that the meaning will be, ever since the  
death of those to whom the promise was  
made, things have continued as we now see  
them [and as they have ever continued even  
before those fathers] from the beginning  
of creation. So that “*all things continue  
from the beginning of creation*,” is a general proposition applicable to all time: “*since  
the fathers fell asleep*,” the terminus, from  
which this general proposition is taken up  
and applied to the case in hand. And now  
we have cleared the way to enquiring, who  
are meant by **the fathers**. And the answer  
is plain: largely and generally, those to  
whom the promise was made: the same as  
are indicated Rom. ix. 5, “*of whom are***the fathers:**” yet not exclusively these, but  
simultaneously with them any others who  
may be in the same category,—e. g. those  
who bear to the New Test. church the same  
relation as they to that of the Old Test.  
The assertion, as coming from the *scoffers*,  
must not he pressed to any particular date,  
but given that wide reference which would  
naturally be in the mind of one making  
such a general charge).

**5–10.]** *Refutations of this their scoffing inference*.

**5–7.]** *First refutation:* from the biblical *history of the  
creation.* **For** (i. e. they speak **t**hus, because) **this** (viz. this fact which follows)  
**escapes them** (passes unnoticed by them)  
**of their own will** (i. e. they shut their  
eyes to this fact), **that the heavens  
were from old** (from the beginning of  
all things) **and the earth formed** (holding  
together, composed, subsisting; so the same  
Greek word in Col. i. 17, “*By him all  
things subsist*”) **out of water and by means  
of water (out of water**, because the waters  
that were under the firmament were gathered together into one place and the dry  
land appeared: and thus water was the  
material, *out of* which the earth was made:  
**by means of water**, because the waters  
above the firmament, being divided from  
the waters below the firmament, by furnishing moisture, and rain, and keeping  
moist the earth, are *the means by which* the  
earth *subsists*. This is the simplest   
rendering) **by the word of God** (not of its own  
will, nor by a fortuitous concurrence of  
atoms), **by means of which [two]** (viz. the  
waters under the firmament and the waters  
above the firmament: for in the flood [1]  
the fountains of the great deep were broken  
up, and [2] the windows of heaven were  
opened, Gen. vii. 11. See the other interpretations in my Greek Test.) **the then  
world** (i. e. the whole state of things then  
existing. The Apostle’s argument is, as  
against the assertors of the world’s endurance for ever, that it *has once been destroyed*, so that their assertion is therby  
invalidated. The analogy is not exactly,  
but is sufficiently close: and **the world**, as  
an indefinite common term, takes in the  
*heavens and earth*, which were then instrumental in, and purified by, the destruction, if not altogether swept away by it. Nay,  
the analogy is closer than this: for just as  
Noah stepped out of the Ark on a new  
world, the face of the heavens clear, and  
the face of the earth renewed, so we look  
for a new heavens and earth [ver. 13], yot  
like these others constructed out of the  
materials of the old) **being inundated with  
water, perished** (see last note; not, *was  
annihilated*, but lost its then form and  
subsistence as a *world* or *order of things*[*cosmos*, the Greek for *world*, signifies  
both], and passed into a new state. Only  
thus does the verse come in logically as a.  
contradiction to the saying of the scoffers,  
that *all things remain thus from the beginning of creation*):

**7.] but the new  
heavens and earth** (contrast to *the then  
world:* the postdiluvian visible world) **by  
His** (God’s: if the other reading [see  
margin] be taken, it must not be pressed  
to signify any one saying, but must  
refer generally to the prophetic word,