

ARTICLE IV.

RESURRECTION AND FINAL JUDGMENT.

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[THE following paper was read before the North Central Association of Michigan, of which I have been a member for eight years. It has since been twice repeated by special request before other public bodies. Upon being asked to publish it, I thought to reconstruct it so as to eliminate entirely the personal element which it will be found to contain, as the paper itself will explain. But I have been too much occupied with other matters to allow me time to do it. So I give it in its original form. If any of my readers are familiar with a little volume by Dr. Warren, of Portland, entitled "The Parousia," they will discover a general similarity of views, though with some marked differences in method of treatment. In view of this fact, it is only due to historic truth to say, that, at the time of my first public presentation of these views, I had not seen Dr. Warren's book, nor known of its existence. His study of the subject and my own have been entirely independent of each other. To those who wish a fuller development of these general topics, I most heartily recommend his volume, with almost the whole of which I find myself in entire harmony.]

WHILE I am entirely clear in the conclusions reached in the present paper, the fact that they differ more or less widely from those reached by many men much wiser than I have ever dreamed of being, may well inspire me with modesty. Of course it goes without saying that the opinions of former years which have been given up, may, after all, be nearer the truth than these which I now hold: but "to the law and the testimony." This is the final appeal. What does the word of God teach? is the only thing to be determined. No question of this sort is settled by the authority of great names. As Congregationalists, we all agree in this—that there is only so much of force in any man's opinions as there is force in the reasons for them. I am to give you

my reasons for the surrender of former beliefs, and you must judge of the force of them.

I used to believe and preach that the resurrection and the final judgment came at the end of this world's history: meaning by "this world" the terrestrial globe upon which we live, and its mortal inhabitants. I confess that the views I held were perhaps quite vague; and certainly they were not so much the result of any investigations of my own, as of a kind of passive acceptance of the doctrines taught me in one way and another from my youth up. But I am sure that I held to the notion that there was some time to be an end of the history of mortal men on this planet, and *at that time the resurrection was to take place*. And that, I understood, was the generally accepted faith of my Sunday-school teachers, and of those whom I heard preach, and of my theological instructors: and so it was my own faith. I hold now an entirely different view as to what the Bible teaches on this subject.

It is unfortunate that the English word "world" should be employed in our English Bible to translate two entirely different Greek words,—*αἰών* and *κόσμος*,—words which to the careful student of the original convey distinct ideas. *Αἰών* means "age," "a period of time," longer or shorter, ordinarily very long. *Κόσμος* means literally "order," "arrangement," the material universe, or earth as the known part of it; and, by metonymy, the people living on it. *Αἰών* is a word of *time*: *Κόσμος*, of *place*.

Occasionally the two words are used in a manner closely related. Take, for example, Luke xx. 34: "The children of this world" (*αἰών*); and John xiv. 30: "The prince of this world" (*κόσμος*). Take, also, 2 Tim. iv. 10: "Having loved

“ages;” as, for example, in this sentence: “The greatest statesman in the history of the world is Moses, the law-giver of Israel.” Substitute “ages” for “world,” and no change is made in the general idea, but only in the manner of expressing it.

Perhaps we would do well, in our version of the New Testament, to transfer from the Greek a few more words instead of attempting to translate them. But suffice it to say here that the Bible *never speaks of the end of the κόσμος*; nor does it, in my judgment, employ any form of words with the purpose of expressing that idea. It is the end of the *eon*; never of the *cosmos*. Thus, in my re-examination, that old notion fell, because it was built upon the sand.

So, again, I had understood the resurrection to be of the mortal body; and that it was still a thing of the future with Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and Daniel, and Paul, and all the rest of the faithful. But when I came to the study of the word, and especially of what Christ had said, some new thoughts came to me; for the words of the Master did not seem to sustain the view I had entertained. Of what He said on this subject, Matthew, Mark, and Luke have all given an account; and between these accounts, while there are slight variations in detail, there is not even an appearance of discrepancy in substance.

Matthew gives the story thus:¹—

“The same day came to him the Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

adds; "Now that the dead are raised," is Luke's form of words], have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Luke adds: "for all live unto him."

What is the argument of Christ with the Sadducees? Plainly this: "*There is a resurrection: your own Scriptures prove it. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob illustrate it.*" I can make nothing else out of it. It is unsatisfactory to say that Christ turned aside from the question of the resurrection to a merely related question—that of existence after death. For notice Luke's form of words: "Now that the dead are RAISED, Moses showed at the bush, when he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." *All that is involved and implied in the doctrine of the resurrection was illustrated in the declaration made to Moses at the bush.* This is the obvious interpretation of Christ's words to the Sadducees. Understanding it otherwise, nullifies utterly the force of the argument. Whatever the word "resurrection" means, we have the direct teaching of Christ to show that *Abraham and Isaac and Jacob had passed through it* when Moses stood at the burning bush.

Now, that the resurrection of their mortal bodies had then taken place, nobody pretends to claim. The term, then, can mean only one of two things—either the future life in a disembodied state, or the future life in a spiritual body. Which of these two the Scriptures teach, will appear as we proceed with this paper. But the point to which your attention is here called, is that in this conversation with the Sadducees our divine Lord makes no reference to any future resurrection which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were to pass through; but he does make a most direct and unquestionable reference to an event which had already taken place when Moses stood at the bush, fifteen hundred years before Christ; and he makes reference to it as showing *what the resurrection of the dead meant.*

The discovery of this fact led to the study of other passages referring to the subject—especially that in Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians in which he emphatically declares that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; and that other: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." There *is* a spiritual body. It is the natural body that dies; it is the spiritual body that does not die. I had been wont to say, in view of the troublesome questions that were often started in connection with the resurrection of the natural body: "It is all within reach of the divine power to keep separate enough particles to make for each one his own body at the last": but when I reflected that flesh and blood could not inherit the kingdom of God, I did not see the necessity for re-creating an organism which was at once to be destroyed. It is to be noticed also that when Paul had said: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body," it was as though he had positively told us that there is no such thing as the resurrection of the natural body at all. *It is raised a spiritual body.* So, little by little, I found myself coming to the conclusion that this natural body was made simply for this world, and that I should not have the least need for it, or for any part of it, hereafter; that the spiritual body was probably already in existence, awaiting my needs when this earthly house of my tabernacle shall be taken down. We shall not for one moment be unclothed; but in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall be clothed upon by our house from heaven.

I found that Paul in writing to the Corinthians had written just as if to be absent from this mortal body were to be present with the Lord, and as if there were no interval of time for the soul to be unclothed. Hear him: "In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For indeed we that are in this taber-

nacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 2-4.) All this in connection with what is written just a little before: "Knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also" (iv. 14).

Paul did not seem to anticipate the lapse of eighteen hundred years between the laying aside of the mortal body and the putting on of the immortal. He appeared to shrink from the thought of being unclothed for an instant. "Out of the old house into the new" at once. He never could have written the words I have quoted, it seems to me, with the thought in his mind that his spirit was to wander about for many ages, without a habitation.

The laying down of the natural body, and the "standing up" (*ἀνάστασις*) in the spiritual body, is the *resurrection*, and it takes place at the moment of death. To be absent from the natural body is to be present with the Lord; and never for one moment does the apostle hint at being present with the Lord except in the house not made with hands; and that house is the spiritual body. It seems to me that there can be no mistake about this being the teaching of Paul.

Then, as to the time of the "final judgment," I had believed and taught that this also was at the end of the *cosmos*. But, as I have already stated, not once is the end of the *cosmos* ever spoken of in the Bible.

I had argued that the general and final judgment meant some great day (or time) of final adjudication, when sentence was to be pronounced upon each one in the presence of the assembled race; and I had gone so far as to repeat what I had heard from such preachers as Lyman Beecher and Charles G. Finney, that something of this sort might be (humanly speaking) necessary for the vindication of the divine Judge—for the reason that men would be treated so differently from what other men would think just and right,

because all the facts were not known. These facts would be brought out in the day of judgment; and thus all would be compelled to say that the sentence of God was a righteous one. But when I came to think it through, and arrange the docket for this judgment-day, and to ask how much time should be allowed, on the average, for this sort of judicial procedure, I was somewhat taken aback. I saw that sixty seconds would be a short time to allow to each one; for with some a hundred times that would scarcely suffice for the briefest epitome of their words and deeds and motives. Yet, were the history of this world closed up to-morrow, and but one minute were allowed for the trial of each case, the day of judgment would be three hundred thousand years long. The simple calling of the roll—sixty names a minute—would require five thousand years. So at once it was manifest that the talk of a judgment-day was but a part of the drapery in which the grand and solemn fact of divine judgment was arrayed to our imagination. Each tick of the watch for the last thousand years has stood for the death of some human being.

And then I had argued that the final judgment could not take place till the end of the *cosmos*, because the evil that men do, as well as the good that they do, lives after them, and the full measure of a man's good or evil could not be determined till things had worked out to their final results; and that could not be short of the end of the world's history.

But a little farther thinking led me to see that, upon that theory, judgment could never be pronounced, because both the good and the evil will be forever expanding. The measure never can be taken so as to say, "*This is all of it.*"

prayer. The sale of Joseph and the betrayal of Christ may have been made to work out the preservation of the Jewish race and the salvation of the world; but the criminal actors in each case must be judged by what they meant to do. *So a man's just award is ready for him any day or hour.* What shall hinder, therefore, that his final judgment for the deeds done in the body shall come at the very moment of death?

But the question is: What saith the word? And at this point the inspired utterance of the Epistle to the Hebrews occurred to me as a very important passage for critical study. So I took it in hand. It reads thus: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

I think we shall agree that the natural impression first received from this passage is that there is a close connection in time between death and the judgment. And that must be true if the resurrection occurs at death: for all agree that resurrection and judgment are everywhere associated most closely together. Take, for example, the passage in Second Corinthians (v. 1-12) to which I have already referred. Absent from the body, at home with the Lord: disrobed of the mortal, clothed upon with the immortal: "wherefore we labor that whether present or absent" (that is, whether living here in this mortal body, or absent from it, and present with Christ), "we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." All this in one paragraph,—death of the natural body, putting on the spiritual body, appearing before Christ, and standing at his judgment-seat to receive according to the things done in the body. No break in time is at all suggested: contrariwise, unbroken continuity.

And why should not judgment be passed at once, if it is based upon the record of "things done in the body"? Has not Paul been judged? or is he still awaiting sentence? Has

not "righteous Noah" been judged? or is he still awaiting sentence? I ask, Has not Paul been judged for the deeds done in the body? If not, why not? And, on the theory that his judgment has not yet taken place, will no part of the more than eighteen hundred years of conscious existence already passed since he died at Rome, enter into the account? For aught we know, the end of this material *cosmos*, at which our old belief located the judgment, may yet be one hundred thousand years in the future—if, indeed, it is ever to come at all.

Hear these words to the Hebrews once again: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Eighteen hundred years "after this"? Three thousand years "after this"? For, according to our old belief, Abraham is not yet judged; and he died more than three thousand years ago. Four thousand years "after this"? For Noah died more than forty centuries ago, and is he not yet judged? Are all the grand and glorious men and women of whom the world was not worthy *still in suspense*? For that is what it must mean. The final judgment is the pronouncing of the final sentence that determines one's final and eternal destiny. If that is yet in the future—if none of all the dead know their fate even to this day, (except Enoch and Elijah peradventure,) then they are all *in suspense*.

If this is the revelation of God's word properly interpreted, then we must accept it: for we know nothing about the resurrection except from revelation. But I submit that the presumption is strongly against such a doctrine. And we shall look very carefully into our exegesis before we accept it.

If the dead all pass into an unconscious existence, and are only waked up out of a dreamless sleep at the end of some *eon* (or at some other time), then we are relieved of that difficulty. But only to be plunged into a greater one. We

assume here that the dead in Christ are in a state of conscious existence and conscious blessedness. Are they still awaiting judgment? is the question before us. Are they still in suspense as regards their eternal destiny? Or has Christ already said to them: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"? I believe most fully that it is the latter, and not the former. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment," means *immediately after*.

But does the Greek text justify such an interpretation? I answer: It not only justifies it, but demands it; or, to say the very least, strongly favors it.

The preposition *μετά*, which is here translated "after," is, in the Greek language, followed either by the genitive, dative, or accusative case. It would require some space to copy all the details and specifications as set forth in the lexicons. It is enough to note what is said in Liddell and Scott's of its meaning when followed by the accusative case under the third general head "of sequence or succession." This is divided into three parts: "1. In order of Place, *after, next after, behind*. 2. In order of Time, *after, next to, (thereupon, thereafter, with ταύτα)*. 3. Of Worth, Rank, etc., *next to, next after*." It is used adverbially also: and the definitions given are: "among them," "with them," "and then," "next afterwards," "thereafter," "afterwards."

The definitions given where this preposition is found in connection with the genitive and dative cases also show how strongly the word inclines to *closeness of connection*. For example, they are such as these: "in the midst of," "among," "between," "in common," "in connection with," "by aid of," "in company with."

It is plain, then, from this standard lexicon, that the passage before us might be translated: "It is appointed unto men once to die, and next after this [or immediately after this] the judgment."

But of course there is a higher authority than even the best lexicon; and that is, the usage of the language in the New Testament itself. To that question I now come: What is the *usus loquendi* of this preposition with the accusative, in the New Testament?

The result of my examination has been to find, that, besides the passage under consideration, there are ninety-eight others; and that in ninety-five of them *μετά* might be translated "next after," or "immediately after;" leaving three in which it denotes simple sequence, but not immediate sequence. I will take time to call your attention to a few only. Take, for example, Matt. xvii. 1: "*After* six days Jesus taketh with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart." *How long after* six days? Immediately after. It will be universally conceded that this form of statement conveys the idea of an exact interval of time. There are nineteen examples of this sort, if I have not miscounted. It is a striking fact that when an exact interval of time is to be expressed, it is done in this way. It is equivalent to saying "six days after."

Again, Mark (xiii. 24), in reporting Christ's conversation on the Mount of Olives, says: "In those days, *after* that tribulation the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light," etc., while Matthew's report of the same utterance (chap. xxiv. 29), is, "immediately after." To give greater emphasis to the close succession of events, "immediately" (*εὐθέως*) is prefixed,—a sort of pleonasm which occurs in all languages, and occurs so often that illustration is unnecessary. But Mark evidently regarded *μετά* as sufficient of itself to express immediate sequence.

Another example may be found in Luke's account of the last supper, in which he says, "Likewise the cup after supper" (xxii. 20). Immediate succession is obvious. There was no leaving the table and no interval.

Another example of immediate sequence is quite unexpectedly found in a passage which is often quoted to encourage our faith where the interval between our troubled questioning and the final and clear solution is long and perplexing: John xiii. 7, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (*μετὰ ταῦτα*). No doubt it is true that the illumination of the future life will explain many things which are obscure in this. And our faith may well rest in the assurance that the Lord is not slack concerning the promises which are long in their fulfilment; but that is not what Christ said to the disciples on this occasion. Christ was washing the disciples' feet. When he came to Peter there was a characteristic remonstrance, to which Christ graciously said: "You do not understand this now; but I will explain it *just as soon as I am through*." And so he did, as we find in the thirteenth of John, wherein it appears that he lost no time in making plain to them the meaning of what he had done.

And so if necessary we could show that according to the almost uniform usage of the New Testament *μετά* means "immediately after," or "next after." In ninety-five out of ninety-eight instances (leaving out the passage in Hebrews) it has this meaning. We come then to the consideration of this passage with the strong probability that this is its meaning here. The burden of proof rests upon him who should deny it. A word which is used to denote immediate sequence thirty times as often as it is used to express simple sequence should be assumed in any given case to convey the former meaning rather than the latter, unless there are insuperable difficulties in the way of so understanding it.

I come now to show that there are not only no such difficulties, but, on the contrary, that the reasons for interpreting *μετά* in this passage to mean "immediately after" are so many and so weighty that we should be constrained so to interpret it, even if its general usage were different.

Let me come at it in the way in which my own experience in the study of this subject has led me.

I used to believe and teach that there was an intermediate state of blessedness for the righteous dead between death and the resurrection; and that *Paradise* was the place of the saints' abode between death and the resurrection, while *Heaven* was their eternal home afterward. It is now clear to me that the New Testament makes no such distinction. The dying Christian does not stop at any intermediate station, but goes direct to Heaven. This is the New Testament teaching; and if this is shown to be true, I am sure that nobody will insist that he shall afterwards be brought into judgment to "try and determine" the question of his fitness to be there.

"Paradise" is used three times in the New Testament: 1. In the promise of Christ to the dying robber, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." 2. In Paul's account in 2 Cor. xii. 4 of his being caught up into paradise. 3. In the promise made in Rev. ii. 7, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." It will scarcely be questioned by any one, I think, that paradise in all these cases refers to one and the same place. If we can ascertain, then, with certainty, what place it is in either of the three, it will be sufficient. In the second of them we have an easy task to show that it means the same as heaven. The reading of the passage in full is all that is necessary. It reads thus: "I knew a man

changeably as referring to the same place. The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia represents the accepted view of biblical scholars, in saying that it is "nothing else than the holy of holies of heaven, the place of the glorious presence of God. This is heaven in its fullest, its real sense," the heaven of heavens, "to which Paul refers when he speaks of the 'third heaven.'"¹ Paul, then, uses "paradise" to mean the "very heaven of heavens." Has the word a different meaning in either of the other passages? Whoever so maintains, upon him must rest the burden of proof. We hardly think that any one will undertake it. This passage in Corinthians ought to be considered a full and final settlement of the question. Paradise is heaven; and heaven is paradise.

But this is not all. To be absent from the body, according to Paul, was to be with Christ. And Christ himself taught the disciples the same comforting truth: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you. 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." Where is Christ? In his Father's house. Surely that is heaven. But many passages will give us the answer in plainest words. Mark xvi. 19 tells us: "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into *heaven*, and sat on the right hand of God." Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians (vi. 9) says: "Knowing that your Master is in heaven." And to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. i. 10) he speaks of waiting "for his son from heaven." And the Revelator says (Rev. xix. 11-13): "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called faithful and true; he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God." Of course, this is Christ. Stephen saw heaven

¹ See article "Heaven" (3).

opened, and Christ at the right hand of the Father. Peter says: "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God" (1 Pet. iii. 22). I need not multiply such quotations. Christ is in heaven: and the redeemed are with him. They are not detained all these years at some intermediate station. They have entered already their eternal abode. And if so, is it not well-nigh absurd to deny that they have passed their final judgment? Is not the judgment for the very purpose of determining their fitness to enter heaven? And are they allowed to dwell there these many ages before the question of their fitness to be there at all has been judicially determined? Certainly a theory that involves such an incredible hypothesis is not to be accepted, unless we are absolutely compelled to accept it by the plainest and most unequivocal declarations of the divine word. And most certainly I have found no such declarations, and none that imply such a doctrine.

Finally, we are taught that the glorified saints are with Christ in the likeness of his glorified body (Phil. iii. 21), and hence *in their glorified bodies*. It is sown a natural body; it is raised up at once a spiritual body; the change coming in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and in this respect not like the slow process of raising wheat from the seed, to which Paul alludes for a partial illustration of the two bodies. The spiritual body is probably as similar to the natural body in form as the wheat produced is to the seed. We shall know each other. Had we spiritual vision, we should see our friends as they depart from us clothed upon with their spiritual bodies. Had we spiritual hearing, we might hear their songs of victory, and the melodies which the angels sing as they come to carry them home. Now and then such spiritual senses seem to have been granted to the inhabitants of earth. Peter and James and John thus saw Moses and Elias, who appeared in their spiritual bodies; and they heard the words of these glorified saints as they

spake of the decease which Christ should accomplish at Jerusalem. Paul had a similar experience when he saw and heard the things of which he wrote to the Corinthians. This blessedness has come to others of God's saints at the hour of departure or near it: and all of them shall be thus endowed when they have put off the earthly house of their tabernacle and put on the house from heaven.

It is not to be denied that many questions arise by way of objection and difficulty. These we will anticipate as well as we can; and as far as space may allow.

Objection First: "What, then, are we to understand by the much-talked-of 'end of the world' and second coming of Christ to judgment and the setting up of his kingdom?" I answer:—

"The end of the world" in the New Testament is never, as I have already said, the end of the *cosmos*, but always and simply the end of the *eon*—the end of that long period that was just closing when the most of the New Testament was written. John came preaching "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." When Christ sent forth the twelve, he said to them: "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." When the disciples showed him the buildings of the temple, he told them of their utter destruction in the near future. When he assured them that the Son of man was to come in the glory of the Father with his angels, he immediately added: "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Matthew, Mark, and Luke all report these wonderful words in the same form substantially and in the same connection.¹ On another occasion he drew the picture in marvellous outline of light and shade: the sun was to be darkened, the moon should not give her light, the stars should fall from heaven, the Son of man should come in the clouds of heaven with power and

¹ See Matt. xvi. 27, 28; Mark viii. 38; ix. 1; Luke ix. 26, 27.

great glory. And immediately added: "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Matthew, Mark, and Luke all give the same sublime outline, with numerous but unimportant variations—but all agreeing in that one most significant declaration: "*Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.*" Peter writes about it in both his Epistles. Paul writes about it in both his letters to the Thessalonians. John writes about it: but not in his Gospel. And this is a remarkable fact. He was present on all those occasions, and heard the words of Christ, of which the first three Gospels have so much to report: but not one word concerning it is there in his Gospel. The study of this matter and the solution of the mystery was an event in my life. Like the philosopher of old, I cried "Eureka!" when I saw the explanation. The book of Revelation—written about the year 66—contains several chapters upon this same subject. The Lord gave to John on the Isle of Patmos to see the coming events still more clearly than he had set them forth while in the flesh. And the Apocalypse is more than one half of it devoted to the most glowing prediction of these very events. They were all to be fulfilled in that generation. And about the year 70 that fulfilment came. John's Gospel was not written till some twenty years later. There was no occasion for him to record in that the prophetic words of Christ which had already passed into history and which he had so fully set forth in his book of the Apocalypse, declaring repeatedly that it was of "things which

eon, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom, "of which there shall be no end." This was the coming of the Son of man: the "Parousia," as it is in the Greek—meaning more than the coming of Christ, even his perpetual presence.

No wonder that all the apostles, under the divine inspiration, wrote of it, before the year 70, as imminent. Their Lord and Master had told them distinctly that it should take place during the lifetime of some of those that were living and standing before him at the very time he was speaking. He had plainly intimated that John's life was to be spared to see the event: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" And he did: the only one of the apostles, so far as we know, who did survive the end of the *eon* in the year 70.

Objection Second: "Are we to believe, then, that in that first century, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, the sun was darkened, and the moon; that the stars fell from heaven; that the Son of man came in the clouds of heaven—with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God?" I answer:—

1. We are to believe that, *in the sense* in which these expressions were meant to be understood, *just exactly that* took place; because Christ in uttering these predictions expressly declared in the most emphatic words: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." As though he had anticipated the questioning and doubting that have arisen, he thus solemnly prefixed to his prophecy these words: "*Verily I say unto you:*" and then added, "heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." I know how diligently men have labored to get this word "gener-

this. Every just principle of interpretation forbids any other sense to be given to it, than this generation of persons now living. The same may be said of the attempt to show that, instead of translating "be fulfilled," we might translate "begin to be fulfilled." All in vain. There is nothing in it. These words must stand just as they are, and be understood in their ordinary sense. But I answer:—

2. That these highly wrought figures of speech are so often found in the Old Testament that they were perfectly well understood by Christ, and the apostles, and all the people, to be only the oriental drapery, so to speak, the rhetorical costume, in which the great and stirring events which were soon to take place were set forth. The Old Testament constituted a large part of the literature with which the hearers of Christ were familiar. And so this furnishes the best help in interpreting the New. Especially do the prophecies of the Old Testament aid us in interpreting the prophecies of the New.

Turn, for example, to the thirteenth of Isaiah, which is entitled the Burden of Babylon, and see in what forms of speech the destruction of that city is foretold: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation, and to destroy the sinners thereof 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. . . . I will make the heavens to tremble, and the earth shall be shaken out of her place" (ver. 9, 10, 13). Did any of those things literally happen in the destruction of Babylon?

Take, as another example, this same prophet's prediction of the capture of Jerusalem, and the laying waste of Palestine by Sennacherib: "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and turneth it upside down. . . . The earth is utterly broken, is clean dissolved. The earth shall stagger

like a drunken man. . . . The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed" (xxiv. 1, 19, 20, 23).

Another, in which the judgments of God are denounced against Edom, is especially interesting, because no imagery found in the words of Christ as he foretells his second coming and the so-called "end of the world," is more highly colored than that used by Isaiah in this prophecy: "All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall fade away. . . . The sword of the Lord hath drunk its fill in heaven: it shall come down upon Edom . . . to judgment. . . . 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 for ever" (xxxiv. 4, 5, 9, 10).

And not alone does Isaiah indulge in such gorgeous drapery. When Ezekiel predicts the overthrow of the king of Egypt by Babylon, these are his words: "When I shall extinguish thee, 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" (xxxii. 7, 8).

When Joel foretells the desolations produced by the locusts, he does it in such forms of speech as these: "The day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand: . . . a great people and a strong The earth quaketh before them; the heavens tremble, the sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining" (ii. 1, 2, 10).

You will see that there is not one form of speech employed by Christ and the apostles in foretelling the desolations of Palestine and the destruction of Jerusalem—from Matthew to Revelation—that they might not have drawn from the old prophets in their predictions of the calamities that were denounced against Babylon, Edom, and Egypt. And the reader of Josephus must conclude that more terri-

ble things never could have befallen those ancient cities and countries than fell to the lot of the Jews in the lifetime of the apostle John. The highly wrought figurative speech of Isaiah and Ezekiel and Joel did not mean the end of the *cosmos* in the days of Pharaoh and Sennacherib, and the son of Amoz; neither did the same figures of speech mean the end of the *cosmos* when used by Christ and Peter and John. The Bible is its own best interpreter. Those who were familiar with the Old Testament were not misled by these strong orientalisms.

I must call attention to one more illustration. It is found in the eighteenth Psalm; in which David describes his personal deliverance from the hand of his enemies, especially from the hand of Saul. And here is his account of God's coming to help him: The earth shook and trembled. The foundations also of the mountains were moved, and were shaken because he was wroth. . . . He bowed the heavens and came down. A smoke came out of his nostrils; a fire out of his mouth. Thick darkness was under his feet. He rode upon a cherub. He flew upon the wings of the wind. . . . He thundered in the heavens: he uttered his voice: hail-stones and coals of fire were the arrows which he shot. . . . The channels of the waters appeared: the foundations of the world were laid bare. Does anybody imagine that there were literally earthquakes and volcanic eruptions and tidal waves and terrific thunder-storms sent to David's help? Were the heavens literally bowed down?

Those who heard the prophecies of Christ on the Mount of Olives and of John from the Isle of Patmos, were accustomed to such modes of speech. They knew that the sun and moon and stars had never literally been disturbed at Babylon or Jerusalem; nor in Idumea. They knew that all this was the rhetorical costume of the thought. Those who survived with John the events of the year 70 knew that every word uttered on the Mount of Olives had been fulfilled,

just as it was intended to be understood, in the momentous events which had taken place in their day. Of the correctness of this view, there is a very striking proof in the sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost, in which he says: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. . . . And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come." As if he had said: "We are already in these last days which the prophet foretold, and this is the fulfilment." And so they were. Daniel had said: "*In those days shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; . . . it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.*" *That prophecy was fulfilled.* The kingdom was set up at the time foretold. It stands to-day. In this kingdom the sovereign and the judge are one and the same—our Lord the Christ. Conquest is going on. And *judgment is going on.* Each minute for the last ten centuries has averaged well-nigh a hundred souls that have passed on to death and to judgment. More than a hundred thousand from this globe of ours receive final sentence each twenty-four hours.

"We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time,"

but we fail to take it in. The Son of man came in power and great glory eighteen hundred years ago: he has ever since been on the throne ruling and judging the nations. Day by day, as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, has the separation been going on. Not one soul has died but has gone to judgment. For the deeds done in the

body, whether good or bad, they have received sentence—sentence irrevocable. As the tree falleth, so it lieth.

There is but one coming of Christ foretold by himself or by his apostles. That was to be in the time of that generation. John was to tarry till he came. The prophecy was fulfilled. Those who dream of still another coming will dream on in the future very likely as they have done in the past. But it will be all a dream. As the Jews are still looking for the first coming of the Christ, because he failed to set up an earthly visible kingdom when he did come, so there are some who are for that reason still on the outlook for his second coming. But the kingdom of God henceforth cometh not with observation. It is a spiritual dominion, which was in an emphatic sense established in the earth by the overthrow of the outward and visible, which Christ and the apostles so distinctly foretold as an event which was just at hand, and which occurred in the year 70. No less than four times in the Apocalypse (which was of the date of Nero's reign, about the year 66 or 67) he said: "Lo, I come quickly." *That promise was fulfilled.* Christ had said more than thirty years before, "There be some standing here who shall not taste of death *till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*" That prophecy was fulfilled.

Objection Third: "But is it not said that 'this same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come *in like manner* as ye have seen him go into heaven'?"

Upon the interpretation of these words I am fully aware that there is some difference of opinion. Some have gone so far as to say that "the expression is never employed to affirm merely the certainty of one event as compared with another, but identity of mode or manner;" while others have said: "These words have no necessary reference to the manner in which a thing is done." In such cases there is an appeal always from commentators to the actual usage of the

language. Let us see how that higher court will decide the question.

The words *ὁμοίως*, which are here translated "in like manner," are used in three other instances in the New Testament. They are as follows: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even *as* a hen gathered her chickens under her wings!" (Matt. xviii. 37.) Then certainly it does not express "identity of mode or manner." "Wilt thou kill me, *as* thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?" (Acts vii. 28.) Does this imply that the killing was to be done in the same manner—or the simple fact of the killing, without reference to details of mode? "Now *as* Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth" (2 Tim. iii. 8). Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses *by magical enchantments*. Does Paul mean to indicate that those of whom he is here writing opposed the truth in that particular way? No one, I imagine, will claim that. For while Paul describes those who opposed the truth, in the use of a score of epithets, setting forth their wickedness and their misdeeds, *not one of them* charges them with being magicians. Read at your leisure the verses that precede (2 Tim. iii. 2-5).

The New Testament usage, then, seems to me to give little countenance to the interpretation which requires that *ὁμοίως* should always imply "identity of mode or manner."

Nor does the usage in the Septuagint sustain this theory any better. I give but a single example from Isa. xxxiii. 4: "Your spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar; *as* the running to and fro of locusts" upon it. Were the men in the gathering of spoil to imitate the move-

altogether too much for those who understand literally what is said of Christ's second coming. "In like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven," so was he to come again. But understanding *literally* what is said of his second coming, it is *most unlike* what we are told of his ascension. This was very quiet; few were present: there was nothing spectacular about it. His second coming, on the other hand, was to be with clouds, and voice of trumpet, and every eye should see him. There is no *resemblance of manner*. I think, then, we must agree that all that was meant to be expressed was that the reality of his second coming was to be as obvious and as unquestionable as his ascension had been. As a matter of fact it was far more impressive, as the figures of speech used in describing it would naturally lead us to expect it would be. The Jewish system and the Jewish nation fell with a crash that resounded to the ends of the earth. The kingdom of God came with power and great glory.

Objection Fourth: Very likely, it will also be objected that what Paul says in his Epistles to the Thessalonians is hard to understand in accordance with the views I have here presented: particularly where he beseeches them not to be troubled by what he had written as though the coming of Christ was "at hand." No one who gives attention to the Greek text will find any difficulty here. And the new version makes it plain. Instead of translating "at hand," the new version says "now present" (2 Thess. ii. 2). Paul, in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, had written of the nearness of Christ's coming, implying that some of the people then living would be on the earth at the time of it. This had been pushed by some zealous brethren to mean that the ad-

he had said about the near approach of the Parousia in its fulness—only it was still in the future, all of which is easily understood when we bear in mind the dates of these two Epistles: both of which were written about the year 52 or 53, as is generally admitted.

There is but one uniform line of teaching in all the books of the New Testament written before the year 70—and that is, *that the coming of the Son of man to fully set up his kingdom, was near.* Were the apostles mistaken about that? Such is the view suggested and even boldly declared by some.¹ But to my mind this destroys the very foundations of all Christian faith. And still if his second coming has not yet taken place, the apostles were mistaken. For there is nothing which they declare with more assurance than that it was near at hand in their day. And in so declaring, they teach only what the Divine Master himself taught when he said: “There be some of you standing here who shall not taste of death, *till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*” The glowing language of Paul to the Thessalonians is not a whit more highly colored (understanding it to refer to the events of the seventh decade of the first century) than John uses in the Apocalypse referring to the same events; or than Christ himself used on Mount Olivet when he expressly added, “This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled.” What good reason has any one to object to the glorious prospect that Paul held out to the Thessalonian believers that the dead in Christ should be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so they should be forever with the Lord? For if we may believe that that blessed word was fulfilled to every one of them at the very hour of death; and that it has been fulfilled to all the saints in all these ages since, we need not wonder that Paul added in the very same breath: “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” So

¹ See *Andover Review* for March, 1888.

understood, they were indeed comforting words. But to tell these persecuted Christian heroes that that promised experience would come to them two thousand years after they were dead, would have been cold comfort. And to say that he told them the other thing, but *that it wasn't true*, alas! alas! if that is all we can get out of the apostles, we may well quote Job to them, and say, "Miserable comforters are ye all!" Paul was not mistaken. The Parousia was at hand. And that Abiding Presence (for that is what Parousia means) is continuous. It has been in the world these eighteen hundred years. So I find far less difficulty in understanding Thessalonians from my present standpoint than from my former one.

Objection Fifth: Possibly some one may quote, in opposition to these views, the words in Job xix. 25, 26: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." But all the difficulty in this oft-quoted passage entirely disappears from the new version, especially from the better form given to it by the American revisers, which reads thus: "But as for me, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and at last he shall stand up upon the earth; and after my skin, even this body is destroyed, then without my flesh shall I see God."

Objection Sixth: "But did not Christ preach to the spirits in prison?" Yes, certainly. When? "In the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." We need not enter into the exegesis of this much disputed passage. But since reading the thorough discussion of it in different articles in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, especially those written by Professor Cowles and President Bartlett—than whom our country has produced few, if any, abler exegetes—I have had no trouble from this quarter. There was no continued probation of the antediluvians up to the year of our Lord 35: at all events it is

not taught by the apostle Peter, as their argument against this interpretation of the passage before us is very strictly based upon the laws of Greek grammar.

Omitting notice of some few other objections, our views are briefly summed up as follows:—

1. The second coming of Christ—spoken of as the Parousia—was most plainly and unequivocally taught by Christ himself as an event that should occur in the lifetime of some who heard him preach.

2. Paul in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, in or about the year 53, declared that it had not then taken place.

3. John in the Apocalypse, written about the year 66, tells us repeatedly that it is to occur very soon: “Lo, I come quickly.”

4. To say, as some do, that both Christ and the apostles were mistaken, is rank infidelity. If not, I should not know how to define the word infidelity.

5. If they were not mistaken, the Parousia did occur in power and great glory not long after the year 66.

6. The destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Jewish system and of the Jewish temple about the year 70 constituted the fulfilment of the prophecies spoken of by Christ and the apostles. All the forms and figures of speech found in the New Testament are fully justified by the prophetic symbols of the Old Testament, as applied to the events at that time; say from A. D. 66 to 70.

7. There is but one Parousia anywhere spoken of in the New Testament, as still future. This word means not only *coming*, but *coming to stay*—PRESENCE. It is seventeen times used where it is translated “coming;” three times it is translated “presence,” and perhaps might always be.

8. This Parousia was to take in the setting up of his kingdom, especially by the utter overthrow of the Jewish system, and *was to last forever*. We are living under it.

9. Death to the Christian is the laying down of the natural body, and resurrection is standing up (*anastasis*) in the spiritual body—occurring at once in the very moment of death—as Paul expresses it, “in the twinkling of an eye.”

10. Every man’s judgment comes also at death. “It is appointed unto men once to die, and immediately after this the judgment.” And the rewards and punishments that follow are for deeds done in the body, and are of course fixed and irrevocable.

11. The saved go at once to heaven, and the lost to perdition.

12. Those who look for another personal visible coming of Christ are misled by a misunderstanding especially of Daniel and the Apocalypse—the prophecies of which have an entirely different meaning from that which they attach to them. (This part might be indefinitely amplified.)

13. The kingdom of heaven, which has been set up, is yet to dominate the earth. The nations are some time to be Christ’s. This is clearly stated in the second Psalm, “Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

14. The “church militant” is *here*—the church triumphant is *in glory*; but not far away. We are come already to the general assembly of the first born on earth and in heaven. The dead in Christ have become as the angels of God. And are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? Seeing then we “are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Surely, the prophets and apostles and martyrs—yea, all the dead in Christ—are already there with him IN HEAVEN. We cannot believe that they have been kept back these many years from a full vision of the glorified One. And so we may pray and sing:—

“ Do thou, Lord, midst pleasure or woe,
For heaven *our* spirits prepare :
Then *shortly* we also shall know
And feel what it *is* to be there.”