THE

SECOND ADVENT:

OR,

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH

RESPECTING

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, THE END OF THE
WORLD, THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD,
AND THE GENERAL JUDGMENT?

BY

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"To the Law and to the Testimony." — Isaiah viii. 20.

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"One thing must at all events be true. If the Bible is not to be interpreted by the common principles of language, it cannot be interpreted at all, except by inspired men. Is there any promise to the Church of such a class of interpreters? If not, then our only safety lies in adopting and following out the common, well-known, and well-established principles of interpretation. That these are violated by the extravagant and unfounded views so common at the present day, lies upon the very face of the interpretations. The main object of this little book has been, to show how they are unfounded, and why they ought to be so regarded. And now I appeal to the sober judgment of every unprejudiced reader, and ask him the question, Am I not in the right, in insisting that all designations of time should be interpreted according to their obvious meaning, when no good reason can be given why we should depart from this? Are not the historical facts that I have adduced as the fulfilment of events predicted as true to the representations in the prophecies as other fulfillments to which we usually appeal? If so, why should we not be satisfied with them? Why should we persevere in looking to centuries in advance for fulfilment of that, respecting which it is repeatedly and solemnly declared, that it shall take place speedily."

—PROFESSOR STUART, Hints on the Interpretation of Prophecy, p. 144.
PREFACE.

The following Essay was originally read before an association of gentlemen. In accordance with a wish expressed by some friends, it has been since revised and enlarged, and is now offered to the public. It will answer the end proposed, if it should be the means of leading some to a renewed investigation, by the light of the Scriptures, of subjects of vast importance, and, it is believed, very extensively misunderstood. To borrow the language of the venerated Professor Stuart at the close of his valuable "Hints on the Interpretation of Prophecy;"—

"If the sober and considerate portion of our religious community can be persuaded to give some due attention to this subject, and to insist on the application of sound principles to all prophetic exegesis, an important end will be answered. If others more capable than myself, and who have more
leisure, can be roused up to pursue the investigations which are here but imperfectly commenced, and to expose any errors, or confirm any truths, which have now been suggested, this little book will not have been written in vain."

This quotation, and that upon the reverse of the title-page, seem to me none the less pertinent from their having been originally written with reference, not to the particular points discussed in the following Essay, but to others to which the same principles of interpretation apply.

It will be observed, that, in accordance with the motto, "To the Law and to the Testimony," this Essay is composed in great measure of quotations from the Scriptures. An Appendix is now added, consisting of extracts from distinguished theological writers, with some remarks. The authors, to whom I am indebted for these extracts, are Professors Woods, Stuart, and Park, of Andover; Professor Robinson, of New York; Professor Stowe, of Lane Seminary; John Robinson, the Father of Congregationalism; Dr. Watts; Bishops Warburton and Horsley; and the well-known Commentators, Lightfoot, Gill, Macknight, Scott, Clarke, and Barnes.

*November, 1849.*
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THE SECOND ADVENT:

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It is the sole aim of this brief treatise, to present the testimony of the Scriptures upon some of the most important points relating to the great subjects above named, with one or two unavoidable inferences. All allusion to any other source of argument, or to the opinions of any particular sect or uninspired writer, will be studiously avoided. It is my wish, so far as possible, to shut myself up alone with the Bible, excluding every sound of theological controversy or speculation, divesting myself of every prejudice, and even forgetting, for the time being, my own most cherished opinions. Truth is of infinitely higher value than the excitement of controversy, the triumph of victory, the pleasure of sympathy, or even the pride of consistency.

The subjects in question are, without dispute, among the grandest themes of Christianity; and they are, in a peculiar sense, themes not of natural religion, but of revelation. Question Nature upon them never so ear-
nestly, and she will return no answer. For every, even the slightest, intimation concerning them, we are entirely dependent upon supernatural communications.

Nor are they themes of mere curiosity or lofty speculation, but of the deepest practical and personal import. They present problems relating to our future eternal history, without a satisfactory solution of which it is impossible to enjoy a moment of rational peace.

That the testimony of the Scriptures upon these important subjects may be the more clearly seen, and the more readily appreciated, it will be arranged under a series of propositions with subordinate heads. The quotations will follow our excellent received version, with an occasional remark upon the original text, and will be made without omissions, except where notice is given by the familiar sign ( . . ).

In respect to the nature and degree of the evidence furnished by each quotation, the reader will, of course, judge for himself; and I have supposed that, in general, he would prefer to do this, without the tedium of a minute running commentary, or of protracted remarks. He will observe that, to passages furnishing direct proof in and of themselves, a few have been added which furnish such proof only in connection with other passages; and also a few which afford only circumstantial evidence or striking illustration. To the intelligent and candid reader, there can be no need that I should suggest the unreasonableness of requiring each separate passage to sustain by itself the whole weight of the argument, or of supposing, because he finds that some weak outpost can be taken, that therefore the citadel is indefensible.
PROPOSITION I.

The Scriptures often speak of a second, but never of a third, coming of Christ.

The quotations in support of this proposition will all be taken from the New Testament. If the Old Testament contains any intimations at all of a second coming of Christ, they are not sufficiently explicit to be made the foundation of an important argument. Nor, with the abundant evidence furnished by the New Testament, could there be any necessity of resorting to them, however explicit they might be. After the first coming of Christ, we find the predictions of a future (that is, of a second) coming alike frequent and express, — continually recurring, in the most unequivocal terms, from almost the beginning of the New Testament to its very close. But, with all this frequency and explicitness of mention, combined at times with general particularity of description, we nowhere find the least intimation that this coming was to be otherwise than one and final; we nowhere find the slightest allusion to any third coming.

It will be observed that our proposition contains a positive and a negative part. No one, of course, will expect any citations in support of the latter. It is impossible to produce examples of what does not exist. And, in making citations, under distinct heads, in support of the former, many examples will be omitted, to avoid need-
less repetition. No apology will, I trust, be deemed necessary for so much repetition of the same passage in different connections as a proper treatment of the subject shall seem to require. And, while I have endeavoured to avoid both extremes, I have supposed that all who hold the Bible in due regard would sooner forgive excessive than deficient quotation from its inspired pages.

I. *Our Saviour often speaks of a future coming of his, but never as though there were to be more than one such coming.*

Mat. xvi. 27, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels."

Mat. xxiv. 37, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Mat. xxv. 31, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him."

Mark xiii. 26, "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."

Luke ix. 26, "Of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels."

Luke xii. 40, "Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

Luke xvii. 30, "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

Luke xviii. 8, "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

John xxi. 22, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

II. *Our Saviour answered inquiries in respect to this coming.*

Mat. xxiv. 3, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives,
the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (4) And Jesus answered," &c.

III. At the time of Christ's ascension, the Apostles were assured of his return by "two men" "in white apparel."—The term "men" is doubtless used here, as in Luke xxiv. 4, with reference simply to the form of these celestial visitants. Compare Mark xvi. 5, and Luke xxiv. 4, with Mat. xxviii. 5, and John xx. 12.

Acts i. 10, "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; (11) Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

It may be here remarked, that, in reading this passage, we are in danger of attaching more force to the expression in our version, "in like manner as," than the original words, ἐν τῷ ἐναντίῳ, require. These words have no necessary reference to the particular manner in which a thing is done, and, in every other instance, (Mat. xxiii. 37, Luke xiii. 34, Acts vii. 28, xv. 11, xxvii. 25, 2 Tim. iii. 8,) have been rendered, by our translators, simply "as," or "even as." Thus,—

Acts vii. 28, "Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday."—2 Tim. iii. 8, "Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth."—Mat. xxiii. 37, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings."

In these passages, it is manifest that there is no refer-
ence to precise manner. So that the meaning in Acts i. 11, may be, simply, "As ye have seen him go into heaven, so likewise shall he come again." Our words likewise (in like wise or manner) and also (entirely so) are precisely similar examples of words which have lost their full etymological force.

IV. The Apostles often speak of the second coming of Christ, as of a single event, and one familiar to their thoughts and expectations. — Examples will be cited from all the Apostolic writers.

1. Paul. — Heb. ix. 27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (28) So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."

1 Cor. i. 7, "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thess. ii. 19, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?"

1 Thess. iii. 13, "At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."

1 Thess. v. 23, "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Tim. vi. 14, "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Tit. ii. 13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Col. iii. 4, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."
A SECOND, BUT NO THIRD, COMING.

Phil. iii. 20, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thess. i. 10, "And to wait for his Son from heaven."

2. JAMES.—v. 8, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

3. PETER.—1 Pet. i. 7, "At the appearing of Jesus Christ."

1 Pet. i. 13, "The grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

1 Pet. v. 4, "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

2 Pet. iii. 4, "And saying, Where is the promise of his coming?"

Acts iii. 20, "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: (21) Whom the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution of all things."

4. JUDE.—14, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, (15) To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

5. JOHN.—1 John ii. 28, "And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

Rev. i. 7, "Behold, he cometh with clouds."

Rev. iii. 11, "Behold, I come quickly."—Also, Rev. xxii. 7, 12.

V. The view taken by the Apostles of Christ's future coming, as a single definite event, is further illustrated by their frequent use of the word day, to denote the time of his coming or of events associated with it.—The
variety and the definiteness of the expressions, in which the word is so used, will appear from the following extracts.

1 Cor. i. 7, "Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: (8) Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Cor. v. 5, "That the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." — See, also, 2 Cor. i. 14.

Phil. i. 6, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Phil. ii. 16, "That I may rejoice in the day of Christ."

1 Thess. v. 2, "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." — See, also, 2 Pet. iii. 10.

2 Pet. iii. 12, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved."


2 Pet. iii. 7, "Reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." — See, also, 2 Pet. ii. 9; 1 John iv. 17.

Rom. ii. 16, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." — See, also, Acts xvii. 31.

Jude 6, "Unto the judgment of the great day."

Rom. ii. 5, "Against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

2 Tim. i. 12, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." — See, also, 2 Tim. i. 18; iv. 8.

1 Cor. iii. 13, "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire." — See, also, Heb. x. 25.
VI. Even the repeated use of certain terms, with specific application to the Second Advent, is not without its significance. — Definiteness of name implies definiteness of idea. Of these terms thus specially applied, —

1. Ἀποκάλυψις, revelation from heaven (also translated appearing and coming), occurs in 1 Cor. i. 7, 2 Thess. i. 7, 1 Pet. i. 7, 13, iv. 13; five times.

2. Ἐπιφάνεια, appearing (once translated brightness), occurs in 2 Thess. ii. 8, 1 Tim. vi. 14, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 8, Tit. ii. 13; five times.

3. Παρουσία, coming, occurs in Mat. xxiv. 3, 27, 37, 39, 1 Cor. xv. 23, 1 Thess. ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 15, v. 23, 2 Thess. ii. 1, 8, James v. 7, 8, 2 Pet. i. 16, iii. 4, 1 John ii. 28; sixteen times.
PROPOSITION II.


It is unfortunate that, in two important cases, our translators of the Bible, to whom we owe such a debt for the general excellence of our version, have produced confusion by using the same English word for two or more Greek words, quite different in force. The cases referred to are, first, the use of "hell" for both ᾇδης, Hades, and γέεννα, Gehenna, which has led to serious misapprehensions; and, secondly, the use of "world" for the three words, ὁκουμένη, inhabited land, earth, κόσμος, system of the material universe, and αἰών, great system or cycle of time, age. The phrase "the end of the world" (or "of this world") occurs six times in our version of the New Testament, Mat. xiii. 39, 40, 49, xxiv. 3, xxviii. 20, Heb. ix. 26; and always as the translation of σφυρήλατη τοῦ αἰῶνος (or once, in the plural, τῶν αἰῶνων), the completion of the age, i.e. the consummation or close of the great period in the world's history, preceding the establishment of the new kingdom
of the Messiah. The bold figurative language, however, in which this consummation was predicted, led to an early expectation of great physical changes in connection with this event; and there has since been a tendency, strengthened among ourselves by our English version, to magnify these changes from the mere costume or circumstance, into the essence, of the event. It is to be deeply regretted, that this important error has had so much influence in producing or fostering other errors still more serious. There is nowhere greater need of the most cautious discrimination, than where two different things are closely related to each other, as type and antitype, or as circumstance and essence.

It will be seen, from the following extracts, how very intimately the Scriptures associate the four events mentioned in our proposition; so intimately, indeed, that they appear to form almost simultaneous scenes of one grand transaction, — not so much separate events, as parts of one great event, — the august consummation of a sublime drama in the history of the universe. These extracts associate, —

I. The Second Advent and the End of the World.

Mat. xxiv. 3, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

2 Pet. iii. 3, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, (4) And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? . . . (10) But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up."
II. The Second Advent and the Resurrection of the Dead, with a corresponding change of the Living.

1 Thess. iv. 15, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. (16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air."

John v. 28, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, (29) And shall come forth." — See VI., below.

Phil. iii. 20, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: (21) Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

1 Cor. xv. 22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (23) But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's, at his coming. . . . (51) Behold; I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

III. The Second Advent and the Judgment with its awards.

Mat. xvi. 27, "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works."

Mat. xxv. 31, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: (32) And before him shall
be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: (33) And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. . . . (46) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

2 Tim. iv. 1, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge [τοῦ μίλλωντος κρίνων, who is about to judge] the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."

2 Tim. iv. 7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: (8) Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

2 Thess. i. 6, "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; (7) And to you, who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, (8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, (10) When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

1 Cor. xvi. 22, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha [a curse; the Lord will come; i.e. let him be accursed, as he assuredly will be at the coming of the Lord]."

1 Cor. iv. 5, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."
Rev. i. 7, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

Rev. xxi. 12, "And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Jude 6, "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. (7) Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example; suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. . . . (14) And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, (15) To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

IV. The End of the World and the Resurrection.

John vi. 39, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (40) And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

John xi. 24, "Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

V. The End of the World and the Judgment.

Mat. xiii. 36, "Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.
(37) He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man: (38) The field is the world [κόσμος]; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; (39) The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world [αἰών]; and the reapers are the angels. (40) As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. (41) The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; (42) And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (43) Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

Matt. xiii. 49, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, (50) And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

John xii. 48, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

VI. The Resurrection and the Judgment.

Daniel xii. 2, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

John v. 28, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, (29) And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

Rev. xx. 13, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [ᾠδης, hades] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

3
These six heads, it will be observed, present every possible combination of any one of these events with any other. So complete is the evidence of our proposition.

In respect to a distinction of order in the resurrection, the Scriptures are for the most part silent. But there are two passages in the epistles of Paul, which some have understood as implying that the righteous dead would be honored with a certain precedence, or priority, in rising.

1 Cor. xv. 22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (23) But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

1 Thess. iv. 16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

Such an interpretation of these passages is by no means free from doubt. Yet there is something appropriate and pleasing in the idea of such a reward of the righteous; for what sovereign, in assembling his subjects, does not give a certain precedence to the faithful and obedient? And in one of the ecstatic visions of the enraptured Apostle in Patmos, this idea of precedence has been expanded into a full picture, prolonged through a thousand years.

Rev. xx. 1, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. (2) And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, (3) And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive
the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season. (4) And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (5) But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. (6) Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

When we consider the false principles which have prevailed in the interpretation of this book, containing so wonderful a series of the most sublime and beautiful visions, and the strange attempts that have been made to convert the boldest and most imaginative poetry into a chronological table, we shall not wonder at the great difficulty which so many have found in the explanation of this passage, or at the various expedients to which they have deemed it necessary to resort, in order to reconcile it with the very different representations elsewhere given. How remarkable it is, that this single unique passage has furnished to the popular doctrine of a Millennium, not only its name, but also its sole foundation!

Before proceeding to our next proposition, it may not be amiss to remark, that even a literal interpretation of "the thousand years" could have no effect to defer the second coming of Christ, since this was evidently to precede them; nor even to defer the commencement of the resurrection and judgment, but merely their close; in other words, to divide them, and prolong them through a thousand years.
PROPOSITION III.

Our Saviour both variously intimated, and even expressly declared, that his Second Coming (with its associate events) would take place before the death of some who were then living.

In support of this proposition, we may appeal to various particulars in our Saviour's discourses to his disciples and others; namely,—

I. The repeated warnings to his disciples to be constantly watching and ready for his coming.

Luke xii. 35, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; (36) And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. (37) Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. (38) And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. (39) And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. (40) Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."
Mat. xxiv. 42, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. (43) But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. (44) Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."—Or, to quote from accounts of the same discourse by other Evangelists,—Mark xiii. 33, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. (34) For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work; and commanded the porter to watch. (35) Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: (36) Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. (37) And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."—Luke xxi. 34, "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. (35) For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. (36) Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

Mat. xxv. 13, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Is it possible to read such urgent, such trumpet-toned warnings, and yet believe that our Lord uttered them knowing, all the while, that those whom he addressed would be all in their graves thousands of years, it might be, before the event for which they were to be so intently watching? Would not this be making his words, and some of his last words too, a species of mockery? Feeling this, some have sought to give more appropriate-
ness and practical force to these warnings, by applying them to the nearness and uncertainty of the hour of death. But is not such an application mere accommodation? Is there any thing whatever in the Scriptures to show, that, in these passages, our Saviour used the expression "the Son of man cometh" as a euphemism or circumlocution to express death, or that any of his hearers so understood him? On the contrary, is it not evident, from the connection in which our Saviour introduced all these warnings, that he had reference to his promised Second Advent?

The precepts recorded by the Apostle John, in the Book of Revelation, from which fuller extracts will be given under the next proposition, are still more express in respect to the nearness of Christ's coming.

Rev. ii. 25, "But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come."

Rev. iii. 11, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Rev. xxi. 7, "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

II: The express declaration, that there were some standing before him, who would not taste of death till they should see his coming.

Mat. xvi. 24, "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (25) For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. (26) For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (27) For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to
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his works. (28) Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

The expression in verse 28, "shall not taste of death," is manifestly an emphatic pleonasm for "shall not die." This is rendered still more evident by a comparison of the other passages in which a similar expression occurs.

John viii. 51, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. (52) Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. (53) Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?"

Heb. ii. 9, "That he [Jesus] by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

The only way, therefore, of evading the express testimony of verse 28, is by denying that the words "coming in his kingdom" refer to Christ's Second Coming. But this denial is rendered very difficult, if not impossible, by the two following considerations.

1. If we examine v. 28 by itself, we are required, by the general tenor of the New Testament, to refer the expression "coming in his kingdom" to the Second Coming of Christ.

I cannot expect that this consideration will be fully appreciated by those who have not attentively studied the view presented in the Scriptures of the new kingdom which the Messiah was to establish, most frequently called "the kingdom of heaven," or "the kingdom of God," but have contented themselves with the very
vague notions which are so common upon this subject. I regret that my prescribed limits absolutely forbid any attempt at a full exposition of this view, which would require a treatise by itself. In general, the view presented in the New Testament is evidently the following: — That, as the first coming of Christ was in humiliation, to labor and suffer, so his second coming would be in glory, to establish his kingdom upon the earth, and reign with his saints: that as he came the first time as a sacrifice and as servant of all, so he would come the second time as King of kings, introducing an entirely new age, raising the dead, changing the living, taking account of all past actions, rewarding his friends, punishing his enemies, and establishing a new and universal empire of transcendent glory. "What are the particular evidences of this view?" and "What is its meaning, when divested of its imagery?" are questions of great interest and importance, but which we must here waive, simply adducing, in illustration of the verse under consideration, a few other passages associating the Second Coming of Christ with the establishment of his kingdom.

Luke xxi. 27, "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. (28) And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh. (29) And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; (30) When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. (31) So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

Luke xxiii. 42, "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

2 Tim. iv. 1, "I charge thee therefore before God, and
the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at *his appearing and his kingdom*.”

This familiar association of the Second Coming of Christ with the establishment of his kingdom explains the use by other Evangelists of the expressions “the kingdom of God come with power,” and “the kingdom of God,” as equivalent to “the Son of man coming in his kingdom.” Thus,—

Mark viii. 38, “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels. (ix. 1) And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.”—Luke ix. 26, “For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come, in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels. (27) 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.”

2. If we examine v. 28 in connection with the preceding verse, we shall see that it loses all its appositeness and natural connection of thought, I had almost said its intelligibility and propriety, if the comings spoken of in the two successive verses are not the same, and that, too, without any intimation of a change.

It seems obvious, in reading the passage continuously, that v. 28 was designed to give additional urgency to the motives drawn from the Second Coming, in which “the Son of man” would “reward every man according to his works,” by teaching the nearness of this coming.
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The attempt of some to find a fulfilment of v. 28 in the transfiguration, of which an account immediately follows, and which occurred "after six days," is cumbersome with peculiar difficulties. The different expressions used by the three Evangelists, "the Son of man coming in his kingdom," "the kingdom of God come with power," and "the kingdom of God," are certainly all very strange ones to denote a mere change of personal appearance, however glorious, before three witnesses, who were not to disclose it till some time after. We may well wonder that any boldness of figurative expression should shock those who can thus interpret. Besides, would not this impart an air of trifling to our Saviour's solemn declaration? — "Verily, I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see" an event which will take place in the course of a week! No one, of course, will think of drawing any argument from the fact that the Cardinal Hugo, in dividing the New Testament into chapters, in the thirteenth century, made a different division in Mark from that in Matthew.

I see not, therefore, how we can avoid the conclusion, that the Saviour, in the emphatic assurance, "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," expressly declared that his Second Coming would take place before the death of some who were then living.

III. The special intimation that the Apostle John would not die before his coming.

John xxi. 20, "Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following; (which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that be-
trayeth thee? (21) Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? (22) Jesus saith unto him, *If I will that he tarry till I come*, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. (23) Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? (24) This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things.”

It is true that we have here, as the Apostle himself modestly points out, not an express declaration, but only an indirect intimation. But it was an intimation in which "the brethren" placed confidence; and it was one which the Apostle thought sufficiently important to be worth recording, while he omitted other particulars in our Saviour’s life and discourses, so numerous, that, “if they should be written every one,” he supposed “that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.” When we further consider that the Apostle John (perhaps alone of the Apostles) lived to see the destruction of Jerusalem and the establishment of the Messianic dispensation (the new kingdom of the Messiah) upon the ruins of the Jewish, can we doubt that the Saviour meant something more than merely to rebuke the natural curiosity of Peter, and to excite false expectations in the bosom of John?

IV. *The association of his coming with events which were manifestly fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem.*

This appears most remarkably in our Saviour’s discourse upon Mount Olivet two days before his crucifixion, recorded in Mat. xxiv., xxv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi. The occasion of this discourse is thus stated by Matthew:
Mat. xxiv. 1, "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to show him the buildings of the temple. (2) And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. (3) And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

In the minds of the disciples, the coming of Christ and the end of the world were inseparably connected with the destruction of the temple; and their two questions related, not to different events, but to the same events; the first question relating to the *time*, and the second to the *sign*, of these events. This is obvious from the parallel passages in Mark and Luke.

Mark xiii. 3, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, asked him privately, (4) Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?"—Luke xxi. 7, "And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?"

Our Saviour, in his very minute and explicit reply, was so far from intimating to his disciples that they were erroneously connecting events between which millenarians were to intervene, that, on the contrary, he himself associated, in the following unequivocal and emphatic language, the destruction of Jerusalem, his own coming, and the establishment of the kingdom of God.

Luke xxi. 20, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. (21) Then let them which are in Judea flee to the
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mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. (22) For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. (23) But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. (24) And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (25) And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; (26) Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. (27) And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. (28) And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh.

“(29) And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; (30) When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of yourselves that summer is now nigh at hand. (31) So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. (32) Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. (33) Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. (34) And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. (35) For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. (36) Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”
V. The general character of replies to questions, and of other statements, respecting the time of his coming and kingdom.

An examination of these replies and statements will show us, that,—

1. The Saviour never speaks of this time as far off, but repeatedly as near.

2. He never states the precise time, but says expressly that this is known only to God.

3. He commonly makes some practical application.

Mat. xxiv. 3, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? ... (34) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. ... (36) But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. ... (42) Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

Luke xxi. 20, "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. ... (24) For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. (25) But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. ... (xviii. 1) And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; (2) Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man. ... (6) And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. (7) And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? (8) I tell you that he will
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avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

Acts i. 6, “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? (7) And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. (8) But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Mat. iv. 17, “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Mat. x. 5, “These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. (6) But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (7) And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . (22) And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. (23) But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.”

The last verse strongly implies, to say the least, that the coming of the Son of man was not far distant. The following, addressed by our Saviour to the eleven Apostles shortly before his ascension, implies the same in respect to the end of the world, unless the promise is made to refer to more than Christ’s special presence with the Apostles themselves, which is all that is expressed.

Mat. xxviii. 19, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; (20) Teaching them to observe all
things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Luke xix. 11, "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."

This parable was suited to correct the expectation of the immediate appearance of the new kingdom, and yet at the same time to confirm the impression that it was not very far distant. It contains an evident and striking representation of Christ's approaching ascension to heaven to receive kingly power, and of his subsequent return with this power to reward his faithful servants, and to destroy "his citizens," the Jews, who "would not that he should reign over them." The practical lessons of the parable are obvious.

"(12) He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. (13) And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. (14) But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. (15) 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. . . . (27) But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

VI. The express declaration that the generation then upon the earth would not pass away before the fulfilment of certain great events, of which his coming was one.

This declaration is contained in the remarkable discourse upon Mount Olivet, two days before the cruci-
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fixion, from which extracts have already been made. This discourse, it will be remembered, was made in reply to the earnest application, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" The discourse consists of a minute exposition of the signs of these events, of a definite statement of the time within which these events would occur, and of emphatic warnings to his disciples to be watching and prepared for them.

In St. Matthew, these warnings are enforced and illustrated by three impressive parables, having all the same general design, but each teaching its peculiar lesson. They all enforce the indispensable necessity of preparation for these great events; but each refers to a different kind of preparation, or at least presents a different view of the preparation required. The first parable, that of the Ten Virgins, inculcates upon the disciple preparation by attention to himself,—by a due provision of oil for his own lamp; the second, that of the Talents, by faithful service of his Master; and the third, that of the Sheep and Goats, by acts of kindness towards others. Each is incomplete without the rest: together they constitute an informal and figurative, but most impressive, summary of duty; the first presenting one's duties to himself, the second his duties to God, and the third his duties to his fellow-men. The circumstance that the last is not formally introduced by our Lord as a parable, like the other two, has led many to mistake its character; but in this respect it does not differ from many of his other parables, even such as are expressly stated by the Evangelists to be parables. Thus,—
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Mat. xiii. 3, "And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow."

Luke xviii. 1, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; (2) Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man."

Luke xviii. 9, "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: (10) Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican."

Luke xx. 9, "Then began he to speak to the people this parable: A certain man planted a vineyard and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time."

Among the parables not formally introduced are the familiar ones of the Great Supper, the Prodigal Son, the Unjust Steward, the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Pounds, &c.

We might perhaps judge somewhat differently, if our Saviour's common mode of teaching had not been by parables. But not only do we read in Matthew, —

Mat. xiii. 34, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: (35) That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables"; but we find these words in his very last discourse to his disciples: —

John xvi. 25, "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs [marginal translation, parables]: but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs [parables], but I shall show you plainly of the Father."

Taken as a parable enforcing a particular class of duties, (which, if performed to others, the Saviour will
regard as performed to himself,) the latter part of Mat. xxv. has great force, beauty, and pathos; but taken as a literal description of a general judgment, it is unnatural and improbable. Does any one, who takes even the most literal view of a day of judgment, actually suppose that at that day the whole examination will have respect to mere acts of kindness towards others, and that it will be conducted in the figurative language and with the special pleading which we find in this passage, and which even give to it so much of its excellence as a parable?

The limitation of time, in this most important discourse, is given by all the three Evangelists; each of whom omits some other particulars recorded by the rest. It is given by all in the most clear and explicit terms, and with great uniformity of language. The Greek scholar will observe, that in the original this language is even more emphatic than in our translation. It is immediately followed, in all the three Evangelists, by the most solemn attestation to its truth, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." The question and the answer, as given by Matthew, who has recorded the discourse most fully, but with no material variations from Mark or Luke, are as follows:—

Mat. xxiv. 3, "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? (4) And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. (5) For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (6) And ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. (7) For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against
kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. (8) All these are the beginning of sorrows. (9) Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. (10) And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. (11) And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. (12) And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. (13) But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (14) And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

“(15) When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand,) (16) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: (17) Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house: (18) Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. (19) And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! (20) But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day: (21) For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. (22) And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. (23) Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. (24) For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. (25) Behold, I have told you before. (26) Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. (27) For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the
coming of the Son of man be. (28) For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

“(29) Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: (30) And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (31) And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

“(32) Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: (33) So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. (34) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. (35) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. (36) But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. (37) But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (38) For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, (39) And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (40) Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (41) Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (42) Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”

Is there any thing in all this that looks at all like the prediction of entirely distinct events thousands of years apart?

To remark particularly upon the signs which are here
given of Christ’s "coming and of the end of the world" would occupy more time than our limits allow. Nor can it be necessary; for every reader of history recognizes most of them at once as fulfilled either before or at the destruction of Jerusalem. The extent to which the Apostles recognized the fulfilment of some of them years before this event, will appear on pp. 60—64. Nor is this a place for remark upon the bold figurative language which, in accordance with the familiar style of prophecy, is employed in describing the great events predicted;—language of an Oriental and not of an Occidental type, and such as we of the West only learn to understand by much study of Oriental writings. The essential point now before us is, that all the events here predicted were to be fulfilled before the generation then living should have passed away.

Five methods have been attempted of evading the force of the declaration in v. 34; (1.) by extending the sense of "generation," (2.) by limiting the application of "these things," (3.) by objecting to the translation "be fulfilled," (4.) by denying that any thing in the preceding part of the discourse refers to Christ’s Second Coming, properly so called, and (5.) by resorting to a double sense. Let us consider these methods in their order.

1. It is said that "the word 'generation' does not necessarily mean the men of one age, or those living at one time, but may signify in general a race or kind of men, and that sometimes it even denotes simply birth. Thus we find the expressions, 'O generation of vipers,' Mat. iii. 7, &c.; 'Ye are a chosen generation,' 1 Pet. ii. 9; 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ,' Mat. i. 1. By 'this generation,' therefore, may be
meant the viperous race of the Jews or the chosen class of believers.” To one who examines only the English version, this may seem very plausible, from the various senses which our word “generation” admits; but it loses all its force when we come to an examination of the original Greek. We then find, that, in our version, the word “generation” is unfortunately employed to translate no fewer than four Greek words. Three of these, γένος, γενώσις, and γένεσις, would always be better translated by other words, as indeed they always are except in the three expressions above given; where the original might have been expressed more precisely and happily as follows: “O progeny, or brood, of vipers,” “Ye are a chosen race, or class,” “The book of the nativity of Jesus Christ.” The fourth word, γενεά, properly translated generation, occurs in the New Testament no fewer than forty-two times, and in all these appears to signify generation in its more common and limited sense, never having the large general sense of race or kind. The expression “this generation” occurs in the Gospels alone no fewer than eighteen times, and always with the sense the men of this age, or those now living. E. g. “Whereunto shall I liken this generation?” Mat. xi. 16; “All these things shall come upon this generation,” Mat. xxiii. 36; “Shall rise up in the judgment with this generation,” Luke xi. 32.

2. It is said that “by these things,” in v. 34, we are to understand only a part of the before-mentioned events, namely, those which preceded or were connected with the destruction of Jerusalem.” But is not this a strange, arbitrary, and unwarrantable limitation of the expression “all these things”—especially when the things are so closely connected, and those which upon
this supposition are excluded immediately precede, while those that are included are more distant? Must not the pronoun, unless well indoctrinated, be sadly puzzled to know how to distinguish and separate the things to which it is to refer? In Luke, the form of expression is even more absolute.

Luke xxi. 31, “So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. (32) Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.”

This limitation of “all these things” has, in the minds of some, been sustained by a false view of v. 33. This verse makes a distinction between signs or preliminaries, and result or consummation. The result is expressed impersonally, “it is near,” i.e., in general, the consummation is near; for no particular event has been expressed, to which “it” can grammatically refer. Now the important question is, where the line is to be drawn between the signs or preliminaries, “all these things,” and the result or consummation, “it.” Some say that the signs close with v. 28, and that the events in vv. 29–31 constitute the consummation; in other words, that the events preceding and connected with the destruction of Jerusalem are represented as signs of a far distant coming of Christ to judgment. To this view there are objections which appear to me insuperable.

(a) The events mentioned in the verses next preceding are those to which “these things” would most naturally refer.

(b) “Immediately,” in v. 29, implies a very close sequence. Can an event which will happen in less than forty years be said to be followed immediately by one which is thousands of years distant? And besides, no
mention has been made in the preceding verses of the destruction of Jerusalem itself, but only of preliminaries to that destruction. That "the holy place," in v. 15, does not mean the temple, but the immediate neighbourhood of the city, which was accounted holy ground, is evident both from the parallel passage in Luke, "when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies," and also from the advice to flee, which was appropriate to the commencement rather than the close of the siege.

(c) A sign, and one of the first rank, is expressly mentioned in v. 30.

(d) The events in vv. 29–31 evidently constitute the preparation for the consummation, rather than the consummation itself. The coming and gathering introduce, but do not in themselves constitute, the grand final result.

(e) The parallel passage in Luke expressly presents the coming of Christ, and the events immediately preceding, as preliminaries to the "redemption" of the saints, and the establishment of "the kingdom of God." And here it will be observed, that, in the last verse, the "it" of Matthew and Mark is explained in Luke, not by the coming of Christ itself, but by the kingdom of God, which that coming was to introduce.

Luke xxi. 25, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; (26) Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. (27) And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. (28) And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh. (29) And he spake to them a parable:
Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; (30) When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. (31) So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

Do not these considerations, and a comparison of v. 33 in Matthew with v. 31 in Luke, show conclusively that by "all these things," in Matthew, are meant all the events just before mentioned; and that by "it" is meant that glorious consummation, called in Luke "the kingdom of God," which these events were to usher in with such awful pomp?

And here it may be remarked, that this comparison with Luke recommends our version it is near or nigh, in Matthew and Mark, rather than he is near or nigh, which some have given. Besides, it is certainly more natural to compare a time or an event to "summer," than a person.

3. It is said that "γίνεται expresses only the commencement of the events before predicted, and should have been translated be fulfilling, rather than be fulfilled." To the Greek scholar the remark is needless, that this change would confound the use of the aorist and present tenses, and would violate one of the most familiar and uniform laws of the language. The adoption of such a change would make dire havoc with our version. To adduce but a single example, let us make the experiment upon Mat. v. 18, where the form of expression, in the original, is precisely the same as here: — "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilling"!

4. It is said that "nothing in the preceding part of the discourse refers to Christ's Second Coming, properly so called, which is an event still future; but language
OUR SAVIOUR’S WORDS.

appropriate to this second and still future coming was employed by Christ to describe his providential coming for the destruction of Jerusalem.” But, if such language as is here employed does not denote Christ’s Second Coming, is there any language in the Bible that does? If vv. 29—31 signify merely the destruction of Jerusalem, why may not all the similar expressions in the New Testament? To make but a single comparison, how can any one, without the aid of a new revelation, pronounce that, of the two following passages, the one refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and not to the Second Advent, but the other to the Second Advent and not to the destruction of Jerusalem?

Mat. xxiv. 30, “Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

Rev. i. 7, “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.”

If there are no predictions of any coming of Christ subsequent to the second, and no predictions of this stronger than such as were fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem, is it not quite gratuitous, not to say idle, to anticipate any further coming?

5. It is said that “these predictions of our Lord respecting his coming have a double sense. In their primary and lower sense, they refer to his coming for the destruction of Jerusalem, and were consequently fulfilled within the specified time; but in their secondary and higher sense, they refer to his final coming to judgment, and are consequently still unfulfilled.” A plea like this it is always difficult to know how to meet. It takes the whole subject out of the region of sunshine,
carries it into a land of mist and mirages and double vision, where our notions of identity are confounded, and where we are unable to distinguish substance from shadow, and fact from fancy. Still it may not be amiss to make one or two obvious suggestions.

The doctrine of a double sense is itself either reasonable or absurd, according to the sense in which it is understood. That the words of the prophets and other inspired writers were sometimes true in a higher sense than they themselves contemplated, I cannot doubt. But does not this necessarily imply imperfection of knowledge in them? And can any thing like this be attributed to the Saviour? Can we suppose it possible that his words had a higher sense than he himself contemplated? Or is it any less presumptuous and absurd to suppose, that, in an apparently direct answer to a direct and most important inquiry, knowing fully "the end from the beginning," he yet spake of *two entirely distinct events*, the one within forty years, and the other thousands of years distant, as if they were *one and the same event*, expressly declaring that all would be fulfilled in the course of the generation then living, and adding the solemn assurance, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away,"—and all this when the more distant event was the one especially contemplated in the question, and to which the answer appears equally to have especial reference? What is incredible, if this can be believed?

Besides, if the expression "all these things," in v. 34, refers to the things which had just been predicted, and our Saviour had just predicted his Second Coming, what difference can it possibly make, how many other things he had also predicted? Must not this, at all events, be
included? Whether we suppose his predictions to have had two or twenty senses, whether he spoke of two comings or two hundred, did not the comprehensive words "all these things," (or "all," according to Luke) include the whole? Were these words mere cobwebs, that caught the minor events, but suffered the great ones to break through?

I see therefore no way of avoiding the conclusion, that our Saviour expressly and most solemnly declared, just before his death, that the generation then upon the earth would not pass away, before the grand event of his Second Coming.

Such are the proofs of our third proposition. Such are the words of our Saviour himself,—words which, I need not say, must be true, and must be true in the very sense which he contemplated. If we have understood them aright, there is an end of all controversy. But can we have essentially misunderstood them? If we cannot understand such plain intimations and explicit declarations respecting the simple matter of time, what hope is there of understanding the Scriptures at all? how do we know that they teach any thing whatever respecting a second coming of Christ? There is one test, however, which remains to be applied. How did the Apostles understand these words of their Master? What expectations did they find upon them? If their interpretation was manifestly the same with ours, there can be no longer any doubt of its accuracy. This brings us to our fourth proposition.
PROPOSITION IV.

THE APOSTLES EVIDENTLY EXPECTED, THAT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, WITH ITS ASSOCIATE EVENTS, WOULD TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE DEATH OF SOME WHO WERE THEN LIVING.

This expectation appears,—

I. In passages directly asserting or implying that some of the Apostles, or of those whom they addressed, would survive until these events.

1 Cor. xv. 50, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God: neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. (51) Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. (52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (53) For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

1 Thess. iv. 13, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. (16)
For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (18) Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

That the *sleep* spoken of in these passages is the *sleep of death*, no one, I presume, will question. The word in the original for *sleep* or *be asleep* is κομάωμα, which is used in the New Testament only four times in the sense of literal sleep, but fourteen times to denote the sleep of death. Its use in these two passages is also determined by the unequivocal expression "the dead." Some, however, suppose that the word "we" is here used very loosely, and that the Apostle merely meant to say that there would be some Christians alive, and so changed without death, at the time of Christ's Second Coming. But to this view there are obviously strong, if not insuperable, objections.

1. It is at variance with the natural interpretation of the passages. If a pastor, in addressing his people either from the pulpit or by letter, should use such expressions as "We shall not all die," "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," &c., would he not be understood, of course, as believing in the speedy coming of Christ? And had the Corinthians or Thessalonians any reason for understanding the Apostle differently?

2. It greatly diminishes the force and significance of these passages.

3. It does not consist with the emphasis belonging to *we* in those clauses in which it has been printed above
in small capitals. In these clauses the pronoun is expressed in the original; so that, according to a familiar law of the Greek language, it must be emphatic and used in marked contradistinction. The form of expression in 1 Thess. iv. 15, 17, is peculiarly strong: ἡμεῖς οἱ ξένες οἱ περιεσπόμενοι, we who are living, who are surviving.

4. This view makes the Apostle’s consolation to the Thessalonians little more than mere mockery. They are sorrowing for their departed friends. He attempts to comfort them, by saying, “We who are living, who are surviving till the coming of the Lord, shall not precede (for this is the old meaning of prevent, derived from the Latin prævenio, to come before), or have any advantage in point of time over those that are asleep.”

What an extraordinary mode of consolation, to say the least, if the Apostle, and those whom he was addressing, supposed that they might all lie in their graves beside their friends thousands of years before the coming of Christ! But, if they were looking for the speedy appearance, triumph, and reign of their Saviour upon the earth, while some were fearing that their friends who had died too soon would not be present to take part at once, if at all, in the glories and joys of these events, then how natural, appropriate, and forcible does every word of the Apostle become!

The following passage may perhaps be cited in further illustration.

1 Thess. v. 9, “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, (10) Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. (11) Wherefore, comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”
This change without death, taught by the Apostle, this being new clothed without having been first unclothed, is evidently what is referred to as an object of aspiration in v. 4 of the following sublime passage.

2 Cor. v. 1, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: (3) If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. (4) For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. (5) Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

The question may perhaps arise in some minds, what were the particular expectations of the first Christians in respect to their own death before the coming of Christ, or their change without death at his coming. The following materials for a reply are furnished by the Scriptures.

1. There was no doubt that Peter would suffer martyrdom. This had been predicted by his Divine Master, and was anticipated by the Apostle himself.

John xxi. 17, "He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, loveth thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (18) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither
thou wouldest not. (19) This spake he, signifying by what
death he should glorify God.”

2 Pet. i. 13, “Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in
this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remem-
brance; (14) Knowing that shortly I must put off this my
tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed
me. (15) Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able,
after my decease, to have these things always in remem-
brance.”

2. There was an expectation that John would survive
until the coming of Christ. See p. 34.

3. St. Paul speaks of the Apostles in general as
being “delivered unto death,” but with the assurance
of being raised again, and joined with the other saints, at
the coming of Christ.

2 Cor. iv. 11, “For we which live are always delivered
unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might
be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (12) So then death
worketh in us, but life in you. (13) We having the same
spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and
therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore
speak; (14) Knowing, that he which raised up the Lord
Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us
with you.”

An examination of Paul’s particular expectations in
respect to himself would require more room than should
be given here to a point of so little importance to our
discussion.

4. In regard to private Christians, the language of the
Apostles in numerous passages clearly implies that they
were for the most part to remain alive until the Second
Advent. Examples in point are elsewhere so abund-
antly quoted, that it seems needless to insert them here.
II. *In passages expressing continuance until these events.*

1 Tim. vi. 13, "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; (14) That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, *until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:* (15) Which in his time he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; (16) Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto: whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.”

The preceding charge occurs, it will be observed, in a private letter to a single individual.

Phil. i. 3, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, (4) Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, (5) For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; (6) Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it *until the day of Jesus Christ.*”

1 Thess: v. 23, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole *spirit,* and *soul,* and *body,* be preserved blameless *unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (24) Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

Rev. ii. 24, “But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden: (25) But that which ye have already, hold fast *till I come.* (26) And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works *unto the end,* to him will I give power over the nations: (27) (And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers:) even as I received of my Father.”
What strange language, if the coming of Christ was not expected till thousands of years, it might be, after those who were addressed had all fallen into the sleep of death! And, upon this supposition, how remarkable the prayer in 1 Thess. v. 23, for the preservation of the body unto this coming! The corruption of the grave is surely a strange species of preservation! The following passage is cited in illustration, rather than proof.

1 Cor. viii. 13, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

III. In passages in which the Apostles speak of their own times as the last days, and find in them the predicted signs of these events. — Among these signs may be mentioned, —

1. The special outpouring of the Spirit predicted by the prophet Joel, whose words were thus cited and applied by the Apostle Peter upon the day of Pentecost: —

Acts ii. 16, "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, (17) 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: (18) And on my servants, and on my handmaids, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: (19) And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke. (20) The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. (21) And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved."
2. The appearance of false teachers, which our Saviour had thus predicted: "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect," Mat. xxiv. 24.

1 John ii. 17, "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (18) Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."

1 John iv. 1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (2) Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God: (3) And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. And this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

1 Tim. iv. 1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; (2) Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron; (3) Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. (4) For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: (5) For it is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer. (6) If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. (7) But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. (8) For bodily exercise prof-
iteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having
promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to
come."

2 Tim. iii. 1, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. (2) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (3) Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, (4) Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; (6) Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (6) For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts: (7) Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (8) Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. (9) But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was."

2 Pet. iii. 3, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, (4) And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (5) For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water."

Jude 17, "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; (18) How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. (19) These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. (20) But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,
(21) Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. (22) And of some have compassion, making a difference: (23) And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. (24) Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, (25) To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

In all these passages, it is manifest that the Apostles are speaking of their own times. With how little reason, then, do some apply the extract from 1 Tim. iv. to the Roman Catholic Church! Surely it could not have been of great consequence to warn the youthful bishop of Ephesus to “refuse the profane and old wives’ fables” of errorists who were to spring up several centuries after his death; and that he should not be carried away by the excessive stress which they would lay upon “bodily exercise,” that is, upon ascetic training, or the mortification of the bodily appetites. Besides, other passages show that this error was prevalent in the times of the Apostles. See, for example, Col. ii. 20—23.

3. The preaching of the gospel throughout the world, in accordance with the prediction, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come,” Mat. xxiv. 14. Such had been the unparalleled fidelity and success of the Apostles and their coadjutors, that St. Paul regarded this sign as already fulfilled.

Rom. x. 17, “So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (18) But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”
Col. i. 3, "We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, (4) Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, (5) For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel: (6) Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth. . . . (21) And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, (22) In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprovable, in his sight: (23) If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister [more literally, which has been preached in the whole creation, &c.]."

Tit. ii. 11, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, (12) Teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (13) Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

The following passages are perhaps quite as striking as those which have preceded.

1 Cor. x. 11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. (12) Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Heb. ix. 26, "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."
EXPECTATIONS OF THE APOSTLES.

Heb. i. 1, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

1 Pet. i. 20, "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, (21) Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

1 Cor. iv. 8, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. (9) For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."

How touching is the allusion in this last passage to those most pitiable victims of the barbarous games of the ancients, who were set forth at the end of the show, when now the thirst for blood had become so ferocious in the spectators, as to demand their certain and speedy slaughter!

IV. In passages which speak of waiting or looking for these events.

1 Cor. i. 7, "So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: (8) Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thess. i. 9, "For they themselves show us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; (10) And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from
the dead; even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

2 Thess. iii. 5, "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

Phil. iii. 20, "For our conversation [πολιτεία, citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: (21) Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Tit. ii. 11, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, (12) Teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; (13) Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (14) Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

2 Pet. iii. 11, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, (12) Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (13) Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (14) Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

Are men waiting and looking for events which they have no expectation will occur till after their death, and, it may be, thousands of years after? The original word in the first extract for waiting is the very strong ἐκτεκτικόν, which (except in one doubtful passage) is only
used, in the New Testament, to express *ardent waiting* for the coming of Christ or the blessings of his kingdom. The same word occurs three times in the following remarkable and sublime passage, which personifies the whole creation, and represents it as groaning and travailling in eager expectation and desire for the deliverance which the coming of Christ would bring. An attempt to explain the passage fully would draw us too far from our present purpose; but it may not be improper to remark, that the word in the original for *creature* is the same which is afterwards more happily, as well as more strictly, translated *creation*.

Rom. viii. 18, "For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (19) For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. (20) For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; (21) Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (22) For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now: (23) And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan, within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. (24) For we are saved by hope. But hope that is seen, is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? (25) But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

V. In precepts, exhortations, consolations, &c., founded upon the nearness of these events

Examples will here be cited from all the Apostolic writers. The force of some of these quotations might
be shown more fully, if our plan admitted more extended remarks; and a few have been cited rather in illustration than in positive proof. Still it is difficult to conceive how any unprejudiced person can simply read these extracts, and yet believe, if he deems the Apostles honest, that they regarded the events, whose nearness and even immediateness they so often and so emphatically urge, as perhaps thousands of years off. If we were reading the bold figures of impassioned poetry, we might interpret somewhat differently; but here all is prose, and most of it plain, practical prose.

1. Paul. — Phil. iv. 4, "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. (5) Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. (6) Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. (7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

2 Thess. i. 4, "So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: (5) Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: (6) Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; (7) And to you, who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels."

Rom. xiii. 7, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. (8) Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. . . . (11) And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is
our salvation nearer than when we believed. (12) *The night is far spent, the day is at hand:* let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

Rom. xvi. 20, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."

1 Cor. iv. 5, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."

Eph. v. 15, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, (16) Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

Col. iv. 5, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time [τὸν καιρὸν ἡγοραστάμενοι, buying off from all inferior pursuits the brief and uncertain opportunity allowed you for doing good]."

Heb. iii. 13, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. (14) For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; (15) While it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

Heb. x. 23, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised: (24) And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works: (25) Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Heb. x. 35, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. (36) For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye
might receive the promise. (37) For *yet a little while*, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. (38) Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. (39) But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

In v. 37 of the last extract, our version has not preserved the peculiar intensity of the Greek ἐκ μικρὸν ἐκ οὖν ἐκου, "like," says Professor Robinson in his Lexicon, "Engl. *yet a very very little while*.

2. JAMES. — v. 7, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. (8) Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh [ḥγμἰς, hath drawn nigh, is at hand]. (9) Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth before the door."

3. PETER. — 1 Pet. i. 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, **ready to be revealed in the last time.** (6) Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: (7) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (8) Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: (9) Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of
your souls. (10) Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: (11) Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. (12) Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. (13) Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

The Apostle, in vv. 4 and 5, above, represents the inheritance of those whom he is addressing as for the present “reserved,” or securely kept for them “in heaven,” but as “ready to be revealed,” or brought out from this treasure-house, “in the last time,” or, as it is afterwards expressed, “at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” In v. 6, the Greek translated “for a season” is διά τὸ γρόσωμα, a little while.

1 Pet. iv. 3, “For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: (4) Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: (5) Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. (6) For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. (7) But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. . . . (12) Beloved, think it not strange, concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing hap-
pened unto you. (13) But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

1 Pet. v. 1, “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be [μελλούσης, about to be] revealed: (2) Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; (3) Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. (4) And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. (5) Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. (6) Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: (7) Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. (8) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (9) Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. (10) But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus after that ye have suffered a while [διὰ πολλάκις, a little while], make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”

2 Pet. ii. 1, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. (2) And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (3) And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment
now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

2 Pet. iii. 13, “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (14) Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

Acts iii. 19, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; (20) And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: (21) Whom the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began. (22) For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you. (23) And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. (24) Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.”

The force of this passage is greatly marred by an evident mistranslation. No argument can be needed to show, that εἰρων, in v. 19, does not mean when (a sense of the word which Prof. Robinson, in his Lexicon of the New Testament, nowhere admits, and which even Liddell and Scott, in their full general Lexicon of the language, do not recognize at all with the subjunctive mode), but, according to its familiar use, so that, in order that. The passage would therefore be correctly translated: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, for the blotting out of your sins; so that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send Jesus
Christ," &c. The Apostle Peter is here urging the Jews to invite the return of Christ with its attendant blessings, by that repentance and obedience which were essential as a preparation for this great event,—an event so glorious, and so blissful to all true believers.

4. Jude. — 20, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, (21) Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.... (24) Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, (25) To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

5. John. — 1 John ii. 28, "And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (29) If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. (iii. 1) Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (3) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Rev. i. 1, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: (2) Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. (3) Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand."
Rev. iii. 11, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Rev. vi. 9, "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: (10) And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? (11) And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Rev. xxii. 6, "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. (7) Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. . . . (10) And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. (11) He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. (12) And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me to give every one according as his work shall be. . . . (20) He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Is it not wonderful that such explicit declarations at the beginning, in the middle, and at the close of the Book of Revelation, have not prevented commentators from looking so far down in the vista of ages for the antitypes of St. John's visions? One would suppose, that the mere comparison of v. 10 of the last chapter with the passages in the Book of Daniel upon which it appears to be founded, might have secured them from this error. The language to Daniel was,
“Wherefore shut thou up the vision, for it shall be for many days.” — viii. 26.

“But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” — xii. 4.

“And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. . . . But go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” — xii. 8, 9, 13.

How striking is the contrast between this and the language to John: “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.” Yet Daniel prophesied only about 600 years before John; a priority quite unimportant in estimating the remoteness of events thousands of years off. How could the difference between 2,000 and 2,600 years, or between 3,000 and 3,600, make events immediate to the Apostle, which were very remote from the Prophet? But some may perhaps say, “A thousand years are with the Lord as one day; so that events at the distance of 2,000 years would be only two days off, and hence might be spoken of as close at hand.” Yes, with the Lord; but not with men, for whom the Scriptures were written. Besides, according to this calculation, events at the distance of two days from John, would have been at the distance of only about two days and a half from Daniel. The difference would be simply that between day after to-morrow morning and day after to-morrow evening.

Is it not also strange, that Rev. xxii. 11 has been so often applied, as an important proof-text, to the eternal
condition of men, when it is evident from the connection, that it refers to the brief period then intervening before Christ's Second Coming?

So far as our present argument is concerned, it obviously makes no difference, whether the Book of Revelation was written in the time of Nero, or in that of Domitian.

VI. In passages guarding against or exposing certain errors, all implying a general expectation of this kind.

Of these errors, we notice the following:—

1. Too immediate an anticipation of these events.

2 Thess. ii. 1, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, (2) That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. (3) Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; (4) Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (5) Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? (6) And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. (7) For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [hindereth] will let [hinder], until he be taken out of the way. (8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: (9) Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, (10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (11)
And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: (12) That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (13) But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth: (14) Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (15) Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. (16) Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, (17) Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."

The original in v. 2, for "is at hand," is ἐνεστηκέν, is instant or already present,—a word differing essentially in its force from those which our Translators have elsewhere rendered "is at hand." It is unfortunate that they have not observed the distinction; for the Apostle everywhere teaches that the day of Christ is at hand, but nowhere that it is already present. This preterite is used elsewhere in the New Testament only in the participle, where it occurs five times, and always with the translation, in our version, "present." The practical character of the latter part of the extract shows that the "man of sin," "the son of perdition," the "Wicked," to be "revealed," was not the Pope, but some enemy to the faith, or hostile power, which would arise in the times of the Thessalonians themselves,—the same apparently with the "Antichrist," whom the Apostle John, at a subsequent period, recognized as having already come.

The agitation among the Thessalonians, which the
Apostle seeks to allay, shows that they had been taught to expect the *speedy* coming of Christ. Nay, it had been perhaps produced in no small measure by the rousing language of the previous letter of the Apostle himself.

1 Thess. v. 1, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. (2) For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (3) For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. (4) But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. (5) Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. (6) Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

Nay, more; even this second epistle (which some strangely suppose to have been written for the express purpose of warning the Thessalonians not to expect the Second Coming of Christ in their day, and of predicting the Papal apostacy) implies throughout that the coming of Christ is *near*, though, it is true, not already present. Thus, "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven," i. 7. — "By the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him," ii. 1. — "The mystery of iniquity doth already work," ii. 7. — "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ," iii. 5.

2. A disbelief in the certainty, or in the nearness, of these events, from their having been so long deferred.

2 Pet. iii. 1, "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: (2) That ye may be mindful of the words
which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: (3) Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, (4) And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (5) For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: (6) Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: (7) But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. (8) But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (9) The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

"(10) But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (11) Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, (12) Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? (13) Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (14) Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. (15) And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom
given unto him, hath written unto you; (16) As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (17) Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. (18) But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

If the Apostles had not taught the speedy coming of Christ, what room could there have been for the scoff, "Where is his predicted coming?" or why should the Apostle have thought it necessary to explain the unexpected delay? This explanation, it will be observed, is twofold. First, "The Lord's view of time is very different from ours. To Him 'that inhabiteth eternity,' a single day and a thousand years are alike, as the Psalmist hath said: 'A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.' Hence that delay of the promised coming and of the judgment, which seems to us so long, may appear to him as only a very brief interval." Secondly, the delay is ascribed by the Apostle, not to slackness, as some had accounted it, but to long-suffering towards the men of that generation, that they might have fuller opportunity for repentance.

The Apostle then repeats the emphatic assurance, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night"; and charges those whom he addresses to be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God," and to be "diligent that" they may then "be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."
He also refers to that frequent mention "of these things" which is so marked a characteristic of the epistles of St. Paul. This reference is by no means unimportant; implying, as it seems to do, an identity of the great events so often spoken of by Paul, and repeatedly as near, with those which Peter has just before, vv. 10–13, described in such vivid language.

3. A belief that the resurrection was already past. — If the Apostles had placed the resurrection afar off, would such an error be likely to have arisen?

2 Tim. ii. 15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (16) But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. (17) And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; (18) Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. (19) Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

VII. In such an indifference to worldly interests, to civil and social institutions, and to outward religious forms, as an expectation of this kind would naturally inspire.

We have here a proof of the genuineness and strength of this expectation, such as mere protestations could not give. It is no longer a mere theory, but has now assumed a practical form, and one affecting the dearest interests of life. We observe this indifference, —

1. In respect to property. — A similar indifference has been since observed at different times, and even very recently, among those who were expecting the speedy advent of Christ.
EXPECTATIONS OF THE APOSTLES.

Acts ii. 40, "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation [from the ruin which will quickly come upon this perverse generation]. (41) Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (42) And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. (43) And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. (44) And all that believed were together, and had all things common; (45) And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. (46) And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart; (47) Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Acts iv. 32, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. (33) And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. (34) Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, (35) And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

2 Tim. ii. 3, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. (4) No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

The course pursued at Jerusalem appears to have been followed by results similar to those which we have ob-
served in our own times from a like course. Great poverty seems to have ensued, aggravated no doubt by other causes. Accordingly we find great importance attached to contributions among the converts in other, even distant, places, for "the poor saints at Jerusalem." These contributions were made not only on the occasion of a "great dearth," but also subsequently. And is it not a striking illustration of the poverty already prevailing in Judea, that the contribution at Antioch appears to have been made, not when the dearth had come, but in anticipation of the dearth?

Acts xi. 27, "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. (28) And there stood up one of them, named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar. (29) Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: (30) Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

Rom. xv. 25, "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. (26) For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. (27) It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things."

1 Cor. xvi. 1, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. (2) Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. (3) And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem."
Gal. ii. 9, "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. (10) Only they would that we should remember the poor [the poor Jewish saints]; the same which I also was forward to do."

2. In respect to condition in life.—Even the exciting question of liberty or slavery became of slight moment, when the Saviour was so soon to return and raise all his saints to a royal dignity. Why should the Apostles have wasted their time in seeking to break fetters which were so very soon to fall off and be succeeded by crowns and sceptres? We have here a satisfactory explanation of the course pursued by the Apostles in respect to slavery, in which so many have found difficulty.

1 Cor vii. 20, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. (21) Art thou called being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. (22) For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman [ἀνελθόντος, freedman]: likewise also he that is called being free, is Christ’s servant. (23) Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. (24) Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

Eph. vi. 5, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; (6) Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; (7) With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: (8) Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free."
Col. iii. 22, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: (23) And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; (24) Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

1 Pet. ii. 18, "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. (19) For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. (20) For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God."

It need be no longer a stumbling-block, as it has been to some, that the Apostle Paul sent back a runaway slave to his master. And there is one passage in the letter sent with the returned fugitive, to which the prevalent expectation of the speedy coming of Christ to establish his everlasting kingdom upon the earth affords important illustration.

Philemon 15, "For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; (16) Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord."

3. In respect to marriage.—Even this earliest and most sacred institution, so essential, not only to the welfare, but even to the very continuance of the world that now is, came to be regarded by the ardent Apostle Paul as a serious obstacle to a proper preparation for the speedy approach of the world that was to come. We find, in v. 29 of the following extract, a key to his views,
which without such a key might seem quite inexplicable, if not absurd.

1 Cor. vii. 1, "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. . . . (7) For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. (8) I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. (9) But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. (10) And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: (11) But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. (12) But to the rest speak I, not the Lord, If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. (13) And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. (14) For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. (15) But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases; but God hath called us to peace. (16) For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? (17) But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. . . . (24) Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

"(25) Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. (26) I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress; I say, that it is good for a man so to be. (27) Art thou bound unto a
wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. (28) But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned: and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned." Nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh; but I spare you. (29) But this I say, brethren, The time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; (30) And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; (31) And they that use this world, as not abusing it. For the fashion of this world passeth away. (32) But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried, careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord. (33) But he that is married, careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. (34) There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and in spirit: but she that is married, careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. (35) And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. (36) But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. (37) Nevertheless, he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. (38) So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. (39) The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. (40) But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God."
4. In respect to forms of government. — It was of little consequence to the early Christians what form of government prevailed during the very short interval before the establishment of the new kingdom, but of vast moment that no needless prejudice or agitation should be excited against "the gospel of the kingdom," and that their blameless lives and good works should win others to its acceptance. The motives presented below, in Rom. xiii. 11, 12, 1 Tim. ii. 4, and 1 Pet. ii. 12, 15, are worthy of especial notice. The following passages, therefore, can no more be now employed to enforce the submission of a nation to a despotic government, than the extracts under a previous head (No. 2) to justify slavery.

Rom. xiii. 1, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God. (2) Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. (3) For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. (4) For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. (5) Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. (6) For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. (7) Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. . . . (11) And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. (12) The
night is far spent, *the day is at hand*: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

1 Tim. ii. 1, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: (2) For kings, and for *all that are in authority*; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (3) For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (4) *Who will have all men to be saved*, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (5) For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (6) Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

1 Pet. ii. 12, "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, *they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation*. (13) Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; (14) Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. (15) For so is the will of God, *that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men*: (16) As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. (17) Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."

5. In respect to outward religious forms and usages.—We find here one of the most remarkable features of the Apostolic period,—a feature to which I know not where to look for a parallel. Regarding the gospel, not as the establishment of a new system of religion, but as the announcement of the speedy advent of a new Sovereign who would establish his own system in both church and state, they gave little heed to any
formal institution of creeds or rubrics or ceremonies or organizations. So far from this, they even recommended that during the brief interval Jews should continue Jews; and Gentiles, Gentiles. The proceedings of a general council held in respect to the Gentiles, as given in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, are throughout worthy of careful study, as throwing great light upon the character of the period, and upon the views and principles of the Apostles. It may perhaps be sufficient here to give merely the conclusion.

Acts xv. 22, "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: (23) And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. (24) Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us, have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment: (25) It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul: (26) Men that have hazarded their lives for, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (27) We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. (28) For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; (29) That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."

So the Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Corinthian church, expressly advised that both Jews and Gentiles should retain their distinctive character.
1 Cor. vii. 18, "Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. (19) Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. (20) Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called."

This view furnishes a satisfactory explanation of what might otherwise seem an unaccountable, if not unprincipled, latitudinarianism and spirit of conformity in this great Apostle, — extending, not merely to circumcision and to meats and drinks, but even to sacred days, and, in some degree at least, to baptism itself. Indeed, one might doubt whether the Apostle regarded any outward forms as more than "the weak and beggarly elements" of a world that was soon to pass away, — the "shadow of things to come," whose substance was Christ.

Rom. xiv. 2, "For one believeth that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. (3) Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. . . . (5) One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. (6) He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. . . . (10) But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ."

Col. ii. 16, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: (17) Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. . . . (20) Wherefore, if
ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (21) (Touch not; taste not; handle not; (22) Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"

Gal. iv. 9, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? (10) Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. (11) I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain."

1 Cor. ix. 20, "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; (21) To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. (22) To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. (23) And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you."

1 Cor. i. 14, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; (15) Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name." (16) And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. (17) For Christ sent me not to baptize; but to preach the gospel."

The following extract shows that St. Paul regarded the precept of "the apostles and elders and brethren," in Acts xv. 29, "that ye abstain from meats offered to idols," not as a matter of religious obligation, but as a mere compromise. He taught the Corinthians, that they should ask no questions to avoid disobeying this precept; and that they might even knowingly violate it
with a good conscience, except when they would thus offend their weaker brethren. So little was the authority which St. Paul attached to the express injunction of a general and even apostolic council!

1 Cor. x. 25, "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience' sake: (26) For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. (27) If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no questions for conscience' sake. (28) But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience' sake; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: (29) Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? (30) For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? (31) Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God: (32) Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God. (33) Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

VIII. As in the remarkable prominence given to motives drawn from the nearness of these events (see V. above); so, even more strikingly, in the no less remarkable absence of motives (now so familiar) drawn from the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the approach of death.

Motives of this latter class are so familiar to our own minds, and hold so large a place in the exhortations of the pulpit, in hymns (that suspicious, because so imaginative and yet unsuspected, source of doctrine), in other exercises of public and private worship, and in popular
RELIGIOUS BOOKS, that we are in danger of not observing their absence in the discourses of our Saviour, and in the writings of his Apostles. They are so fixed in our own minds, that we unconsciously supply them ourselves in reading the Scriptures; and it is perhaps little suspected by most preachers and religious writers, how many texts they use, by way of accommodation, as containing or implying such motives, which, in their proper sense, are entirely devoid of any such force. It is possible, therefore, that not a few may be surprised to learn that, in the New Testament, often as we find the word “death,” yet,—

1. There are no warnings to prepare for death, but for the coming of the Son of man.

2. There are no precepts to watch with reference to death, but to Christ’s coming.

3. It is nowhere said that death “will come as a thief in the night,” but the day of the Lord.

4. There is no promise to believers of rest at death, but “when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.”

5. It is never urged as a motive to repentance that death is near, but that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

6. It is never presented as a motive to sobriety and prayerfulness, that the end of life is at hand, but the end of all things.

It is needless to multiply these particulars; but let me ask, Are they not absolutely inexplicable, if our proposition be false? That “the coming of the Son of man,” “the day of the Lord,” “the kingdom of heaven,” “the end of all things,” &c., are mere periphrases for death, no one, of course, will seriously urge.
So various, abundant, and conclusive are the proofs in favor of our proposition that "The Apostles evidently expected, that the Second Coming of Christ, with its associate events, would take place before the death of some who were then living." So important, nay, so vital, was the connection of this expectation of the Apostles with all their preaching and all their life. Deny our proposition, and you make many of their words enigmas, and much of their history a riddle. Admit it, and you have a key of wondrous power to unlock the secrets of their views and feelings, of their language and their lives. I have endeavoured to set forth its evidence as clearly and as fully as our limits would allow; and yet I feel that any impression made by detached passages must fall far short of the strong, deep, firm conviction produced by simply reading carefully and continuously the whole priceless series of the apostolic writings.

The generation addressed by our Saviour and his Apostles has long been numbered with the generations that have passed away. The men who composed it have all been lying in their graves nearly two thousand years. The events, therefore, which, according to the declarations of the Saviour and the expectations of the Apostles, were to be fulfilled before that generation should pass away, must have long since taken place. No prediction of our Saviour can have failed of its fulfilment within the predicted time; and any expectation of its fulfilment out of this time, unless ignorantly entertained, must be a presumptuous questioning either of his knowledge or of his veracity. But we have seen both how variously he intimated, and even how explicitly he declared, that his Second Coming, with its associate events, would take
place before the death of some who were then living; and also how clearly and abundantly the Apostles, both in their discourses, in their writings, and in their lives, manifested a corresponding expectation. Is it then possible for us to avoid the inference expressed in the following proposition?
PROPOSITION V.

The Second Coming of Christ, with its associate events, the End of the World, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the General Judgment, must have already taken place; and all expectation of these events as still future is forbidden by the Scriptures.

The question of time determined, that of mode succeeds. "How have these events taken place? In what has consisted the fulfilment of the predictions relating to them?" These are questions alike interesting and important; but they open a new and broad field of inquiry, into which we cannot now enter. Let it here suffice to ascertain in what direction this field lies. It is needless to say that we shall search in vain all the volumes of history to find anything like a literal and outward fulfilment of these predictions. Even the predictions of the end of the world or age, which in its proper sense has literally come to pass, are too much involved in imagery to be made an exception. It requires no argument, therefore, to establish the following proposition as an unavoidable conclusion from those which have preceded.
PROPOSITION VI.

The predictions in the Scriptures of the Second Coming of Christ, the End of the World, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the General Judgment with its awards, must be explained in a figurative or spiritual, rather than a literal sense, and in such a sense as admits an application to what has already taken place.

Any attempt to determine the precise nature and character of this sense, which I should myself term a spiritual rather than a merely figurative sense, must involve a careful study of the teaching of the Scriptures in respect to the nature and characteristics of the Messianic Dispensation,—that new and glorious kingdom which forms the great subject of the New Testament, and to which the events above named were to constitute the introduction. Let me commend this investigation to the studious, the thinking, and the devout, as presenting most directly the great peculiar problems of Christianity, those which are alike grandest in theory and most practical in application. Among the most important subsidiary inquiries are such as relate to the nature and significance of Oriental, and especially of Hebrew and prophetic imagery, to the design and character of our Saviour's
teaching, to the nature and objects of the Apostolic office and of Apostolic Christianity, and to the distinctive characteristics of the several great dispensations or economies under which the world has been placed.

I conclude by expressing my fullest conviction, my most assured belief, that the predictions of our Saviour respecting the great events which we have now considered have been all fulfilled in the precise sense which he himself contemplated when he uttered the sublime attestation, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away"; and that this is no lower or more earthly sense, but the very highest, noblest, heavenliest, of which those words are susceptible.
POSTSCRIPT.

There is one objection to the foregoing argument, which has been already virtually answered, but which may yet assume prominence enough in the minds of some, to render it worthy of a distinct reply. It may be thus stated: "It is true that the Scriptures teach a figurative Second Coming of Christ, which was near at hand when the Apostles wrote, and which was connected with the destruction of Jerusalem; but they also teach a literal Second Coming, which was more remote, and is still future, — a coming which will be personal and visible, attended with a literal end of the present world, an actual resurrection of the body, and a visible and final judgment." I have endeavoured to state the objection clearly and fully, in precise accordance with views extensively entertained, and in the very language which the advocates of these views employ.

It is obvious that the whole burden of proof lies upon those who assert two second comings of Christ; and I might claim the privilege of deferring all reply, until some distinct proof should be adduced of a second second coming. But, to waive this privilege, let me invite all who entertain this objection to unite with me in a careful and candid examination of its force.

If a literal second coming of Christ is taught in the Scriptures, it is either taught in the same passages that teach his figurative second coming, or in different pas-
sages; for no third supposition is possible. Let us, then, consider each of these alternatives.

1. Is the literal coming taught in the same passages that teach the figurative coming? This can only be in two ways. Either the passage must speak expressly of more than one future coming, or it must so speak of one future coming as to show that two are intended.

1. Is there any passage in the New Testament (for here the Old Testament may be left out of view), which speaks expressly of more than one future coming of Christ? No such passage has ever been found. The terms for his second coming, mentioned on p. 19, occur only in the singular, and in every instance but two (where the preposition in precedes) are expressly marked as having a particular reference by the definite article. It is not a coming, an appearing, a revelation; but the coming, the appearing, the revelation.

2. Does any passage in the New Testament so speak of one future coming of Christ as to show that two are intended? Nothing has ever been pointed out in any passage, implying such a duplicity of reference. We simply find in some passages a limitation of time inconsistent with a literal coming; joined with a boldness of scenic description which those who are not familiar with Hebrew imagery find it difficult to reconcile with a figurative coming. So, to obviate all difficulty, a theory of two comings is framed, the one to correspond with the time, and the other with the description. How convenient, if we might interpret other language with the same license! But certainly, the figurative coming either satisfies the meaning of the passage when rightly interpreted, or does not satisfy it. If it satisfies it, what need can there be of supposing any literal coming?
it does not satisfy it, must not the limitation of time be false? Let us take, for an example, Mat. xxiv. 29—31. If these verses do not necessarily mean more than a figurative coming, how can they be said to teach a literal coming? If they do necessarily mean more than a figurative coming, how can the declaration, "This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled," be true? See p. 52.

If, then, we find it absurd to claim that the literal coming is taught in the same passages that teach the figurative coming, let us consider the second alternative.

II. Is the literal coming taught in different passages from those which teach the figurative coming? If so, it must be because the two classes of passages speak of events differing either in kind or in the time or place of their occurrence. For if the two classes of passages do not speak of events differing either in kind or in the time or place of their occurrence, what possible reason can there be for supposing that they are not both speaking of identically the same events? Does the circle of our knowledge embrace any events which are different, and yet which do not differ in either kind, time, or place? Let us, then, consider each of these points.

1. Do any passages that can be referred to a literal coming speak of events differing in kind from those which are spoken of in passages limited in time to the figurative coming? What, then, are the events spoken of in those passages which are either expressly or by implication limited in time to the figurative coming?

(a) Great changes and commotions in the heavens. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the
powers that are in heaven shall be shaken,” Mark xiii. 24, 25.

(c) The appearance of “the sign of the Son of man in heaven,” Mat. xxiv. 30.
(d) The mourning of the tribes of the earth. “Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn,” Mat. xxiv. 30. “And upon the earth distress of nations,” Luke xxi. 25. “And all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him,” Rev. i. 7. See Rev. i. 3, xxii. 10, 12.
(e) The coming of Christ in clouds, with a retinue of angels, and in the glory of the Father. “They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory,” Mat. xxiv. 30. “Behold, he cometh with clouds,” Rev. i. 7. “The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels,” Mat. xvi. 27. See p. 33. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him,” Mat. xxv. 31. For the coming referred to in the last passage, see the preceding part of the discourse, especially Mat. xxiv. 30. The very language used, “When the Son of man shall come,” implies that a coming is here spoken of which has been before mentioned.

(f) A great sound of a trumpet. “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet,” Mat. xxiv. 31. “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound,” 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God,” 1 Thess. iv. 16. See p. 54.

(g) The resurrection of the dead, and a correspond-
ing change of the living. "The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed," 1 Cor. xv. 52. "The dead in Christ shall rise first," 1 Thess. iv. 16.

(h) The gathering of the saints to Christ, to be with him evermore. "And they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other," Mat. xxiv. 31. "The dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: _and so shall we ever be with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

(i) The judgment of all men. "And then he shall reward every man according to his works," Mat. xvi. 27. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be," Rev. xxii. 12. "Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations," Mat. xxv. 31, 32.

(j) The end of the world. "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?" Mat. xxiv. 3. For the answer, see vv. 30, 34. "The end of all things is at hand," 1 Pet. iv. 7.

(k) The establishment of the kingdom of heaven. "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," Mat. xvi. 28. "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand," Luke xxi. 31.

Such are the events ascribed to the figurative coming. What are the events differing from these in kind, which are ascribed to the literal coming? Or what, even the slightest, intimation is there, that in the one case the events are figurative, and in the other literal?
2. Does any passage in the New Testament assign to any future coming of Christ a different time or place from that of his figurative coming? No such passage has ever been found. Indeed, the subject of place may here be left entirely out of consideration. And in respect to the time of any future coming of Christ, we find in the New Testament but one representation; namely, that the time was near at hand, even before the death of some who were then living, but that the day and hour were known only to God. For the oft-quoted and misunderstood passage in 2 Thess. ii. 2, see p. 78.

If, then, we find in the New Testament but one series of events and but one time assigned to any future coming of Christ, what possible ground is there for supposing that more than one such coming is there spoken of? What can be more unscientific, or even unreasonable, than such a gratuitous supposition?

There is no remaining alternative for us to consider. What force, then, let me ask in conclusion, can possibly attach to the objection, that, "besides the figurative second coming of Christ, the Scriptures also teach a literal second coming"?
APPENDIX

OF EXTRACTS RELATING TO BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION.

[In the preceding Essay, that nothing might interfere with a distinct view of the Scriptural Argument in its simplicity, and, as it seems to me, its irresistible force, I have scrupulously avoided all extracts from uninspired writers, however favorable they might be to my own views. And in the following Appendix, that no suspicion may attach to any of the selections, I have been careful to confine them to the writings of divines of high reputation, and of acknowledged orthodoxy, according to the common use of this term. The names of most of the authors will be too familiar to require special remark. I am happy to recognize among them the names of three revered teachers and of other highly esteemed friends, and to acknowledge, for these extracts from their valuable writings, an addition to former obligations.

In making these quotations, I wish to be regarded simply as an editor, and not as adopting for my own any sentiment or statement which they may contain.]
I. ON THE AUTHORITY OF TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION.

[There is a tendency in the human mind to bow to tradition, and to subject others to the same yoke. This tendency is allied to some of the best feelings of our nature; but it is not therefore the less prejudicial to the cause of truth. It is a part of the most pardonable kind of idolatry, father-worship; but still it is idolatry. The bondage has assumed various forms. Among Jews, the yoke has consisted of "the tradition of the elders"; among Roman Catholics, of the traditions of the Church; and among Protestants, of traditions of interpretation. It is the boast of Protestantism, that it recognizes no human authority for its belief, but receives the Scriptures as "the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice"; yet how prevalent is the feeling, even among the most enlightened Protestant sects, that we are bound to interpret the Scriptures as others have done before us, and that any important deviation from their tradition is a criminal presumption! We are told that we must think independently; but then we must independently think just as others have thought before us. Investigation with this result is commended as a noble exercise of the noble powers with which we have been endowed; but with a different result, though conducted in the same manner and with the same spirit, it is denounced as presumptuous if not infidel speculation, philosophy "falsely so called," a being "wise above that which is written." That such fanatical views have sometimes led to unkind feelings and personal collisions, is not to be wondered at, however deeply it may be regretted. A juster view of the authority of tradition, and a better spirit of theological study, are taught by the following extracts.]

A. THEOLOGY A PROGRESSIVE SCIENCE.

1. From the Farewell Charge to the Plymouth Pilgrims, by their Pastor, the Rev. John Robinson.

"Brethren, we are now quickly to part from one another, and whether I may ever live to see your Face on Earth any more, the God of Heaven only knows; but
whether the Lord hath appointed that or no, I charge you before God and his blessed Angels, that you follow me no farther than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

"If God reveal any thing to you by any other Instrument of his, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my Ministry; for I am verily persuaded, I am very confident, the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his Holy Word. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the Condition of the Reformed Churches, who are come to a Period in Religion, and will go at present no further than the Instruments of their Reformation. The Lutherans can't be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; whatever Part of his Will our good God has revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it. And the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great Man of God, who yet saw not all things.

"This is a Misery much to be lamented, for though they were burning and shining Lights in their Times, yet they penetrated not into the whole Counsel of God; but were they now living, would be as willing to embrace further Light, as that which they first received. I beseech you remember it, 't is an Article of your Church Covenant, That you be ready to receive whatever Truth shall be made known to you from the written Word of God. Remember that, and every other Article of your sacred Covenant. But I must herewithal exhort you to take heed what you receive as Truth. Examine it, consider it, and compare it with other Scriptures of Truth before you receive it; for 't is not possible the Christian World should come so lately out of such thick Antichristian Darkness, and that Perfection of Knowledge should break forth at once." — Neal's History of New England, Vol. I., p. 84.


"It is no objection to the Inspiration of the Scriptures,
that the real and full meaning of some passages was not known at the time they were written, or even that it remains unknown to the present time.

"In this respect, the same is true of the Scriptures as of the natural world. There are many things in the creation, the nature and design of which lay concealed for thousands of years, and many which are, even at the present day, but imperfectly understood, or not understood at all. Notwithstanding this, it is true that God created them, and preserves them; and it is doubtless true, that they are designed for some important end, and that they will ultimately accomplish that end. So, as to those things in Scripture which are not well understood; it may be that they will ultimately be understood, and that some special and additional good may result from them in consequence of their having been so long involved in obscurity. Even during the time they are not understood, they may be of use in promoting among good men a humble sense of their limited knowledge, and in exciting them to diligent endeavours after higher acquisitions. And there is nothing inconsistent with the infinite wisdom of God in the supposition, that he should, by subsequent revelations, as well as by the course of his providence and the well-directed labors of his servants, explain that which was before left designedly obscure. This would evidently be analogous to the method of divine instruction in other cases."

— p. 33.

"Now suppose it pleases God, by his Spirit, to influence his servants to write some things which cannot be well understood in their day, but which are intended to be understood, and to be of special use, in future ages: is this any discredit to his wisdom or goodness? In fact, do not all our endeavours to arrive at a more perfect knowledge of the Scriptures imply, that hitherto they have been understood but imperfectly?" — p. 34.
TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION.


“Another duty of a theologian is, to cherish a liberal faith in the possibility of improving our standard theological systems. Improvement in other sciences is hailed with joy, but in theological science is often deemed both undesirable and impossible. The new is too often regarded as but a synonyme with the false, and untrammelled inquiry as a sign of ambition and arrogance. It is on record that Jerome, having grown old in the belief that falsehood for a good purpose is a duty, became incensed at the ‘daring spirit of Augustine for venturing out of the common road,’ and gainsaying the popular belief; and he advised the youthful reformer, ‘if he burned with a strong desire of glory, rather to seek out some champion of his own age with whom he might contend, than molest him who was a worn-out veteran.’ With a similar complaisance were Luther, and Calvin, and Edwards, and Hopkins aspersed as innovators; and the distinctive theology of New England has suffered less from any logical processes than from the obloquy of the name which it has worn for more than fifty years, the name of ‘new divinity.’

“It is said that theological science differs from every other in that it came from God, and was therefore perfect at the first. It did come from God; it did come perfect from him. But is there not a wide distinction between what is perfect as given, and what is perfect as received; between the fullness of God’s teaching, and the completeness of man’s learning? The most harmonious developments of doctrine are at first but partially comprehended by our ill-balanced minds. God reveals his truth in such a way as to try the character, and not to prevent the possibility of a distorted view; in such a way as to stimulate and guide our active search, and not to supersede our industry, that parent of the virtues. He has decreed that the perfection of doctrine shall be given as a reward to him, and only him, who is earnest and piously
skilful in following out the hints of nature and the Bible. And as the zeal of theological scholarship has never been what it should be, so the development of theological doctrine has not been what it should and will be. We recognize the invigorating discipline of our Creator in giving us the raw material and not the fabric ready made; the gold in the ore under ground, and the pearls at the bottom of the sea, and the matter of science from which we must elaborate the science for ourselves. But we recognize also the lethargy of man in eyeing the butterfly rather than digging for the silver; in neglecting to elucidate even the truths of secular science, evident as they are, subservient as they are to his temporal good. How can we suppose, then, that he has gone to the very foundations of that recondite science, which is alien from his vitiated tastes,—gone past all improvement in the richest of human studies? Is it not the whole history of man to be rising regularly, though slowly, from the savage to the sage; to enucleate by little and little the involved phenomena of life? Is it not an old proverb, that 'truth is the daughter of time'? Is it not on every body's tongue, that the little child standing on his father's shoulders can see further than his parent; and starting in his race where his father stopped, may go beyond his parent's goal? As every age may begin with the results of the age preceding, as the tendencies of the intellect are ever upward, as the experiences of successive generations are quickening the growth of virtuous feeling and thereby of clear perception, we cannot but hope that the most extensive of all the sciences will yet be explored with new vigor and success." — p. 9.

"It is needless to add, that theology has been obviously improving within the last two centuries; and the comparison between the standard systems of the present day and those of Turretin, Ridgely, or Owen, presents a rich earnest of what is to come. All these improvements have given, and all future improvements will give, new power to the essential doctrines of Jesus." — p. 14.
TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION.

"The mind should be cheered with the hope of rising higher and higher, or it will droop its wing and debase itself on trifles. It was made for hope, as the eye for light; and it sinks within itself when told that all is done, that there is no employment for it save in ruminating on past opinions; that all its restless strength must be swallowed up in the single power of the memory. It longs to breathe a purer atmosphere than was ever inhaled before: and as the dart of Acestes kindled while it was rising toward the sun, so does the mind drink in a new vitality, when it aspires to an unattained perfection. The scholar thinks better, feels better, writes better, prays better, lives better, when he goes forth with the freeness and freshness of the sages and bards in the earliest days, willing, as a modest man, to see the unseen and hear the unheard, and be the first chronicler of some of the works of God." — p. 14.

"So please Almighty God, we will be faithful to our fathers' memories. Like them, we will learn what we can. Like them, we will say what we know. We will feel, that, of all men on earth, New England men should be the last either to fear the accusation of bigotry, or to become bigots, — either to be reckless in resisting authority, or slavish in compressing their speculations into the shape of a triangle or a square. We will write on our consciences the magnanimous creed of John Robinson, who told the voyagers in the Mayflower, that he would not foreclose his mind against the truth of God, even if it were new. Let us then give heed to ourselves and the doctrine; be first pure, and always peaceable." — p. 35.

B. PROGRESS IN SACRED INTERPRETATION.

1. From Dr. Park's "Duties of a Theologian."

"We are further cheered in this hope [that theology will yet be explored with new vigor and success] by the rela-
tions of scientific theology to other branches of knowledge. Its main dependence is sacred hermeneutics; and when we compare the principles and modes of interpretation adopted by Calvin with those adopted by the Greek and Latin fathers, we see an advance that betokens the coming of a still riper criticism. Many important parts of the Bible are receiving new illustrations from the chronological researches of such men as Neander, and from the reports of modern travellers concerning the topography and natural history of the East. Long buried dwelling-places of the old Orientals have been recently brought to light; and one of our own countrymen, though spending but three months in the Holy Land, and exploring the grounds that have been so often explored in vain, is said to have lately made new discoveries even amid the foundations of the Holy Temple. The almost magical success of Gesenius in evoking the Phœnician tongue from oblivion, the freshening zeal of so many scholars in mastering the cognate languages of the Hebrew, the faithfulness of our missionaries in searching the archives of the East, the increasing facilities of communication between the old countries and the new, have made, and are still making, our acquaintance with the text and idioms of the Bible more minute and definite than before. The labors of such men as Walton, Mill and Kennicott, Bengel, Wetstein and Griesbach, on the various manuscripts, recensions, and versions of the Bible, have reflected clear light, and will reflect still clearer, on the comparative authority of our various readings, and the true meaning of many controverted passages. The Hebrew Testament can now, as all admit, be translated with more correctness than it was by the seventy-two who made the version that Christ and his Apostles used; and both the Testaments are more accurately interpreted at the present day, than they have ever been since the days of John, the last of the unerring expositors.” — p. 10.
TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION.

2. From Professor Stuart’s Edition of Ernesti’s “Elements of Interpretation.”

“Who is ignorant of the innumerable controversies that have arisen about the tropical and literal sense of a multitude of passages in the Sacred Writings? Almost all the enthusiasm and extravagance that have been exhibited in respect to religion, have had no better support than gross material conceptions of figurative language; or, not unfrequently, language that should be properly understood has been tropically construed. There is no end to the mistakes on this ground. Nor are they limited to enthusiasts and fanatics. They develop themselves not unfrequently in the writings of men grave, pious, excellent, and in other parts of theological science very learned. Indeed, it is but a recent thing, that it has come to be considered as a science, and a special and essential branch of theological science, to study the nature of language, and above all the nature of the Oriental, Biblical languages. Long has this been admitted in respect to the classics, and all works of science in ancient languages. But in regard to the Bible, the most ancient book in the world, and written in a language the idiom of which is exceedingly diverse from our own, it seems to have been very generally taken for granted, that no other study was necessary to discover its meaning, than what is devoted to any common English book. At least, a Bible with marginal references, studied by a diligent and careful use of these references, might surely be understood in a most satisfactory manner. In very many cases, the first thing has been to study theology; the second, to read the Bible in order to find proofs of what has already been adopted as matter of belief. This order is now beginning to be reversed. The nature of language, of Scripture language, of figurative language, and of interpretation, is now beginning to be studied as a science the acquisition of which is one of the greatest ends of study; as it is the only proper mode of leading the theologian to the knowledge of what the
Bible really contains. Here, too, is a common arbiter of the disputes that exist in the Christian world. The nature of language and of tropical words, thoroughly understood, will prostrate, among all intelligent and candid men who really love the truth, a great part of all the diversities of opinion that exist.” — Note on p. 74.

"The time is coming, (I cannot doubt it,) when all the dark places of the Bible will be elucidated, to the satisfaction of intelligent and humble Christians. But how near at hand that blessed day is, I do not pretend to know. 'The Lord hasten it in its time!'” — Note on p. 19.

C. **Wrong Use of Proof-Texts.**

From Professor Stuart's Ernesti.

"It is really matter of regret, to find in most of the old and distinguished writers on theology, such a multitude of passages adduced as proof-texts, which, when hermeneutically examined, prove to be in no wise adapted to establish the doctrine, in confirmation of which they were cited. It must be acknowledged, that the pleasure of reading many very valuable works of this nature is greatly abated by the study of sacred interpretation, which teaches more correct exegesis. This loss, however, is more than compensated by the deep conviction which springs from the examination of genuine proof passages.” — Note on p. 20.

D. **Lateness of the Discovery that the Prophets Wrote in Poetry.**


[Can we read the following extracts without surprise at the lateness of a discovery so essential to a correct view of the prophecies, and at the need and the eclat of Lowth’s labors at so late a period in the history of biblical study? Is it not even more surprising, that any can think themselves bound by uninspired inter-
pretations of the prophecies made before this discovery! Why, then, should they not still use text-books on Geography written before the age of Columbus?]

"Though Lowth, when he accepted his Professorship, [in 1741,] had but just completed the thirtieth year of his age, and had never before appeared in a public character, he immediately formed a design which would have done honor to mature age and long experience. This was no other than to reclaim from the dust of ages and the rubbish of allegorizing mystics, the relics of primeval poetry preserved in the Sacred Writings of the Hebrews, to set them in their true light, and prove them worthy the attention and favor of men of taste. It was his purpose to discover the true spirit and meaning of the genuine oracles of God, and to disjoin them from the rude and tasteless additions of uninspired interpreters. Calvin and Grotius had already given noble examples of acute and logical exegesis of the Scriptures; Simon and Le Clerc had prepared the way for the investigation of their history; Selden had searched out the numerous hints which they give respecting ancient manners and domestic life; Milton had explored their rich stores of poetic imagery; and many other distinguished scholars, as Vitringa, Buxtorf, Bochart, and Lightfoot, had labored successfully in different departments of Sacred Literature; but no one had yet arisen to survey accurately the whole ground, to assign the boundaries of safe investigation, to present the student with a clue that would guide him through the labyrinth of conjecture and mysticism, to collect and arrange the more important results which lay scattered in the writings of others, to look on the Hebrew Scriptures with the eye of a critic and the heart of a poet, and to give to Sacred Interpretation the form and dignity of a science. Notwithstanding all that had been done, but few general and correct principles of exegesis had as yet been settled, the Bible had never been viewed in its true light as a work of
taste, the unnatural and barren expositions of the Rabbins were still deemed authoritative; and Christian interpreters were wandering in the dark wilds of mysticism, or exhausting their strength and wasting their time in the useless search of etymologies and various readings. *No one, indeed, had ever ventured to express the opinion that the prophets wrote in poetry*, excepting the eccentric HERMANN VAN DER HARDT, who threw out this among the other fancies of his prolific brain (and the idea then lost all reputation by appearing in such company); and the learned VITRINGA, who had given a hint to that effect in his Commentary on Isaiah. Under these circumstances LOWTH appeared, with the determination and the ability to breathe a new spirit into the whole business of sacred study.” — p. iv.

“LOWTH broke through the trammels of false taste and erroneous theology, penetrated to the secret retirements of the Hebrew Muse, discovered and developed the true nature and genuine sources of the Sacred Poetry, marked out the boundaries of its several departments, and assigned to each its appropriate characteristics, and led the way to a new and more perfect mode of Scriptural interpretation; and by the exquisite specimens of translation with which he illustrated and enriched his Lectures, he proved that the soaring genius and refined taste of the poet may be united with the severe accuracy of the critic, the gravity of the theologian, and the religious sensibility of the devout Christian. The effect was wonderful. LOWTH was immediately caressed and honored by all the patrons of learning in his own country, and hailed on the continent of Europe as the former of a new era in the literary world; for it was his work on the Hebrew Poetry which first directed the attention of the studious Germans to a department of literature which they have since pursued with such untiring zeal and astonishing success. In England he has had many admirers, but no successor.” — p. v.
E. THE FRATERNAL SPIRIT WITH WHICH THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS SHOULD BE PURSUED.

From Dr. Park's "Duties of a Theologian."

"Another duty of a theologian is, to foster a spirit of fraternal interest in the investigations of his brethren. Nothing is more seemly than the scientific coöperation of such friends as Dugald Stewart and Sir James Mackintosh, and from nothing do we turn with more sickness of heart than from the recorded animosity of a Newton and a Leibnitz. The history of theological speculation has too seldom been the history of friends, aiding each other in candid as distinguished from party research. It has too often been the history of combatants, who have striven, not indeed with more noise than others, but with keener passion.

"The peculiar intolerance of theological dogmatists has been owing in part to their love of power. The depravity belonging by nature to all men has cleaved in a measure to ministers; and while in other professions it has found an outlet in a love of gain, or of parade, or of pleasure, it has often been confined in the clerical profession to a love of authority. This is the avenue through which the concentrated sinfulness of the soul has poured itself out. It has been fostered by the apologizing name of a desire to exert a good influence. It has been favored by the ministerial station....

"There has been a second reason for the irritating style of controversial theologians. The weapons of their warfare are of refined power. When they plied the chain, the rack, the fire, they used these grosser implements as the symbols of a more subduing penalty. The symbols have gone; the relics of what they signified remain. It is yet hard for the multitude to rise above a superstitious version of the truth, that what the minister binds or looses here shall be bound or loosed hereafter. To many he yet seems to hold the keys of hell and death. He should be aware of this. It is true he should make a vigorous opposition against essential error."
He should call things by their right names. But he should beware of indulging in too hard names, and of exposing his pious brother to the unmerited jealousies of the Church. When he solemnly insinuates that a theological teacher is a heretic, when he breathes out his significant suspicions that a spiritual guide is unsound in the faith, he sends a panic through a host of confiding Christians, and they, trembling for the ark, cry earnestly to the God of Israel that the new stumbling-block may be removed out of the way.

"There is an inward, a still, a penetrating power in that word heretic, which the men who use it are too prone to forget. It is a word that rouses the fears and inflames the superstitions of praying men and women, who, though the humblest, are yet the most awe-inspiring of all men and women, and arms thousands of the elect of God against one solitary victim, and that victim perhaps an unsuspecting inquirer after truth. It is a word that seems to take hold on eternity, and to consign the unfriended student to the companionship of the ancient apostates, who were delivered over to Satan. When uttered by a high and wary ecclesiastic, it has sounded as if the avenging omnipotence of God was wielded by the envy, or jealousy, or perhaps malice of man. No wonder that Martin Luther sighed for death, as his only hope of rescue from the odium of the Church. No wonder that even evangelical divines have lost their fraternal feeling, when they have reciprocated with each other the accusations of heresy and schism."—pp. 15, 16.

"It is a pusillanimous orthodoxy, and not a fraternal Christianity, that prompts the devotee of a human creed to condemn philosophical research, and to confound the true revelation of nature with the philosophy 'falsely so called,' which, and only which, the Bible disapproves; to discharge the epithets proud, ambitious, skeptical, infidel, or worse than all, and worse than any thing else, Pelagian, against every one who brings into theology the enterprise of a scientific
discoverer, and prefers the sure word of God above all the traditions of the elders. . . . The way to aid an investigator is, not to exclude him from our sympathies because his mind is his as distinct from ours, but to take a kindly interest in his heart's yearnings; not to avoid discussion for the sake of peace, but to labor for rational peace by brotherly discussion, and to imitate the winning voice of the infinite intellect, 'Come, let us reason together.' Our duty is to note well the delicacy of the mind's nature; how like a field-flower it shuts itself up when no rays come down from the sun, and it will never be forced open by the rudeness of rain and hail, but will expand itself to nothing but the light of the morning, and will drink in only the sweet influences of day."—p. 18.

II. VIEWS OF DR. LIGHTFOOT.

[To those who are acquainted with the history of biblical learning, nothing need be said in commendation of the eminent Dr. Lightfoot; for those who are not, let the following brief notice suffice, which I shall give, as far as convenient, in the language of others.

John Lightfoot, son of the Rev. Thomas Lightfoot, "a man much esteemed for his learning and piety," was born in 1602, at Stoke-upon-Trent, in Staffordshire, England. At the age of nineteen, he took his Bachelor's degree at Cambridge, where he "made an extraordinary proficiency in Latin and Greek," and was "thought the best orator of the undergraduates in the University"; and two years after received ordination. In 1643, he was summoned by Parliament to become a member of the celebrated Assembly of Divines at Westminster (the authors of the well-known Catechisms, Confession of Faith, &c.), where he "became distinguished for his eloquence in debate and activity in business," "gave signal proofs of his courage, as well as learning," and "sometimes, by the strength and clearness of his reasonings, and evidence of Scripture, turned the whole Assembly."
In the same year, he was appointed Master of Catharine Hall, Cambridge; and in 1655, was chosen Vice-Chancellor of the University. He died in 1675, after a long life devoted with remarkable singleness and strength of purpose to sacred learning, and to public and private religious duties.

"He was not only a man of great learning," says Strype, "and exemplary diligence; but of great modesty and humility and gratitude and candor. . . . His spiritual endowments, as he was a minister and a Christian, rendered him more illustrious, than all his natural and acquired. . . . His house was a continual hospital; none went away thence unrelieved. . . . He was a truly devout and pious Christian towards God."

From the many tributes to his extensive learning and the great value of his researches, by distinguished biblical scholars both in England and upon the Continent, I add but these two.

"Dr. Lightfoot was a profound scholar, a sound divine, and a pious man. He brought all his immense learning to bear on the sacred volumes, and diffused light wherever he went. His historical, chronological, and topographical remarks on the Old Testament, and his Talmudical Exercitations on the New, are invaluable." — Dr. Adam Clarke.

"The writings of Dr. Lightfoot are an invaluable treasure to the Biblical Student. By his deep researches into the Rabbinical writings, he has done more to illustrate the phraseology of the Holy Scriptures, and to explain the various customs, &c., therein alluded to, particularly in the New Testament, than any other author before or since. . . . Of all the theologians of his time, this celebrated divine (whose opinion was consulted by every scholar of note, both British and Foreign) is supposed to have been the most deeply versed in the knowledge of the Scriptures." — Thomas Hartwell Horne.

Dr. Lightfoot was led by his profound biblical researches, and by the great familiarity which he acquired with the Jewish mind and mode of expression, to refer many passages to the destruction of Jerusalem which are often referred to a future day of judgment. His views upon this point, which often appear in his writings, are most fully expressed in a Sermon preached at the Hertford Assize, March 29, 1663, from 2 Pet. iii. 13; in the Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations upon St. John, published in 1671; and in a posthumous Essay upon the Spirit of Prophecy. Instead of
giving the three statements, which do not essentially differ, I have thought it better to give the one contained in the Commentary, making some additions from the Sermon (enclosed thus, † . . . †), and others from the Essay (enclosed thus, ‡ . . . ‡). For the extract from the Commentary, see Pitman’s Edition of Lightfoot’s Works, Vol. xii., pp. 433–436; for those from the Sermon, see Do., Vol. vi., pp. 290–293; and for those from the Essay, see Do., Vol. iii., pp. 440–442.]

ST. JOHN, Ch. xxii., “Ver. 22: If I will that he tarry till I come.] ‘Till I come’; that is, till I come to destroy the city and nation of the Jews. As to this kind of phrase, take a few instances:—

“‘Our Saviour saith, Matt. xvi. 28, ‘There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom:’—which must not be understood of his coming to the last judgment; for there was not one standing there, that could live till that time:—nor ought it to be understood of the resurrection, as some would have it; for probably not only some, but, in a manner, all that stood there, lived till that time. His coming, therefore, in this place, must be understood of his coming to take vengeance against those enemies of his, which would not have him to rule over them, as Luke xix. 12, 27.

“Perhaps it will not repent him that reads the Holy Scriptures, to observe these few things:

“I. That the destruction of Jerusalem and the whole Jewish state is described, as if the whole frame of this world were to be dissolved. Nor is it strange, when God destroyed his habitation and city, places once so dear to him, with so direful and sad an overthrow; his own people, whom he accounted of as much or more, than the whole world beside,—by so dreadful and amazing plagues. Matt. xxiv. 29, 30, ‘The sun shall be darkened, &c. Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man,’ &c.; which yet are said to fall out within that generation, ver. 34.—2 Pet. iii. 10, ‘The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements
shall melt with fervent heat,' &c. Compare with this, Deut. xxxii. 22, Heb. xii. 26: and observe that, by elements, are understood the Mosaic elements, Gal. iv. 9, Colos. ii. 20: and you will not doubt, that St. Peter speaks only of the conflagration of Jerusalem, the destruction of the nation, and the abolishing the dispensation of Moses.

"Rev. vi. 12 - 14, 'The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, &c.; and the heavens departed as a scroll when it is rolled together,' &c. Where if we take notice of the foregoing plagues, by which, according to the most frequent threatenings, he destroyed that people, viz. the sword, ver. 4, — famine, ver. 5, 6, — and the plague, ver. 8; withal comparing those words, 'They say to the mountains, Fall on us and cover us,' with Luke xiii. 30; — it will sufficiently appear, that, by these phrases, is understood the dreadful judgment and overthrow of that nation and city. With these also agrees that of Jer. iv., from ver. 22 to 28, and clearly enough explains this phrase. To this appertain those and other such expressions, as we meet with; 1 Cor. x. 11, 'On us the ends of the world are come;' † not the very last times of the world, for the world hath lasted sixteen hundred years since Paul spake that; and how long yet it may last, who knoweth? but the end of that old world of the Jewish state which then hasted on very fast: † and 1 Pet. iv. 7, 'The end of all things is at hand;' † not the end of the world, but of that city, nation, and economy. †

† "The ruin and destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish commonwealth and economy is set forth in Scripture in such expressions, as if it were the destruction and dissolution of the whole world. Moses beginneth this style in Deut. xxxii. 22, where he is speaking of that vengeance: — 'For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and it shall burn to the lowest hell, and it shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.' Would you not think that the dissolution of all things were in mention? Look upon the context, and you find it to mean no other
than the destruction of that nation. Jeremiah yet higher, chap. iv. 23; 'I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void: and the heavens, and they had no light.' You would think all the world were returning there to her old chaos again. Add yet farther, 'I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.' You would think, that the whole universe were dissolving; but look but in ver. 27, and it speaks no other than the dissolution of that people, 'For thus hath the Lord said, the whole land shall be desolate.'

"Our Saviour yet higher, Matt. xxiv. 29; 'The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man,' &c. Who would not conclude, that these expressions mean no other thing in the world, than the last dissolution of the world, and Christ's coming to judgment? Yet look well upon the context, and it speaketh plainly, that the meaning is only of the dissolving of the Jews' city and state: and Christ speaks it out most plainly at ver. 34, where he asserts, that 'that present generation should not pass, till all those things were fulfilled.'

"The beloved disciple follows his Master's style, upon the very same subject, in the sixth of his Revelation; where, after he had described the means of the destruction of this wretched people, under the opening of certain seals, by sword, famine, and plague; he comes at last, in ver. 12–14, to speak their final dissolution itself in the very like terms: 'The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood: and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, and the heavens departed as a scroll that is rolled together, and every mountain and island were removed out of their places.' One would think, the final dissolution of all the world were spoken of; but look in ver. 16, and you find
the very same words that our Saviour applies to the destruc-
tion of that people; 'They said unto the mountains, Fall on
us and hide us,' &c. Our apostle Peter's meaning is
no other in the expression before my text, where, when he
speaks of 'the heavens being dissolved by fire, the earth and
the works therein burnt up, and the elements melting with
fervent heat,' he intends no other thing, than the dissolving
of their church and economy by fiery vengeance, the con-
sumption of their state by the flame of God's indignation, and
the ruin of their elements of religion by God's fury. Not
'the elements' in Aristotle's sense, of fire, air, earth, and
water; but 'the elements' in his brother Paul's sense,
whom he mentions presently after my text,—the 'carnal
and beggarly elements' of their Mosaic rites and
traditionary institutions.†

"II. With reference to this, and under this notion, the
times immediately preceding this ruin are called the 'last
days,' and the 'last times,' אסתרי גים: that is, the last
times of the Jewish city, nation, economy. This manner of
speaking frequently occurs, which let our St. John himself
interpret; 1 John ii. 13, 'There are many antichrists,
whereby we know that it is the last time:' and that this na-
tion is upon the very verge of destruction, when as it hath
already arrived at the utmost pitch of infidelity, apostasy,
and wickedness.

† "There is much mention of the 'last days' in Scripture,
which in most places is not to be understood of the last
times of the world, as some take them and so mistake, but of
the last days of Jerusalem and the Jewish state. And indeed,
the greatest mercies that were promised to that people were
promised to occur in those last days; as Isa. ii. 2, Hos. iii.
5, Joel ii. 28, as he is cited by this our apostle, Acts ii. 17.
These things are not to be allotted to the last days of the
world, but to the last days of that city; as Peter's very al-
llegation out of Joel makes it plain, if there were no more
proof. "Now (saith he) is fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, In the last days I will pour out, &c. These are the 'last days' there intended, and now the thing hath received its accomplishment. For how improper is it to construe him in such a sense as some do,—This is that which, Joel foretold, should come to pass in the last days of the world, two or three thousand years hence.

"And so, on the contrary, the worst of men and times are foretold to be in those last days of Jerusalem, because they did not improve those mercies, 1 Tim. iv. 1, and 2 Tim. iii. 1; and our apostle in the third verse of this chapter [2 Pet. iii. 3].† † And see 1 Pet. i. 20; 'Christ was manifest in these last times.' †

"III. With the same reference it is, that the times and state of things immediately following the destruction of Jerusalem are called, a 'new creation,' 'new heavens,' and a 'new earth,'—Isa. lxv. 17, 'Behold I create a new heaven and a new earth.' When should that be? Read the whole chapter; and you will find the Jews rejected and cut off; and from that time is that new creation of the evangelical world among the Gentiles. Compare 2 Cor. v. 17, and Rev. xxi. 1, 2: where, the old Jerusalem being cut off and destroyed, a new one succeeds; and new heavens and a new earth are created.

"2 Pet. iii. 13: 'We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth:'—The heavens and the earth of the Jewish church and commonwealth must be all on fire, and the Mosaic elements burnt up: but we, according to the promise made to us by Isaiah the prophet, when all these things are consumed, look for the new creation of the evangelical state.

† "It is well they might so, [look for new heavens and a new earth,] and had warrant of promise so to do; otherwise where had their expectation been? The verses immediately before speak nothing but devastation and ruin of heaven
and earth; and if there had been nothing beyond that to be looked after, their hopes and expectancy had been ruined also; 'but we (says our apostle) look for new heavens and a new earth.'

"But of what nature they, is all the question. I doubt some men construe these words of the apostle as far distant from his sense almost, as the earth is distant from the heavens; whilst they conceive from hence, that after the dissolution of all things, yet there shall be a renewing of heaven and earth, and they shall be as before as to their substance and form, only their quality changed. To this they apply Rom. viii. 19, 20; 'For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God,' &c.

"They would make our apostle say Shibboleth, whether he will or no; whereas he speaks Shibboleth, plain enough, to a far differing sense.†

‡ "Here belong those things which are said of the פֶּלֶם אַנְשֵׁי, 'the world to come,' when they refer to the times of the Messiah. For the destruction of Jerusalem was the τάλαθα τοῦ αἰῶνος, 'finis sæculi Judaici,' 'the end of the Jewish age,' (or of that פֶּלֶם, or age, during which the institutions of Moses were to continue, of which it is said that they were to endure פֵּלֶם [commonly translated for ever]; and thereupon was the commencement of a new world and age, in which Christ was to reign among the Gentiles, and all the nations were to submit to the sceptre of his gospel.

"And here by the way let us remark, that that is a harder interpretation, which explains 'in the last days,' vaguely and generally, in the days of the gospel, that is, from its first preaching to the end of the world. It is, I say, a harder interpretation to call those times which are distinguished by the appellation of 'the new world,' or 'the new creation,' the last days.‡

"IV. The day, the time, and the manner, of the execution of this vengeance upon this people, are called, 'The
day of the Lord,' 'The day of Christ,' 'His coming in the clouds, in his glory, in his kingdom.' Nor is this without reason; for from hence doth this form and mode of speaking take its rise:

"Christ had not as yet appeared but in a state of humility; contemned, blasphemed, and at length murdered, by the Jews: his gospel rejected, laughed at, and trampled under foot: his followers pursued with extreme hatred, persecution, and death itself. At length, therefore, he displays himself in his glory, his kingdom and power; and calls for those cruel enemies of his, that they may be slain before him.

"Acts ii. 20, 'Before that great and notable day of the Lord come.' Let us take notice, how St. Peter applies that prophecy of Joel to those very times; and it will be clear enough, without any commentary, what that 'day of the Lord' is.

"2 Thess. ii. 2, 'As if the day of Christ was at hand,' &c. † For the apostle is here speaking of the apostasy that will precede the destruction of the nation, and of the Jewish antichrist that is to be shown forth in living colors. ‡ To this, also, do those passages belong, Heb. x. 37, 'Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come:'—James v. 9, 'Behold, the judge is at the door:'—Rev. i. 7, 'He cometh in the clouds:'—and xxii. 12, 'Behold, I come quickly:' †—Matt. xix. 28, 'When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel:'—and xxiv. 30, 'Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory:' ‡ with many other passages of that nature, all which must be understood of Christ's coming in judgment and vengeance against that wicked nation. And in this very sense must the words now before us be taken, and no otherwise, 'I will that he tarry till I come:' — 'For thy part, Peter, thou shalt suffer death by thy countrymen the Jews; but as for him, I will that he
shall tarry till I come and avenge myself upon this generation: and if I will so, what is that to thee? ’ The story that is told of both these apostles confirms this exposition; for it is taken for granted by all, that St. Peter had his crown of martyrdom, before Jerusalem fell; and St. John survived the ruins of it.”

[Dr. Lightfoot would have been too far in advance of his age, if he had proceeded from a sounder interpretation of the Scriptures, to a truer system of theology. It is perhaps an argument in favor of his interpretations, that he seems to have been wholly unconscious of their logical result. While depriving the common doctrine of a future general judgment of so large a part of its supposed scriptural proof, he still appears, like most theologians of his time, to have received the doctrine itself almost as an axiom. He even found additional evidence of it in his figurative interpretation. Witness the following argument in a sermon upon “The Great Assize.”

“Was not the judgment and sad conflagration of Jerusalem, and destruction of the Jewish church and nation, an assurance of the judgment to come; when the expressions whereby it is described are such as, you think, meant nothing else but that final judgment! As, ’Christ’s coming: coming in clouds, in his glory, in his kingdom:—the day of the Lord; the great and terrible day of the Lord:—the end of the world; the end of all things:—the sun darkened; the moon not giving light:—the stars falling from heaven, and the powers of heaven shaken:—the sign of the Son of man appearing in heaven:—heaven departing as a scroll rolled together, and every mountain and hill removed out of its place,’ &c. You would think, they meant nothing but the last and universal judgment; whereas their meaning, indeed, is Christ’s coming in judgment and vengeance against the Jewish city and nation; but a fore-signification also of the last judgment.” — Works, Vol. vi., p. 354.

The logical result of such interpretation did not escape that sharp controversialist, Bishop Horsley, as appears from the following passage, in which, quite unintentionally no doubt, he virtually recommends this interpretation as adopted extensively and even by “some of the best modern expositors.”
“Among the passages which have been thus misrepresented by the refinements of a false criticism, are all those which contain the explicit promise of the coming of the Son of Man in glory, or in his kingdom: which it is become so much the fashion to understand of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman arms within half a century after our Lord’s ascension, that, to those who take the sense of Scripture from some of the best modern expositors, it must seem doubtful whether any clear prediction is to be found in the New Testament, of an event in which, of all others, the Christian world is the most interested.” — Horsley’s Theological Works, Vol. I., p. 2.

It may be remarked alike of Dr. Lightfoot and of most of his successors in the figurative interpretation, and that without any disparagement of their merits, that they have been more successful in establishing the necessity of such an interpretation, than in rising to the fulness and spirituality of the figurative sense. They have rested too much in the outward, to the neglect of the inward; too much in the sign, to the neglect of the thing signified. Their thoughts have been too much occupied with the intense tragedy of the destruction of Jerusalem, and too little with those vast, those infinite spiritual transactions, of which that destruction was a mere circumstance. It is only by a greater elevation and consistency of view, that the figurative interpretation can be raised above the objections with which it has been so often and, notwithstanding its demonstrativeness, even so plausibly assailed.

III. DR. ROBINSON ON MATTHEW XXIV. 29–31.


[The peculiarity of the views expressed by this eminent scholar consists chiefly in his adopting as the basis of his calculation the largest measure of a generation, a hundred years, and in his finding the accomplishment of the predictions in Matt. xxiv. 29–31, not in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, but in “the great final catastrophe of the Jewish people” in the time of Adrian, in that “bloody tragedy” which “was at length brought to a close
at the unknown city of Bether, in the eighteenth year of Adrian, A. D. 135." Even if we may not fully appreciate his reasons for this extension of the time, and may be looking for a higher spiritual and practical sense than he has developed, still we cannot read without great interest so able an argument for the figurative interpretation, from one whose opinions are commended to our confidence by so much thoroughness of research and so much soundness of judgment.]

"Our Lord himself limits the interval within which Jerusalem shall be destroyed and his 'coming' take place, to that same generation: Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. The language is here plain, definite, and express; it cannot be misunderstood, nor perverted. It follows, in all the Evangelists, the annunciation of our Lord's 'coming,' and applies to it in them all, just as much as it applies to the antecedent declarations respecting Jerusalem; and more directly, indeed, inasmuch as it stands here in a closer connection." — p. 540.

"The question now arises, Whether, under these limitations of time, a reference of our Lord's language to the day of judgment and the end of the world, in our sense of these terms, is possible? Those who maintain this view attempt to dispose of the difficulties arising from these limitations in different ways. Some assign to ebdios the meaning suddenly, as it is employed by the Seventy in Job 5:3, for the Heb. דנהם. But even in this passage, the purpose of the writer is simply to mark an immediate sequence, — to intimate that another and consequent event happened forthwith. Nor would any thing be gained, even could the word ebdios be thus disposed of, so long as the subsequent limitation to 'this generation' remained. And in this, again, others have tried to refer γενεά to the race of the Jews or to the disciples of Christ; not only without the slightest ground, but contrary to all usage and all analogy. All these attempts to apply force to the meaning of the language are vain; and are now abandoned by most commentators of note." — p. 541.
"We come now to our last preliminary inquiry, viz. Whether the language of Matthew in vv. 29–31 is in fact applicable to merely civil and political commotions and revolutions? and whether the solemnity and strength of the language, and the grandeur and pomp of the mode of representation, do not necessarily imply a catastrophe more general and more awful, than the fall of a single city or the subversion of a feeble people? Can it be, then, that the language of these verses should refer merely to the destruction of Jerusalem or of the Jewish nation?

"Not to dwell here on the well-known fact, that the language of the Orient, and especially that of the Hebrew prophets, is full of the boldest metaphors and the sublimest imagery, applied to events and things which the manner of the Occident would describe without figure and in far simpler terms; it will be sufficient to show, that similar language is employed, both in the Old and New Testaments, on various occasions arising out of changes and revolutions in the course of human events; and especially in respect to the judgments of God upon nations. We will take the verses in their order.

"Verse 29. Here it is said, that after the preceding tribulation, the darkness of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars, and the shaking of the powers of heaven are to be the harbinger of the Lord’s coming. The 'powers (συνάνωμε) of heaven' are the sun, moon, and stars, the נubes, אבק, host of heaven, of the Old Testament. Now that the very same language and the same natural phenomena are employed in other places to mark events in human affairs and to announce God’s judgments, is apparent from the following passages:

"In Is. c. 13, woes and judgments are denounced against Babylon. In v. 9 it is said, ‘the day of the Lord cometh ... to lay the land desolate;’ and in v. 10 the following signs and accompaniments are pointed out: ‘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.'

"In Is. c. 34, similar woes and judgments are proclaimed against Idumea; see vv. 5, 6. The prophet in v. 2 describes 'the indignation of the Lord upon all nations, . . . he hath utterly destroyed them;' and in v. 4 he continues: 'And all the host of heaven (Sept. δυνάμει τῶν οὐρανῶν) shall be dissolved; and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as the withered leaf from the fig-tree.'

"In Ez. c. 32, the prophet takes up a lamentation for Pharaoh, v. 2; in the succeeding verses his destruction is foretold; and then the prophet proceeds in v. 7, as follows: 'And when I shall put thee out, 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, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God.'

"In Joel 2: 30, 31 (3: 3, 4, Heb.) the very same phenomena are described as appearing 'before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.' In Acts 2: 19, 20, this passage is quoted by the Apostle Peter, and applied directly to the great events which were to accompany the introduction of the new dispensation,—including obviously the signs and wonders attendant upon the death and resurrection of our Lord; the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost and upon the churches afterwards; the spread and establishment of Christianity; and the final termination of the Mosaic dispensation in the subversion of the temple-worship and the irretrievable ruin of the Jewish nation.

"These examples are enough to show, that the language of the verse under consideration may well be in like manner understood as symbolic of the commotions and revolutions of states and kingdoms. In respect to the other 'two Evange-
lists, the words of Mark are entirely parallel to those of Matthew; while Luke interweaves a further allusion to terrestrial phenomena, and to the distress and faintness of heart among men, 'for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.'

"Verse 30. After the phenomena described in the preceding verse, is to appear 'the sign of the Son of man in heaven.' This, of course, is not the Messiah himself, as some assume; but it would seem to be something immediately connected with his personal appearance, perhaps the dark clouds and tempest, the thunders and lightnings, which are ascribed as the usual accompaniment of a Theophania [appearance of God], and in which the Redeemer is at first shrouded. (See Ps. 18: 11–14.) Then the Son of man himself is seen 'coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.' Can this magnificent and awful representation have reference merely to events in the world's past history?

"Let this question also be answered by an appeal to the Old Testament. There Jehovah is represented as appearing in a similar manner, both for the judgment of the wicked and the protection of the righteous.

"Thus in Ps. 97: 2 sq. 'Clouds and darkness are round about him, ... a fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about,' etc.

"Ps. 50: 3 sq. 'Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.'

"So too in respect to particular nations. In Is. 19: 1 it is said: 'Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt; and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence,' etc.

"In like manner, Ps. 68 is the description of a continued Theophania, in behalf of the people of Israel; see vv. 1, 2; 7, 8; 17, 18; 33, 35.
APPENDIX.

The same sublime imagery is likewise employed in Ps. 18 (see also 2 Sam. c. 22) in describing God's appearance for the deliverance of an individual,—his chosen servant David. A passage more full of poetic sublimity and overpowering grandeur can hardly be found in the sacred writings, than is contained in vv. 7–15 of that Psalm. The application of it to David follows immediately in v. 16: 'He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters,' etc. The whole passage is too long to be inserted here, but the reader will not fail to turn to it and peruse it.

If then language of this kind relating to Jehovah is employed in the Old Testament, with reference both to nations and to individuals, we are surely authorized to apply the like representations of the New Testament to an event so important in the Divine economy as the overthrow of God's own peculiar people, and the chosen seat of their national worship.

The source of the particular form of representation in v. 30 is doubtless the seventh chapter of Daniel. There in vv. 13, 14, the prophet says: 'I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom, that which shall not be destroyed.' Here then is the Messiah, coming not for the day of judgment, but to introduce his spiritual kingdom upon earth. Analogically, therefore, the like language of our Lord in the verse before us must be understood in the same way, and not made to refer to the day of judgment.

Verse 31. Hosts of angels and the sound of the trumpet belong to the Christophania [appearance of Christ] here and elsewhere, as also to the Theophania (Ex. 19: 16, 19, 1 Cor. 15: 52, 1 Thess. 4: 16; comp. Rev. 8: 2, etc.). Here
too it is said: 'He shall send his angels ... and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds;' and the same is said in the corresponding verse of Mark. This 'gathering,' it has been thought, can refer only to the assembling of all nations for the final judgment, as more fully depicted in Matt. 25:31 sq. and also as implied in the explanation of the parable of the tares in Matt. 13:40 sq. But on comparing the modes of expression in the two cases, they do not appear to be parallel. Here the angels simply 'gather together the elect;' there (in 25:32) all nations are gathered before him, and the wicked are then separated from the righteous. The representation is the same in Matt. 13:41, 43. The idea of such a separation before the judgment-seat is indeed essentially connected with every representation of the day of judgment; and indeed cannot be separated from it. Why then are only the elect here said (in v. 31) to be gathered together? For judgment? Nothing of the kind is expressed or implied in the passage itself; nor is it elsewhere ever said of the elect, that they alone will be 'gathered together' to the judgment of the great day.

''But the idea of 'gathering together' those widely dispersed, sometimes includes also the accessory notion of deliverance and protection, as the end and purpose of the act. Thus it is said of Jehovah, that 'he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel' (Ps. 147:2, Deut. 30:3); he will gather them out of all lands whither they are scattered, will deliver them from all dangers, and secure to them his protection. So too our Lord, in his touching lament over Jerusalem, exclaims: 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!' Here the idea of deliverance and protection is strongly prominent. Now this idea we may apply in the verse under consideration. In the commotions and distress antecedent to our Lord's coming for the
destruction of the Jewish state, he will send his angels 'to gather together his elect,' so that they may be delivered and protected from the dangers which threaten them. Indeed, precisely this idea is strongly expressed by Luke, in the parallel verse: 'And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.'

"We come then to the general result, that the language of the three verses under consideration does not necessarily in itself apply to the general judgment; while the nature of the context shows that such an application is inadmissible. On the other hand, there is nothing in the language itself to hinder our referring it to the downfall of Judaism and the Jewish people; but rather both the context and the attendant circumstances require it to be understood of these events.

"In further illustrating the language of our Lord as thus applied, I would remark, that 'his coming,' as here foretold, includes as its object not only the overthrow of the Jewish nation, but also the establishment and spread of his own spiritual kingdom upon earth. This is clearly indicated in the words of Daniel, as above cited; and also in those of Joel, as cited and applied by the Apostle Peter (Dan. 7: 13, 14, Acts 2: 16 sq.). The latter prophecy began to have its fulfilment in the signs and wonders attendant upon our Lord's death and resurrection, and in the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; but it was fully accomplished only in the later catastrophe of Jerusalem and Judaism. The tenacity with which that people clave to the outward rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation, to the worship of the temple, and to their hopes of restoration and exaltation under a temporal Messiah; as also their fierce and unrelenting opposition to the claims of the lowly Jesus; — all this was the first great and prominent obstacle to the introduction and prevalence of his spiritual reign. This was at that moment the great enemy to be vanquished; and the
downfall of this opposing power was to be the triumph and the establishment of the Messiah’s kingdom. Both these great results, therefore, were to be accomplished by his coming. (See also Matt. 16: 27.)—pp. 545–550.

IV. FROM THE COMMENTARIES OF DRS. GILL AND CLARKE.

[I have been induced to make the following selections, not only by the great learning and laboriousness of these Commentators, but also by the especial reputation and influence which they possess among extensive communities of Christians; Dr. John Gill having been, without dispute, the most eminent Baptist Commentator, and Dr. Adam Clarke the most eminent Methodist Commentator, that has ever written. The extracts will be simply arranged in the order of the texts. Had it been thought necessary, many similar extracts might have been added from other Commentators.]

Mat. xvi. 27, For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.] “This seems to refer to Dan. vii. 13, 14; ‘Behold one like the Son of man came... to the Ancient of days;... and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him.’ This was the glorious Mediatorial kingdom which Jesus Christ was now about to set up, by the destruction of the Jewish nation and polity, and the diffusion of his Gospel through the whole world. If the words be taken in this sense, the angels or messengers may signify the apostles and successors in the sacred ministry, preaching the Gospel in the power of the Holy Ghost. It is very likely that the words do not apply to the final judgment, to which they are generally referred; but to the wonderful display of God’s grace and power after the day of Pentecost.”—Dr. Clarke.

Mat. xvi. 28, “Till they see the Son of man coming in his
kingdom; which is not to be understood of his personal coming in his kingdom in the last day, when he will judge quick and dead; for it can’t be thought, that any then present should live to that time, but all taste of death long before, as they have done; for the story of John’s being alive, and to live till then, is fabulous, and grounded on a mistake which John himself has rectified at the close of his gospel: — nor of the glorious transfiguration of Christ, the account of which immediately follows, when he was seen by Peter, James, and John, persons now present; for that, at most, was but an emblem and a pledge of his future glory: — rather, of the appearance of his kingdom in greater glory and power, upon his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven; when the Spirit was poured out in an extraordinary manner, and the Gospel was preached all over the world, was confirmed by signs and wonders, and made effectual to the conversion and salvation of many souls; which many then present lived to see and were concerned in: — though it seems chiefly to have regard to his coming to show his regal power and authority in the destruction of the Jews; when those his enemies, that would not that he should reign over them, were ordered to be brought and slain before him; and this the Apostle John, for one, lived to be a witness of.” — Dr. Gill.

Mat. xxiv. 29, Immediately after the tribulation, &c.] “Commentators generally understand this and what follows, of the end of the world, and Christ’s coming to judgment. But the word immediately shows that our Lord is not speaking of any distant event, but of something immediately consequent on calamities already predicted; and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem. ‘The Jewish heaven shall perish, and the sun and moon of its glory and happiness shall be darkened,—brought to nothing. The sun is the religion of the church; the moon is the government of the state; and the stars are the judges and doctors of both. Compare Isa.
xiii. 10, Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8, &c. Lightfoot. — In the prophetic language, great commotions upon earth are often represented under the notion of commotions and changes in the heavens.” — Dr. Clarke.

"That is, immediately after the distress the Jews would be in through the siege of Jerusalem, and the calamities attending it; just upon the destruction of that city and the temple in it, with the whole nation of the Jews, shall the following things come to pass; and therefore cannot be referred to the last judgment, or what should befall the church or world a little before that time, or should be accomplished in the whole intermediate time between the destruction of Jerusalem and the last judgment. For all that is said to account for such a sense (as that it was usual with the prophets to speak of judgments afar off as near; and that the apostles often speak of the coming of Christ, the last judgment, and the end of the world, as just at hand; and that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years,) will not answer to the word immediately, or show that that should be understood of two thousand years after. Besides, all the following things were to be fulfilled, before that present generation in which Christ lived passed away, ver. 34, and therefore must be understood of things that should directly and immediately take place upon or at the destruction of the city and temple.” — Dr. Gill.

Mat. xxiv. 34, "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass,— Not the generation of men in general, as if the sense was that mankind should not cease until the accomplishment of these things; nor the generation or people of the Jews, who should continue to be a people until all were fulfilled; nor the generation of Christians, as if the meaning was that there should be always a set of Christians or believers in Christ in the world, till all these events came to pass: — but it respects that present age, or generation of men then living in it; and the sense is, that all the men of
that age should not die, but some should live *till all these things were fulfilled* (see Mat. xvi. 28); as many did, and as there is reason to believe they might and must, since all these things had their accomplishment in or about forty years after this. And certain it is, that John, one of the disciples of Christ, outlived the time by many years; and, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, many of the Jewish doctors now living, when Christ spoke these words, lived until the city was destroyed; as Rabban Simeon, who perished with it, R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, who outlived it, R. Zadoch, R. Ishmael, and others. This is a full and clear proof, that not any thing that is said before relates to the second coming of Christ, the day of judgment, and the end of the world; but that all belong to the coming of the Son of man in the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the end of the Jewish state.” — *Dr. Gill.*

Mat. xxvi. 64, “Thou hast said, that is, I am the Christ, the promised Messiah; and you and this whole nation shall shortly have the fullest proof of it. For hereafter, in a few years, ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, fully invested with absolute dominion, and *coming in the clouds of heaven*, to execute judgment upon this wicked race. See chap. xxiv. 30. Our Lord appears to refer to Dan. vii. 13; ‘One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven,’ &c. This may also refer to the final judgment.” — *Dr. Clarke.*

John xxii. 22, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? meaning, that if it was his pleasure that he should live, not till his second coming to judge the quick and dead at the last day, but till he should come in his power, and take vengeance on the Jewish nation in the destruction of their city and temple by the Romans, and in dispersing them through the nations of the world, (till which time John did live, and many years after; and was the only one of the disciples that lived till that time, and who did not die a violent death,) what was that to Peter? It was no concern of his.” — *Dr. Gill.*
Heb. x. 37, For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come.] “This is to be understood, not of his coming in the flesh, for he was come in the flesh already; . . . but of his coming in his kingdom and power, to destroy Jerusalem, and take vengeance on the Jews for their rejection of him.” — Dr. Gill.

James v. 8, The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.] “He is already on his way to destroy this wicked people; to raze their city and temple, and to destroy their polity for ever; and this judgment will soon take place.” — Dr. Clarke.

1 Pet. i. 13, Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.] “Continue to expect all that God has promised; and particularly that utmost salvation, that glorification of body and soul, which ye shall obtain at the revelation of Christ, when he shall come to judge the world.

“But if the Apostle alludes here to the approaching revelation of Christ to inflict judgment on the Jews, for their final rebellion and obstinacy; then the grace, χάρις benefic, may intend their preservation from the evils that were coming upon that people, and their wonderful escape from Jerusalem at the time that the Roman armies came against it.” — Dr. Clarke.

1 Pet. iv. 7, But the end of all things is at hand.] “In a very few years after St. Peter wrote this Epistle, even taking it at the lowest computation, viz. A. D. 60 or 61, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. To this destruction, which was literally then at hand, the Apostle alludes when he says, ‘The end of all things is at hand’: the end of the temple, the end of the Levitical priesthood, the end of the whole Jewish economy, was then at hand.” — Dr. Clarke.

Rev. i. 7, Behold he cometh with clouds.] “This relates to his coming to execute judgment on the enemies of his religion: perhaps to his coming to destroy Jerusalem, as he was to be particularly manifested to them that pierced him;
which must mean the incredulous and rebellious Jews.” — *And all kindreds of the earth.*] “All the tribes of the land. By this the Jewish people are most evidently intended; and therefore the whole verse may be understood as predicting the destruction of the Jews.” — Dr. Clarke.

V. VARIOUS SELECTIONS.

A. DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY.

From Bishop Warburton’s *Julian: or a Discourse concerning the Earthquake and Fiery Eruption,* &c.

“The prophecy of Jesus concerning the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, by Titus, is conceived in such high and swelling terms, that not only the modern interpreters, but the ancient likewise, have supposed that our Lord interweaves into it a direct prediction of his second coming to judgment. Hence arose a current opinion of those times, that the consummation of all things was at hand; which hath afforded a handle to an infidel objection in these, insinuating that Jesus, in order to keep his followers attached to his service and patient under sufferings, flattered them with the near approach of those rewards which completed all their views and expectations. To which the defenders of religion have opposed this answer, That the distinction of short and long in the duration of time, is lost in eternity; and, with the Almighty, ‘a thousand years are but as yesterday,’ &c.

“But the principle both go upon is false; and if what hath been said be duly weighed, it will appear that the parts of this prophecy which mark a speedy advent do not respect God’s second coming to judgment, but his first,—in the abolition of the Jewish policy, and the establishment of the Christian,—that kingdom of Christ, which commenced
on the total ceasing of the theocracy. For as God's reign over the Jews entirely ended with the abolition of the temple-service, so the reign of Christ in spirit and in truth had then its first beginning.

"This was the true establishment of Christianity, not that affected by the donations or conversions of Constantine. Till the Jewish Law was abolished, over which the Father presided as King, the reign of the Son could not take place; because the sovereignty of Christ over mankind was that very sovereignty of God over the Jews transferred and more largely extended.

"This therefore being one of the most important eras in the economy of grace, and the most awful revolution in all God's religious dispensations; we see the elegance and propriety of the terms in question, to denote so great an event, together with the destruction of Jerusalem, by which it was effected. For in the old prophetic language, the change and fall of principalities and powers, whether spiritual or civil, are signified by the shaking heaven and earth, the darkening the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars; as the rise and establishment of new ones are by processions in the clouds of heaven, by the sound of trumpets, and the assembling together of hosts and congregations."—Bk. i., ch. 1.

B. EXPECTATIONS OF THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS.


[The following extract is chiefly made for the included statements of the revered author (whose praise and whose songs of praise are in all the churches), in regard to the expectations of the first Christians. It also shows, how strange a theory an excellent and learned man can adopt, in order to reconcile the facts of history and the language of Scripture with his creed. How much better, if he had undertaken the simpler work of harmonizing his creed with fact and Scripture. With what horror would the Apostles have started back from such Jesuitry and pious imposture as are here ascribed to them?]
"I might yet take occasion from this objection to give a further reason, why the Apostles more frequently draw their motives of hope and fear from the Resurrection and the Great Judgment; that is, that even that day of recompense was generally then supposed to be near at hand, and so there was less need to insist upon the joys and sorrows of the separate state.

"As the patriarchs and the Jews of old, after the Messiah was promised, were constantly expecting his first coming almost in every generation, till he did appear, and many modes of prophetical expression in Scripture, which speak of things long to come as though they were present or just at hand, gave them some occasion for this expectation; so the Christians of the first age did generally expect the second coming of Christ to judgment, and the resurrection of the dead, in that very age wherein it was foretold. St. Paul gives us a hint of it in 2 Thess. ii. 1, 2. They supposed that the day of the Lord was just appearing. And many expressions of Christ concerning his return, or coming again after his departure, seem to represent his absence as a thing of no long continuance. It is true these words of his may partly refer to his coming to destroy Jerusalem, and the coming in of his kingdom among the Gentiles; or his coming by his messenger of death; yet they generally, in their supreme and final sense, point to his coming to raise the dead, and judge the world. And from the words of Christ, also, concerning John, Chap. xxi. 22, 'If I will that he tarry till I come,' it is probable that the Apostles themselves at first, as well as other Christians, might derive this apprehension of his speedy coming.

"It is certain, that when Christ speaks of his coming in general and promiscuous and parabolical terms, whether with regard to the destruction of Jerusalem or the judgment of the world, he saith, Matt. xxiv. 34, 'Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.'
And the Apostles frequently told the world, the coming of the Lord was near: Phil. iv. 5, 'The Lord is at hand.' Heb. x. 25, 'Exhorting one another...so much the more as ye see the day approaching': and that this is the day of the coming of Christ, ver. 37 assures us, 'For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.' Rom. xiii. 11, 12, 'Now it is high time to awake out of sleep.... The night is far spent; the day is at hand.' 1 Pet. iv. 5, 7, 'To him who is ready to judge the quick and the dead.... The end of all things is at hand.' James v. 8, 9, 'The coming of the Lord draweth nigh....Behold the judge standeth at the door.' Rev. xxii. 10, 12, 'Seal not the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.... And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man as his work shall be.' And the sacred volume is closed with this assurance, ver. 20, 'Surely I come quickly'; and the echo and expectation of the Apostle or the Church, 'Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus.'

'It is granted that in prophetic expressions, such as all these are, some obscurity is allowed; and it may be doubtful, perhaps, whether some of them may refer to Christ's coming by the destruction of Jerusalem, or his coming to call particular persons away by his messenger of death, or his appearance at the last judgment. It is granted, also, it belongs to prophetic language to set things far distant, as it were before our eyes, and make them seem present, or very near at hand. But still these expressions had plainly such an influence on the primitive Christians, as that they imagined the day of resurrection and judgment was very near: and since the prophetic words of Christ and his Apostles seemed to carry this appearance in them and to keep the Church under some uncertainty, it is no wonder that the Apostles chiefly referred the disciples of that age to the day of their resurrection for comfort under their sufferings and sorrows. And though they never asserted that Christ would come to
raise the dead and judge the world in that age, yet when they knew themselves that he would not come so soon, they might not think it necessary to give every Christian or every church an immediate account of the more distant time of this great event, that the uncertainty of it might keep them ever watchful. And even when St. Paul informs the Thessalonians that the day of the Lord was not so very near as they imagined it, 2 Thess. ii. 2, yet he does not put it off beyond that century by any express language.

"Thus we see there is very good reason why the New Testament should derive its motives of terror and comfort chiefly from the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment." — pp. 79 — 83.

C. LIMITS OF INSPIRATION.

1. From "Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians," by Rev. Albert Barnes.

"I do not know that the proper doctrine of inspiration suffers, if we admit that the apostles were ignorant of the exact time when the world would close; or even that in regard to the precise period when that would take place, they might be in error. The following considerations may be suggested on this subject, showing that the claim to inspiration did not extend to the knowledge of this fact.

"(a) That they were not omniscient, and there is no more absurdity in supposing that they were ignorant on this subject than in regard to any other.

"(b) Inspiration extended to the order of future events, and not to the times. There is in the Scriptures no statement of the time when the world would close. Future events were made to pass before the mind of the prophets, as in a landscape. The order of the images may be distinctly marked, but the times may not be designated. And even events which may occur in fact at distant periods, may in vision appear to be near each other; as in a landscape,
objects which are in fact separated by distant intervals, like
the ridges of a mountain, may appear to lie close to each
other.

"(c) The Saviour expressly said, that it was not designed
that they should know when future events would occur.
Thus, after his ascension, in answer to an inquiry whether
he then would restore the kingdom to Israel, he said (Acts i.
7), 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which
the Father hath put in his own power.' See Note on that
verse.

"(d) The Saviour said that even he himself, as man, was
ignorant in regard to the exact time in which future events
would occur. 'But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no
man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the
Son, but the Father.' Mark xiii. 32.

"(e) The apostles were in fact ignorant, and mistaken in
regard to, at least, the time of the occurrence of one future
event, the death of John. xxi. 23.

"There is, therefore, no departure from the proper doc-
trine of inspiration, in supposing that the apostles were not in-
spired on these subjects, and that they might be ignorant like
others. The proper order of events they state truly and ex-
actly; the exact time God did not, for wise reasons, intend
to make known."—Note upon "We shall not all sleep,"
1 Cor. xv. 51.

[If it is "no departure from the proper doctrine of inspiration,"
to suppose that the Apostles were so widely mistaken in respect to
that time, upon the nearness of which they so continually insisted,
and insisted not as a matter of opinion, but of certain knowledge;
can it be any such departure, to suppose that they were correct
about the time, but had too objective and literal views of the nature of
the events which were then to take place? Has not the latter sup-
position fewer difficulties; and is it not supported by the well-
known imperfection and objectiveness of views among the Apos-
tles, both before and after the day of Pentecost, in respect to the
nature of the Messiah's kingdom and the design of the gospel.
Even after the Pentecostal descent of the Spirit, the Apostle Peter required a *miracle* to induce him to communicate the gospel to a pious Gentile; and was afterwards obliged to justify himself for so doing by relating the miracle. On a subsequent occasion, "the apostles and elders came together for to consider" whether circumcision "after the manner of Moses" were not *essential to salvation*; and we are informed that there was "much disputing" in the assembly.

2. From Dr. Woods's "Lectures on the Inspiration of the Scriptures."

"It is the opinion of most writers that, in some instances, inspired men had not in their own minds a clear understanding of the things which they spake or wrote. One instance of this commonly referred to is the case of Daniel, who heard and repeated what the angel said, though he did not understand it. Dan. 12: 7-9. This has also been thought to be in some measure the case with the prophets referred to, 1 Peter 1: 10-12. And is there not reason to think this may have been the case with many of the prophetic representations contained in the Psalms, and many of the symbolic rites of the Mosaic institute? Various matters are found in the Old Testament, which were not intended so much for the benefit of the writers, or their contemporaries, as for the benefit of future ages. And this might have been a sufficient reason, why they should be left without a clear understanding of the things which they wrote. In such cases, if the opinion above stated is correct, inspired men were led to make use of expressions, the meaning of which they did not fully understand." — p. 99.

D. DATE OF THE APOCALYPSE.

1. From the "Introduction to the Revelation," in the Commentary of Dr. Adam Clarke.

"The reasoning of Dr. Lardner, relative to the date of this Book [who fixes upon A. D. 95 - 97] is by no means
satisfactory to many other critics, who consider it to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem; and in this opinion they are supported by the most respectable testimonies among the ancients, though the contrary was the more general opinion. Epiphanius says, that John was banished to Patmos by Claudius Cæsar. This would bring back the date to about A. D. 50. Andreas (bishop of Cæarea, in Cappadocia, about A. D. 500), in his comment on this Book, ch. vi., ver. 16, says, John received this Revelation under the reign of Vespasian. This date also might place it before the final overthrow of the Jewish state; though Vespasian reigned to A. D. 79. The Inscription to this Book in the Syriac Version, first published by De Dieu in 1627, and afterwards in the London Polyglot, is the following: — "The Revelation which God made to John the Evangelist, in the island of Patmos, to which he was banished by Nero Cæsar." This places it in the year of our Lord 69, and consequently before the destruction of Jerusalem. Of this opinion are many eminent writers, and among them Hentenius, Harduin, Grotius, Lightfoot, Hammond, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Wetstein, and others."

2. From "A Commentary upon the Apocalypse," by Rev. Moses Stuart, Professor of Sacred Literature, Andover.

"At what Time was the Apocalypse written? A much more serious question than either of those which we have just discussed, and one about which very different and even opposite opinions have been formed and maintained by critics of high standing. A majority of the older critics have been inclined to adopt the opinion of Irenæus, viz. that it was written during the reign of Domitian, i.e. during the last part of the first century, or in A. D. 95 or 96. Most of the recent commentators and critics have called this opinion in question, and placed the composition of the book at an earlier period, viz. before the destruction of Jerusalem." — Vol. i., p. 263.
"In short, the more I reflect upon these circumstances, the more am I compelled to believe that John wrote his book pending the Neronian persecution." — Do., p. 278.

E. THEORY OF A DOUBLE SENSE.

1. From an Article by Professor Stuart, on the "Interpretation of Psalm XVI," in the Biblical Repository, January, 1831.

"I cannot admit the double sense. There is a host of difficulties which rise up against this, too numerous to be particularly recounted on the present occasion. I can merely hint at some of the leading ones. If there be an occult sense to the words of Scripture, not conveyed by the language itself, to be attained in some way independent of the laws of language; then it would follow, that he who reads the Scriptures, and applies to them the laws of interpretation common to all other books, can have no security, that he has arrived at the principal and most important meaning which they were designed to convey. If there be an occult meaning couched under the words of Scripture, a second inspiration is needed for the readers, in order to determine it with any good degree of satisfaction; for when the laws of language cease to be the guide, (as of course they must in the case before us,) then some substitute worthy of equal or greater confidence must come in their place. But a substitute must be either conjecture or inspiration. The first surely cannot lay claim to much certainty; it is subject to no laws; it has no bounds. A second inspiration then is needed, in order to understand a second or occult revelation, i.e. a second sense of words.

"When God speaks to men, he speaks in a language which they understand. Otherwise a revelation so called would not in fact be one. Nothing is revealed, which is not understood, or at least which is not intelligible. And when a communication is made by the use of language, how can
it be understood, unless language is employed in the same way as men are accustomed to employ it? For example, how could one who understands only the English language in its ordinary use, be able to expound a communication in which English words should be employed, but a sense given to them by the writer entirely foreign to the usus loquendi of the language? It would manifestly be as impossible, in such a case, for a writer to be understood, as it would be if he were to make his communication in Sanscrit or Chinese.

"It follows of necessity, that a revelation, in the true and proper sense of this term, which is made by the use of words, must be made by employing those words in a manner that accords with the usus loquendi of the language employed. And if this be true, it seems to decide the whole question; for there is no other book on earth, (if you except books of riddles, and some of the old heathen oracles,) where language has or can have a double sense. All men who do not design to deceive or mislead, attach but one meaning to words, i.e. but one meaning to the same words in the same place. Even a book of riddles in reality does this; the enigmas have but one true meaning, and were not designed to have any more; although, from the manner in which words are employed, it may be difficult to decipher it." — p. 63.

"There are no limits to this second sense of the Scriptures. The man who adopts it is cast at once upon a boundless ocean, without rudder or compass. He must himself be inspired, in order to know with any security whether his interpretation is correct. But as I find no promise of such inspiration to writers of the present day, I must hold to the laws of language, as one of the indispensable means of investigating the true and only sense of the Scriptures." — p. 64.

[For a fuller discussion of this important subject, see Professor Stuart's "Hints on the Interpretation of Prophecy," pp. 11 - 47.]

[The following quotations from the popular Commentary of the excellent Dr. Scott are given, to illustrate the theory of a double sense in its application to Mat. xxiv. 29–41. They present this theory as unobjectionably as I have anywhere seen it presented. It seems needless, therefore, to add quotations from other Commentators who interpret in like manner.]

Matthew, Ch. xxiv., "V. 29–31. The language of these verses is suited, and probably was intended, to lead the mind of the reader to the consideration of the end of the world and the coming of Christ to judgment: yet the expression, 'immediately after the tribulation of those days,' must restrict the primary sense of them to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the events that were consequent to it. The darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars, and the shaking of the powers of the heavens, denote the utter extinction of the light of prosperity and privilege to the Jewish nation; the unhinging of their whole constitution in church and state; the violent subversion of the authority of their princes and priests; and the abject miseries to which the people in general, especially their chief persons, would be reduced, and the moral darkness to which they would be consigned. This would be an evident sign and demonstration of the Son of man's exaltation to his throne in heaven; whence he would come in his divine providence, as riding upon 'the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, to destroy his enemies, who would not have him to reign over them;' at which events all the tribes of the land would mourn and lament, whilst they saw the tokens and felt the weight of his terrible indignation. At the same time he would send forth his angels, (or messengers, the preachers of the Gospel,) as with a great sound of a trumpet, proclaiming the year of jubilee, 'the acceptable year of the Lord.' Thus he would gather his elect into his Church, from every quarter, all over the world. The remarkable
appearances in the heavens, that attended these transactions, might be alluded to, and the great spread of the Gospel about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem was predicted; but the whole passage will have a more literal and august accomplishment at the day of judgment.

"V. 32–35. Our Lord here answers the former part of the apostle’s question, concerning the time when these events would take place. In general he assured them, that their approach would be as certainly determined by the signs that he had mentioned, as the approach of summer was by the budding and the tender branch of the fig-tree, and that they would all be accomplished before that generation was passed away. This absolutely restricts our primary interpretation of the prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place within forty years....

"V. 36–41. Some expositors explain these words exclusively of the day of judgment, as being emphatically ‘that day;’ and the context denotes, that Christ meant to lead the attention to that solemn occasion: but might not this be done with reference also to the precise day and hour of Jerusalem’s destruction? Even this was not declared to either man or angel, so far as we can learn: but the disciples were warned to expect and be ready for its approach, and to mark the signs which had been given them....

"V. 42–44. Our Lord here at length more clearly speaks of his coming to take men away by death and of his second advent to judge the world. The disciples were exhorted to watch and be on their guard, expecting and preparing for his coming, as they would not know when that would be."

[In reading these remarks of the excellent Dr. Scott, a few questions occur.

1. If, as Dr. S. thinks, “the language of” vv. 29–31 "was intended to lead the mind of the reader to the consideration of the end of the world and the coming of Christ to judgment,” was it not manifestly intended to lead the mind to the consideration of]
these events as to occur "immediately after the tribulation of those days"? And if this expression "must restrict the primary sense of" these verses "to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the events that were consequent to it," why must not the restriction of time extend equally to the secondary sense,—especially if this sense refers to the "more literal and august accomplishment" of "the whole passage"?

2. If v. 34 "absolutely restricts our primary interpretation of the prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem," must not the restriction of time apply in like manner to every admissible interpretation? Did our Lord intend to say, "This generation shall not pass, till a part of these things be fulfilled,"—and that a very small part?

3. What proof do we find, in respect to vv. 42–44, that "our Lord here at length more clearly speaks of his coming to take men away by death and of his second advent to judge the world," than he has done in the preceding verses?

F. Theory of Four Comings.

From "A New Literal Translation of all the Apostolical Epistles, with a Commentary," &c., by Rev. James Macknight, D. D.

[I am not aware, that the theory of different comings of Christ subsequent to the first is anywhere more distinctly stated than in Dr. Macknight's great work upon the Epistles, in the preface to 2 Thessalonians, Sect. 4, "Different Comings of Christ are spoken of in the New Testament." It will be observed, how strongly the learned author feels the limitation of time and the necessity of a figurative interpretation, in the case of a large class of passages often applied to a coming still future.]

"In this Article, I propose to show, that there are other comings of Christ spoken of in Scripture, besides his coming to judgment; and that there are other things besides this mundane system, whose end is there foretold: and that it is of these other matters the apostles speak, when they represent the day of their master and the end of all things as at hand.

"1. First, then, in the prophetical writings of the Jews, (2
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Sam. xxii. 10-12, Psal. xcvi. 2-5, Isa. xix. 1,) great exertions of the divine power, whether for the salvation or destruction of nations, are called the coming, the appearing, the presence of God. Hence it was natural for the apostles, who were Jews, to call any signal and evident interposition of Christ, as governor of the world, for the accomplishment of his purposes, his coming, and his day. Accordingly, those exertions of his power and providence, whereby he destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, abrogated the Mosaic institutions, and established the gospel, are called by the apostles his coming and day: not only in allusion to the ancient prophetic language, but because Christ himself, in his prophecy concerning these events, recorded Matt. xxiv., hath termed them the coming of the Son of man, in allusion to the following prophecy of Daniel, of which his own prophecy is an explication. Dan. vii. 13, 14, 'I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' This prophecy the Jewish doctors with one consent interpreted of their Messiah, and of that temporal kingdom which they expected was to be given him. Farther, they supposed that he would erect that temporal kingdom by great and visible exertions of his power, for the destruction of his enemies. But they little suspected, that themselves were of the number of those enemies whom he was to destroy; and that his kingdom was to be established upon the ruin of their state. Yet that was the true meaning of the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. For while the Jewish nation continued in Judea, and observed the institutions of Moses, they violently opposed the preaching of the gospel, by which the Messiah was
to reign over all people, nations, and languages. Wherefore, that the everlasting kingdom might be effectually established, it was necessary that Jerusalem and the Jewish state should be destroyed by the Roman armies. Now, since our Lord foretold this sad catastrophe in the words of the prophet Daniel, Matt. xxiv. 30, 'And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory;ARD, and, after describing every particular of it with the greatest exactness, seeing he told his disciples, ver. 34, 'This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled;' can there be any doubt that the apostles, (who, when they wrote their epistles, certainly understood the true import of this prophecy,) by their master's coming, and by the end of all things, which they represent as at hand, meant his coming to destroy Jerusalem, and to put an end to the institutions of Moses?

"It is no objection to this, that when the apostles heard Christ declare, 'There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down,' they connected the end of the world, or age, with that event: Matt. xxiv. 3, 'Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, kai συντελέσα τοῦ αἰῶνος, and of the end of the age.' For, as the Jewish doctors divided the duration of the world into three ages, the age before the law, the age under the law, and the age of the Messiah; the apostles knew that the age under the law was to end when the age under the Messiah began. And therefore, by the end of the age, they meant, even at that time, not the end of the world, but the end of the age under the law, in which the Jews had been greatly oppressed by the heathens. And although they did not then understand the purpose for which their master was to come, nor the true nature of his kingdom, nor suspect that he was to make any change in the institutions of Moses; yet when they wrote their epistles, being illuminated by the Holy Ghost, they certainly knew that the institutions of
Moses were to be abolished, and their master's kingdom was not a temporal but a spiritual dominion, in which all people, nations, and languages were to be governed, not by external force, but by the operation of truth upon their minds, through the preaching of the gospel.

"Farther, that the apostles, by the coming of Christ, which they represented as at hand when they wrote their epistles, meant his coming to establish his spiritual kingdom over all people, nations, and languages, and not his coming to put an end to this mundane system, is evident from what Christ himself told them, Matt. xvi. 28, 'There be some standing here, who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.' And agreeably to this account of the coming of Christ and of the end of all things, I observe, that every passage of their epistles, in which the apostles have spoken of these things as at hand, may, with the greatest propriety, be interpreted of Christ's coming to establish his everlasting kingdom over all people, nations, and languages, by destroying Jerusalem, putting an end to the law of Moses, and spreading the gospel through the world. Thus, 1 Cor. x. 11, 'These things...are written for our admonition, upon whom τὸν τῶν αἰώνων, the ends of the ages are come,' means the end of the age under the law, and the beginning of the age under the Messiah. Philip. iv. 5, 'Let your moderation be known to all men: the Lord is nigh;' namely, to destroy the Jews, your greatest adversaries. Heb. ix. 26, 'But now, once εἰς συντελεῖα τῶν αἰώνων, at the conclusion of the ages, (the Jewish Jubilees,) he hath been manifested to abolish sin-offering by the sacrifice of himself.' Heb. x. 25, 'Exhorting one another daily, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching:' the day of Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem and the Jewish state. Ver. 37, 'For yet a very little while, and he who is coming will come, and will not tarry.' James v. 7, 'Wherefore, be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.' Ver. 8,
'Be ye also patient: strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord (to destroy the Jews, your persecutors,) draweth nigh.' Ver. 9, 'Behold, the Judge standeth before the door. 1 Pet. iv. 7, 'The end of all things, (the end of Jerusalem and of the temple, and of all the Mosaic institutions,) hath approached. Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.' 1 John ii. 18, 'Young children, it is the last hour (of the Jewish state); and, as ye have heard (from Christ, in his prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem,) that the antichrist cometh, so now there are many antichrists; whence we know that it is the last hour (of the Jewish state).'

"2. There is another coming of Christ spoken of by the apostles, different likewise from his coming to judge the world, and to put an end to the present state of things; namely, his coming to destroy the man of sin. 2 Thess. ii. 8, 'Him the Lord will consume by the breath of his mouth, and will render ineffectual by the bright shining of his coming.' This singular event, which will contribute greatly to the honor of God, and to the good of his church, being to be accomplished by a visible and extraordinary interposition of the power of Christ in the government of the world, is agreeably to the scripture style fitly called the coming of the Lord, and the bright shining of his coming. But this coming is nowhere in scripture said to be at hand.

"3. There is likewise a day or coming of Christ, spoken of by Paul, different from his coming to judgment, and from both the former comings; I mean, his releasing his people from their present trial, by death. 1 Cor. i. 8, 'He also will confirm you until the end without accusation, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Philip. i. 6, 'He who hath begun in you a good work, will be completing it until the day of Jesus Christ.' 1 Thess. v. 23, 'May your whole person, the spirit, and the soul, and the body, be preserved unblamable unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is true, the release of Christ's servants from their present trial by death is ac-
accomplished, for the most part, by no extraordinary display of his power: yet it is fitly enough called his day and coming; because by his appointment all men die, and by his power each is carried to his own place after death. Besides, his servants in particular, being put on their duty like soldiers, must remain at their several posts, till released by their commander; and when he releases them, he is fitly said to come for that purpose.

"4. Besides all these, there is a day or coming of the Lord to judge the world, and to put an end to the present state of things. This coming Christ himself hath promised, Matt. xvi. 27, 'The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his work.'* Now, this being a real personal appearing of Christ in the body, it is more properly than any other of his comings called the day and coming of Christ. And the purposes of it being more important than those of his other comings, the exertions of his power for accomplishing them will be most signal and glorious. On that occasion, likewise, he will appear in far greater majesty than formerly. For whereas, during his first abode on earth, his dignity and perfections were in a great measure concealed under the veil of his human nature; at his second coming, his glory as the image of the invisible God, and as having all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, will be most illustriously displayed, by his raising the dead, judging the world, destroying the earth, punishing his enemies, and rewarding his servants. Hence this coming is, with great propriety, termed the revelation of Jesus Christ;† and the day of his revelation, when he shall 'be glorified in his saints, and admired of all them that believe.'

Thus it appears, that when the apostles wrote, there were four comings of Christ to happen; three of them figurative,
but the *fourth* a *real personal appearance*; that these different comings are frequently spoken of in scripture; and that, although the coming of Christ to destroy Jerusalem, and to establish his everlasting kingdom, be represented by the apostles as then at hand, no passage from their writings can be produced, in which his personal appearance to judge the world is said, or even insinuated, to be at hand.* The truth is, if the different comings of Christ are distinguished as they ought to be, we shall find that the apostles have spoken of each of them according to truth; and that the opinion which infidels are so eager in maintaining, and which some Christians have unadvisedly espoused, to the great discredit of the inspiration of the apostles,† as if they believed the day of judgment was to happen in their lifetime, hath not the least foundation in scripture."

[It cannot be necessary here to repeat the argument on pp. 101–106. Still two or three questions suggest themselves, which will perhaps occur to other readers of Dr. Macknight, as well as to myself.

1. Is it wonderful that readers of the Bible should fail to distinguish "different comings" which the Bible itself never distinguishes; and which, though "frequently spoken of in scripture," are spoken of throughout as one and the same?

2. After assigning to the three first comings (which must of course be first served) all the passages which are applicable to them even upon Dr. Macknight's own principles of interpretation, will any be found remaining for the fourth coming; and shall we not be forced to believe in this, if we believe in it at all, merely upon the authority of *tradition*, — and that, possibly, a tradition founded wholly upon *misinterpretation*? Or is it the duty of the interpreter to exercise a careful economy as he goes along, and be sure, at all events, to save proof-texts enough for the fourth coming?

3. Is it not gratuitous toil, to construct a complicated and cum-

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* Certainly none in which the contrary is said, or even insinuated.
† But see p. 149.
brous theory of four comings to account for expressions in the Bible, which are as easily explained by a single coming? Does not this seem like the Ptolemaic theory of the universe compared with the Copernican? Is it not better, let me ask, to allow the little earth of our theological notions to revolve about the great sun of Scripture, than to require sun, moon, and stars, all to revolve, by a complicated system of various and opposite movements, direct and retrograde, around our own diminutive planet? What if it be ours? Must sun, moon, and stars, all make obeisance to us, as to Joseph in his dream? Nay; rather, "let God be true, but every man a liar."

ADDENDA.

[The following extracts, from writers who will not be suspected of any want of orthodoxy, and one of whom I am happy to count among my personal friends, for the most part met my eye only in season for the printer to add them here.]

A. ONLY ONE FUTURE COMING OF CHRIST TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.


"Similar to the foregoing have been the opinions advanced on this subject within our own time. The noted Edward Irving, of London, believed in the personal and visible reign of Christ, and preached that it was near at hand. He claimed also for himself and followers the gift of tongues and power of miracles. Others still more confident have assumed to fix the year and day when Christ would come in his glory to destroy the wicked, to raise the righteous dead, and to establish his personal reign upon the earth. While others
still, without fixing the period of the advent, profess to believe that it is nigh, even at the door;—that the wicked will then all be destroyed; the earth burnt up or renovated; the martyrs, if not all the righteous dead, be raised to life, which is ‘the first resurrection;’ and then, as some hold, Christ will reign spiritually and invisibly; or, as others, visibly and in person with his saints, a thousand years.

‘But where, in all the Scriptures, is there one word to warrant such sentiments? The New Testament teaches but one future coming of Christ, which is his second and final coming, to raise all the dead, and to judge the world of mankind. Not a single passage in the New Testament teaches that Christ will ever again come to our world to reside; much less that he will make it his abode a thousand years, and reign over his saints visibly and in person. Not a passage intimates the time, either the day, the year, or the century, when he will so come. But again and again, we are told that the time is unknown. How presumptuous then for ignorant and short-sighted mortals to pry into the secrets of the Almighty; to enter into calculations about the end of all things, which angels would not dare to do. When from dark and mysterious prophetic numbers a conclusion is arrived at that the Son of God is coming, the wicked to be destroyed, and saints to reign with him on earth; then the terrible effect of such presumption is revealed either in wild fanaticism, in the neglect of the ordinary duties of life, in mental gloom and madness, or often in hardened defiance and blasphemous infidelity.’

B. Figurative or Spiritual Resurrection.

[In some passages in the Scriptures speaking of a resurrection of the dead, a figurative or spiritual interpretation is quite familiar, if not unavoidable. Of this class are the following:—

Ezek. xxxvii. 1, ‘‘The hand of the Lord was upon me, and
carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. (2) And caused me to pass by them round about: and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and lo, they were very dry. (3) And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? and I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. (4) Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. (5) Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: (6) And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. (7) So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. (8) And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. (9) Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. (10) So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. (11) Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. (12) Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. (13) And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, (14) And shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.''

Isa. xxvi. 19, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. (20) Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. (21) For behold, the
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Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

John v. 25, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

Eph. ii. 1, "And you hath he quickened [brought to life], who were dead in trespasses and sins. ... (4) But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, (5) Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ; (by grace ye are saved;) (6) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus."

Col. ii. 12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. (13) And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses. ... (iii. 1) If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

Rev. xx. 4, "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (5) ... This is the first resurrection. (6) Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

In like manner, some both of the Jewish Rabbins and of Christian interpreters have explained figuratively the very express language in Dan. xii. 2; — a passage which has been more appealed to than any other in the Old Testament, in support of the doctrine of a literal resurrection; and upon which, more than any other, the representations in the New Testament relating to this subject appear to have been based. Of the following extracts, the first may serve as an example of interpretation by double sense, and the others of simple figurative interpretation.]

John v. 25, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.] "The hour. The time. ¶ Is coming. Under the preaching of the gospel, as well as in the resurrection of the dead. ¶ Now is. It is now taking place. Sinners were converted under his ministry, and brought to spiritual life. ¶ The dead. Either the dead in sins, or those that are in their graves. The language of the Saviour will apply to either. Language, in the scriptures, is often so used as to describe two similar events. Thus the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world are described by Jesus in the same language. Mat. xxiv., xxv. The return of the Jews from Babylon, and the coming of the Messiah, and the spread of the gospel, are described in the same language by Isaiah. Isa. xl. –lxi. The renewal of the heart, and the raising of the dead at judgment, are here also described in similar language,—because they so far resemble each other, that the same language will apply to both."

2. From Mr. Bouton's "Historical Sketch of Opinions concerning the Second Coming of Christ."

"Besides the error of the millenarian doctrine in general, it is most manifest from the Scriptures, that the idea of a 'first literal resurrection' of the martyred or righteous dead is equally without warrant. This 'first resurrection' is the revival of the spirit of primitive faith, zeal, and devotion to the cause of God, which will characterize some period of the church before the world shall end, and which will in part constitute that glorious period foretold by prophets from ancient times."


"Sufficient is it to show, that such language as is before
us [in Rev. xx. 4–6] is used in Scripture to express a revival of the spirit, and a mystical or figurative resurrection; where the design is not to affirm a literal raising of the body to life. If it has been satisfactorily done, we are ready to proceed to a similar inspection of the parallel passage in Daniel (chap. xii. 2).

"'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.'

"The chronology of the writer leads us here to understand this of the same spiritual awakening; and yet the force of the language in our English translation has led most commentators to the conclusion that a real, bodily resurrection is intended... The natural and proper force of the language does not at all involve the idea of dead bodies of men coming to life again; but only of persons in a careless and secure condition being aroused, rather arousing themselves, to vigorous action, shaking off the dust of indolence, and calling their powers forth into exercise.

"Such will be the state of the world and the Church, immediately prior to the great revival which ushers in the millennium: the latter will be only half aroused, as it now is; the former will be wholly stupid and languid as to the great events in prospect. In verse 1st, the angel assures Daniel, that in this season of unparalleled trouble, the Israelites should be restored, as Ezekiel teaches: 'Thy people shall be delivered.' And farther, the very clods of Gentilism, the sleeping ones of earthly clay, shall stir themselves up, and inquire after the Lord. Not only the bones, the inanimate fragments of the whole house of Israel, spread up and down the open valley, 'the dust of Jacob,' will be stirred and moved, bone to bone; but the cold earth that has slept for ages in all the darkness of paganism and delusion, shall be thrown into vast commotion. The blinded heathen, 'multitudes; multitudes in the valley of decision,' and all over the
world, shall rouse up and act vigorously in reference to religion and eternal things. Of the vast masses of mankind who shall thus be brought into energetic action, some will inquire successfully and find the way to salvation, 'and so live for ever;' 'some to everlasting life:'—others will spend their faculties in perverting and opposing the truth, as the Romans, Pagans, and the Mohammedan-pagans, and all forms of heretics now do, and shall utterly perish 'in shame and everlasting contempt.' Such is the spiritual awakening which John denominates the first resurrection.

"By the context and the natural force of the original terms we are shut up to this interpretation, and must conclude that we have in it the mind of the Spirit. *These words do not teach a resurrection of the body.*"

[But why must we stop here in the figurative or spiritual interpretation? If this interpretation *must* be admitted to some extent, and *may* proceed *thus far*, why may it not be carried still farther and applied to other like passages? Would not consistency of interpretation be thus promoted? For example, in the following passage, is it not arbitrary to interpret v. 25 figuratively, but the closely corresponding language in v. 28 literally; and this, when there is no intimation of any change in the sense? That the expression "all that are in the graves" can be explained figuratively just as easily as "the dead," is evident from Ezek. xxxvii. 12.

John v. 25, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, *The hour is coming,* and now is, when *the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God:* and they that hear shall live. (26) For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; (27) And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. (28) Marvel not at this: for *the hour is coming,* in the which *all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,* (29) And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

And in the following passage, is it not evident that "lived" must have the same signification in vv. 4 and 5? And does not v.
13 appear to contain a description of the second resurrection,—the resurrection of "the rest of the dead"?

Rev. xx. 4, "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (5) But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. (6) Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (7) And when the thousand years are expired," &c. "(13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

Says Professor Stuart, in commenting on v. 5: —"First resurrection, so called in distinction from the second. Of course it is one which precedes it in respect to time; it is not necessary that the two resurrections should differ in other respects. Indeed, the obvious implication here is, that they do not substantially differ; for what else can the oi δὲ λοιπὸν τῶν νεκρῶν οὐκ ζησαν mean, except that the rest of men must wait until the second resurrection, before they would be raised up in like manner as those had been who were partakers of the first resurrection?" — Commentary on the Apocalypse, Vol. ii., p. 362.

And again: —"It [the distinction between the first resurrection and the second] appears to be a distinction of order or succession, but not of kind. There is indeed one other particular of difference or contrast, viz. the second resurrection will be general, universal, comprising both the righteous and the wicked, while the first will comprehend, as the writer's language seems to intimate, only saints and martyrs who have been specially faithful unto death. . . . The express contrast here made between the partial and the general resurrection, and the manner in which this contrast is presented, show that the design is not to compare a spiritual with a physical resurrection." — Do., p. 475.

In view of these considerations, and those, so decisive, present-
ed in the foregoing Essay, are we not forced to conclude that the popular notion of a future literal resurrection of the body is entirely unsupported by Scriptural authority?]

C. A Second Coming of Christ has already taken place.

From "What are Scriptural Views of the Second Coming of Christ?" by Rev. Nathaniel Bouton, in the Congregational Journal, Nov. 8, 1849.

[The following came to hand, after the preceding Addenda had been sent to the printer. As it shows that the italicized sentence in the first extract of the Addenda is not to be understood in the sense which would otherwise seem most obvious, it is perhaps but justice to the author that this should be appended. I allow the more room to the extract, from its strong expression of the absolute necessity of admitting to so great an extent the figurative interpretation.]

"3. The question then is, Will this risen, ascended, reigning Saviour ever reappear in our world? Will he come a second time? And if so, When? in what circumstances? and for what end?

"4. In seeking an answer to these questions from the Scriptures, we may lay out of the account those passages which speak of a coming of Christ, which we are assured has already taken place. I refer to such passages as the following:

"Matt. 10: 23, 'Ye,' i.e. the Apostles whom he sent forth to preach, 'shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.'

"Matt. 16: 28, 'Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.' Or, as Mark expresses it in a parallel passage, 'Till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power,' 9: 1. Or as Luke, 'Till they see the kingdom of God,' 9: 27.
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"Whatever is meant by 'the kingdom of God,' and 'the Son of man coming,' in these passages, it is certain from the phraseology used, that they relate to events that were to take place during the natural life of some who were then present. So Christ said of the beloved disciple, John 21: 22, 23, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?' The coming here referred to was to be within the lifetime of John; and the event showed the accomplishment of the declaration.

"Especially to this class of passages belong all those texts which refer to the destruction of the temple and of the Jewish state, in which Christ is said to come with great power and glory. Thus Matthew 24: 3—51; Mark 13: 1—37; Luke 17: 20—37; 21: 5—38. However some of the language employed might relate to more distant and still future events, yet by the whole tenor of the Saviour's discourse on the topics here recorded, as well as explicit affirmations, we are required on principles of sound interpretation, to restrict the meaning to his coming for local purposes and within a specified time. 'Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled,' Matt. 24: 35; Mark 13: 30; Luke 21: 32. Sure and dreadful was the fulfilment of all he foretold; for within about 40 years from that time, while some who heard him were yet alive,—among whom was the Apostle John,—Christ came with visible signs of glory and majesty, and the temple and city were overthrown, and the nation scattered.

"5. The question then recurs, Do the Scriptures warrant a belief in a still future coming of Christ?"

[This question the author answers in the affirmative, thus making two second comings, or, in other words, two comings which were future in the time of the Apostles. It is striking that, in so full a citation of the Scripture testimony in answer to the question, "Will this risen, ascended, reigning Saviour ever reappear in our world? Will he come a second time?" ("read," as we are informed, "before an association of ministers,")—
A SECOND COMING HAS TAKEN PLACE.

1. So many emphatic declarations of our Saviour are cited, only to "lay them out of the account," as referring to a coming which "has already taken place."

2. It is not shown, said, or even intimated, that our Saviour ever spake of any further coming. — But,

3. The whole argument in favor of "a still future coming" is based upon passages in the Acts and Epistles. The passages cited from these books are seventeen in number; and have all been quoted (with many others) in the preceding Essay, except 2 Pet. i. 16, which is, however, referred to on p. 19, and 1 Cor. xi. 26, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come," which might have been added to the extracts on p. 59. — And that,

4. The author subsequently says: — "At this point in our discussion, we may answer an inquiry which naturally arises, and which is even turned into an objection to the views which we maintain, viz. Why do the Apostles in some places speak of 'the coming of the Lord,' 'the day of the Lord,' as near, or why urge that consideration as a motive to Christian fidelity and perseverance, since in reality the time was not only unknown to them, but very remote?"

For myself, I must acknowledge that I not only feel this "objection," but can as yet see no way of removing it without sacrificing even the reputation of the Apostles for common honesty. In respect to the general question of two second comings of Christ, see pp. 101–106.]

THE END.