

ARTICLE III.

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF CHRIST, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO THE DISCOURSE IN MATT. XXIV. AND XXV.

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INTRODUCTION.

It will be admitted, I presume, by every intelligent reader of the Bible and the commentaries upon it, that there is often very great vagueness, uncertainty, and inconsistency in the interpretation of its language. It will also be admitted, I believe, that these faulty interpretations cannot fairly be attributed to the language itself; for most readers are convinced that there is scarcely a mode of speech in the whole compass of literature more simple, direct, and intelligible than is the language of the Bible as to much the greater portion of it. There must be some other cause, and the following, I suppose, will generally be received as the true cause, namely: Men who profess to be Christians usually feel obliged to believe what the Bible affirms; if any passage of the Bible, therefore, understood in its obvious and true sense, states a sentiment which they are strongly disinclined to believe, there is a powerful temptation to reconcile the words to some other meaning more agreeable to the interpreter. Hence has arisen a very general practice of interpreting meanings derived from other sources *into* the words of the Bible, instead of simply explaining the words themselves according to grammatical usage, the context, and the nature of the subject. The art of interpretation, instead of being a simple hydrant by which the waters of life may be drawn out of their receptacles for our use, has too often been made a sort of forcing-pump, by which other waters, not of life, have been driven into the Scriptural reservoirs. Some interpreters are in this respect much more guilty than others, but almost all have participated in the sin more or less. There is scarcely one who does not find some passage somewhere in the Bible, in respect to which he would like a little more latitude than the strictest rules of grammatical interpretation, faithfully carried out, will allow him; and if he himself takes this latitude, he cannot be very severe on others when they take the same. Hence the very great prevalence of the practice in all parties.

ESCHATOLOGICAL TEXTS.

In view of these remarks, I propose to examine, by the strictest rules of grammatical interpretation, some of the more important eschatological texts contained in the record of our Lord's discourses, particularly **MATTHEW XXIV. 29—31**, and its parallels **MARK XIII. 24—27** and **LUKE XXI. 25—27**, and see what they really import when thus examined.

The reader, that we may enter upon the subject understandingly, is earnestly requested, before we proceed any further with these remarks, to take the Greek Testament and carefully examine for himself the following eschatological passages from the discourses of Christ recorded in the Gospels :

MATTHEW.

v. 29, 30.	x. 33.
xii. 31, 32.	xiii. 41—43, 49, 50.
xvi. 24—27.	xviii. 6—9.
xxv. 31—46.	xxvi. 64.

MARK.

iii. 28—30.	viii. 34—38.
ix. 42—50.	xiv. 62.

LUKE.

ix. 24—26.	xii. 9, 10.
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JOHN.

v. 25—29.	vi. 39, 40, 44.
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It is the purpose of the following pages to point out and illustrate the right interpretation of these and similar texts. In respect to all which are cited in the above paragraphs, there is but little difference of opinion among interpreters of any authority or note. They are generally understood in their obvious sense, as being really eschatological, as pertaining to the final judgment and a future state of rewards and punishments in the eternal world. The passage in **MATTHEW XXIV. 29—31**, however, though in all respects similar to these, on account of the connection in which it stands, and some difficulties which are supposed to arise from the context, has not been so unanimously agreed upon. To this text, therefore, our attention will be principally directed; for if it can be shown that this must be understood eschatologically, must be interpreted as referring to the final judgment, there

will be but little difficulty in applying all the others to the future state ; while, if the eschatological interpretation of this text be given up, if this text is regarded as referring to the Jewish-Roman war, the destruction of Jerusalem, or any other temporal event, it will not be easy to prove philologically that any of the other passages, usually considered eschatological, necessarily have reference to an eternal condition of rewards and punishments in the world to come. The importance of the subject justifies and requires a careful, patient, and minute investigation ; and in order to such an inquiry, we will first make a brief statement of what we regard as the right

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

IN RESPECT TO ALL TOPICS OF THIS KIND.

These principles of interpretation, (and in regard to them I suppose there will be no dispute,) are the two following :

I. We are never to depart from the obvious meaning of language without a necessity created by the context or by the nature of the subject.

I say *a necessity created by the context or by the nature of the subject*; because, if we admit necessities which are created by the theories, the opinions, or the feelings of the interpreter, interpretation at once becomes arbitrary, and we are all afloat on a sea of conjecture. Interpretation then, is the art of forcing meanings into language, and not the art of eliciting meaning from it.

II. Inasmuch as the use of language is always modified by the opinions, feelings, and circumstances of those who use it, in the interpretation of any document, its contemporary history is an indispensable auxiliary.

These two principles give three things, and three only, which are ever allowed to modify the literal meaning of words, namely : 1) the nature of the subject ; 2) the context ; and 3) the contemporary history. When we say of a man that "he *flies* into a passion," and of a bird that "she *flies* into her nest," the nature of the subject at once indicates which of two very different meanings the word *flies* bears in each of these sentences.

In strict accordance with these principles I now propose to examine the passage in Matt. xxiv. 29—31; and its parallels in Mark and Luke, and I earnestly request the reader to keep a strict watch over me, and see if in any instance I swerve in the least degree from the principles I have stated.

TEXTS TO BE EXAMINED.

ΜΑΤΤ. XXIV. 29—31.

29 Ἐνθὺς δὲ μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων ὁ ἥλιος σκοτισθεῖται, καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φέγγος αὐτῆς καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες πεσοῦνται ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν σαλευθήσονται.

30 Καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τότε κόψονται πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς, καὶ ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς.

31 Καὶ ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ μετὰ σαλπικῆς φωνῆς μεγάλης, καὶ ἐπισυναΐξουσιν τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων, ἀπ' ἄκρων οὐρανῶν ἕως ἄκρων αὐτῶν.

ΜΑΡΚ. XIII. 24—27.

24 Ἄλλ' ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις, μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν ἐκείνην, ὁ ἥλιος σκοτισθῆσεται, καὶ ἡ σελήνη οὐ δώσει τὸ φέγγος αὐτῆς·

25 Καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔσονται ἐκπίπτοντες, καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς σαλευθήσονται.

26 Καὶ τότε ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλαις μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς καὶ δόξης.

27 Καὶ τότε ἀποστελεῖ τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐπισυναΐξει τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων, ἀπ' ἄκρου γῆς ἕως ἄκρου οὐρανοῦ.

ΛΟΥΚ. XXI. 25—27.

25 Καὶ ἔσται σημεῖον ἐν ἡλίῳ, καὶ σελήνῃ, καὶ ἄστροις, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς συνοχὴ ἔθνων ἐν ἀπορίᾳ, χηούσης θαλάσσης καὶ ὄλου,

26 Ἀποψυχόντων ἀνθρώπων ἀπὸ φόβου καὶ προσδοκίας τῶν ἐπερχομένων τῇ οἰκουμένῃ· αἱ γὰρ δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν σαλευθήσονται.

27 Καὶ τότε ὄψονται τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν νεφέλῃ μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς.

In regard to these passages it must be observed, that the nature of the subject is the very thing in dispute respecting them. If the subject be the day of judgment, the words may be understood in their literal and most obvious sense; if the subject be the destruction of Jerusalem, the literal and most obvious sense of the words must be entirely abandoned, given up, and put far away; and for it a metaphorical meaning must be substituted, so far below the literal, so infinitely inferior to it, (even more unlike it than a picture of Niagara made of paint and canvas is unlike the roaring, thundering, rushing cataract itself,) that the very statement of the fact, after a careful reading of the words, is almost enough of itself to settle the whole question of criticism.

Conceding, however, this whole ground, I admit in the outset, for the argument's sake, that the subject being the very thing in dispute, the nature of it cannot come in to modify our interpretation, till we have ascertained what it is; and accordingly, the only sources left to enable us to ascertain the meaning of the passages are: 1) the literal import of the language, 2) the context, and 3) the contemporary history.

THE LITERAL IMPORT OF THE LANGUAGE.

What is the literal import of the language, as it stands in the pages of the Bible, and without any other source of information respecting its

meaning than what the words themselves give? Read the passage in Matt. 24: 29—31, read it either in the Greek original or in any competent translation, and see what kind of an impression the language, considered by itself, most obviously and most naturally makes. Here it is :

(29) Immediately (*εὐθὺς* in the Greek) 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.

We must remember that our Saviour did not utter his speech in the same language in which the report of his remarks is given. He probably spoke in the conversational Hebrew, the Syro-Chaldaic or Aramaean dialect, (as it is sometimes called), of his time; and the report of his remarks is made in Greek. The passage in Matthew, therefore, is a Greek translation of what Jesus spoke in Hebrew. Matthew, therefore, is a translator of what Christ said, and not a reporter merely. There are two other reporters and translators of what our Saviour said on this occasion, and their report and translation is as important as that of Matthew, for all three were divinely inspired to give the ideas with perfect accuracy. Let us then read their report and translation, as well as that of Matthew. Here they are :

Mark 13: (24) But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. (25) And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. (26) And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory. (27) And then he shall send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Luke 21: (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.

Observe, in the 29th verse of Matthew, the great changes in nature, the darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars, the tossing of the hosts of heaven; in the 30th verse the *sign* (*σημεῖον* or *visible appearance* of Christ in the *clouds of heaven* and compare this verse with Matt. 16: 27, Mark 8: 38, Luke 9: 26; in the 31st verse compare the *angels*, the *trumpets*, the *gathering together of the*

elect for the whole habitable world (*ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων ἀπ' ἄκρων οὐρανῶν ἕως ἄκρων ἀντῶν*) (no translation scarcely can do justice to the force of the original), and compare this verse with Matt. 18: 41, 42. 1 Cor. 15: 51, 52. 1 Thess. 4: 15—17. 2 Thess. 1: 7—10. Rev. 20: 11—14. How in all the world were the elect gathered together, with a great sound of trumpets, from the very extremities of the heavens, at any time during the Roman-Jewish war? So far from being gathered then, they were every where scattered, literally, spiritually, and in every way. Compare also Matt. 13: 41—48, 49, 50. 25: 81—46. Certainly, according to the literal import of the language, here is as plain and as fearful a description of the great day of judgment as can be put into human speech. All its expressions, all its figures, all its imagery, taken in their obvious import, must belong to that event, and cannot without extreme violence be made to refer to any other. Any one who can read these 29th, 30th, and 31st verses carefully and thoughtfully, and then spiritualise or allegorise them into a description of any thing which took place during the siege and overthrow of Jerusalem, need never be disturbed by any of the most extravagant allegorizing interpretations of the church-fathers or the mediæval mystics; nor can such an interpreter find much difficulty in making any conceivable description of the day of judgment, that can possibly be expressed in human language, to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. With such latitude of interpretation there is an end of all *eschatology*, and interpretation itself becomes wholly *subjective*. The thing needs only to be looked at; and it must be a blind eye which cannot see through it.

Thus much for the language taken in its literal and obvious sense.

It is alleged, however, that the *usus loquendi* of the prophetic writings justifies the application of such language as the above to such events as the siege and destruction of Jerusalem; that the darkening of the sun and moon, the shaking and falling of the heavenly bodies, etc., are prophetic symbols of the overthrow of nations, governments, etc. All this may be true, or partly true, and yet not reach the point for which the assertion is made. Let us examine the texts adduced on this point, and see how they compare with the descriptions in our Lord's discourse. They are such as these. Amos 8: 9; "I will cause the sun to go down at noon, I will darken the earth in the clear day." Micah 3: 6; "Night shall be unto you . . . it shall be dark unto you . . . the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them." Ezek. 32: 7; "I will cover the heavens 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." Jer. 15: 9; "Her sun is gone down while it was yet day." Isa. 13: 10; "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." Compare also Psalm 18: 7—14. Here indeed we see strong, poetic description, highly wrought metaphor; but how immeasurably different from the language of our Lord in his discourse! The only really strong passage, the only one which fairly admits of comparison with the expressions in the discourse of our Lord, is in Isa. 34: 4, and in regard to this prophecy, I accord fully with the following judicious remarks of Bishop Lowth in his commentary upon it. (Lowth's Isaiah, p. 297); "By a figure very common in the prophetic writings, any city or people, remarkably distinguished as enemies of the people and kingdom of God, is put for these enemies in general. This seems here to be the case with Edom and Botzra. It seems, therefore, reasonable to suppose, with many learned expositors, that this prophecy has a further view to events still future; to some great revolutions to be effected in later times, antecedent to that more perfect state of the kingdom of God upon earth, which the Holy Scriptures warrant us to expect."

The passage in Rev. 6: 12—17 is supposed by some to indicate merely the temporal calamities of the Jews in the Roman war; but I suppose the chapter is intended as a picture of the *kind of calamities*, (foreign conquest, war, famine, pestilence, etc.), by which the Jews, as the enemies of God's kingdom, would be swept away; and that the picture is *not confined* to the Roman war, but takes in all time till the final judgment. To this view the next chapter as a picture of the deliverance of the elect, exactly corresponds. The principle of the remarks quoted from Lowth is applicable to both these chapters.

THE CONTEXT.

Let us now come to our second source of information respecting the meaning of the text, namely *the context*. For the present I shall consider only that part of the context which precedes the text. The context following the text, and the word *ἐνθὺς* in Matt. 24: 29, can be more appropriately investigated hereafter under the head of *objections*. In the first place let us read Matt. 24: 21 and Mark 13: 19.

(21) For then shall be great tribulation, (*θλίψις*) such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be.

(19) For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

The affliction (*θλίψις*) here spoken of, all will admit to be the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, for that, all acknowledge, is the subject of discourse before and after; and no other affliction can answer to this description, for that was the very climax and acme of all human suffering, and it is remarkable that Josephus describes it in almost the same form of expression, namely: "It appears to me that the misfortunes of all men from the beginning of the world, if they be compared to those of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were." (Jewish War, Pref. 4.)

And this melancholy testimony is abundantly confirmed by the narrative which Josephus has himself given of the facts, of which he was an eye-witness, and by the statements of Tacitus and other historians.

Now Matthew in our text (24: 29), refers to that affliction when he says, or, more properly, reports Christ as saying, *μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων*, *after the affliction of those days*, and Mark also (13: 24), in the words *ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν ἐκείνην*, *in those days AFTER that affliction*; and then they proceed to describe the events under consideration. Thus they both affirm that the words of our text refer to something which was to take place *AFTER that affliction*, *AFTER the siege and destruction of Jerusalem*, and of course, according to the testimony of both these evangelists, the words of our text must refer, not to the destruction of Jerusalem, but to something which was to take place *afterwards*; *how long afterwards* we shall consider by and by.

The context thus far, then, decides the point that the verses under consideration must refer to some event which was to take place *subsequent* to the destruction of Jerusalem; and to what other event has any one ever thought of referring them but to the great day of Judgment?

Two, then, of the only three sources of information to which we can appeal, the literal import of the language, and the context (*preceding it*) refer the passage under consideration, necessarily, to the great day of judgment.

How is it with the third?

THE CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.

We come here to our third and only remaining source of information respecting the meaning of the language under consideration, namely, the contemporary history, or the opinions, feelings, and circumstances of the apostles and their Master at the time of the delivery of this

discourse. Our first remark under this head must be made up of two elements, namely, the context in connection with the contemporary history.

The disciples (Matt. 24: 3) had asked our Lord two questions; (1) when the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, which had just before been predicted (Matt. 23: 32—39), would take place? and (2) what would be the sign of his coming and of the end of the world? (*σημεία τῶ αἰῶρος*).

Whatever others may understand by this second question, the disciples unquestionably understood by it the great consummation, the final judgment. This I believe is not often questioned. The Jews and early Christians, generally, supposed that the final consummation would immediately follow the destruction of Jerusalem. No fact of contemporary history, I think, is better attested or more generally credited than this. This opinion was very prevalent, and nearly if not quite universal, and some expressions in 1 Thess. 4: 15—18 (*then we which are alive and remain*, etc.) tended to establish the idea that the great consummation would take place during the existence of the generation then living. This misunderstanding produced so much perturbation, that the apostles felt themselves called upon to utter solemn warnings against it 2 Thess. 2: 1—8. 2 Pet. 3: 3—14. *Now we beseech you* (says Paul in reference to the misunderstanding of his first epistle) *by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon SHAKEN IN MIND, or be TROUBLED, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by OUR EPISTLE, AS THAT THE DAY OF CHRIST IS AT HAND.* He then proceeds to show that so many and such important events were to take place before the final consummation, that this could not reasonably be supposed to be immediately impending; but neither he nor Peter undertake to show how distant the day was, for *neither of them knew*; — *that had never been revealed to them.* For aught that they could tell, it might be sooner or later, and they undoubtedly expected that it would occur at no very distant date. On points not revealed to them by inspiration, they did not presume to decide, for on such points their judgment was as fallible as that of other men.

Christ assured the apostles in this very discourse, that he should not tell them the time in regard to their questions generally (Matt. 24: 36. Mark 13: 32); and he afterwards solemnly assured them that the time was not to be made matter of revelation at all. (Acts 1: 7). How, then, could the apostles know anything about the time, any more than we?

In the verses preceding our text, Christ has answered their first

question as definitely as he intends to answer it, impressing the certainty of the event without defining the time; and then, from the 29th verse he proceeds to answer the second question proposed. He then proceeds, from Matt. 24: 37 to 25: 30, to give various warnings and instructions and practical exhortations equally applicable to both events, — the destruction of Jerusalem and the day of judgment — and finally closes the whole with a solemn and impressive description of the principal scenes of the last great day. Matt. 25: 31—46. In all this he says not one word to determine whether those two events would be contemporaneous or not; he studiously avoids giving any hint either to correct or confirm their error on that topic; on the contrary he emphatically assures them that they knew nothing about the time, that he should tell them nothing about the time; nay, that if he should undertake to tell them the time, he would be altogether exceeding his commission and his powers as the Messiah, the Son of God. Mark 13: 32. How, then, I ask again, were the disciples to know anything about the time? How could they know that the day of Judgment would *not* immediately follow the destruction of Jerusalem? How could they know anything at all about the matter, except this, that *they knew nothing?*

The light of contemporary history is necessary for the understanding of these and the other eschatological passages of the New Testament, because some contend that the Hebrews and early Christians had no idea of a future state of retribution, and no word even to indicate a place of future punishment. If this were truly so, some of the expressions of Jesus in this discourse, and in other places, must have sounded very strangely to them; but as they could not imagine him to be speaking of things which had no existence and of which they had no conception, they would probably endeavor to give his words some exposition which would make them apply to circumstances destined to take place in this world. But if, on the contrary, the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, of eternal retributions, were as fully established among them as it has been among Christians since, if they had definite and well known expressions to indicate the place of future punishment, — then, most unquestionably, they must have understood our Saviour's discourses, which we have quoted as eschatological, as referring to a future state; and he, knowing the attitude of their minds on this subject, must have intended, in these words, to convey to them ideas of the future state. Of this, certainly, there can be no reasonable doubt on the mind of any one who examines these discourses of our Lord as they are recorded in the Gospels.

Let us then examine the statements of the proper writers on this

subject; and first, of Josephus, a Hebrew, a Pharisee, and for some portion of his life a contemporary of the apostles. The passages which I shall quote from this writer may be found in his *Antiquities* XVIII. 1. 8, and the *Jewish War* II. 8. 11, 14. III. 8. 5. In giving an account of the opinions of his own sect, the Pharisees, Josephus says: "They also believe that souls have an immortal vigor in them, and that under the earth there will be *rewards and punishments*, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an *everlasting prison*, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again." They also say "that the souls of bad men are subject to *eternal punishment*"—while the Sadducees "take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and the rewards of Hades." On this subject we know that the followers of Christ took ground with the Pharisees and against the Sadducees. See *Acts* 23: 6—9.

Josephus also expresses it as his own opinion that "for bad souls there is a dark and tempestuous den full of *never-ceasing punishments*." He says: "The vehement inclinations of bad men to vice are restrained by the fear and expectation they are in, that though they should lie concealed in this life, they would suffer *immortal punishment* after their death." Again, "the soul is ever immortal." "The souls of those whose hands have acted madly against themselves, are reserved in the darkest place in Hades." In these extracts I have used the old translation of Whiston as being the one in general use, and though clumsy, faithful and accurate. Let any one who chooses consult the original. Human language cannot be stronger, more perfectly unequivocal as to the opinions of the Hebrews in the time of Christ and the apostles. The Sadducees were but a small sect, they were the infidels, the freethinkers of the time; and their opinions never greatly influenced the popular belief; and in respect to the point we are now discussing, their existence is of no importance whatever.

The other Jewish writers fully corroborate the testimony of Josephus in this regard; as is well known to all who are familiar with the Talmud. Paulus (*Comment.* III. 499) gives us the following extract from the Tanchuma. "Thy righteousness is as the mountains of the Lord, Ps. 36: 7. Why are the mountains compared to it? Answer: They have no end; and so also the retribution of the rewards of the just in the future time will have no end. Thy judgments are a great deep. Why is the great deep compared to them? Answer: Because no one is able to search it through; and so also no one is able to search through the punishment of the wicked in the future time." Here the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked in the future state

are placed on precisely the same ground as to intensity and duration, just as they are in our Saviour's discourse, according to the obvious, literal import of the words in Matt. 25: 46.

Such being the prevailing impression on the public mind at the time of the delivery of our Saviour's discourses, his language on this subject could not possibly have been otherwise understood by his hearers than in its plain, obvious, literal sense. Precisely the same ideas on this subject we accordingly find prevalent among all the early Christians. Clement, the companion of Paul (Phil. 4: 8), in an epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 8: 12—16) expresses himself as follows:

“Thus speaks the prophet concerning those who keep not their seal (Isa. 66: 24); ‘their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be for a spectacle unto all flesh.’ Let us therefore repent while we are yet upon the earth; for we are as clay in the hands of the artificer. For as the potter, if he make a vessel and it be turned amiss in his hands, or broken, again he forms it anew; but if he have gone so far as to throw it into the furnace of fire, he can no more bring any remedy to it; so we, while we are in this world, should repent with our whole heart for whatsoever evil we have done in the flesh, while we have yet the time of repentance, that we may be saved by the Lord. For after we shall have departed out of this world, we shall no longer be able either to confess our sins or to repent in the other.”

Language cannot be made to express more clearly the idea of eternal punishment in a future world, than it is done in this passage of Clement. It is true the N. Testament expresses the same sentiment in language equally plain; but we are required by some to modify the meaning of the language of the N. Testament, to turn it aside from its plain literal import on account of what they allege to be contemporary adverse opinions! But how is it when we show that the contemporary opinions are precisely the same as those expressed by the language of the N. Testament understood in its obvious, literal sense? Certainly we have double proof that Christ and his apostles clearly taught the doctrine of endless retribution in a future state.

But it is said the N. Testament has no word to indicate the place of future punishment, (and if it had not, would that prove there is no future punishment?) that the word *Gehenna*, for example, the term most frequently used, is derived from the Hebrew *Geh-hinnom*, and means the same thing, namely, a valley on the south side of Jerusalem, where children were once offered in sacrifice to Moloch, and which subsequently became the receptacle for burning the offal and sweepings of the city. 2 Kings 23: 10. 16: 3, 4. 1 Kings 2: 7. Critics of the highest

eminence, and on this subject entirely disinterested, have denied this etymology altogether, and assigned to the word a very different origin, as for example Paulus in his *Commentar* I. 678.

But allowing that the Greek word *γέεννα* is derived from the Hebrew words גֵּהֶנְנוֹם; does that prove that the two phrases denote the same thing? that *Gehenna* is the *vale of Hinnom*? Is the etymology of a word always a sure guide to its meaning? Does a derived word always indicate the same idea as its primitive? Very far from it—often just the reverse, as every student of languages knows. Our English word *constable* comes from the Latin *comes stabuli, count or superintendent of the stable*; but does that prove that all our *constables* are necessarily *hostlers*? Our English *esquire* is from the French *escuyer*, and that again from the Latin *scutum, a shield*, and that from the Greek *σκῦρος a hide*, of which shields were originally made; but does that prove that our *justices of the peace* are all *tanners*? The English word *lady* is from the Saxon *hlafdig*, which comes from a word meaning a *loaf of bread*; but does that prove that *ladies* are *loaves of bread*? The argument in all these cases is the same, and as good in any one of the cases as in any of the others.

It is *use* which determines the meaning of a word, and not etymology; and contemporary history gives ample testimony to the usage, in the times of Christ and the apostles, in respect to the word *Gehenna*, as also *Τάραχος*, and other words employed to express the same idea. And first, as to Jewish usage: "Says Rabbi Eliezer, seven things were created before the world was created; these are, the law (Prov. 8: 22), *Gehenna*, (Isa. 30: 33), paradise (Gen. 2: 8), the throne of glory, the (heavenly) temple, penitence, and the name of the Messiah" (Paulus, Comment. III. 495). If the Jews meant by *Gehenna* a valley in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, we may well ask, how would that be created before the world was created?

The testimony as to Christian usage is no less explicit. Justin Martyr, a native of Palestine, and born not far from the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, says expressly: "Gehenna is the place where those who have lived unjustly shall be punished." (Apol. ad Anton. p. 66.) Bretschneider's N. T. Lexicon, art. *γέεννα*.

For numerous examples of the same kind, examine the copious collections made by Wetstein in his Nov. Test. I. 513, 514; and also Kuinoel's Comment. I. 683.

RESULT.

According, then, to all the sources of information which we have or can have, for the determining of the meaning of the words, namely,

their literal import, the context, and the contemporary history, our Saviour everywhere, in his eschatological discourses, speaks of the day of judgment and the eternal retribution in the future world, and not of the destruction of Jerusalem in this world; and this is very emphatically true in respect to the passage more immediately under consideration, *Matt. 24: 29—31.*

This *destruction of Jerusalem* is a very convenient resort, a kind of universal *tertium quid* to a certain class of expositors. Whatever in the New Testament would make them afraid, if properly understood, they call it *destruction of Jerusalem*, and so let it pass.

The interpretation of the passages in question, it seems to me, is settled, if positive proof can settle anything.

OBJECTIONS.

We will now proceed to consider the objections which are urged with most plausibility against our interpretation of *Matt. 24: 29—31.* They are the three following :

1. Christ speaks to the disciples as if they themselves would witness the transactions which he describes, *Matt. 24: 33. Lk. 21: 28.*
2. He places the judgment in immediate proximity to the destruction of Jerusalem, *Matt. 24: 29.*
3. He says that generation should not pass away till the accomplishment of his predictions, *Matt. 24: 34.*

Objection 1st. Christ speaks to the disciples as if they themselves would witness the transactions which he describes. *Matt. 24: 33. Lk. 21: 28.*

Throughout this address, and in his eschatological discourses generally, Christ so selects his phraseology as to give his hearers no means of inferring anything in regard to the time of the judgment. On this point he intended to keep them ignorant, and he made repeated and open declarations of this intention. Whether it would be in their own day, or some subsequent period, they knew not; though they rather supposed it might be in their own day, and Christ said nothing either to confirm or correct this impression. That the disciples were fully aware of their own ignorance in this respect is manifest from the fact that they repeated their question to him just before his ascension (*Acts 1: 7*), but with no better satisfaction than before, for his reply was: *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons*—thus peremptorily cutting them off from all hope of knowing.

In view of all these facts, can any one suppose that Jesus intended to intimate in *Matt. 24: 33* and *Lk. 21: 28*, that his twelve apostles would

live to see the destruction of Jerusalem? If he did, he made a great mistake, for not one of them lived to see the destruction of Jerusalem. They were all dead before it took place except John; and he was then at Ephesus, a great way off, and saw nothing of it. But every one who heard Christ's discourse, and every one who has read it or who may hereafter read it, since its delivery, will see the day of judgment and witness the signs of its approach. The objection, so far from weakening, confirms our interpretation.

Objection 2d. He places the judgment in immediate proximity to the destruction of Jerusalem. Matt. 24: 29.

This is true, and it is in exact accordance with the genius, the universal idiom of prophecy. A local temporal event is taken as the sign and pledge of a universal spiritual transaction; and the two things ever so remote in time, and whatever important events may have intervened between them, are represented in immediate succession. Thus every considerable temporal deliverance in the Old Testament prophecies, is followed immediately by predictions of the coming of the Messiah and the millenium, as if these three events were all to occur in immediate succession. Thus Isaiah connects the coming of the Messiah and the millennium immediately with the Jewish deliverance from the Assyrian oppression (Isaiah ix—xi. compared with Matt. 4: 15, 16), as if they were to occur in immediate succession. Again in other places the same prophet connects these same events with the deliverance from the Babylonian captivity, as if they were to occur immediately after that. See Isaiah xl. and the following chapters. The deliverance from Assyria was to take place more than two centuries earlier than the deliverance from Babylonia; and the prophet certainly knew that the coming of the Messiah and the millennium could not succeed immediately to both the Assyrian and the Babylonian deliverances; yet in different passages he connects these events with both the others, in accordance with the genius and constant custom of prophecy, in which generally the succession of events only is regarded, and exact chronology studiously avoided. The prophets themselves, for the most part, knew not the chronology of the events which they foretold, but only the succession. The apostle Peter expressly informs us (1 Pet. 1: 10—12) that the prophets who predicted the Messiah, diligently sought to know the time when he would appear, but could not ascertain it; the most that they could learn being that he would not appear in their day.

There is another important principle here, which must not be overlooked. In 2 Sam. vii. (compare Heb. 1: 5) Solomon, (the son and successor of David) and the Messiah — the Hebrew temple and the Christian church — are blended together in prophetic vision, so that it

is impossible satisfactorily to separate the two elements linguistically. Compare also Ps. viii. with Heb. ii., Ps. xvi. with Acts 2: 25—31, and 13: 35, Ps. xxii. with Matt. 27: 85—50. This principle is carried so far and so clearly recognized in the Bible, that sometimes the proper names are actually interchanged. Thus John the Baptist is called Elijah, (Mal. 4: 5 compared with Matt. 11: 14), and Christ is called David (Ezek. 24: 23, 24). There is in this way often a *two-fold reference* in prophecy, both in prediction of events and of persons. Compare Isaiah 7: 14—17 with Matt. 1: 22, 23. No one who admits that the writers of the New Testament are inspired and divinely authorized interpreters of the Old, can consistently deny the existence of this two-fold view in at least several of the scriptural prophecies. I am sorry to see that such critics as Neander, Tholuck, and Hengstenberg, rather than admit this principle, have concluded, though reluctantly, (especially the last), to give up the authority of the New Testament as a correct interpreter of the Old. Everywhere you find proof of this in the Commentaries on the Psalms by Hengstenberg and Tholuck, and in the Life of Christ and History of the Apostles by Neander. And so it must needs be: there is neither logical nor critical consistency without it.

It is to this principle mainly that Lord Bacon refers (*Advancement of Learning*, B. II.), when he speaks of a "latitude which is agreeable and familiar unto divine prophecies, being of the nature of their author, to whom a thousand years are but as one day; therefore they are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishment throughout many ages, though the height or fulness of them may refer to some one age." In reference to this principle also we find the following significant remarks of Herder (*Werke* XII. 261 ff.) written in vindication of his method of interpreting the Apocalypse. "The more I compared the imagery of the whole book (the Apocalypse), with the prophecy of Christ in Matthew xxiv. and xxv. and its frightful fulfilment according to Josephus, the more there seemed to me a *resemblance*, an *analogy*, a *solution* of the vision and its imagery." "The whole destruction of Jerusalem I viewed as Christ viewed it, as the *sign*, the *pledge*, the *type*, of the last great issue of things. "With that Jesus connected the end of the world itself, and prefigured his final coming in that first coming." "The higher prospect came to John in the same connection; but no figure now applies to Jerusalem alone; every thing acquires gigantic proportions; the view pertains to a higher, a final, a universal future, yet still in images borrowed from the first one." "This whole frightful history is only the *pledge*, the *symbol*, the *sign*, of still another fulfil-

ment." Compare here the remarks of Lowth quoted on a preceding page. (*supra* p. 458.)

This idea I feel compelled to retain so long as I hold the New Testament to be an authoritative interpreter of the Old; and while we retain this idea there is no difficulty in Christ's placing the great day of judgment in direct proximity with the destruction of Jerusalem; it is just what he ought to do; it is just what the prophets always do in all predictions of this kind; it is one of the most uniform, most constantly occurring idioms of scriptural prophecy.

But there is another peculiarity of prophecy, which will of itself abundantly account for and justify the proximity in question, even without recurring at all to the important principle just stated.

Events of the same class are often represented in successive series without allusion in any one series to events which belong to another class, however important these events in themselves may be. In this respect prophecy may be compared to a series of historical pictures suspended in a gallery, in the order of the occurrence of the transactions, but without any record of the dates. Imagine such a picture-gallery in reference to the history of our own country, in two departments, one for the peaceful, the other for the warlike events. The first picture in the peaceful series might be the landing at Jamestown, the second the landing at Plymouth, the third the first harvest, the fourth the first legislative assembly, the fifth the Congress at Philadelphia, the sixth the declaration of independence, the seventh the inauguration of Washington, the eighth the settlement of Cincinnati, the ninth the commencement of steam navigation, the tenth the opening of the first canal, the eleventh the laying of the first railroad. Here we have succession but not chronology; you know the order but not the dates, the intervals of time between the events as they actually occurred were widely variant, but their proximity in place as they hang in the gallery is all the same, however different the absolute intervals of time; and there is no picture in this series of any warlike event, though very numerous and important occurrences of this kind were actually all along intermingled with the peaceful events.

There may be another series in the gallery representing only warlike events, and these may be the Indian massacre in Virginia; Philip's war in New England; capture of Montreal under Wolf; battle of Lexington; surrender of Burgoyne; capture of Cornwallis; the taking of Washington city; the battle of Baltimore; the battle of New Orleans, etc. Here also the same remarks are applicable as in the former case, as to succession without chronology, order without dates, proximity in place without proximity in time. The superia-

endent of the gallery hangs the pictures along close together, without leaving spaces between the frames corresponding to the intervals of time which intervened between the transactions represented in the several pictures.

Now just so is prophecy constructed — just such a picture gallery do we have in the prophets — succession without chronology, order without dates, proximity in place, without proximity in time. For illustration take Zechariah ix. 1—10. This was written 200 years before Alexander the Great, 500 before Christ, and probably at least 2500 before the millennium. Here are four pictures, namely, (1) the victories of Alexander, vs. 1—5; (2) humiliation and eventual conversion of the Philistine cities, vs. 6, 7; (3) safety of the Jewish nation during the progress of Alexander, v. 8; (4) advent of the Messiah, his universal reign, and the means by which it is to be accomplished, vs. 9, 10. Compare Matt. 21: 5.

The destruction of Jerusalem was the first of a long series of Judgments, which Christ is to execute on his enemies, and which is to terminate in the great day of judgment. Christ in this discourse (Matt. xxiv. xxv.) holds up only two pictures, the first and the last of the series; and in accordance with the universal rule of prophecy, brings them into immediate proximity of place, though they were widely separated in time, yet not so widely as some of the events of the first 10 verses of the ix. of Zechariah, which yet are placed in the same immediate proximity.

Remember — prophecy is not anticipated history, nor is it written according to the rules of history — it has rules of its own, which (like every thing else) must be learned by a laborious process of induction — by a careful study of the prophetic writers themselves.

We have said enough to vindicate our interpretation of this verse even were we to admit that the word *εὐθέως* here is properly translated by the word *immediately*. On this point, however, we offer a few remarks.

Matthew says *εὐθέως δὲ μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων*, and Mark, *ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις μετὰ τὴν θλίψιν ἐκείνην*, *in those days, after that affliction* — an expression entirely indefinite as to time, and indicating only the latter days, or days of the Messiah, as in all the prophets. Jesus, as before observed, did not speak in Greek but in the Aramaean. Matthew and Mark are both (as we believe) divinely inspired translators of what he did say, and therefore both correct. Our Saviour, then, must have used some term which was indefinite in its meaning, and admitting of both translations. Certainly he could not have used a term which was definite as to time, because he had assured

his disciples that he should not tell them the time. It would be *after* the destruction of Jerusalem, but whether early or late, during their life or after their death, he never informed them. Paulus, Schott, and others conjecture that he might have used the word $\alpha\rho\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota$, which is found in Job 5: 3 in the sense of *suddenly*, and is there translated in the Septuagint by the Greek word $\epsilon\nu\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$. See Schleusner's Sept. Lexicon on this word. The $\epsilon\nu\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$ and the $\mu\epsilon\tau\grave{\alpha}$ extend over the whole period of conflict and trial to the final triumphant decision.

Nothing is more certain, as a philological fact, than that $\epsilon\nu\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$ is *not* universally, always and everywhere to be translated by the English word *immediately*. Every Greek lexicographer will teach us that. Schleusner gives, as his second definition of the word, *subito, suddenly*; and the most recent and most esteemed of the Greek lexicographers among the Germans. Passow, Rost, and Schmidt, give as one definition of $\epsilon\nu\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$ the German word *plötzlich suddenly*. So Liddell and Scott, in their new Greek-English Lexicon, under $\epsilon\nu\theta\upsilon\varsigma$ give *suddenly* in the second class of definitions. Bretschneider, in his N. T. Lexicon, gives the sense of $\epsilon\nu\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$ in some connections by *ex improviso, unexpectedly*. In the New Testament there are many places where this is evidently the meaning of the word. For example Mark 9: 15 $\kappa\alpha\iota \epsilon\nu\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma \pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \acute{\omicron} \acute{\omicron}\chi\lambda\omicron\varsigma \iota\delta\omega\upsilon\varsigma \alpha\nu\tau\omicron\nu\epsilon\nu \epsilon\acute{\zeta}\epsilon\theta\alpha\mu\beta\eta\theta\eta$, and the whole multitude *SUDDENLY seeing him were astonished*. Says Kuinoel on the passage, "*subitaneus et inopinatus, sed peropportunos Christi adventus, erat causa stuporis*—the *sudden and unexpected* but very opportune arrival of Christ, was the cause of astonishment." Compare also Lk. 6: 49. Acts 12: 10. Rev. 4: 2. Now this is the meaning of the word which belongs to it in Matt. 24: 29. He always represents his coming to judgment as a *sudden*, an *unexpected* coming. Matt. 24: 27, 42, 44, 50. Rev. 8: 8. Compare also 1 Thess. 5: 2, 3. 2 Pet. 3: 10. According to all usage and all analogy, then, we are authorized and required to translate the verse in question, *Suddenly*, or *unexpectedly, after the affliction of those days, etc.* The context plainly requires this, vs. 27, 42, 44, 50. I know not why it is that so many have supposed themselves, in this case, tied down to the word *immediately*. The word $\epsilon\nu\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$ has quite a latitude of definitions. In classic Greek it is often used in the exact sense of our English phrases *for instance, for example*.

Objection 3d. But Christ says, that generation should not pass till the accomplishment of these predictions. Matt. 24: 34 $\acute{\alpha}\nu \pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha \tau\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\tau\alpha \gamma\acute{\iota}\nu\eta\tau\alpha\iota$.

If in this verse Christ meant to tell the time, it is exceedingly strange that in the verse immediately following he should so solemnly declare, that no one, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Fa-

ther only, knew anything about the time. Matt. 24: 34, 35. Mark 13: 30, 31. Our English translation here makes a glaring inconsistency between these two declarations, which the Greek entirely avoids. In the original there is no word which means *fulfilled*, or which can in this place, with any propriety, be so translated. The word here in the original, the word used by all three of the evangelists, though they very seldom in other passages use the same word when repeating the same sentiment, the word here used by all three of the evangelists, is *γίνηται*, the subjunctive present, third person singular, of *γίνομαι*. Now what is the meaning of *γίνομαι*? Hedericus and Schleusner give, as the first definition, *orior*, which Lyttleton defines, *to arise, to begin, to have a beginning*. The modern German lexicographers, as Schmidt, Rost, Wahl, Passow, and Bretschneider, define *γίνομαι* by the German word *entstehen*, almost without exception, making this the very first definition; and *entstehen*, according to Rabenhorst, Noehden, Adler, etc., means *to begin, to originate, to arise*. Take the definition of *entstehen*, as given in Weber's *Kritisch erklärendes Handwörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, and you have the exact meaning of the Greek word *γίνομαι* in the passage under consideration. It is this: *Entstehen seinen Anfang nehmen* — *to take its beginning*. The proper definition of *γίνομαι* is *to begin to be, to take a beginning*. Dr. Robinson, in his Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, art. *γίνομαι*, says: "This verb is Mid. dep. intrans. with the primary signification, *to begin to be*." And again, in the definitions: "I. *To begin to be*," etc. This, as the appropriate sense of the word, can be established, not only by the authority of all the best lexicographers, but also by numberless examples from the classical Greek, the Septuagint, and the New Testament. John 8: 58, Jesus says, *πρὶν Ἀβραάμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμί*, which Kuinoel very properly translates: *antequam Abraham ESSE COEPISSET, me extitisse*. For a like use of the word in the N. Test. compare Matt. 8: 16. John 6: 16, 17, 19 — in the Sept. 1 Chron. 20: 4 (*ἐγένετο ἔτι πόλεμος ἐν Γαζέρ, there began yet a war in Gerar* — very well translated in the Vulgate, *initum est bellum*), Ps. 89 (90): 2. Tob. 3: 8. Among the classics, Herodotus (II. 11.) says, *πρότερον ἢ ἐμὲ γενέσθαι*, *before that I began to be*, and he also uses the word in the same sense in I. 198. III. 85. So Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia* (I. IV. 17) says: *ἤδη δὲ ἑσπεραὶ γενομένης*, *but when it began to be evening* — and also, I. VI. 42. *ἐπιιδάν ἡμέρα γένηται*, *when the day begins to be*, and Memorab. IV. VII. 19. *ἐπεὶ ἑσπέρα ἐγένετο*, *after it began to be evening*. The very common use of the word *γίνομαι* in the sense of *to be born*, depends entirely on its meaning, *begin to be*.

What, then, philologically considered, is the proper translation of the text? Clearly this: *this generation shall not pass, TILL ALL THESE*

THINGS BEGIN TO BE, or, *till all these things TAKE THEIR BEGINNING.* So Luther interprets it, in his note on the passage : *Es wird solches alles anfangen zu geschehen noch bey dieser zeit, weil ihr lebet: All this will begin to take place in the present time, while you are yet alive.* Let there be no quibbling, as if *γίνομαι* must *always* be so translated. Every word, besides its original, *primitive* meaning, has also *derived* meanings, which are in frequent use. No word, especially no verb of such extensive use as the Greek *γίνομαι*, can ever be translated into another language, in all its variety of meanings, by the use of one unvarying synonym. Try the experiment with the English verbs *take*, *make*, *put*, and see what infinite absurdities you would fall into.

The destruction of Jerusalem was the first occasion on which Christ appeared as a judge, taking vengeance on his enemies. Before, he had appeared as a suffering Redeemer, an atoning sacrifice. The destruction of Jerusalem was the first in that series of judgments which terminates and is consummated in the great final judgment, which in the preceding verses had been so vividly and so terribly described. The three judgments *began*, now are they going on, and at length they will be completed, on

“ That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away.”

That generation which saw Jesus, the meek, the uncomplaining, the suffering, victim, should not pass till it had seen him assume the character of the mighty, the inexorable, the avenging judge, *taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not his truth.* Compare also Matt. 16: 28. Mark 9: 1. Lk. 9: 27.

The three evangelists, though they use different words in translating every other part of this discourse, all use the same word here, in the same person, number, mode, and tense, — they all say *γένηται*, thus showing that they use the word in its peculiar and appropriate sense of BEGIN TO BE. We will place them side by side, that the identity may be seen.

MATT. 24: 34.

Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ μὴ
παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὴ αὕτη, ἕως
ὧν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται.

MARK 13: 30.

Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐ
μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὴ αὕτη,
μέχρις οὗ πάντα ταῦτα γέ-
νηται.

LUKE 21: 32.

Ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐ
μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὴ αὕτη,
ἕως ὧν πάντα γένηται.

According, then, to all the rules of critical judgment, which can be applied to a case of this kind, and in full view of all the objections which can be urged against our interpretation, we decide unhesitatingly that these solemn words of the gospels under consideration are, that

they were by the disciples understood to be, that they were by our Saviour intended for a fearful description of the great day of final judgment, when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, and the books shall be opened, and another book will be opened which is the book of life: and the dead will be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works. And the sea will give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell will deliver up the dead which are in them; and they will be judged, every man according to his works. And whoever is not found written in the book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. See Rev. 20: 12—15.

In conclusion, I would say, that even if *γίνονται* had not the meaning which all the best lexicographers and the best usage give it, if it were, as it is often erroneously supposed to be, synonymous with *esse*, if it might properly be rendered *be fulfilled* instead of *begin to be*; even in this case, the common usage of the prophetic writers, the style, structure, and custom of the prophetic speech, would fully justify the interpretation we have adopted. What more common in the prophecies than to speak of a thing already *determined upon* in the divine counsels as *already done*? than to speak of a fulfilment as *completed* when it has decidedly *commenced*? In prophetic style, when the first of a series is done, the whole is done. (See Rev. 11: 15. Compare also Nahum, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, on Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Edom, etc.) And in the prediction of an event fully resolved upon in the divine mind, it is very often spoken of as already past, inasmuch that one of the common rules given for the interpretation of prophecy is, that *the past tense indicates certainty of fulfilment*. (See Horne's Introduction, vol. ii. p. 640.)

AUTHORITIES.

I am aware that many of the best scholars, many of the most judicious, learned and reliable critics, both in our own country and in Europe, have entertained and with great ability defended the opinion that the whole of Matt. xxiv. which precedes verse 35 must refer exclusively to the judgments on the Jews in connection with their wars with the Romans from Vespasian to Hadrian. They suppose that in no other way can a consistent interpretation be made out for verse 34. Were it not for this verse, and the *σὺθίως* in verse 29, they would be very glad to interpret vs. 29—31 otherwise. Are these difficulties really insurmountable? Is not the interpretation proposed in the preceding pages fairly and philologically sustained?

I know not that I should have ventured publicly to defend a view so different from that of many whom I so highly esteem, to whose judgment I so gladly defer, were it not for the long list of names, no less venerable, no less worthy of confidence, of those who, in one way and another, confidently affirm that Matt. 24: 29—31 must of necessity be referred to the great day of final judgment, and who maintain that view by reasons which seem to me unanswerable. These writers are found in all generations and of all sorts, from the beginning of Christian literature to the present hour, church-fathers and reformers, philologists and preachers, Catholics and Protestant, orthodox and rationalist, of every shade of belief and unbelief, of every variety of zeal and indifference.

An enumeration of a few of the names alluded to will fully justify my statement. In defence of this view we have Chrysostom, Augustine, Jerome, and the church-fathers generally; Bede, Luther, Calvin, Gerhard, Hammond, Bengel; Paulus, Schott, D. Schultz, Olshausen, Fritzsche, Neander, Meyer, De Wette, Von Gerlach, Allioli, and many others. From some of the more recent of these I now propose to make a few extracts, to show how the matter is viewed by the most eminent New Testament scholars of the present day. They shall be of entirely different schools and different modes of thinking, and the date shall be given of each work from which the extract is made.

(1) *Neander*, (pious, supernaturalist, but hardly orthodox) *Leben Jesu*, 1st ed. 1837, 4th ed. 1847, pp. 561, 562. Speaking of the 24th of Matthew, he says, that Christ represented therein "partly his triumph in the overthrow of the hitherto sensuous form of the theocracy and thereby advanced more free and effective diffusion of his kingdom, partly his last return for the perfecting of this kingdom—the judgment over the degenerated theocracy, and that last judgment—the final more free and mighty development of the kingdom of God, and that last completion of the same—elements corresponding to each other, the last of which is prefigured in the first." "In regard to a prophet we might with probability say, that in his conception the image of a glorious development of the future, which disclosed itself before his prophetic look in moments of religious inspiration, were unconsciously mingled with the perceptions of the present; that things separated by long intervals of time presented themselves to him as contemporaneous." "In Christ we can suppose no such commingling, no error." "But it is easy to see how it might happen, that in the apprehending and reporting of such discourses from the position of the hearers, the elements which Christ himself kept separate (though He

presented them in a certain correspondence with each other and made no definite limits as to time) might become intermingled." "It has already been noted as a peculiarity of the editor of our Greek Matthew, that he collects into one discourse the related ideas which Christ spoke at different times and in varying circumstances." "Therefore it is not at all surprising that a clear separation of the different elements cannot here be made out, and we should not, in order to effect this, resort to forced interpretations, which are injurious both to the truth and the love of truth. There is far less of such intermingling, — the different elements of the judgment on Jerusalem and the last coming of Christ are much more clearly separated, in the representation of this last as given by Luke, chapter xxi.; though even here all difficulties cannot be avoided." "We may say, perhaps, that Luke here, as in other places, gives the more original, the truer, the purer representation of Christ's discourse." Any one accustomed to Neander will know very well what he means to say here: Christ was all right. He kept the two subjects sufficiently distinct, but *the editor of our Greek Matthew* has rather confused and blended them.

(2) Meyer, (rationalist, clear and strong,) *Kritisch exegetischen Kommentar u. d. N. T.* 2d. ed. 1844, Vol. I. p. 403 — 5.

First remark on the 24th of Matthew. "Exegetically it stands fast that from the 29th verse onward, Jesus speaks of his *παρουσία*, after he had spoken thus far of the destruction of Jerusalem, and, indeed, as the immediate antecedent of his *παρουσία*. All attempts to fix in any other place the transition point, where the discourse goes on to the *παρουσία* (*Chrys.* v. 24. *Kuinoel*, v. 43. *Lightf. Wetst. Flatt, Jahn* and others 25: 31,) are the products, not of exegesis, but of history, and lead to the grossest violation of exegesis."

"The attempt to explain this whole discourse of the Destruction of Jerusalem (*Michaelis, Bahrdt, Ekkerm.* and others,) are worthy of notice only as a sign of their times."

"In respect to the difficulty, that Jesus placed his *παρουσία* directly after the Destruction of Jerusalem, which was not confirmed by the result, the following things are to be remarked: (1) Jesus spoke of his *παρουσία* in a three-fold sense; for he designated as his coming, (a) the communication of the Holy Ghost, which was to come shortly (*John* 16: 16 et al.) and did come; (b) the historical revelation of his dominion and power in the triumph of his work on earth to be experienced forthwith on his ascension to the Father, of which we have an evident example preserved in *Matt.* 26: 64. (c) his *παρουσία* in the literal sense for the awakening of the dead, the holding of the

judgment, and the establishing of his kingdom. This is distinctly set forth in several passages of John, 5: 28. 6: 40, 54. and it is remarkable that in John the *ἀναστήσω αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἰσχυρίᾳ ἡμέρα* contains no trace of the proximity of this act, but presupposes the death of the believers who were living."

"Unconsciously the form of the *expectation* passed over to the form of a *promise*; the ideal *παρουσία* and establishment of the kingdom became identified with the real, so that the first disappeared in conception and tradition, and the last only remained as the object of expectation, not merely surrounded with all the splendid colors of the prophetic delineation, but also perplexed with that reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, in which the promised *ideal παρουσία* had originally stood in the picture-language of prophecy."

3) *De Wette* (rationalist, sharp-sighted, fully informed, and consistent), *Kurze Erklärung des Evang. Matth.*, 3d edition, 1845, p. 259. "It is undeniable, and is at the present day acknowledged by all unprejudiced interpreters (*Paul., Schu., Fr., Zech., Ols., Mey.*), that in *vs. 29—31* (of *Matt. xxiv.*), the discourse is of the coming of the Messiah to his kingdom; and that this, according to Matthew, follows directly after the destruction of Jerusalem. This idea of the near coming of Christ, is also distinctly expressed in other places (16: 28), and the apostle Paul likewise cherished it. Only Luke, who probably wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, appears to defer it some; for he limits to the Romans a certain time for the possession of Jerusalem (21: 24), and introduces the last great decision with an indefinite *καὶ*."

"The distorted interpretations by which all thus far (that is, to *v. 31*) is understood of the destruction of Jerusalem, are scarcely worth noticing." — "Some find in chapters *xxiv.* and *xxv.* a double coming of Christ, one invisible at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the other visible at the judgment of the world, but they can separate only arbitrarily. *Light., Wetst., Fltt., Jahn*, explain of the last *25: 31 ff* only. *Eichh.*, 25: 14 ff. *Kuin.* finds the transition 24: 43 ff. Also *Chrys.* separates arbitrarily, and applies 24: 1—23 to the destruction of Jerusalem, and 24: 24. 25: 46 to the coming of Christ, when plainly this comes in at 24: 29."

4) *Von Gerlach* (pious and strictly orthodox) *Das Neue Test. mit Anmerk.*, 3d edition, 1843. Vol. I. p. 147, 148, 150. "In this prophecy of Jesus, everything arranges itself about the 28th verse. The necessary destruction of the external kingdom of God on account of its corruption, is particularly the chief subject of this prophetic speech, in which primarily only Jerusalem and the Jewish State are spoken of.

Yet this stands in the most intimate typical connection with the last judgment, and Christ himself designates both as his coming." (Matt. 10: 23. 16: 28. Lk. 17: 22 ff.)

"In this picture everything tends to the nearest future (the destruction of Jerusalem), except that certain features, by their strength, point particularly to the end of the world; likewise it all tends to the most distant future (the last judgment), of which the former is but the image, so that that which was accomplished but imperfectly and weakly in the destruction of Jerusalem, will be thoroughly and powerfully fulfilled at the entrance of the final judgment. On the whole, three divisions may be recognized (in Matt. 24: 1—31); 1) a general view of the whole subject (vs. 4—14); 2) a more particular detail of the destruction of Jerusalem (vs. 15—28; 3) the stronger reference to the end of the world (vs. 29—31). When we thus view the whole, it is easily comprehended how v. 34 can follow upon what precedes, and how the exhortations to watchfulness can be so closely connected with the parables and figures which relate to the last judgment in ch. xxv."

Again, in the introductory remark to vs. 29 ff. "Now follows the more definite reference to the last times, though even here the destruction of Jerusalem is still primarily referred to, yet it is chiefly as a type" (a prefiguring of the other).

5) *Allioli* (a pious, learned, and candid Roman Catholic) *Die Heilige Schrift übersetzt und erläutert*, 5th edition, 1842, p. 972, Note on Matt. 24: 4. "Christ in the reply now following, gives explanations respecting both events, as the holy fathers unanimously declare, though as to the separation of the different passages which refer to the one and the other event, they are of various opinions." — "Augustine, Jerome, Bede, and most of the fathers and interpreters are of opinion, that Christ in his divine intuition, in which a thousand years are as one day (Ps. 89: 4), represented both events together and in each other. This view seems to have the best foundation, whether we consider the nature of the events referred to, or the letter of the prophecy. Both events, the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, are but parts of the one great God's-deed, the judgment of God over men. Now since, in the prophetic intuition, such events as, gradually taking place in time, together form but one divine act, are represented under one point of view with and in each other (compare Isa. xxiv. xxvi. etc.), so it is altogether according to the nature of the case, that Christ should so announce these events, that the one is communicated in the other and by the other. This intimate connection of the two is also confirmed by the latter. In vs. 29, 30, and 31, the prophetic intuition of the end of the world distinctly and expressly comes forth," etc.

“The view of some moderns, that Christ here predicts only the destruction of Jerusalem, has against it not only the united voice of antiquity, but also the letter of the prophecy itself.”

These extracts are brought together for the purpose of showing how the most eminent Biblical scholars of the present day, of the most diverse habits of thought, and in relations the most widely separated, and amid all the light of the most recent investigations and discoveries in Biblical science, have at last come to view the much disputed passage in *Matt. 24: 29—31*. It seems to be agreed on all hands, that these verses must be referred to the great day of final judgment, that they cannot, without the utmost violence to the text and to the idiom of Holy Writ, be limited to the events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem. Rather than admit an idea apparently so incredible, Meyer and De Wette at once and boldly deny the inspiration and accuracy of the sacred record; the pious, learned, and amiable Neander meets them more than half way on the same ground; while the orthodox Protestant Von Gerlach, and the orthodox Catholic Allioli, still retain the old idea, the patristic idea, of a twofold reference in prophecy. And this idea of a twofold reference they all, Neander, Meyer, De Wette, as well as Von Gerlach and Allioli, admit to be a *New Testament idea*; and so also does Tholuck, Hengstenberg, Ewald, Rosenmueller, and the whole host of continental critics, orthodox and rationalist, pious and not pious, whether they themselves believe in it or not. How can any one, who reads the N. Testament, help admitting it?

The interpretation of *Matt. 24: 29—31*, which I have advanced in the preceding pages, does not depend on the idea of a twofold reference in prophecy; it stands firmly on other grounds. Yet I believe fully that this principle of typical interpretation is clearly recognized and acted upon as entirely correct by the writers of the New Testament, and that no one can reject it without at the same time repudiating the authority of the New Testament writers as divinely inspired interpreters of the Old.