

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE V.

RESURRECTION AND FINAL JUDGMENT.

BY THE REV. EDMUND B. FAIRFIELD, D. D., LL. D., LYONS, FRANCE.

[*Concluded from Vol. xlix. p. 88.*]

THE THIRD CHAPTER OF SECOND PETER.

THIS chapter is confidently appealed to as against the doctrines set forth in these pages. But to my mind it is most decidedly otherwise; and I beg to call the reader's attention to three things:—

1. To the fact that the events which the apostle speaks of as future are most emphatically represented as being in the *near* future; so that those to whom he was writing, were personally interested and concerned in them. There is a feeling of *the intense* in the whole style of the chapter. The air which the writer breathes is full of oxygen. No one can read the passage in the original, or in any translation, without being impressed with the urgency of it. Something should be done, and done now, and done by the very persons to whom he was writing, to get ready for events which were just at hand. It has the atmosphere of a military encampment, amid the blare of trumpets, calling to battle array, with the enemy in sight and coming on at double quick. He "stirs up" (ver. 1) their minds vigorously. His appeal is all on fire: "Seeing that all these things are about to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought *ye* to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and *hastening* unto the coming of the day of God."

Now, bearing in mind that the date of this writing is the year 66; that, more than thirty years before, the Master had said, "There be some of you standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom;" remembering that Peter had heard him say this, and had also heard him say those other words of terrible import: "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 all the tribes of the land mourn," adding in the same breath: "*Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all these things shall be accomplished,*"—it is not strange that the soul of the apostle should be charged with the electric fire. The fulfilment was already beginning. The mourning of the tribes was even now swelling in a deep undertone, and was ready to break out into a wail such as there had not been heard since the world began; no, nor ever should be heard again.

With this understanding of it, the passage is entirely intelligible. But, on the theory that the apostle was writing of things yet two thousand years in the future, it is quite impossible to understand it. Just imagine, for a moment, that Peter is saying to his readers (or better to his hearers, for no doubt all these epistles were written to be read to the people in their assemblies): "Beloved, this world is one day to be burned up! Not in your day or mine; not in a thousand years! Not in eighteen hundred years! But some day it is to be burned up! Seeing, then, that all these things shall, two thousand years hence, or later, be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye who are now living, to be in all holy conversation and godliness; 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—two thousand years hence?"

. Such a juxtaposition of ideas—such basing of a fervid

appeal to present Christian life and action *upon a remote event in the history of the physical globe*, would be so absurd that it seems irreverent even to hypothecate it! The apostle was never guilty of such preposterous preaching as that! No man outside of a mad-house would be expected to put things together in such a fashion! Yet just that was what Peter did: or

2. If he appealed to them in view of events which *he supposed to be at hand*, but which were yet many centuries distant—what, in that case, becomes of his being an inspired teacher? If he were *mistaken*, by more than eighteen hundred years, as to the *time* of the events which he foretells, what ground of confidence have we left that he might not have been mistaken as to the occurrence of the events at all?

Why do my critics in the April number of this Quarterly for 1891, hold to the belief of the literal burning of this world, except that Peter and others of the New Testament writers (as they understand them) so declare? Yet if Peter's prophetic gift was not adequate to save him from an error of more than eighteen centuries as to the *time* when this catastrophe should take place, what ground of faith is left us, either in his prophetic gift, or in any divine inspiration whatever?

The preachers of fifty years ago who went everywhere declaring that the end of the world was to be in 1843, lost their hold upon the people when 1844 smiled upon a world not yet in ashes. They ought to have lost it. Those other preachers, thirty and thirty-five years ago, who placed the date of this catastrophe in 1866, had no more any power with their hearers when the year passed and their predictions had failed. This was inevitable. And the good brethren and learned doctors who tell us that the apostles were all mistaken about the *time* of the coming of Christ and the end of the world, may not know it,—they certainly do not in-

tend it,—but just as certainly they are in fact destroying the very foundations of all faith in apostolic teaching; and indeed in the prophetic teachings of Christ himself. And yet, if those predictions *have not already been fulfilled*, there is no other possible conclusion. For I do not know of a passage of Scripture quoted to prove the yet future personal coming of Christ, that was not spoken, at the time, of an event then near at hand—within the lifetime of the generation then upon the earth. I have just read a long discourse, upon this subject, in which the learned and eloquent preacher quotes from the words of Christ and the apostles sixteen passages to prove Christ's second coming as still in the future and near at hand; and I find that in the immediate context of every one of these passages is most clear and unequivocal proof that they were spoken of an event or events *just about to take place then*.

The quotation of "proof-texts" upon this subject has more than once reminded me of a little bit of personal experience—an experience so fitting to the case, that I trust I shall be pardoned for introducing it as a parable into this stately Quarterly. Coming home one evening with a letter in hand, I said to my family, all of whom were in a healthful mood for a harmless practical joke (the younger members of the household had retired): "I have a letter from my sister J. Would you like to hear a sentence or two?" "Yes; yes; hear! hear!!" I read: "I am expecting to come to you next week!" "Good! good! I'll meet her at the train!" cried one. "I'll give her up my room!" said another. "I'll stay at home from college to see her!" shouted a third. "Good! good!" One of the company at this point quietly asked: "What is the date of your letter?" As quietly I said: "It is only twenty-two years since it was written!" Of course it was well for me to make a speedy escape from that room! And yet who has not heard, time without number, such passages as "Lo! I come quickly!" quoted to prove that the second

coming of Christ was now to be expected very soon? Words uttered more than eighteen hundred years ago,—and, if ever they were worthy of belief, must have been fulfilled more than that ago—quoted as if they were just spoken from heaven! But for the good intention of those who are guilty of this “fallacy of quotation,” what else could it be called but consummate trifling with the word of God? I knew that I was, for the moment, trifling with my sister’s old letter; but I did it for a moral purpose, and to illustrate and enforce a principle of interpretation that it was important to learn; namely, that a disconnected sentence, taken from any document, may make a very false impression. This is, perhaps, the most common and the most hurtful of all fallacies in the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures.

3. The third thing I wish to say is this: that upon the hypothesis that this chapter referred to events then close at hand,—the record of which is in authentic history,—there is not a form of speech in it that was not justified by the laws of language to which Peter and all his readers and hearers were thoroughly accustomed.

Suppose Peter had written thus: “Beloved, the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll. The streams of the earth shall be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone. The earth shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched day nor night; the smoke thereof shall go up forever;” suppose the apostle had written that,—how eloquent men might have become in showing that such language was too plain to be misunderstood! “It *must* refer to the end of all things! The host of heaven was to be *dissolved!* No form of words could be more emphatic in setting forth the absolute closing up of the material universe! And then how plainly the language in reference to the earth must imply its utter destruction, and nothing short of it! So graphic! So ex-

plicit! So detailed! The streams turned into pitch! The dust into brimstone! The earth itself become burning pitch! And the smoke of the destroying fires to go up forever!"

Those who should question the literal interpretation of such unmistakable forms of speech would be chided for their unbelief, and warned against the doom of those who take away from the words of the book!

Every reader will admit that the substitution of the words which I have hypothecated in place of the tenth verse of this third chapter would increase, and not diminish, its intensity—would make the destruction of the earth more absolutely certain, and not less so. And yet I have but copied, word for word, the prophecy of Isaiah respecting Edom, instead of that of Peter which is understood to mean the end of all things! Assuming that Peter's prophecy was of the calamities that came to Palestine, (as I have no doubt it was,) it is even then not by any means so highly colored as Isaiah's, that is known to refer to Edom. We can understand why, for although all the prophecies of the New Testament, like those of the Old, deal in strong imagery, yet each one, endowed with the gift of prophecy, has still his own personal characteristics. Had Isaiah, instead of Peter, been the seer of Palestine's desolation, the picture had been still more highly colored than Peter's hand has made them. The calamities that befell the land of Israel in the seventh decade of the first century undoubtedly far surpassed those of Edom, as predicted by the son of Amoz.

There is not a word in this third chapter of Peter that ever suggested to those who read, or heard it read, in Peter's lifetime or John's, any thought of the literal destruction of the heavens and the earth. All their lives they had read from Isaiah about the sun and the moon and the stars and the constellations being darkened, when it was merely the desolation of Babylon that was meant by it. They had heard times without number that all the host of heaven

should be dissolved, and the heavens should be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host should fade away; and that the streams of the earth were to be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the earth was to become burning pitch, to be quenched neither night nor day, but the smoke was to go up forever, when they knew that this was only the rhetoric in which the desolation of Idumæa was clothed. They had listened to Ezekiel in similar strains, when it was the king of Egypt that was to be overthrown, and when Peter had employed similar forms of speech—though on a lower key, for he was a fisherman, and not a poet—in prophesying of the terrible times that filled up the years from the very date of this Epistle to the final overthrow of Jerusalem, those who passed through the agonies of that unparalleled epoch never thought of charging Peter with overdrawing the picture, but only said, “Oh, if Isaiah had done it, with what flashes of lightning would he have set all the heavens ablaze!”

THE MEANING OF I COR. XV. 51—“WE SHALL NOT ALL SLEEP.”

Naturally very great stress is laid upon this passage to discredit the views which were set forth in my last paper.¹ The implied statement is: “Some of us shall sleep, and some of us shall not; but we shall all be changed.”

I come at once to challenge the correctness of our accepted translation. The Greek reads: “*πάντες οὐ κοιμηθήσόμεθα, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα.*” This, I hold, ought, beyond all question, to be translated: “None of *us* shall sleep; but we shall all be changed.”

As this is a point having a vital bearing on the whole subject before us, I shall be pardoned for presenting the argument somewhat fully. And I contend for the amended translation:—

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. xlix. pp. 62–88.

1. From the general law laid down by all Greek scholars as to the force and effect of the negative *οὐ* which is here found. The law is thus stated by Liddell and Scott: "*οὐ* is generally put immediately before the word which it negatives."¹

To this general law they mention a few exceptions, as follows: (1) In poetry the position is often more free; (2) sometimes emphatically at the end of the clause; (3) in clauses opposed by *μέν* and *δέ*, it is often thrown to the end; (4) sometimes it stands in the first clause after *μέν*. It will be seen at once, by an inspection of the passage before us, that not one of these exceptions can apply. The general rule, therefore, holds good. According to this rule, the *οὐ* should be made to negative the verb that follows it; not the *πάντες* that precedes it, as our English translation makes it do. Paul by placing the *οὐ* where he does, affirms the *not sleeping* of *all*, equivalent to our saying, "None of us shall sleep." Our accepted version could only be justified by a Greek text in which the *οὐ* should stand before the *πάντες*; and I know of no such text. Certainly neither of our versions pretends to have been made from such a one.

2. I argue that this change should be made upon the authority of all the learned gentlemen who were responsible for the accepted version in 1611, and of the equally learned gentlemen who made the revised version in 1881; inasmuch as they have translated every other similar passage in the New Testament in a manner similar to that which I claim for this. Of these I find twenty-six as follows,—

Matt. xxiv. 22, "Except those days had been shortened, *no flesh would have been saved.*"

I will forbear burdening my page with the quotation of the Greek, and leave my scholarly reader to turn to his Greek Testament, and discover that, literally translated, it would

¹ See Liddell and Scott's Lexicon (Harper's edition,) p. 1088, 2d col. near the bottom, letter B.

read, "All flesh shall not be saved. But the negative standing just before the verb *negatives the verb*; asserting the *not being saved* of all flesh. The translation "no flesh would have been saved" is, therefore, correct beyond dispute. Translating similarly the passage before us, it would read, "None of us shall sleep."

Mark vii. 3, "All the Jews eat not," etc., i. e. none of the Jews eat, etc.; ver. 18, "Nothing from without can defile him."

Luke i. 37, "With God nothing shall be impossible;" xii. 10, "No word spoken against the Holy Spirit shall be forgiven."

John iii. 16, "Whosoever believeth on him shall not perish;" xii. 46, "Whosoever believeth on me shall not abide in darkness."

Acts x. 14, "I have never eaten anything common or unclean;" xi. 8, "Nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth."

Rom. iii. 20, "No flesh shall be justified;" xii. 4, "All members have not the same office:" i. e. all members have their peculiar office. The negative applies to the word "*same*."

1 Cor. i. 29, "That no flesh should glory before God."

Gal. ii. 16, "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Eph. iv. 29, "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth;" v. 5, "No fornicator hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ."

Heb. xii. 11, "No chastening is for the present joyous."

2 Peter i. 20, "No prophecy is of private interpretation."

1 John ii. 21, "No lie is of the truth;" iii. 6, "Whosoever sinneth hath not known him;" ver. 9, "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not;" ver. 10, "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not righteous;" ver. 15, "No murderer hath eternal life;" v. 18, "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not."

Rev. xviii. 22, "No craftsman shall be found any more in thee;" xxi. 27, "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth;" xxii. 3, "There shall be no curse any more."

Whoever will examine the Greek original of these twenty-six passages will find that the construction is substantially the same as in 1 Cor. xv. 51. They are the only passages of the kind which I have noticed in the New Testament. The translation, both in the old version and the new, is in the form of a universal negative. Translating the passage before us in a similar manner, it would read, "None of us shall sleep." Is there any reason why this alone should be made an exception? I know of none.

3. I argue in favor of a change in the accepted version,

upon the authority of the translators of both the old and new versions, inasmuch as in every other case where they have given us a similar translation they have a different Greek text as the basis of it. Of this sort I quote as follows:

Matt. xix. 11, "Not all men can receive this saying."

John xiii. 10, "Ye are clean, but not all;" ver. 11, "Ye are not all clean;" ver. 18, "I speak not of you all."

Rom. ix. 6, "They are not all Israel;" x. 16, "They have not all obeyed the gospel."

1 Cor. vi. 12, "Not all things are expedient;" viii. 7, "There is not in all men that knowledge;" x. 23 (same as 1 Cor. vi. 12); ver. 23, "Not all things edify;" xv. 39, "Not all flesh is the same flesh."

2 Thess. iii. 2, "Not all men have faith."

Heb. ii. 8, "Not yet all things put under him;" iii. 16, "Not all that came out of Egypt."

1 John iv. 1, "Believe not every spirit."

In these various instances (and there are others like them) in which the negative is applied to the word "all," invariably the negative stands *before* "all." The passage in 1 Cor. xv. 51 is the only one in which they have applied the negative to the word "all," in which the negative stands after. Is there any reason for this variation? I know of none. If their version "We shall not all sleep" is the true one, it is absolutely the only one of the kind which the translators themselves have found. So it appears that they have hemmed themselves in on all sides. More than forty cases there are in which the negative occurs in the same clause with "all." In every other case, except this, where they find the same Greek, they translate differently: and in every other case in which they translate similarly, we find a different Greek. Can the case be stronger?

4. Yes: even more conclusive than all this is the fact that the translators have in no other instance in their entire translation of the Greek Testament varied from the rule laid down by Liddell and Scott. I have not had at hand a full concordance of the Greek Testament. But I have read the Testament through carefully—marking every instance in

which the negative *οὐ* in any of its forms is used. If I have made no omissions or miscounts, the following is the result: The Gospel of Matthew contains this negative 215 times; Mark, 126; Luke, 181; John, 291; Acts, 116; Paul's Epistles (including Hebrews), 540; the other Epistles, from James to Jude, 97; the Apocalypse, 87. In all, 1653. In one case (Rev. xviii. 11) the negative stands at the end of the clause, giving it special emphasis, according to the second of the exceptions mentioned by Liddell and Scott. In all the other one thousand six hundred and fifty-two cases both the accepted version and the revised agree in applying the negative to the word that follows it, excepting only I Cor. xv. 51.

I think there never was a plainer case of mistranslation than this. A translation that violates the laws of the Greek language, as laid down by all Greek scholars—laws which the translators themselves recognize, and to which they conform one thousand six hundred and fifty-two out of one thousand six hundred and fifty-three times—*must be a mistake*. My learned critics in the April number of this Quarterly (both of whom refer to this passage as a fatal objection to my views) may possibly find the amplest exercise for their vigorous muscle in defending our accepted version. I think that they will find that, beyond all shadow of doubt, the passage ought to be translated, "None of us shall sleep: but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Thus this passage, instead of being a tower of strength for the defence of the commonly accepted views, seems to me to be an impregnable battery for their overthrow. The very thing which Paul here states is that no Christian really dies: but that, at the very moment of death, he is changed instantly. "The last trump" *closes the battle of life*—not the history of this planet. It is at this moment that the dead are raised incorruptible. At this moment the corruptible puts on incorruption, and the mortal puts on im-

mortality. It is at this moment that death is swallowed up in victory. It is at this very instant that the conquering believer shouts, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" He is not called to wait till this globe is destroyed at some time in the indefinite future—it may be a million years hence: it may be never!

This, the only possible translation of 1 Cor. xv. 51—which I have just this moment, since writing the last paragraph, found the learned Meyer admits—makes a glorious harmony of the whole chapter in which it stands. Meyer's Commentary is the only one I have at hand. But I have not cared to examine commentaries. After reaching a conclusion that no commentaries could either strengthen or weaken, I opened Meyer, more as a matter of curiosity than anything else. And I find that, after alluding to the various attempts to justify our accepted version, he calls them "make-shifts, contrary to the construction, without proof or precedent."

Nothing can be plainer. I know of no law of Greek interpretation more absolute than the one I have quoted from Liddell and Scott. Paul was not ignorant of this law. Five hundred and forty times (if he wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews) he uses this same negative:—in every case (our translators of both old and new versions themselves being the judges) making it to apply to the word following, with the single exception before us. It was not necessary to ask Paul, "Dost thou understand Greek?" He understood it well. He knew how to speak it: he knew how to write it. This Epistle was addressed to a church established in a Greek city. No less than a hundred and sixty-one times does he use this same negative in this same Epistle—in every other case applying it (as our translators admit) according to the rule; namely, to the word following it. If he meant in this case to apply it to the word going before, how could his readers at Corinth know that fact? There cannot be any doubt

that he was understood by the brethren at Corinth to say, "None of us shall sleep." Being Greeks, they could not possibly have understood him to mean anything else.

And all the New Testament writers knew where to place this negative. They all used it:—used it in the aggregate more than sixteen hundred times. And never once (our learned translators being judges) did one of them make a mistake—excepting only Paul, the most scholarly of them all! And he only once: but that, unfortunately, was in writing to a church in Greece!

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION NOT A TYPE OF OURS.

Many have the impression that the Bible teaches that it is. It teaches nothing of the sort. On the contrary, it most distinctly affirms things which imply the contrary. Paul says, in regard to our resurrection, that the natural body is not raised. "It is *sown* a natural body; *it is raised* a *spiritual body*." But, on the other hand, Christ's resurrection was of the natural body. That was according to the prophecy: his flesh was not to see corruption—so soon was it to be raised after burial. There was an infinitely important object to be attained in the resurrection of his natural body. It was thus that he was declared to be the Son of God with power (Rom. i. 4). This was the very test which Christ himself gave when he was asked by what authority he did certain things (John ii. 18–22). Had there been any failure upon this point, his whole mission had failed. So Paul reasons most cogently (1 Cor. xv. 14–18). The disciples must actually see him and touch him. They went to his tomb, and found it empty. The natural body had gone. They afterwards met him in person; ate and drank with him; saw him eat and drink. For the space of forty days they could testify to having seen him,—not his spiritual body, but his natural body. They were challenged to put it to the test, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke

xxiv. 39). That was the manner of Christ's resurrection, and with good reasons for it. The natural senses must have convincing proof. Even sceptical Thomas must be convinced by handling the natural body of his risen Lord.

But is that the way with *our* resurrection? By no manner of means. Paul, in answer to the supposed question of some interlocutor, "With what manner of body do they come forth?" says most explicitly: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." I cannot conceive it possible to deny more explicitly and emphatically the doctrine of a resurrection of the natural body, than Paul has done in the various forms of speech which he uses in this chapter. "*Thou sowest not the body which shall be,*" when thou sowest grain. So is it in the resurrection of the dead. It goes down a corruptible body; it comes up an incorruptible body. It goes down in dishonor; it comes up in glory. It goes down in weakness; it comes up in power. In a word, it goes down a natural body; it comes up a spiritual body. *If the natural body of any dead and buried saint is yet to be raised, then Paul was mistaken!*

Then, following this, he goes right on to say: "Brethren, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"; as if he had said, "Of no conceivable use would it be to raise the natural body; it could not go to heaven!" And in writing to the Philippians, he tells us farther that our vile body is to be *changed*, that it may be made like unto Christ's *glorious* body. It is here that we find the likeness between us and Christ—not that his resurrection is the type of ours; but *his spiritual body is the type of ours*. If anyone asks, (as a correspondent has done,) *when* Christ's natural body was changed into his spiritual body, we have only to reply that we know nothing about it; for we have been told nothing. The same inquiry might be made respecting Enoch and Elijah, and the same

answer must be given. One thing we do know,—because we are told that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither can corruption inherit incorruption,—that Christ's natural body was at some time laid aside, and his glorious body taken on. But when, we are not told.

As to our own change, we know more, because we have been told more—namely, *that it occurs at death, and occurs in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*

MEANING OF "CHRIST THE FIRST-FRUITS," ETC.

The passage (1 Cor. xv. 20) which speaks of Christ as "the first-fruits of them that are asleep" is deemed by many to be conclusive against the views which I have set forth in my former papers. And it is not to be denied that at first sight it seems to be so. But upon closer study it may appear otherwise. I present the matter briefly as it lies in my own mind.

1. That this form of speech was intended to set forth that Christ was the first person who had ever passed through the resurrection is opposed to the teachings of Christ himself, who in his discourse to the Sadducees expressly said: "Now that the dead *are raised* [not *shall be raised*], even Moses showed at the bush when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Christ said this not incidentally, but when directly explaining and defending the resurrection of the dead, and illustrating it from the case of the patriarchs who had been raised from the dead when Moses stood at the bush. (See Luke xx. 27-38.)

2. If it still be insisted that nothing less than the resurrection of the natural body from the dead can be meant, then it is enough to say that Christ was *not* the first person that rose from the dead in this sense; as is evident from the gospel history. When John sent certain of his disciples to Jesus to inquire, "Art thou he that should come, or look we

for another?" he said to them: "Go, tell John what things ye have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and *the dead are raised up.*" And, besides, we have the detailed history of the raising from the dead of the widow's son at Nain, of Jairus's daughter, and of Lazarus, at Bethany.

Christ was not then, in any sense, the first person who had been raised from the dead. Some other meaning, therefore, must be attached to the expression "the first-fruits of them that slept." So I say:—

3. The term "first-fruits" does not necessarily mean first in order of time, but may mean first in order of quality. This I infer from such a passage as Deut. xv. 19–21, which after requiring that all the firstling males of the herd and of the flock should be offered unto the Lord, goes on to say: "But if there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill blemish whatever, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the Lord thy God. The first-fruits that were so by way of eminence must be of *the highest excellence.* Christ may be thus spoken of as "the first-fruits of them that slept"—not as being the first person who had experienced resurrection, as he certainly was not, but as being the one utterly without spot or blemish. No other being of such a rank had ever passed through the gates of death.

4. This view is supported by the word *τάγμα*, which is translated "order" in the next sentence: "Each in his own order: Christ the first-fruits," etc. The word *τάγμα* does not mean order in time, or in succession, but *order in rank*. It is one of those words used only once in the Greek Testament. Hence there are no parallel passages to be referred to in illustration. But whoever will be at the trouble of examining any Greek Lexicon will find that I am abundantly supported in this view. And, moreover, if reference is had to the Greek Testament in such passages as Luke i. 3: "It seemed good to me to write unto thee *in order*"; or Acts

xi. 4: "Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it *in order* unto them; or Acts xviii. 23: "Paul went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia *in order*,— it will be found that a very different Greek text lays the foundation for this translation. It is not then asserted that Christ was first in order of time, but first in order of rank.

5. Once more: this exegesis is strengthened by the words that come immediately after those that I have quoted above. The whole verse reads: "Every man in his own rank; Christ the most exalted; next to him those that are Christ's at his coming." So I understand it. For everywhere the same thing is brought out: that there were to be troublous times in that generation; such as had never been before, and never should be again:—such tribulation and affliction and persecution, that, unless the days were shortened, no flesh should be saved. False Christs and false prophets also were to arise, so that the very elect, if it were possible, should be deceived. They were exhorted to take heed that no man should deceive them; to give diligence to make their calling and election sure. And they were repeatedly assured that such as conquered should receive a reward of glory and honor commensurate with the fiery trials through which they were to pass. A hundred and forty and four thousand of Israel's faithful were to be sealed, and a multitude that no man could number of other kindreds and tribes; and when concerning them all it should be asked: "Who are these who are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?"—it was to be answered: "These are they who came out of *great tribulation*, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb." Next in dignity to Christ himself were to be those who should endure such a great fight of affliction and temptation, and *win!* In this strain spoke Christ himself; in this wrote Peter, and John and Paul.

I believe this to be the true interpretation of this passage. It alone falls in with the well-known facts; it harmon-

izes with the many declarations that the coming of Christ was to be in that generation, and that it was to be accompanied with unparalleled tribulations. It harmonizes, as we have already seen, with other teachings of this same chapter which have been obscured and misrepresented by erroneous translation.

MEANING OF "THE LAST DAY" OR "LAST DAYS."

Much stress is laid on the use of the various expressions "the last day," "the last time," "the last days," etc., as proving that the world is to come to an end; and that at the time of the destruction of this material globe, the final judgment is to take place.

Now it goes without saying that these forms of expression do not in themselves settle the matter. There was to be an end of the Old Dispensation; there is also to be the last day in every man's life. It is a fair question for investigation, therefore, as to whether these forms of speech should be referred to some event yet in the future, which may be called "*the last day*," or some other "last day." And this is a question to be settled by examination of the various passages in which the words are used, and by the thorough study of the connection in which they stand.

Proceeding with such an investigation, we find that, in Acts ii. 17, Peter quotes from the prophet Joel these words: "It shall come to pass in *the last days*, saith God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:" telling his hearers distinctly, that they were then realizing the fulfilment of that prophecy. (Acts ii. 16.) *Those were "the last days."*

In 2 Tim. iii. 1 Paul speaks of the perilous times coming "*in the last days*," and proceeds to exhort Timothy to be

ready for them in such a way as manifestly to indicate that he was to encounter them, and that, too, before long.

Heb. i. 2 says: "God hath *in these last days* spoken unto us by his Son." This is the accepted version from an old Greek text. The Revised Version translates from the revised Greek text: "In the last of these days," but with no substantial change of meaning.

Jas. v. 3, "Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days": R. V.—"*in* the last days." Both forms of expression imply that those days were the last days.

1 Pet. i. 20 speaks of Christ as "manifested in *these* last times."

2 Pet. iii. 3 alludes to scoffers that "should come in the last days," as though they were then living, and the people to whom he was writing needed to be on their guard against them.

1 John ii. 18 says: "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."

I understand all these words to have been written before the year 70. This will be readily conceded, except perhaps in the case of John. As to the date of his Epistle, there is a difference of opinion; but I think the strength of the argument is most decidedly in favor of the view that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Besides these seven examples of the use of these words as referring to apostolic times, there are six other passages in which the expressions "the last day" and "the last time" are used; and I think that a critical study will show that *they* are used with reference to *the end of human life*; and not at all as referring to the end of this material globe. My reasons are:—

1. The "end of the world" whenever spoken of in the Bible, as has already been most conclusively shown, always

means the end of the *eon*, and not the end of the *cosmos*. And as to what Peter says of the heavens passing away with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat, it has been made too plain for question that such words, and words even stronger, and more striking, and more graphic, were used by Isaiah in speaking of Babylon and Edom; and that Peter's readers and hearers were accustomed to such forms of speech in referring prophetically to great national calamities. They knew that they did not convey the idea of the end of the material globe, and were never intended to.

Nor is there anywhere in the Bible *any* form of speech that, under sound laws of interpretation, contains a prophecy of the destruction of this globe. That event may sometime occur; but the Bible has nothing to say about it. There is certainly nothing in science to suggest that this planet is anywhere near the end of its career. The Creator spent millions of years in fitting it up for human habitation, before a human soul was created to dwell upon it. Were any man of sense and reason to spend ten years in building a house, the reasonable presumption would be that he expected somebody to occupy it *at least as long* before it would need to be demolished. When the Bible student becomes dispossessed of the false notion that the word of God predicts the early destruction of our globe, he will soon have his eyes opened to discover the fallacy of other interpretations which are as baseless as the shadow of a dream. If men only knew that a million of years yet remained for the occupancy by the human race of this planet, they would see how preposterous it is to postpone the judgment till the end of that time, and to keep the redeemed out of heaven for all that long, long period. Now we do not know that this globe is to be inhabited so long. But I believe it most assuredly. For reason favors it, and science favors it; and I am clear in my conviction that the Bible has not a word to say against it. Upon the whole subject it is as silent as the grave. This earth

is but in its earliest infancy; and has yet before it a future that no man has conceived.

But it is by no such process of reasoning that I have been led to revise my old beliefs on the question before us. My every step has been most vividly exegetical. My only purpose is to ascertain by the laws of interpretation rationally applied—"what saith the scripture?" Every proposition must be submitted to that ordeal. I believe that the Bible needs only to be understood, and on all questions of eschatology it will teach nothing but the truth. And truths, whether revealed in science or the Bible, will never clash. So I come to face the passages in hand to ascertain what they mean. And this leads me to say:—

2. When Peter (1 Peter i. 5) speaks of "a salvation ready to be revealed *in the last time*," the connection makes it plain that the salvation spoken of was *not* one to be revealed more than eighteen hundred years afterwards. He was writing to Christians who were going through the fires of persecution. He is pouring out his very heart in thanksgiving to God that, while they were stripped of their property, and robbed of life too, there was *waiting for them* an inheritance indestructible, undefiled, fading not away; reserved in the heavens for those who were kept by the power of God through faith unto a salvation *ready to be revealed the very moment the end came*. That was a sort of talk in which there was power. They were to be admitted to their reward at once. It was "*ready*" for them. The end of earth was the gateway of heaven. If they were to be burned at the stake, it would only be a chariot of fire to carry them to glory.

Make out that Peter was saying to them that there was an inheritance awaiting them; and a salvation—but it would be thousands of years before they would reach it!—and the whole brightness is not only dimmed, it is utterly gone.

Notice, too, that the apostle talks about an inheritance "in heaven." All in *heaven!* Not a moiety of it in some

other place for many centuries, and a salvation still beyond: but all "ready"—waiting for them. Right out of the fires of martyrdom into the very glories of the city of God! Are not these heroic souls in Heaven yet? Haven't they reached their inheritance? Evidently *Peter* knew nothing about their having any inheritance anywhere else. The whole of it was *reserved in Heaven*; and they would come into possession of it at once.

3. When Christ says (John xii. 48): "The word that I have spoken the same shall judge him *at the last day*," it is plain to my mind that the man spoken of as thus judged, has not been all these long ages awaiting his sentence. To every man it is appointed once to die, and *immediately after that, his judgment*. There is nothing more plainly taught in the Bible than that it is for the deeds done in the body, that our account is to be given. The last day of life closes the record—*the whole record upon which judgment is to be pronounced*. God knows it all. It is then, if ever, fresh in the mind of the one who has completed it. It cannot be confused with anything in the future—for that future has not yet been lived. That is just the time of all times for the judgment to be spoken: so that even the condemned soul will be constrained to say: "Just and righteous are thy judgments, O God!"

4. The words of Christ in the sixth chapter of John, in which the term "last day" occurs four times, seem to me to be as clear as sunlight. When he says: "It is the will of him that sent me that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him should have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day," repeating this last clause again and again, it is obvious that he regarded it as a promise full of cheer and inspiration. So it was—and is. *It was abolishing death at a single stroke!* The grave drops out! One step from earth to heaven—taken "in a moment, in the twinkling

of an eye." Not a step two thousand years long! [Far more likely as many millenniums.]

Imagine Christ saying: "And I will raise him up in two thousand years" (even if the globe should be burned up in that time)—how utterly dead the sentence would seem! It was no such thought as that that came to the souls of those who heard his gracious words. The whole burden of his discourse was, "No death to the believer! *No death!* NO DEATH! The last day of earth is the first day of Heaven. None of you shall sleep! You shall all be changed in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye!"

How we have robbed the words of Christ and of Paul of their glory by our traditions! Whereas we ought to have shouted, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" We have all our life been in bondage through imagining that somehow or other the grave still held a mortgage upon us that had not been cancelled. It is a mistake. "Our Saviour Jesus Christ hath *abolished* death." And Paul tells us (in the use of the same Greek word) that the last enemy *to be abolished* is death. Put the two together and see how much it means. "*The last enemy to be abolished is death*"—that is what the apostle writes to Corinth. And yet how many have failed in reading the fifteenth of Corinthians to see that what Paul there teaches is that this is a consummation already reached. But put by the side of it his words to Timothy, and the way-faring man though a fool need not err: "Our Saviour Jesus Christ *hath abolished* death." It is not a thing to be done at the end of the world. No! thank God! it has been done already! It is a finished work. The last enemy that was to be destroyed has been *already absolutely annihilated!* That is what Paul teaches.

CHRIST'S TALK WITH MARTHA ON THE RESURRECTION.

The language of Martha is, of course, not claimed by those who refer to it as an inspired utterance, any more than

what Nicodemus said in his conversation with Christ. The question is, What does Christ's part of the conversation teach us? Let us ponder the words of these two or three short verses: they seem to me to be very pregnant. They are found in the eleventh of John, beginning with the twenty-fourth verse. "Jesus said unto her [Martha]: Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me though he die, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" What is the soul and heart of this language of Christ? This is what he says to Martha: "You talk of your brother's resurrection in some far-away time. There is a better word for you, Martha, than that. He that believeth in me is not called to this long waiting in some dreamless sleep. His glorious immortal life is not to be postponed to some last day at the end of some long, long sweep of the ages: he no sooner dies than he lives again. He but passes through the gate that men call death to life eternal. Better may I say that he who believes in me *doesn't die at all*; it is only stepping up from the lower life of this world to the better life from which I came. Believest thou this?" That is my poor paraphrase of what the *Master* said in this talk with Martha. These "wonderful words of life" of our blessed Lord furnish little support to the doctrine of a future and long postponed resurrection. It is, on the contrary, exactly the resurrection of which Paul speaks in the passage I have been discussing—"None of us shall die—not one! But we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump." Those that have dreaded that last trumpet call to meet the last enemy—DEATH—may know that it is simply a call to LIFE. Infinitely far from being dreadful, it is a summons to glory eternal, which the soul of the believer enters upon at once.

THE TIME OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING.

In view of some questions started, and some criticisms suggested, in the April number of 1891, it seems proper to allude to this subject once again.

Twice we have Christ's own prophecy on this point. I do not mean twice recorded. For each of these two prophecies is recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke: so that we have six records: and would, no doubt, have had two more, had John's Gospel been written before the fulfilment of them. He has given to the same subject more than half of the Apocalypse.

These two prophecies were uttered upon different occasions, at different localities, and separated in time by at least several months. The former was spoken somewhere in the neighborhood of Cæsarea Philippi, or Mount Hermon: the latter at Jerusalem. The former as recorded by Matthew reads thus:—

"The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works. *Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*" (Matt. xvi. 27, 28.)

I place these two verses in one paragraph. It is so obvious that they belong together that I know of no edition or translation that does not thus place them.

Mark records the same conversation, locating it at the same place and fixing it at the same identical time. But the blundering monks who cut the Bible up into chapters and verses, cut it in two in the middle, putting part of it in the eighth chapter, and the remainder in the ninth. Whoever will take the pains to read half a dozen verses beginning with Mark viii. 34, comparing them with the same number in Matthew beginning with the twenty-fourth verse of the sixteenth chapter, will see that the two passages are substantially identical beyond a question. The two verses in Mark read thus:—

“Whosoever 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. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here who shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.”

Luke’s words are these:—

“Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in his own glory, and the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God.”

The whole context makes it absolutely certain that these are three different, but not conflicting, accounts of the same utterance of our Lord. And surely the words are too plain to be misunderstood. The Son of man was to come in his glory, in the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels; he was to come to set up his kingdom; and to come with power; and of *that very coming with all these attending circumstances* he said that there were some of them standing there *who should not taste of death till they should see it*. And while the three evangelists vary their report in giving the details of the conversation, that remark was so impressed upon those who heard it, that they all give it in the very same words. And they all gave it with the emphatic introduction,—Matthew and Mark saying: “*Verily* I say unto you;” Luke: “I tell you *of a truth*.”

That we have given the true interpretation of this prophecy is made doubly plain by the second prophecy some months later,—pronounced upon the Mount of Olives. I will not ask for space to set it forth in full. The reader only needs to turn to the twenty-fourth of Matthew, the thirteenth of Mark, or the twenty-first of Luke, to notice that the *connectives* which bind the different parts of the discourse together make it entirely evident that running through these chapters there is *one subject matter* from beginning to end. The temple was to be destroyed. Jerusalem was to be compassed with armies. Those that were in Judæa were to flee

to the mountains. *Then* should be great tribulation. "*Immediately after the tribulation of these days* 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 in heaven; and *then* shall all the tribes of the land mourn." And as the nearness of summer shows itself in the leaves of the fig tree, so ye also when ye shall see these things, (the things just above mentioned,) *know ye that the Son of man is at the doors.* "VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU, THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS AWAY TILL ALL THESE THINGS BE ACCOMPLISHED."

Are Dr. Warren and myself accused of "ringing in the changes" on these words? No wonder that *we* should ring the changes on them when Matthew and Mark and Luke all rang these changes—clear and loud. This is the very key to the castle. It is the only key that unlocks the mystery. Christ himself gives it to us: yea, more; urges it upon us, with those words that he never wasted on comparatively unimportant matters; which he only used to call attention to something of great significance:—"VERILY I SAY UNTO YOU." He used them also on the former occasion of a like prophecy. And now in repeating the prophecy, he adds, by way of emphasis, words found nowhere else in the book; but found just here: "Heaven and earth may pass away; but my words shall not pass away." Upon these words, too, all the synoptists "ring the changes." Christ wanted to make it too plain to be misunderstood: so he prophesied it on two different occasions, widely separated in distance and in time. The Spirit of Inspiration wanted it to be plain: so he moved the evangelists to put it down in most unequivocal phrase, so that he who runneth may read:—that Christ was to come again in that generation—to come the second time in judgment—to put an end to the old *eon*, blotting out the temple service forever; and to introduce the "*eon of*

eons." His kingdom was then to be set up as Daniel had predicted: and that kingdom was to be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions should serve and obey him world without end.

Christ then adds: "But of the *day* and *hour* knoweth no man: no, not even the angels of heaven; neither the Son, but the Father only." I see no need of misunderstanding this verse. The time of the event was sufficiently revealed in the statement that it was to come *in that generation*: but of the *day* and *hour* he was not empowered to speak.

It will be observed that in quoting the above I have made one change from our received version: substituting "tribes of *the land*" for "tribes of *the earth*." The word $\gamma\eta$ is often translated "land;" as, for example, in Matt. xxvii: 45, "There was darkness over all *the land*." This darkness is not supposed to have covered the earth; but only Palestine. Moreover, "*tribes*" properly refers to divisions of Palestine, not of the earth. Indeed, this whole prophecy is manifestly local. The destruction of "the temple," the armies encompassing "Jerusalem," the warning to those living in "Judæa" to flee to the mountains, and the mourning of "the tribes" plainly indicate this. It was the overthrow of the Jewish state and temple service, and the establishment of a spiritual kingdom in its stead, that was predicted; and Palestine was to be the great centre of the coming conflict. Had the mourning been prophesied as world-wide, the proper word would not have been $\phi\upsilon\lambda\alpha\iota$ (tribes) but $\xi\theta\nu\eta$ (nations). $\xi\theta\nu\omicron\varsigma$, either in the singular or plural, is used about a hundred and fifty times in the New Testament: $\phi\upsilon\lambda\acute{\eta}$ about one-fifth as often; always in the sense of tribes. The distinction between the two words is generally properly recognized in our translation: but in the passage before us, and one other in Rev. i. 7, referring to the same events, the translation should evidently be changed, so as to read—"all the tribes of *the land*." The "earth" is never spoken of as being di-

vided into "tribes;" but, as in Matt. xxviii. 19, into "nations:" or, as in Rev. xiv. 6, into "nations, and tribes, and tongues, and peoples."

Christ's second coming was then and there. The Jewish dispensation then came to a perpetual end. And the Christian dispensation was established forever. Surely we have had enough of the folly of "Second Adventism" in our time, without keeping it up any longer. Many of us remember the wide-spread excitement over the coming of Christ in 1843. We remember how large a number of the victims of that delusion went into the insane asylums; and how much larger a number went into infidelity. The harvest gathered from the similar delusion of 1866 was of the same sort. And already the theory of the end of the world and the personal coming of Christ in 1892 has, at the time of my writing, sent one brilliant preacher to the mad-house. Time will prove that this speculation is as baseless as the others. All of them have been the offspring of a totally erroneous interpretation of Scriptures. This world is yet to become the kingdom of our Lord: but why are we so slow to learn that what Christ said was true, and will be true to the end?—that *the Spirit of God in the world is of far more worth than Christ's personal bodily presence?* Read the last wonderful discourse of Christ, and see how repeatedly and distinctly he brings out the thought. (Especially John xvi. 7-15.)

This world is to grow better and better. More and more from age to age it is to be dominated by the living Christ through the Eternal Spirit. Generation after generation of the believing are to be gathered into the heavenly garners. For millions of years this earth is to be the nursery from which will be translated day by day unnumbered thousands into the heavenly glory. The spiritual conquest of the nations is to go on, until from all lands shall come up the shout: "Alleluiah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; the

kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

I believe that I have now met and fully answered every important question and objection of my learned and able critics. And, before laying down my pen, I only ask the indulgence of my patient reader while I state in few words, and in somewhat logical order, the points which have been made in these papers.

1. The words *Sheol* and *Hades* (which are confessedly synonymous) always, in the Sacred Scriptures, refer either to the place of physical burial, or the place of future punishment.

2. That the souls of the righteous dead are sent to this place, or any part of it, is nowhere taught in the Bible: but, on the contrary, what is said about it, is of such a sort as absolutely to preclude that idea.

3. The finally unrepentant pass from earth to *Hades* immediately after death.

4. Between that and Paradise there is an impassable gulf.

5. Paradise and Heaven are interchangeable names for the same place.

6. To this place the righteous dead go immediately after death.

7. The "middle state," so called, is a myth, entirely unsupported by the Bible, directly or indirectly.

8. It would be preposterous to admit the righteous to their final reward in Heaven before they had passed their final judgment.

9. It would be at least equally preposterous to consign to final and remediless punishment those who had not passed their final judgment, and been pronounced deserving of such punishment.

10. A general judgment for the purpose of revealing men's history and character to each other—such as is often

set forth in sermons and theological writings—would require many millions of years, even were the history of the human race to be closed up now.

11. No such proceeding is necessary for God's vindication, or for the restful assurance that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

12. As the Scriptures teach distinctly that the issues of the final judgment are according to the deeds done in the body, there is no reason why such judgment may not be pronounced the moment that the earthly record is closed.

13. The distinct statement of Heb. ix. 27 is that the judgment of *all* men [this is plainly the import of τοῖς ἀνθρώποις] follows death immediately.

14. A general resurrection of men's natural bodies is nowhere taught in the Bible.

15. The contrary doctrine *is* taught, most explicitly and emphatically. (1 Cor. xv. 35-44.)

16. None of the righteous dead sleep: but all are instantly changed at the very moment of death.

17. This changing of the natural body into the spiritual body is what constitutes their resurrection. "It is sown a natural body; it is RAISED *a spiritual body.*"

18. Christ himself plainly taught that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been raised from the dead before the time of Moses.

19. It is revolting to human reason to conceive of the righteous dead as waiting in a conscious state through thousands of years for the decision of their final destiny.

20. The theory of an unconscious sleep for all these ages is so clearly unbiblical and irrational, that, in this discussion, we have assumed agreement in rejecting it.

21. This decision of their endless destiny is what constitutes their last judgment.

22. A postponement of the final judgment to the end of this world's history would be unendurable to any man's

thought, except upon the hypothesis that this history is soon to be closed.

23. There is not a single utterance in the Bible which, properly understood, predicts the destruction of this globe, either sooner or later.

24. On the contrary, we are told explicitly: "One generation goeth, and another generation cometh; but THE EARTH ABIDETH FOREVER."

25. Both science and reason are against the theory of the winding up of its history at least for a million of years to come.

26. There is but one coming of Christ spoken of in the New Testament subsequent to his ascension.

27. That coming was to be for the final overthrow of the Jewish state, and the permanent establishment of his spiritual kingdom in the earth.

28. That kingdom, when thus set up, was to endure forever.

29. Christ's coming to establish it was to be in that generation.

30. The expressions "the last times," "the last day," etc., as used by Christ and the apostles, never refer to the end of this planet; but either to the end of the Jewish dispensation, or the end of human life.

31. To hold that the apostles were mistaken in what they said of Christ's speedy coming, is fatal to any true theory of inspiration, and subversive of all faith in divine revelation.

32. Erroneous interpretations of the Scriptures upon these various subjects have always been a fruitful source of unbelief. It is only necessary to understand them correctly, in order to maintain their absolute inerrancy; and to demonstrate their beautiful and perfect harmony with each other, and with all known facts.