-suffering. But the patience and forbearance of God were never more remarkable than in the days of Noah. He commanded them to reform, and gave them the opportunity of doing so—"while an ark was preparing." It was during this period that Christ preached to the sinners of the old world. But how did he preach? The Apostle replies—"by his spirit." This is corroborated by Gen. vi. 3.—"my spirit," says God, "shall not always strive with man."—How long did Christ preach to them? how long did the Spirit of God strive with them?—Peter says Christ preached to the people "while the ark was preparing;" which, it seems, was an "hundred and twenty years." This agrees with the statement in Gen. vi. 3.—"Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." This was the length of time that the long-suffering of God waited; and during this long period did Christ preach to them by his Spirit. The question arises,—How was this done? It appears evident that words were employed, and a human agent must have spoken them. Christ preached to the Jews and Gentiles, by his Spirit in his Apostles; and with equal propriety, it may be said, he preached to the Antediluvians by his Spirit in Noah: and this is most certainly the way he did preach to them. Noah was a "preacher of righteousness"—(2 Pet. ii. 5.) and by his preaching the Spirit of God strove with the people. He spoke as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, as did all the Prophets; it was the Spirit of Christ which inspired them all—Pet. i. 1-2. What Noah did under the influence of the Spirit of Christ, Christ did by his Spirit; and to refuse to do