

Eschatology of the New Testament

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es-ka-tol'-o-ji:

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I. Doctrinal and Religious Significance

The subject of eschatology plays a prominent part in New Testament teaching and religion. Christianity in its very origin bears an eschatological character. It means the appearance of the Messiah and the inauguration of His work; and from the Old Testament point of view, these form part of eschatology. It is true in Jewish theology, the days of the Messiah were not always included in the eschatological age proper, but often regarded as introductory to it (compare Weber, *Judische Theol.* 2:371). And in the New Testament also, this point of view is to some extent represented, inasmuch as owing to the appearance of the Messiah and the only *partial* fulfillment of the prophecies for the present, that which the Old Testament depicted as one synchronous movement is now seen to divide into two stages — namely, the present Messianic age, and the consummate state of the future. Even so, however, the New Testament draws the Messianic period into much closer connection with the strictly eschatological process, than does Judaism. The distinction in Judaism rested on a consciousness of difference in quality between the two stages

— the content of the *Messianic Age* being far less spiritually and transcendently conceived than that of the *Final State*. The New Testament, by spiritualizing the entire Messianic circle of ideas, becomes keenly alive to its affinity to the content of the highest eternal hope; and consequently it tends to identify the two, in order to find the age *to come* anticipated in the *present*. In some cases this assumes an explicit shape in the belief that great eschatological transactions have already begun to take place, and that believers have already attained to at least *partial* enjoyment of eschatological privileges. Thus the *present* kingdom in our Lord's teaching, is one in essence with the *final* kingdom; according to the discourses in John, eternal life is in principle realized *here*; and with Paul, there has been a *prelude* to the Last Judgment and resurrection, in the death and resurrection of Christ, and the *life in the Spirit* is the first-fruits of the *heavenly state* to come. The strong sense of this may even express itself in the paradoxical form that the eschatological state has arrived, and the one great incision in history has already been made (Heb 2:3, 5; 9:11; 10:1; 12:22-24). Still, even where this extreme consciousness is reached, it nowhere supersedes the other more common representation, according to which the present state continues to lie *this side* of the eschatological crisis; and while directly leading up to the latter, it yet remains to all intents a part of the *Old Age* and world-order. Believers live in the "last days," upon them "the ends of the ages are come," but "the Last Day," "the consummation of the age," still lies in the future (Mat 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3; 28:20; Joh 6:39, 44, 54; 12:48; 1Cor 10:11; 2Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2; 9:26; Jas 5:3; 1Pet 1:5, 20; 2Pet 3:3; 1Joh 2:18; Jude 1:18).

The eschatological interest of early believers was no mere fringe to their religious experience, but the very heart of its inspiration. It expressed and embodied the profound supernaturalism and soteriological character of the New Testament faith. The coming world was not to be the product of natural development, but of a Divine interposition arresting the process of history. And the deepest motive of the longing for this world was a conviction of the abnormal character of the present world, a strong sense of sin and evil. This explains why the New Testament doctrine of salvation has grown up to a large extent in the closest interaction with its eschatological teaching. The present experience was interpreted in the light of the future. It is necessary to keep this in mind for a proper appreciation of the generally prevailing hope that the return of the Lord might come in the near future. Apocalyptic calculation had less to do with *this*, than the practical experience that the earnest of the supernatural realities of *the life to come* was present *in the church*; and that therefore it seemed unnatural for the full fruition of these to be long delayed. The subsequent receding of this acute eschatological state has something to do with the gradual disappearance of the miraculous phenomena of the apostolic age.

II. General Structure

New Testament eschatology attaches itself to the Old Testament and to Jewish belief as developed on the basis of ancient revelation. It creates on the whole no new system or new terminology, but incorporates much that was current; yet so as to reveal by selection and distribution of *emphasis* the essential newness of its spirit. In Judaism there existed at that time two distinct types of eschatological outlook. There was the ancient national hope which revolved around the destiny of Israel. Alongside of it existed a transcendental form of eschatology with a cosmical perspective, which had in view the destiny of the *universe* and of the *human race*. The former of these represents the original form of Old Testament eschatology; and therefore it occupies a legitimate place in the beginnings of the New Testament development, notably in the revelations accompanying the birth of Christ and in the earlier (synoptical) preaching of John the Baptist. There entered into it, however (as held by the Jews), a considerable element of individual and collective *eudaemonism*.¹ And it had become identified with a literalistic interpretation of prophecy, which did not sufficiently take into account the *typical* import and *poetical* character of prophecy. The other scheme, while to some extent the product of subsequent theological

¹ An ethical system that evaluates actions by reference to personal well-being through a life based on reason.

development, lies prefigured in certain later prophecies, especially in Daniel; and far from being an importation from Babylonian, or ultimately Persian sources (as some at present maintain), represents in reality the true development of the inner principles of Old Testament prophetic revelation. The structure of New Testament eschatology closely conforms itself to it.

In doing this, however, it discards the impure motives and elements by which even this relatively higher type of Jewish eschatology was contaminated. In certain of the apocalyptic writings, a compromise is attempted between these two schemes in this manner: that the carrying out of the one is merely to follow that of the other — the national hope first receiving its fulfillment in a provisional *Messianic Kingdom* of limited duration (400 or 1,000 years), to be superseded at the end by the *Eternal State*. The New Testament does not follow the Jewish theology along this path. Even though it regards the present work of Christ as preliminary to the consummate order of things, it does not separate the two in essence or quality; it does not exclude the Messiah from a supreme place in the coming world; and it does not expect a temporal Messianic kingdom in the future as distinguished from Christ's *present* spiritual reign, and as preceding the *state of eternity*. In fact, the figure of the Messiah becomes central in the entire eschatological process, far more so than is the case in Judaism. All the stages in this process — the resurrection, the judgment, the life eternal, even the intermediate state — receive the impress of the absolute significance which Christian faith ascribes to Jesus *as the Christ*. Through this Christocentric character, New Testament eschatology also acquires far greater unity and simplicity than can be predicated by the Jewish schemes. Everything is practically reduced to the great ideas of the resurrection and the judgment, as *consequent* upon the *Parousia* of Christ. Much apocalyptic embroidery to which no spiritual significance attached is eliminated. While the overheated fantasy tends to multiply and elaborate, the religious interest tends toward concentration and simplification.

III. Course of Development

In New Testament eschatological teaching, a general development in a well-defined direction is traceable. The starting-point is the historico-dramatic conception of the two successive ages. These two ages are distinguished as (1) *houtos ho aion, ho nun aion, ho enesios aion*, "this age," "the **present** age" (Mat 12:32; 13:22; Luk 16:8; Rom 12:2; 1Cor 1:20; 2:6, 8; 3:18; 2Cor 4:4; Gal 1:4; Eph 1:21; 2:2; 6:12; 1Tim 6:17; 2Tim 4:10; Tit 2:12), and (2) *ho aion ekeinos, ho aion mellon, ho aion erchomenos*, "that age," "the **future** age" (Mat 12:32; Luk 18:30; 20:35; Eph 2:7; Heb 6:5). In Jewish literature before the New Testament, no instances of the developed antithesis between these two ages seem to be found; but from the way in which it occurs in the teaching of Jesus and Paul, it appears to have been current at that time. (The oldest undisputed occurrence is a saying of Johanan ben Zaqqay, about 80 AD.) The contrast between these two ages is (especially with Paul) that between the *evil & transitory*, and the *perfect & abiding*. Thus, to each age belongs its own characteristic order of things; and so the distinction passes over into that of two "worlds" in the sense of two systems. In Hebrew and Aramaic, the same word *'olam, 'olam*, does service for both; in Greek, *aion* usually renders the meaning "age," or occasionally "world" (Heb 1:2; 11:3) — *kosmos* meaning "world." The latter, however, is never used of the *future* world. Compare Dalman, *Die Worte Jesu*, 1:132-146. Broadly speaking, the development of New Testament eschatology consists in this: that the two ages are increasingly recognized as answering to two spheres of being which coexist from of old; so that the coming of the New Age assumes the character of a revelation and extension of the supernal order of things, rather than that of its first entrance into existence. Inasmuch as the coming world stood for the perfect and eternal — and in the realm of heaven, such a perfect, eternal order of things already existed — the reflection inevitably arose that these two were in some sense identical. But the new significance which the antithesis assumes, does not supersede the older historico-dramatic form. The *higher* world so interposes in the course of the *lower*, as to bring the conflict to a crisis.

The passing over of the one contrast into the other, therefore, does not mark (as has frequently been asserted) a recession of the eschatological wave, as if the interest had been shifted from the future to the present life. Especially in the Fourth Gospel, this “de-eschatologizing” process has been found, but without real warrant. The apparent basis for such a conclusion is that the realities of the future life are so vividly and intensely felt to be existent in *heaven*, and from there operative in the believer’s *life*, that the distinction between what is *now* and what will *hereafter* be enjoyed, becomes less sharp. Instead of the superseding of the eschatological, this means the very opposite; namely, its most real anticipation. It should further be observed that the development in question is intimately connected and keeps equal pace with the disclosure of the *preexistence of Christ* — because this fact, and the descent of Christ from heaven, furnished the clearest witness to the reality of the heavenly order of things. Hence, it is especially observable, *not* in the earlier epistles of Paul, where the structure of eschatological thought is still in the main historico-dramatic, but in the epistles of the first captivity (Eph 1:3, 10-22; 2:6; 3:9, 10; 4:9, 10; 6:12; Phi 2:5-11; 3:20; Col 1:15, 17; 3:2; further, in Heb 1:2, 3; 2:5; 3:4; 6:5, 11; 7:13, 16; 9:14; 11:10, 16; 12:22, 23). The Fourth Gospel marks the culmination of this line of teaching; and it is unnecessary to point out how here the contrast between heaven and earth in its Christological consequences determines the entire structure of thought. But here it also appears how the last outcome of the New Testament progress of doctrine had been anticipated in the highest teaching of our Lord. This can be accounted for by the inherent fitness that the supreme disclosures which touch the personal life of the Savior should come not through any third person, but from His own lips.

IV. General and Individual Eschatology

In the Old Testament, the destiny of the *nation* of Israel to such an extent overshadows that of the *individual*, that only the first rudiments of an individual eschatology are found. The individualism of the later prophets, especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel, bore fruit in the thought of the intermediate period. In the apocalyptic writings, considerable concern is shown for the ultimate destiny of the individual. But not until the New Testament thoroughly spiritualized the conceptions of the last things could these two aspects be perfectly harmonized. Through the centering of the eschatological hope in the Messiah, and the suspending of the individual’s share in it on his personal relation to the Messiah, an individual significance is necessarily imparted to the great final crisis. This also tends to give greater prominence to the intermediate state. Here, also, apocalyptic thought had pointed the way. Nonetheless, the Old Testament point of view continues to assert itself in that even in the New Testament, the main interest still attaches to the *collective*, historical development of events. Many questions in regard to the intermediate period are passed by in silence. The Old Testament prophetic foreshortening of the perspective, immediately connecting each present crisis with the ultimate goal, is reproduced in New Testament eschatology on an *individual* scale in so far as the believer’s life here is linked, not so much with his state after death, but rather with the consummate state after the final judgment. The *present* life in the body, and the *future* life in the body, are the two outstanding illumined heights between which the disembodied state remains largely in the shadow. But the same foreshortening of the perspective is also carried over from the Old Testament into the New Testament delineation of general eschatology. The New Testament method of depicting the future *is not chronological*. Things lying widely apart to our chronologically-informed experience, are by it drawn closely together. Doubtless this law is adhered to, *not* from mere limitation of subjective human knowledge, but by reason of adjustment to the general method of prophetic revelation in the Old and New Testaments alike.

V. The Parousia

1. Definition:

The word denotes “coming,” “arrival.” It is *never* applied to the Incarnation of Christ, and could be applied to His second coming *only*; this is partly because it had already become a fixed

Messianic term, and partly because there was a point of view from which the future appearance of Jesus appeared to be the sole adequate expression of His Messianic dignity and glory. The explicit distinction between “first advent” and “second advent” is not found in the New Testament. It occurs in *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Testament of Abraham* 92:16. In the New Testament, it is approached in Heb 9:28 and in the use of *epiphaneia* for both the *past* appearance of Christ, and His *future* manifestation (2The 2:8; 1Tim 6:14; 2Tim 1:10; 4:1; Tit 2:11, 13). The Christian use of the word *Parousia* is more or less colored by the consciousness of the present bodily absence of Jesus from His own, and consequently it suggests the thought of His future abiding presence, without formally coming to mean the state of the Savior’s presence with believers (1The 4:17). *Parousia* occurs in Mat 24:3, 17, 39; 1Cor 15:23; 1The 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2The 2:1, 8; Jas 5:7, 8; 2Pet 1:16; 3:4, 12; 1Joh 2:28. A synonymous term is *apokalupsis*, “revelation,” probably also of pre-Christian origin, presupposing the pre-existence of the Messiah in hidden form *previous* to His manifestation, either in heaven or on earth (compare *Apocrypha Baruch* 3:29; 1:20; 4Ezra; 2Esdras 7:28; Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Testament of Levi 18; Joh 7:27; 1Pet 1:20). It could be adopted by Christians because Christ had been withdrawn into heaven, and He would be publicly demonstrated to be the Christ on His return; hence it is used with special reference to enemies and unbelievers (Luk 17:30; Act 3:21; 1Cor 16; 2The 1:7, 8; 1Pet 1:13, 20; 5:4). Another synonymous term is “the day of the (Our) Lord,” “the day,” “that day,” “the day of Jesus Christ.” This is the rendering of the well-known Old Testament phrase. Though there is no reason in any particular passage why “the Lord” should not be *Christ*, the possibility exists that in some cases it may refer to *God* (compare “day of God” in 2Pet 3:12). On the other hand, what the Old Testament predicates of God with the use of this phrase, is sometimes purposely transferred to Christ in the New Testament. “Day,” while employed of the *Parousia* generally, is (as in the Old Testament) mostly associated with the Judgment, so as to become a synonym for judgment (compare Act 19:38; 1Cor 4:3). The phrase is found in Mat 7:22; 24:36; Mar 13:32; Luk 10:12; 17:24; 21:34; Act 2:20; Rom 13:12; 1Cor 1:8; 3:13; 5:5; 2Cor 1:14; Phi 1:6; 2:16; 1The 5:2, 4 (compare 5:5, 8); 2The 2:2; 2Tim 1:12, 18; 4:8; Heb 10:25; 2Pet 3:10.

2. Signs Preceding the Parousia:

The *Parousia* is preceded by certain signs heralding its approach. Judaism, on the basis of the Old Testament, had worked out the doctrine of “the woes of the Messiah,” *chebhele ha-mashiach*, the calamities and afflictions attendant upon the close of the *present* and the beginning of the *coming age*, being interpreted as birth pains of the latter. This is transferred in the New Testament to the *Parousia* of Christ. The phrase occurs only in Mat 24:8; Mar 13:8; the idea occurs in Rom 8:22; and allusions to it occur probably in 1Cor 7:26; 1The 3:3; 5:3. Besides these general “woes” (and also in accord with Jewish doctrine), the appearance of the Antichrist is made to precede the final crisis. Without Jewish precedent, the New Testament links with the *Parousia* as preparatory to it, the pouring out of the Spirit, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the conversion of Israel, and the preaching of the gospel to all the nations. The problem of the sequence and interrelation of these several precursors of the end, is a most difficult and complicated one; and at the present, it would seem not ripe for solution. The “woes” which are mentioned in our Lord’s eschatological discourse (Mat 24; Mark 13; Luke 21), in more or less close accord with Jewish teaching, are these:

- (1) wars, earthquakes and famines, “the beginning of travail;”
- (2) the great tribulation;
- (3) commotions among the heavenly bodies; compare Rev 6:2-17.

For Jewish parallels to these, compare Charles, *Eschatology*, 326, 327. Because of this element which the discourse has in common with Jewish apocalypses, it has been assumed by Colani, Weiffenbach, Weizsacker, Wendt, et al., that here *two sources* have been welded together: (1) an actual prophecy of Jesus, and (2) a Jewish or Jewish-Christian apocalypse from the time of the Jewish War 68-70 (*Historia Ecclesiastica*, 3.5.3). In the text of Mark, this so-called “small

apocalypse” is believed to consist of Mar 13:7, 8, 14-20, 24-27, 30, 31. But this hypothesis mainly springs from the disinclination to ascribe to Jesus, realistic eschatological expectations, and the entirely unwarranted assumption that He must have spoken of the end in purely ethical and religious terms only. That the typically Jewish “woes” bear no direct relation to the disciples and their faith, is not a sufficient reason for declaring the prediction of them unworthy of Jesus. A contradiction is pointed out between the two representations, that the *Parousia* will come suddenly, unexpectedly, and that it will come heralded by these signs. Especially in Mar 13:30, 32 the contradiction is said to be pointed. To this it may be replied that even after the removal of the assumed apocalypse, the same *twofold* representation remains present in what is recognized as genuine discourse of Jesus, namely, in Mar 13:28, 29 as compared with 13:32, 33-37 and other similar admonitions to watchfulness. A real contradiction between 13:30 and 13:32 does *not* exist. Our Lord could consistently affirm both:

“This generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished,” and “of that day or hour no one knows.” To be sure, the solution should not be sought by understanding “this generation” to mean the Jewish race or the human race. It must mean, according to ordinary usage, the *then living generation*. Nor does it help matters to distinguish between the prediction of the *Parousia* within certain wide limits, and the denial of knowledge as to the precise day and hour. In point of fact, the two statements do not refer to the same matter at all. “That day or that hour” in 13:32 does not have “these things” of 13:30 for its antecedent. Both by the demonstrative pronoun “that,” and by “but,” it is marked as an absolute self-explanatory conception. It simply signifies as elsewhere, the Day of the Lord, the Day of Judgment. Of “these things,” the exact meaning of which phrase must be determined from the foregoing, Jesus declares that they will come to pass *within* that generation; but concerning the *Parousia*, “that (great) day,” He declares that no one but God knows the time of its occurrence. The correctness of this view is confirmed by the preceding parable, Mar 13:28, 29, where in precisely the same way “these things” and the *Parousia* are distinguished. The question remains how much “these things” (verse 29; Luk 21:31), “all these things” (Mat 24:33, 34; Mar 13:30), “all things” (Luk 21:32) is intended to cover what is described in the preceding discourse. The answer will depend on what is represented there as belonging to the precursors of the end, and what as strictly constituting part of the end itself — and on the other question, whether Jesus predicts one end with its premonitory signs, or refers to two crises, each of which will be heralded by its own series of signs. Here two views deserve consideration. According to the one (advocated by Zahn in his *Commentary on Matthew*, 652-66) the signs cover only Mat 24:4-14.

What is related afterward — namely, “the abomination of desolation,” great tribulation, false prophets and Christs, commotions in the heavens, the sign of the Son of Man — all this belongs to “the end” itself, in the absolute sense, and is therefore comprehended in the *Parousia*, and it is excepted from the prediction that it will happen in *that generation*; while it is included in the declaration that only God knows the time of its coming. The destruction of the temple and the holy city, though not explicitly mentioned in Mat 24:4-14, would be included in what is said there about wars and tribulation. The prediction thus interpreted would have been literally fulfilled. The objections to this view are:

- (1) It is unnatural to thus subsume what is related in 24:15-29 under “the end.” From a formal point of view it does not differ from the phenomena of 24:4-14 which are “signs.”
- (2) It creates the difficulty that the existence of the temple and the temple-worship in Jerusalem are presupposed in the last days, immediately before the *Parousia*.

The “abomination of desolation” taken from Daniel 8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; compare Sirach 49:2 — according to some, the destruction of the city and temple, better a desecration of the temple-site by the setting up of something idolatrous, as a result of which it becomes desolate — and the flight from Judea, are put among events which, together with the *Parousia*, constitute the

end of the world. This would seem to involve *Chiliasm*¹ of a very pronounced sort. The difficulty recurs in the strictly eschatological interpretation of 2The 2:3, 1, where “the man of sin” (see Man of Sin:) is represented as sitting in “the temple of God;” and in Rev 11:1, 2, where “the temple of God” and “the altar,” and “the court which is without the temple,” and “the holy city,” figure in an episode inserted between the sounding of the trumpet of the sixth angel, and that of the seventh. On the other hand, it ought to be remembered that eschatological prophecy makes use of ancient traditional imagery and stereotyped formulas which, precisely because they are fixed and applied to all situations, cannot always bear a literal sense, but must be subject to a certain degree of symbolical and spiritualizing interpretation. In the present case, the profanation of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes may have furnished the imagery in which, by Jesus, Paul, and John, anti-Christian developments are described of a nature which has nothing to do with Israel, Jerusalem, or the temple, literally understood.

(3) It is not easy to conceive of the preaching of the gospel to all the nations as falling within the lifetime of that generation. It is true, Rom 1:13; 10:18; 15:19-24; Col 1:6; 1Tim 3:16; 2Tim 4:17 might be quoted in support of such a view. In the statement of Jesus, however, it is definitely predicted that the preaching of the gospel to all the nations not only must happen before the end, but that it straightway precedes the end:

“Then shall the end come” (Mat 24:14). To distinguish between the preaching of the gospel to all the nations, and the completion of the Gentile mission, as Zahn proposes, is artificial. As over against these objections, however, it must be admitted that grouping all these later phenomena *before* the end proper, avoids the difficulty arising from “immediately” in Mat 24:29, and from “in those days” in Mar 13:24.

The other view has been most lucidly set forth by Briggs, *Messiah of the Gospels*, 132-165. It makes Jesus’ discourse relate to two things:

- (1) the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple;
- (2) the end of the world.

He further assumes that the disciples are informed with respect to two points:

- (1) the time;
- (2) the signs.

In the answer to the time, however, the two things are not sharply distinguished, but united into one prophetic perspective, the *Parousia* standing out more conspicuously. The definition of the time of this complex development is, (a) *negative* (Mar 13:5-8); (b) *positive* (Mar 13:9-13).

On the other hand, in describing the signs, Jesus discriminates between (a) the signs of the *destruction* of Jerusalem and the temple (Mar 13:14-20); and (b) the signs of the *Parousia* (Mar 13:24-27). This view has in its favor that the destruction of the temple and the city, which in the question of the disciples figured as an eschatological event, is recognized as such in the answer of Jesus, and it is not alluded to in a mere incidental fashion, as being *among* the signs. Especially the version in Luk 21:20-24 proves that it figures as an *event*. This view also renders easier the restriction of Mar 13:30 to the first event and its signs. It places “the abomination of desolation” in the period preceding the national catastrophe. The view that the two events are successively discussed is further favored by the movement of thought in Mar 13:32. Here, after the Apocalypse has been brought to a close, the application to the disciples is made in the same order as observed in the prophecy: *first*, the true attitude toward the national crisis is defined in the parable of the

¹ *Chiliasm*: also called the *Jewish Dream* or *Golden Age*; belief that the physical nation of Israel will be restored prior to the Judgment, and will reign over the nations of the earth for 1000 years. Adopted by Dispensationalists. – WHG

Fig Tree, and in the solemn assurance appended that it will happen *in this generation* (13:28-31); and *secondly*, the true attitude toward the *Parousia* is defined (13:32-37).

The only serious objection that may be urged against this view, arises from the close concatenation of the section relating to the *national crisis*, with the section relating to the *Parousia* (Mat 24:29: “immediately after ... those days;” Mar 13:24: “in those days”). The question is whether this mode of speaking can be explained on the principle of the well-known foreshortening of the perspective of prophecy. It cannot be *a priori* denied that this peculiarity of prophetic vision may have also characterized here the outlook of Jesus into the future which, as Mar 13:32 shows, was the prophetic outlook of His *human* nature as distinct from the *Divine* omniscience. The possibility of misinterpreting this feature, and confounding the sequence in perspective with chronological succession, is guarded against in the present case by the statement that the gospel must *first be preached to all the nations* (compare Act 3:19, 25, 26; Rom 11:25; Rev 6:2) before the end can come; that no one knows the time of the *Parousia* except God; that there must be a period of desolation after the city has been destroyed; and that the final coming of Jesus to the people of Israel will be a coming *not* of Judgment, but one in which they will hail Him as blessed (Mat 23:38, 39; Luk 13:34, 35). This presupposes an interval to account for this changed attitude (compare Luk 21:24: “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”). It is not necessary to carry the distinction between the two crises that are joined together here in the question put by the disciples in Mat 24:3 — as if “when shall these things be?” was related to the *destruction of the temple* exclusively, and the other half of the question speaks of *the coming of Jesus and the end of the world*. Evidently, it is not the two events that are distinguished here, but the *events* (complexly considered) and the *signs*. “These things” has its antecedent not exclusively in 24:2, but even more in 23:38, 39.

The disciples desired to know not so much when the calamitous national catastrophe would come, but rather when that subsequent coming of the Lord would take place, which would put a limit to the distressing results of this catastrophe, and bring with it the reacceptance of Israel into favor. This explains also why Jesus does not begin His discourse with the national crisis, but first takes up the question of the *Parousia*, to define negatively and positively the time of the latter. And that is for the purpose of warning the disciples who, in their eagerness for the ultimate issue, were inclined to foreshorten the preceding calamitous developments. That Jesus could actually join together the *national* and the *cosmical* crises appears from other passages, such as Mat 10:23, where His interposition for the deliverance of the fugitive disciples is called a “coming” of the Son of Man (Mat 16:28; Mar 9:1; Luk 9:27, where a coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom (Matthew), or a coming of the kingdom of God with power (Mark), or a seeing of the kingdom of God (Luke), is promised to some of that generation). It is true, these passages are frequently referred to the *Parousia*, because in the immediately preceding context the latter is spoken of. The connection of thought, however, is not that the *Parousia* and this promised coming are identical. The proximate coming is referred to as an encouragement toward faithfulness and self-sacrifice, just as the reward at the *Parousia* is mentioned for the same purpose. The conception of an earlier coming also receives light from the confession of Jesus at His trial (Mat 26:64; where the “henceforth” refers equally to coming on the clouds of heaven and to sitting at the right hand of God; compare Mar 14:62; Luk 22:69). The point of the declaration is that He who now is condemned, will in the near future appear in *theophany* for Judgment upon His judges. The closing discourses of John also have the conception of the coming of Jesus to His disciples in the near future for an *abiding presence*, although here this is associated with the *advent of the Spirit* (Joh 14:18, 19, 21, 23; 16:16, 19, 22, 23). Finally, the same idea recurs in Revelation, where it is equally clear that a preliminary visitation of Christ, and not the *Parousia* for final judgment, can be meant (Joh 2:5, 16; 3:3, 10; compare also the plural “one of the days of the Son of man” in Luk 17:22).

3. Events Preceding the Parousia:

(1) The Conversion of Israel:

To the events preceding the *Parousia* belongs — according to the uniform teaching of Jesus, Peter, and Paul — the conversion of Israel (Mat 23:39; Luk 13:35; Act 1:6, 7; 3:19, 21; where the arrival of “seasons of refreshing” and “the times of restoration of all things” is made dependent on the (eschatological) sending of the Christ to Israel). And this again is said to depend on the repentance and conversion, and the blotting out of the sins of Israel. In Romans 11, the problem of the unbelief of Israel is solved by the twofold proposition that there is *even now* among Israel an election according to grace; and that in the *future* there will be a comprehensive conversion of Israel (Rom 11:5, 25-32).¹

(2) The Coming of the Antichrist:

Among the precursors of the *Parousia*, further appears the Antichrist. The *word* is found in the New Testament in 1Joh 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2Joh 1:7 only; but the *conception* also occurs in the Synoptics, in Paul and in Revelation. There is no instance of its earlier occurrence in Jewish literature. “Anti” may mean “in place of” and “against;” the former includes the latter. In John it is not clear that the heretical tendencies or hostile powers connected with the anti-Christian movement make false claim to the Messianic dignity. In the Synoptics, the coming of false Christs and false prophets is predicted, and that is not merely as among the nearer signs (Mar 13:6), but also in the remote eschatological period (Mar 13:22). With Paul, who does not employ the word, the conception is clearly the one developed about the counter-Christ. Paul ascribes to him an *apokalupsis* as he does to Christ (2The 2:6, 8); his manner of working and its pernicious effect, are set over against the manner in which the gospel of the true Christ works (2The 2:9-12). Paul does not treat the idea as a new one; it must have come down from the Old Testament and Jewish eschatology, and have been more fully developed by New Testament prophecy. Compare in Daniel 7:8, 20; 8:10, 11, the supernaturally magnified figure of the great enemy. According to Gunkel (*Schöpfung und Chaos*, 1895) and Bousset (*Der Antichrist in der überlieferung des Judenthums, des New Testament und der allen Kirche*, 1875) the origin of the conception of a final struggle between God and the supreme enemy must be sought in the ancient myth of *Chaos* conquered by *Marduk*; what had happened at the beginning of the world, was transferred to the end. Then this was anthropomorphized, first in the form of a false Messiah, later in that of a political tyrant or oppressor. But there is no need to assume any other source for the idea of a last enemy, than Old Testament eschatological prophecy (Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah). And no evidence has so far been adduced that the Pauline idea of a counter-Messiah is of pre-Christian origin. This can only be maintained by carrying back into the older period, the Antichrist tradition as found later among Jews and Christians. It is reasonable to assume in the present state of the evidence, that the combination of the two ideas — that of the great eschatological enemy, and that of the counter-Messiah — is a product of Christian prophecy. In fact, even the *conception* of a single last enemy does not occur in pre-Christian Jewish literature. It is found for the first time in Apocrypha Baruch 40:1, 2, which changes the general conception of 4Ezra to this effect. Even in the eschatological discourse of Jesus, the idea is not yet unified; for false Christs and false prophets are spoken of in the plural, and the instigator of “the abomination of desolation,” if any is presupposed, remains

¹ **Rom 11:5** Even so then, *at this present time* there is a **remnant** according to the election of grace. **Rom 11:25** For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶ And so all Israel will be saved; — cf. **Rom 9:6-8** But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, ⁷ nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” ⁸ That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed — cf. **Heb 11:17-18** *By faith* Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” — Thus “all Israel,” all the *elect* of Israel, “will be saved”: all those who by faith in the Promise, are the seed of Abraham. — WHG

in the background. In the Epistle of John, the same plural representation occurs (1Joh 2:18, 22; 2Joh 7), although the idea of a personal Antichrist in whom the movement culminates is not only familiar to the author and the reader (1Joh 2:18, “as you heard that antichrist comes”), but it is also accepted by the writer (1Joh 4:3, “This is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it comes; and now it is in the world already;” compare 2The 2:7, “The mystery of lawlessness is already at work”).

Various views have been proposed to explain the concrete features of the Pauline representation in 2Thessalonians 2 and that of Revelation 13 and 17. According to Schneckenburger, *Jahrb. f. deut. Theol.*, 1859, and Weiss, *Stud. u. Kritik*, 1869, Paul has in mind the person whom the Jews will acclaim as their Messiah. The idea would then be the precipitate of Paul’s experience of hostility and persecution on the part of the Jews. He expected that this Jewish Messianic pretender, helped by Satanic influence, would overthrow the Roman power. The continuance of the Roman power is “that which restrains,” or as embodied in the emperor, “one who restrains now” (2The 2:6, 7). (For an interesting view in which the roles played by these two powers are reversed, compare Warfield in *The Expositor*, 3rd series, 4:30-44.) The objection to this is that “the lawless one,” not merely from Paul’s or the Christian point of view, but in his own avowed intent, opposes and exalts himself against all that is called God or worshipped. No Jewish pretender to the Messiahship could possibly do this. His very Messianic position would preclude it. And the conception of a counter-Christ does not necessarily point to a Jewish environment, for the idea of Messiahship had in Paul’s mind been raised far above its original national plane, and assumed a universalistic character (compare Zahn, *Einleitung in das NT* 1:171). Nor does the feature that, according to 2The 2:4, “the lawless one” will take his seat in the temple favor the view in question, for the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, and later similar experiences, may well have contributed to the figure of the great enemy the attribute of desecrator of the temple.

It is not necessary to assume that this was understood by Paul *literally*; it need mean no more than that the Antichrist will usurp for himself Divine honor and worship. Patristic and later writers gave a chiliastic interpretation to this feature, referring it to the temple which was to be rebuilt in the future. Also, the allegorical exegesis which understands “the temple” of the Christian church has found advocates. But the terms in which “the lawless one” is described, exclude his voluntary identification with the Christian church. According to a second view, the figure is not a Jewish but a pagan one. Kern, Baur, Hilgenfeld and many others, assuming that 2Thessalonians is post-Pauline, connect the prophecy with the at-one-time current expectation that Nero, the great persecutor, would return from the East or from the dead, and with the help of Satan, set up an anti-Christian kingdom. The same expectation is assumed to underlie Rev 13:3, 12, 14 (one of the heads of the beast smitten to death and his death stroke healed); 17:8, 10, 11 (the beast that was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss; the eighth king, who is one of the seven preceding kings). As to Paul’s description, there is nothing in it to make us think of a Nero reappearing or redivivus.¹ The *Parousia* predicated of the lawless one, does not imply it; for *Parousia* as an eschatological term, does not mean “return” but “advent.” The Antichrist is not depicted as a persecutor, and Nero was the persecutor *par excellence*. Nor does what is said about the “hindering” or the “hinderer” suit the case of Nero, for the later Roman emperors could not be said to hold back Nero’s reappearance.

As to Revelation, it must be admitted that the role here ascribed to the beast would be more in keeping with the character of Nero. But as Zahn has well pointed out (*Einleitung in das NT* 2:617-626), this interpretation is incompatible with the date of Revelation. This book must have been written at a date when the earlier form of the expectation that Nero would reappear still prevailed, namely, that he would return from the East to which he had fled. Only when too long an interval

¹ *Redivivus*: living again; revived; restored.

had elapsed to permit further belief in Nero's still being alive, was this changed into the superstition that he would return from the dead. But this change in the form of the belief did not take place until after Revelation must have been written.¹ Consequently, if the returning Nero did figure in Revelation, it would have to be in the form of one reappearing from the East. As a matter of fact, however, the beast or the king in which Nero is found is said by Rev 13:1; 17:8 to have been smitten unto death and healed of the death stroke, to come up out of the sea or the abyss, which would only suit the later form of the expectation. It is therefore necessary to dissociate the description of the beast and its heads and horns, entirely from the details of the succession of the Roman empire. The prophecy is more grandly staged; the description of the beast as partaking of several animal forms in Rev 13:2 refers back to Daniel; and here (as there) it must be understood of the one world-power in its successive national manifestations, which already excludes the possibility that a mere succession of kings in one and the same empire can be thought of. The one head smitten unto death and the death stroke healed, must refer to the world-power to be made powerless in one of its phases, but afterward to revive in a new phase. Hence, here already the healing of the death stroke is predicated, not merely of one of the *heads*, but also of the *beast* itself (compare Rev 13:3 with 13:12). And the same interpretation seems to be required by the mysterious statements of Revelation 17, where the woman sitting upon the beast is the metropolis of the world-power, changing its seat together with the latter, yet so as to retain, like the latter in all its transformations, the same character from which she bears the same name of Babylon (17:5). Here as in Revelation 13, the beast has seven heads, *i.e.* it passes through seven phases. This idea is also expressed by the representation that these seven heads are seven kings (17:10); for, as in Daniel 7, the kings stand not for individual *rulers*, but for *kingdoms*, phases of the world-power. This explains why in Rev 17:11, the beast is identified with one of the kings. When here the further explanation is added, going beyond Revelation 13, that the beast was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss (13:8); and in 13:10, 11, that of the seven kings, five are fallen, one is, the other is not yet come; and when he comes he must continue a little while, to be followed by the eighth, who is identical with the beast that was, and is not, and with one of the seven — the only way to reconcile these statements lies in assuming that “the beast,” while in one sense a comprehensive figure for the world-power in all its phases, can also in another sense designate the supreme embodiment and most typical manifestation of the world-power in the past. In respect to this acute phase, the beast was, and is not, and is to appear again, and this acute phase was one of seven successive forms of manifestation, and in its reappearance, it will add to this number the eighth. Although a certain double sense in the employment of the figures thus results, this is no greater than when, on the other view, Nero is depicted both as “the beast” and as one of the heads of “the beast.”

Which concrete monarchies are meant by these seven phases is a matter of minor importance. For a suggestion, compare Zahn, *op. cit.*, 2:624: (1) Egypt; (2) Assyria; (3) Babylon; (4) the Medo-Persian power; (5) the Greco-Alexandrian power; (6) the Roman power; (7) a short-lived empire to succeed Rome; (8) the eighth and last phase, which will reproduce in its acute character the fifth, and will bring on the scene the Antichrist, the counterpart and, as it were, reincarnation of Antiochus Epiphanes. The seer evidently has his present in the Roman phase of the power of the beast, and this renders it possible for him to give in Rev 17:9 another turn to the figure of the seven heads, interpreting it of the seven mountains on which the woman sits. But this apocalyptic looseness of handling of the imagery can furnish no objection to the view just outlined, since on *any* view, the two incongruous explanations of the seven heads as seven mountains and seven kings stand side by side in Rev 17:9 and 10. Nor should the mysterious number of 666 in 13:18 be appealed to in favor of the reference of the beast to Nero. For on the one hand, quite a number of other equally plausible or implausible solutions of this riddle have been proposed; and on the other hand, the interpretation of Nero is open to the serious objection that, in order to make out

¹ Nero died 68 AD. Vos is saying that Revelation was therefore probably written prior to 70 AD.

the required number from the letters of Nero's name, *this* name has to be written in Hebrew characters, and *that* name with *scriptio defectiva* of Kesar (Neron Kesar) instead of Keisar, the former of which two peculiarities is out of keeping with the usage of the book elsewhere (compare Zahn, *op. cit.*, 2:622, 624, 625, where the chief proposed explanations of the number 666 are recorded). Under the circumstances, the interpretation of the figure of the beast and its heads must be allowed to pursue its course independently of the mystery of the number 666, in regard to which no certain conclusion appears attainable.

The following indicates the degree of definiteness to which (in the opinion of this writer) it is possible to go in the interpretation of the prophecy. The terms in which Paul speaks, remind us of Daniel's description of the "little horn." Similarly Revelation attaches itself to the imagery of the beasts in Daniel. Both Paul and Revelation also seem to allude to the self-deification of rulers in the Hellenistic and Roman world (compare *Zeitschrift für neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1904, 335). Both, therefore, appear to have in mind a politically organized world-power under a supreme head. Still, in both cases this power is not viewed as the climax of enmity against God on account of its political activity as such, but distinctly on account of its *self-assertion* in the religious sphere, so that the whole conception is lifted to a higher plane, purely spiritual standards being applied in the judgment expressed. Paul so thoroughly applies this principle, that in *his* picture the seductive, deceptive aspect of the movement in the sphere of false teaching is directly connected with the person of "the lawless one" himself (2The 2:9-12), and not with a separate organ of false prophecy, as in Rev 13:11-17 (the second beast). In Revelation, as shown above, the final and acute phase of anti-Christian hostility is clearly distinguished from its embodiment in the Roman empire and separated from the latter by an intermediate stage. In Paul, who stands at a somewhat earlier point in the development of New Testament prophecy, this is not so clearly apparent. Paul teaches that the "mystery of lawlessness" is already at work in his day, but this does not necessarily involve that the person of "the lawless one," subsequently to appear, must be connected with the same phase of the world-power, with which Paul associates this mystery already at work, since the succeeding phases being continuous, this will also insure the continuity between the general principle and its personal representative, even though the latter should appear at a later stage. It is impossible to determine how far Paul consciously looked beyond the power of the Roman empire to a later organization as the vehicle for the last anti-Christian effort. On the other hand, it cannot be proven that Paul must have thought of "the lawless one" as already in existence at that time. It does not follow from the parallelism between his "revelation" and the *Parousia* of Christ, for this "revelation" has for its correlate, simply a previous hidden presence for some time, some where — not an existence necessarily extending to Paul's time or the time of the Roman empire; and far less a pre-existence, like Christ's, in the supernatural world. Nor is present existence implied in what Paul says of "the hindering power." To be sure, this is represented as asserting itself at that very time, but the restraint is not exerted directly upon "the lawless one;" it relates to the power of which he will be the ultimate exponent. When this power, through the removal of the restraint, develops freely, his revelation follows. According to 2:9, his "*Parousia* is according to the working of Satan." But whether this puts a supernatural aspect upon the initial act of his appearance, or relates more to his subsequent presence and activity in the world (which will be attended with all powers and signs and lying wonders), cannot be determined with certainty. But the element of the supernatural is certainly there; although it is evidently erroneous to conceive of "the lawless one" as an incarnation of Satan, literally speaking. The phrase "according to the working of Satan" excludes this, and "the lawless one" is a true human figure, "the man of sin" (or "the man of lawlessness," according to another reading. Compare the distinction between Satan and "the beast" in Rev 20:10, and Rev 13:3.

The "power" and "signs" and "wonders" are not merely "seeming;" the genitive *pseudous* is not intended to take them out of the category of the supernatural; it simply means that what they are intended to accredit is a lie; namely, the Divine dignity of "the lawless one." Most difficult of all is

the determination of what Paul means by the *hindering power* or the *hinderer* in 2:7. The most common view refers this to the Roman authority as the basis of civil order and protection; but there are serious objections to this. If Paul at all associated the Antichrist in any way with the Roman power, he cannot very well have sought the opposite principle in the same quarter. And not only the *hindering power* but also the *hindering person* seems to be a unit, and the latter does not apply to the Roman *empire*, which had a succession of rulers. It is further difficult to dismiss the thought that the *hindering principle* or *person* must be more or less supernatural, since the supernatural factor in the work of “the lawless one” is so prominent. For this reason, there is something attractive in the old view of von Hofmann, who assumed that, besides other features, Paul also borrowed from Daniel this feature that the historical conflict on earth has a supernatural background in the world of spirits (compare Daniel 10). A more precise definition, however, is impossible.

Finally it should be noticed that, as in the eschatological discourse of Jesus, “the abomination of desolation” appears connected with an apostasy within the church through false teaching (Mar 13:22, 23); so Paul joins to the appearance of “the lawless one,” the destructive effect of error among many who are lost (2The 2:9-12). The idea of the Antichrist in general, and that of the apostasy in particular, reminds us that we may not expect an uninterrupted progress of the Christianization of the world until the *Parousia*. As the reign of the truth will be extended, so the forces of evil will gather strength, especially toward the end. The universal sway of the kingdom of God cannot be expected from missionary effort alone; it requires the eschatological interposition of God.

4. The Manner of the Parousia:

In regard to the manner and attending circumstances of the *Parousia*, we learn that it will be widely visible, like the lightning (Mat 24:27; Luk 17:24; the point of comparison does not lie in the suddenness). To the unbelieving, it will come unexpectedly (Mat 24:37-42; Luk 17:26-32; 1The 5:2, 3). A sign will precede, “the sign of the Son of Man,” in regard to the nature of which nothing can be determined. Christ will come “on the clouds,” “in clouds,” “in a cloud,” “with great power and glory” (Mat 24:30; Mar 13:26; Luk 21:27); attended by angels (Mat 24:31 (compare Mat 13:41; 16:27; Mar 8:38; Luk 9:26); Mar 13:27; 2The 1:7).

VI. The Resurrection

The resurrection coincides with the *Parousia* and the arrival of the future *aeon* (Luk 20:35; Joh 6:40; 1The 4:16). From 1The 3:13; 4:16 it has been inferred that the dead rise before the descent of Christ from heaven is completed; the sounds described in the later passage are then interpreted as sounds accompanying the descent (compare Exo 19:16; Isa 27:13; Mat 24:31; 1Cor 15:52; Heb 12:19; Rev 10:7; 11:15; “the trump of God” = the great eschatological trumpet). The two words for the resurrection are *egeirein*, “to wake,” and *anistanai*, “to raise;” the latter is less common in the *active* than in the *intransitive* sense.

1. Its Universality:

The New Testament teaches in some passages, with sufficient clearness, that all the dead will be raised. But the emphasis rests to such an extent on the soteriological aspect of the event (especially in Paul, where it is closely connected with the doctrine of the Spirit), that its reference to non-believers receives little notice. This was already partly so in the Old Testament (Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2). In the intervening Jewish literature, the doctrine varies: sometimes a resurrection of the martyrs alone is taught (Enoch 90); sometimes of all the righteous dead of Israel (Psalms of Solomon 3:10; Enoch 91-94); sometimes of all the righteous and of some wicked Israelites (Enoch 1-36); sometimes of all the righteous and all the wicked (4Ezra; 2Esdras 5:45; 7:32). Josephus ascribes to the Pharisees, the doctrine that only the *righteous* will share in the resurrection. It ought to be noticed that these apocalyptic writings which affirm the universality of the

resurrection, present the same phenomena as the New Testament — namely, that they contain passages which so exclusively reflect upon the resurrection in its bearing upon the destiny of the righteous, as to create the appearance that no other resurrection was believed in. Among the Pharisees, probably a diversity of opinion prevailed on this question, which Josephus will have obliterated. Our Lord in His argument with the Sadducees, proves only the resurrection of the *pious*, but he does not exclude the other (Mar 12:26, 27); “the resurrection of the just” in Luk 14:14 may suggest a *twofold* resurrection. It has been held that the phrase, *he anastasis he ek nekron* Luk 20:35; Act 4:2, always describes the resurrection of a limited number from among the dead. Whereas *he anastasis ton nekron* would be descriptive of a *universal* resurrection (Plummer, *Commentary on Luke 20:35*). But such a distinction breaks down before an examination of the passages.

The inference of the universality of the *Resurrection*, sometimes drawn from the universality of the *Judgment*, is scarcely valid, since the idea of a judgment of disembodied spirits is not inconceivable, and actually occurs. On the other hand, the punishment of the judged is explicitly affirmed to include the *body* (Mat 10:28). It cannot be proven that the term “resurrection” is ever eschatologically employed in the New Testament *without* reference to the body, simply of the quickening of the spirit (against, Fries, in *ZNTW*, 1900, 291). The sense of our Lord’s argument with the Sadducees does not require that the patriarchs were at the time of Moses, in possession of the resurrection, but only that they were enjoying the covenant-life, which would in due time inevitably issue in the resurrection of their bodies. The resemblance (or “equality”) to the angels (Mar 12:25) does not consist in the disembodied state, but in the absence of marriage and propagation. It has been suggested that *Hebrews* contains no direct evidence for a bodily resurrection (Charles, *Eschatology*, 361), but compare 11:22, 35; 12:2; 13:20. In connection with its Pauline type of teaching, the spiritualism of the epistle points to the conception of a *pneumatic* (spiritual) heavenly body, rather than to a *disembodied* state.

2. The Millennium:

The New Testament confines the event of the resurrection to a single epoch, and nowhere teaches, as *chiliasm* assumes, a resurrection in two stages — one at the *Parousia*, of saints or martyrs, and a second one at the close of the millennium. Although the doctrine of a temporary Messianic kingdom, preceding the consummation of the world, is of pre-Christian Jewish origin, it had not been developed in Judaism to the extent of assuming a repeated resurrection; the entire resurrection is always placed at the end. The passages to which this doctrine of a double resurrection appeals are chiefly Act 3:19-21; 1Cor 15:23-28; Phi 3:9-11; 1The 4:13-18; 2The 1:5-12; Rev 20:1-6. In the first-named passage (Act 3:19-21) Peter promises “seasons of refreshing,” when Israel will have repented and turned to God. The arrival of these coincides with the sending of the Christ to the Jews, *i.e.* with the *Parousia*. It is argued that Peter in Act 3:21, “whom the heavens must (present tense) receive until the times of restoration of all things,” places *after* this coming of Jesus to His people, a renewed withdrawal of the Lord into heaven, to be followed in turn, after a certain interval, by the restoration of all things. The “seasons of refreshing” would then constitute the millennium with Christ present among His people. While this interpretation is not grammatically impossible, there is no room for it in the general scheme of the Petrine eschatology; for the *Parousia* of Christ is elsewhere represented as bringing not a *provisional presence*, but bringing in *the Day of the Lord*, the *Day of Judgment* (Act 2:17-21). The correct view is that “the seasons of refreshing,” and “the times of restoration of all things,” are identical. The *latter* phrase relates to the prospects of Israel, as well as the *former*, and should not be understood in the later technical sense. The present tense in Act 3:21 “must receive” does not indicate that the reception of Christ into heaven still lies in the future, but it formulates a fixed eschatological principle — namely, that after His first appearance, the Christ must be withdrawn into heaven till the hour for the *Parousia* has come.

In 1Cor 15:23-28 ¹ two *tagmata*, “orders,” of the resurrection are distinguished; and it is urged that these consist of “believers” and “non-believers.” But there is no reflection here upon non-believers at all, the two “orders” are Christ, and they that are Christ’s. “The end” in 15:24 is not the final stage in the resurrection, *i.e.* the resurrection of non-believers, but the end of the series of eschatological events. The kingdom of Christ which comes to a close with the end, is not a kingdom beginning with the *Parousia*, but it dates from the exaltation of Christ. To Paul, it is not *future*, but already *in operation*.

In 1The 4:13-18, the presupposition is not that the readers had worried about a possible exclusion of their dead from the provisional reign of Christ and from a first resurrection, but that they had sorrowed even as the Gentiles who have no hope whatever — *i.e.* they had doubted the *fact* of the resurrection as such. Accordingly, Paul gives them in 4:14, the general assurance that in the resurrection of Jesus, that of believers is guaranteed. The verb “precede” in 4:15 does not imply that there was any thought of *precedence* in the enjoyment of glory, but is only an emphatic way of affirming that the dead will not be one moment behind in inheriting with the living the blessedness of the *Parousia*. In 4:17, “so shall we ever be with the Lord,” the word “ever” excludes the conception of a provisional kingdom. 2The 1:5-12 contains merely the general thought that sufferings and glory, persecution and the inheritance of the kingdom, are linked together. There is nothing to show that this glory and kingdom are anything else but the *Final State*, the *Kingdom of God* (2The 1:5). In Phi 3:9-11, it is claimed, Paul represents attainment to the resurrection as dependent on special effort on *his* part, and therefore as something not in store for all believers. Since the general resurrection pertains to *all*, a special grace of resurrection must be meant, *i.e.* inclusion in the number of those to be raised at the *Parousia*, at the opening of the millennial kingdom. The answer to this is that it was quite possible for Paul to make the resurrection as such, depend on the believer’s progress in grace and conformity to Christ, seeing that it is not an event unrelated to his spiritual development, but it is the *climax* of an organic process of transformation *begun in this life*. And in verse 20 the resurrection of all is joined to the *Parousia* (compare for the Pauline passages Vos, “The Pauline Eschatology and Chiliasm,” PTR, 1911, 26-60).

At first sight, the passage Rev 20:1-6 greatly favors the conception of a millennial reign of Christ, participated in by the martyrs, brought to life in a first resurrection, and marked by a suspension of the activity of Satan. And it is urged that the sequence of visions places this millennium *after* the *Parousia* of Christ narrated in Revelation 19. The question of historic sequence in Revelation, however, is difficult to decide. In other parts of the book, the principle of “recapitulation,” *i.e.* of cotemporaneousness of things successively depicted, seems to underlie the visions; and numbers elsewhere in the book are meant symbolically. These facts leave open the possibility that the thousand years are synchronous with the earlier developments recorded, and symbolically describe the state of glorified life enjoyed with Christ in heaven by the martyrs during the intermediate period preceding the *Parousia*. The terms employed do not suggest an anticipated bodily resurrection. The seer speaks of “souls” which “lived” and “reigned,” and finds in this, the *first* resurrection. The scene of this life and reign is in heaven, where also the “souls” of the martyrs are beheld (Rev 6:9). The words “this is the first resurrection” (20:5) may be a pointed disavowal of a more realistic (*chiliastic*) interpretation of the same phrase. The symbolism of the thousand years consists in this: that it contrasts, on the one hand, the glorious state of the martyrs with the brief season of tribulation passed here on earth, and on the other hand, with the eternal life of the consummation. The binding of Satan for this period marks the first eschatological conquest of Christ over the powers of evil, as distinguished from the renewed activity to be displayed by Satan toward the end in bringing up against the church, still other forces not previously introduced into the conflict. In regard to a book so enigmatical, it would be presumptuous to speak with any degree

¹ 1Cor 15:23 But each one in his own *order*: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming. ²⁴ Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed *is* death.

of dogmatism, but the uniform absence of the idea of the millennium from the eschatological teaching of the New Testament *elsewhere*, ought to render the exegete cautious before affirming its presence here (compare Warfield, "The Millennium and the Apocalypse," PTR, 1904, 599-617).

3. The Resurrection of Believers:

The resurrection of believers bears a twofold aspect. On the one hand, it belongs to the forensic side of salvation. On the other hand it belongs to the *pneumatic* transforming side of the saving process. Of the former, traces appear only in the teaching of Jesus (Mat 5:9; 22:29-32; Luk 20:35, 36). Paul clearly ascribes to the believer's resurrection a somewhat similar forensic significance as to that of Christ (Rom 8:10, 23; 1Cor 15:30-32, 55-58). Far more prominent with Paul, however, is the *other*, the *pneumatic* interpretation. Both the origin of the resurrection life, and the continuance of the resurrection state, are dependent on the Spirit (Rom 8, 10, 11; 1Cor 15:45-49; Gal 6:8). The resurrection is the *climax* of the believer's transformation (Rom 8:11; Gal 6:8). This part ascribed to the Spirit in the resurrection, is not to be explained from what the Old Testament teaches about the Spirit as the source of physical life, for the New Testament hardly ever refers to this. It is rather to be explained as the correlate of the general Pauline principle that the Spirit is the determining factor of the heavenly state in the coming eon. This *pneumatic* character of the resurrection also links together the resurrection of *Christ*, and that of the *believer*. This idea is not yet found in the Synoptics; it finds expression in Joh 5:22-29; 11:25; 14:6, 19. In early apostolic teaching, a trace of it may be found in Act 4:2. With Paul, it appears from the beginning as a well-established principle. The continuity between the working of the Spirit *here*, and His part in the *resurrection*, does not, however, lie in the *body*. The resurrection is not the culmination of a pneumatic change which the body undergoes in this life. There is no *preformation* of the spiritual body on earth. Rom 8:10, 11; 1Cor 15:49; 2Cor 5:1, 2; Phi 3:12 positively exclude this, and 2Cor 3:18; 4:7-18 do not require it.

The glory into which believers are transformed through the beholding (or reflecting) of the glory of Christ as in a mirror, is not a *bodily* but an *inward* glory, produced by illumination of the gospel. And the manifestation of the life of Jesus in the body or in the mortal flesh, refers to the preservation of bodily life in the midst of deadly perils. Equally without support is the view that at one time Paul placed the investiture with the new body, immediately after death. It has been assumed that this, together with the view just criticized, marks the last stage in a protracted development of Paul's eschatological belief. The initial stage of this process is found in 1Thess: the resurrection is that of an earthly body.¹ The next stage is represented by 1Corinthians: the future body is *pneumatic* in character, although not to be received until the *Parousia*.² The third stage removes the inconsistency implied in the preceding position between the character of the body and the time of its reception, by placing the latter at the moment of death (2Cor,³ Romans, Colossians). And by an extreme flight of faith, the view is even approached that the resurrection body is in process of development now (Teichmann, Charles). This scheme has no real basis of fact. 1Thess does not teach an un-pneumatic eschatology (compare 4:14, 16). The second stage given is the only truly Pauline one, nor can it be shown that the apostle ever abandoned it. For the third position named finds no support in 2Cor 5:1-10; Rom 8:19; Col 3:4. The exegesis of 2Cor

¹ **1Th 4:15-16** For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

² **1Co 15:42-44** So also is the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

³ **2Co 5:6-8** So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

5:1-10 is difficult, and cannot here be given in detail. Our understanding of the main drift of the passage, put into paraphrase, is as follows:

We feel assured of the eternal weight of glory (4:17), because we know that we shall receive, after our earthly tent-body will have been dissolved (*aorist subjunctive*), a new body, a supernatural house for our spirit, to be possessed eternally in the heavens.

A sure proof of this lies in the heightened form which our desire for this future state assumes. For it is not a mere desire to obtain a new body, but specifically to obtain it *as soon as possible*, without an intervening period of nakedness, *i.e.* of a disembodied state of the spirit. Such would be possible, if it were given us to survive till the *Parousia*. In that case, we would be clothed with our habitation from heaven (= supernatural body), the old body not having to be put off before the new can be put on — the new body being superimposed on the old, no “unclothing” would have to take place first. What is mortal would simply be swallowed up by life (2Cor 5:2, 4). And we are justified in cherishing this supreme aspiration, since the ultimate goal set for us in any case, even if we should have to die first and unclout, and then put on the new body over the naked spirit — since the ultimate goal, I say, excludes under all circumstances, a state of nakedness at the moment of the *Parousia* (5:3). Since, then, such a new embodied state is our destiny in any event, we justly long for that mode of reaching it which involves least delay, and least distress, and avoids intermediate nakedness. ¹ The understanding of the passage will be seen to rest on the pointed distinction between being “clothed,” change at the *Parousia* without death (5:2, 4), to be “unclothed,” loss of the body in death with nakedness resulting (5:4), and “being clothed,” putting on of the new body after a state of nakedness (5:3).

Interpreted as above, the passage indeed expresses the hope of an instantaneous endowment with the spiritual body immediately after this life. But that is only on the supposition that the end of this life will be *at the Parousia*, not for the case that death should intervene before; this latter possibility is distinctly left open. In Rom 8:19, what will happen at the end to believers is called a “revealing of the sons of God” — not because their new *body* existed previously, but because their *status* as sons of God existed before; and this status will be revealed through the bestowal upon them of the glorious body. Col 3:3 speaks of a “life ... hid with Christ in God,” and of the “manifestation” of believers with Christ in glory at the *Parousia*. But “life” does not imply *bodily* existence; and while the “manifestation” at the *Parousia* presupposes the body, it does not imply that this body must have been acquired long before, as is the case with Christ’s body.

In conclusion, it should be noted that there is ample evidence in the later epistles, that Paul continued to expect the resurrection body at the *Parousia* (2Cor 5:10; Phi 3:20, 21).

4. The Resurrection-Body:

The main passage informing us as to the nature of the resurrection body is 1Cor 15:35-58. The difficulty Paul here seeks to relieve, does not concern the *substance* of the future body, but its *kind* (compare 1Cor 15:35 “With what manner of body do they come?”). Not until 1Cor 15:50 is the deeper question of difference in substance touched upon. The point of the figure of “sowing” is not that of an identity of substance, but rather this: that the impossibility of forming a concrete conception of the resurrection body, is no proof of its impossibility. This is because in all vegetable growth, there appears a body totally unlike that which is sown, a body the nature and appearance of which are determined by the will of God. We have no right to press the figure in other directions, in order to solicit from it answers to other questions. That there is to be a real connection between the present and the future body, is implied rather than directly affirmed. 1Cor 15:36 shows that

¹ This on the reading in 5:3 of *ei ge kai endusamenoï ou gumnoï heurethesometha*. If the reading *ei ge kai ekdusamenoï* is adopted, the rendering of 5:3 will have to be: “If so be that also having put off (*i.e.* having died), we shall not at the end be found naked.” If *eiper kai ekdusamenoï* is chosen, it will be: “Although even having put off (*i.e.* having died) we shall not at the end be found naked.” These other readings do not materially alter the sense. — G. Vos

the distinction between the earthly body and a germ of life in it — to be entrusted with it to the grave and then quickened at the last day — does not lie in the apostle’s mind. For what is sown is the *body*; it dies, and it is quickened in its entirety. Especially the turn given to the figure in 15:37—that of a naked grain putting on the plant as a garment—proves that it is neither intended nor adapted to give information on the degree of identity or link of continuity between the two bodies. The “bare grain” is the *body*, not the *spirit*, as some would have it (Teichmann). For it is said of the *seed*, that it dies; which does not apply to the *Pneuma* (compare also 15:44). The fact is that in this entire discussion, the subjective *spirit* of the believer remains entirely out of consideration; the matter is treated entirely from the standpoint of the *body*. So far as the *Pneuma* enters into it, it is the *objective* Spirit, the *Spirit of Christ*. As to the time of the sowing, some writers take the view that this corresponds to the entire earthly life, not to the moment of burial only (so already Calvin, recently Teichmann and Charles). In 1Cor 15:42, 43 there are points of contact for this, inasmuch as especially the three last predicates — “in dishonor,” “in weakness,” “a natural body” — seem more applicable to the *living* than to the *dead* body. At any rate, if the conception is thus widened, the act of burial is certainly included in the sowing.

The objection arising from the difficulty of forming a conception of the resurrection body, is further met in 15:39-41, where Paul argues from the multitude of bodily forms that God has at His disposal. This thought is illustrated from the animal world (15:39); from the difference between the heavenly and the earthly bodies (15:40); and from the difference existing among the heavenly bodies themselves (15:41). The structure of the argument is indicated by the interchange of two words for “other”— *allos* and *heteros*. The former designates the difference of *species* within the *genus*, the latter designates the difference of *genus*, a distinction that is lost in the English version. In all this, the reasoning revolves not around the substance of the bodies, but around their kind, quality, and appearance (*sarx* in 15:39 = *soma*, “body,” *not* = “flesh”). The conclusion drawn is that the resurrection body will differ greatly in kind from the present body. It will be *heteros*, not merely *allos*. The points of difference are enumerated in 15:42, 43.

Four contrasts are named; the first three in each case appear to be the result of the fourth. The dominating antithesis is that between the *soma psuchikon* and the *soma pneumatikon*. Still, Paul can scarcely mean to teach that “corruption,” “dishonor,” and “weakness” are in the same sense necessary and natural results of the “psychical” character of the earthly body, because the corresponding opposites are the necessary and natural concomitants of the *pneumatic* character of the resurrection body. The sequel shows that the “psychical body” was given to man at creation; and according to 15:53, corruption and death go together; whereas *death* is not the result of creation, but of the entrance of sin, according to Paul’s uniform teaching elsewhere. Hence also, the predicate *sarkikos* is avoided in 15:46, 47, where the reference is to creation; for this word is always associated in Paul with sin. The connection, therefore, between the “natural (psychical, marginal) body” and the abnormal attributes conjoined with it, will have to be so conceived, that in virtue of the former character, the body will fall prey to death when sin enters, though it need not of itself. In this also lies the explanation of the term “psychical body.” This means a body in which the *psuche*, the natural soul, is the vitalizing principle. It is sufficient to support life, but not sufficient to support that supernatural, heavenly plane, where it is forever immune to death and corruption.

The question must be asked, however, why Paul goes back to the original state of man’s body, and does not content himself with contrasting the body in the state of *sin*, and in the state of *eternal life*. The answer is found in the exigency of the argument. Paul wished to add to the argument for the possibility of a different body, drawn from *analogy* — an argument that is drawn from the typical character of the original creation-body. The body of creation, on the principle of prefiguration, already pointed forward to a higher body to be received in the second stage of the world-process: “if there exists a *psychical* body, there exists also a *pneumatic* body” (15:44). The

proof lies in Genesis 2:7.¹ Some think that Paul here adopts Philo's² doctrine of the creation of two men, and means 1Cor 15:45b as a quotation from Genesis 1:27.³ But the sequence is against this, for Paul's spiritual man appears on the scene *last*, not *first*, as in Philo. Nor can the statement have been meant as a correction of Philo's sequence. For Paul cannot have overlooked the fact that once a double creation was found in Genesis 1 and 2, Philo's sequence was the only possible one; and to correct *that*, would have amounted to correcting *Scripture*. If Paul does correct Philo here, it must be in the sense that he rejects the entire Philonic exegesis, which found a twofold creation in Genesis (compare 1Cor 11:7). Evidently for Paul, Genesis 2:7 taken by itself, contains the proof of his proposition that there is both a *psychical* and a *pneumatic* body. Paul regarded the creation of the first Adam in a *typical* light. The first creation gave only the provisional form in which God's purpose with reference to man was embodied, and it looked forward to a higher embodiment of the same idea on a higher pneumatic plane (cf. Rom 5:14): "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven" (1Cor 15:47); "of" or "from heaven" does not designate heavenly material; for even here, by not giving the opposite to *choikos*, "earthly," Paul avoided the question of substantiality. A "pneumatic" body is not, as many assume, a body made out of *pneuma* as a higher substance; for in that case, Paul would have had *pneumatikon* ready at hand as the contrast to *choikon*. The question of substance is touched upon only negatively in 1Cor 15:50: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" but the apostle does not say what will take their place. For the non-substantial meaning of *pneumatikos*, compare Rom 15:27; 1Cor 9:11; 10:3; Eph 1:3; 5:19; 6:12; Col 1:9. The only positive thing which we learn in this direction is *formal*; namely, that the resurrection body of the believer will be the image of Christ (1Cor 15:49).

VII. The Change of Those Living at the *Parousia*

This is confined to believers. The New Testament nowhere speaks of a change in the body of non-believers found living or raised at the *Parousia*. The passages referring to this subject are 1Cor 15:51-53; 2Cor 5:1-5; Phi 3:20, 21. The second of these has already been discussed: It represents the change under the figure of putting on the heavenly body over the earthly body, the result is that what is mortal, is swallowed up so as to disappear by life. This representation starts with the new body by which the old body is absorbed. In 1Cor 15 and Phi 3, on the other hand, the point of departure is from the old body which is changed into a new one. The difference between the resurrection and the change to the living, is brought out in 2Cor 5:1-5, in the two figures of "putting on" and "putting on over" (*endusasthai* and *ependusasthai*). Some exegetes find in 1Cor 15:51-53 the description of the process is kept in such general terms, as to be equally applicable to those *raised*, and those *transformed alive*. If this view is adopted, it yields new evidence for the continuity between the present body and the resurrection body. Others, however, find here the expectation that Paul and his readers will "all" survive until the *Parousia*, and be changed alive; in that case, no light is thrown on the resurrection-process. The more plausible exegesis is that which joins the negative to "all" instead of to the verb; it makes Paul affirm that "not all" will die, but that all, whether dead or surviving, will be changed at the *Parousia*. The difficulty of the exegesis is reflected in the early attempts to change the reading. In Phi 3:20, 21 there are no data to decide whether the apostle conceives of himself and his readers as living at the moment of the *Parousia*, or if he speaks generally so as to cover both possibilities.

¹ **Gen 2:7** And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

² Philo of Alexandria (20BC - c. 50AD) – Hellenistic Jewish philosopher who used allegory to harmonize Jewish scripture with Greek philosophy.

³ **1Cor 15:45** And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit. **Gen 1:27** So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

VIII. The Judgment

The Judgment takes place on a “day” (Mat 7:22; 10:15; 24:36; Luk 10:12; 21:34; 1Cor 1:8; 3:13; 2Tim 4:8; Rev 6:17), but this rests on the Old Testament conception of “the day of Yahweh,” and is not to be taken literally, from which “hour” also interchanges with “day” (Mar 13:32; Rev 14:7). While not confined to an astronomical day, the Judgment is plainly represented as a definitely circumscribed transaction, not as an indefinite process. It coincides with its *Parousia*. The New Testament nowhere speaks of a judgment immediately after death, not even in Heb 9:27, 28. Its locality is the earth, as would seem to follow from its dependence on the *Parousia* (Mat 13:41, 42; Mar 13:26, 27). Although, some infer from 1The 4:17 that, so far as believers are concerned, it will take place “in the air.” But this passage does not speak of the judgment, only of the *Parousia* and the meeting of believers with Christ. The Judge is *God* (Mat 6:4, 6, 14, 18; 10:28, 32; Luk 12:8; 21:36; Act 10:42; 17:30, 31; Rom 2:2, 3, 5, 16; 14:10; 1Cor 4:3-5; 5:13; Heb 12:25; 13:4; 1Pet 1:17; 2:23; Rev 6:10; 14:7), but also *Christ*, not only in the great scene depicted in Mat 25:31-46, but also in Mar 8:38; 13:26; Mat 7:22; Luk 13:25-27; Act 17:31; 2Cor 5:10; Rev 19:11. This is also why the Old Testament conception of “the day of Yahweh” is changed into “the day of the Lord” (1Cor 5:5; 2Cor 1:14; 1The 5:2; 2Pet 3:10). In the sense of the final assize, the Judgment does not in earlier Jewish eschatology belong to the functions of the Messiah, except in Enoch 51:3; 55:4; 61:8; 62:1; 63. Only in the later apocalypses does the Messiah appear as Judge (4Ezra [2Esdras] 13; Apocrypha Baruch 72:2 [cf. Sibylline Oracles 3:286]). In the more realistic, less forensic sense of an act of destruction, the Judgment forms part of the Messiah’s work from the outset, and is already assigned to Him by the Baptist, and still more by Paul (Mat 3:10, 11, 12 = Luk 3:16, 17; 2The 2:8, 10, 12). The one representation passes over into the other. Jesus always claims for Himself the judgment in the strictly *forensic* sense. Already in His present state, He exercises the right to forgive sin (Mar 2:5, 10).

In the Fourth Gospel, it is true, He denies that His present activity involves the task of judging (Joh 8:15; 12:47). That this, however, does not exclude His eschatological judgeship appears from Joh 5:22, 27 (notice the article in 5:22 “the whole judgment,” which proves the reference to the Last Day). But even for the present, though not directly, yet indirectly by His appearance and message, Christ according to John effects a judgment among men (8:16; 9:39). This culminates in His passion and death, the judgment of the world and the Prince of the world (12:31; 14:30; 16:11). A share of the judgment is assigned to angels and to the saints (Mat 13:39, 41, 49; 16:27; 24:31; 25:31; 1The 3:13; 2The 1:7; Jude 1:14). In regard to the angels, this is purely ministerial; of believers it is affirmed only in 1Cor 6:1-3 that they will have something to do with the act of judgment itself; passages like Mat 19:28; 20:23; Luk 22:30; Rev 3:21 do not refer to the judgment proper, but to judging in the sense of “reigning,” and promise certain saints a preeminent position in the kingdom of glory. The Judgment extends to all men, Tyre, Sidon, Sodom, as well as the Galilean cities (Mat 11:22, 24); all nations (Mat 25:32; Joh 5:29; Act 17:30, 31; Rom 2:6, 16; 2Cor 5:10). It also includes the evil spirits (1Cor 6:3; 2Pet 2:4; Jude 1:6).

It is a Judgment according to works, and that is not only in the case of non-believers; also the works of believers will come under consideration (Mat 25:34; 1Cor 4:5; 2Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12). Side by side with this, however, it is taught already in the Synoptics that the decisive factor will be the acknowledgment of individuals by Jesus, which in turn depends upon the attitude assumed by them toward Jesus here, directly or indirectly (Mat 7:23; 19:28; 25:35-45; Mar 8:38). The principle of judgment according to works is upheld by Paul, not merely hypothetically as a principle preceding and underlying every soteriological treatment of man by God (Romans 2) — and therefore applying to non-Christians for whose judgment no other standard is available — but also as remaining in force for *Christians*, who under the soteriological regime of grace, have already received absolute, eternal acquittal in justification. *This raises a twofold problem:* (a) why justification does not render a last judgment superfluous; (b) why the last judgment, in the case of Christians saved by grace, should be based on works.

In regard to (a), why judgement isn't superfluous in light of justification by faith, it ought to be remembered that the Last Judgment differs from *justification* in that it is not a private transaction *in foro conscientiae*, but public, *in foro mundi*.¹ Hence, Paul emphasizes this element of publicity (Rom 2:16; 1Cor 3:13; 2Cor 5:10). In accordance with this, God the Father is always the author of justification, whereas as a rule, Christ is represented as presiding at the assize of the Last Day.

As to (b), why Christians should be judged by their works, because the Last Judgment is not a mere *private*, but a *public* transaction, something more must be taken into account than that on which the individual eternal destiny may hinge. There can be disapproval of works, and yet salvation (1Cor 3:15). But the trial of works is necessary for the sake of the vindication of God. In order to be a true theodicy,² the judgment must publicly exhibit and announce the complete overthrow of sin in man, and the complete working out in Him of the idea of righteousness. This includes not merely man's acquittal from the guilt, but also his deliverance from the power of sin; not merely his imputed righteousness, but also his righteousness of life. In order to demonstrate this comprehensively, the judgment will have to take into account three things: *faith* (Gal 5:5), *works* done in the Christian state, and *sanctification*.

Besides this, the works of the Christian appear as the measure of gracious reward (Mat 5:12, 46; 6:1; 10:41, 42; 19:28; 20:1-16; 25:14-45; Mar 9:41; Luk 6:23, 15; 1Cor 3:8, 14; 9:17, 18; Col 2:18; 3:24; Heb 10:35). These works, however, are not mechanically or commercially appraised, as in Judaism. For Paul speaks by preference of "work" in the singular (Rom 2:7, 15; 1Cor 3:13; 9:1; Gal 6:4; Eph 4:12; Phi 1:6, 22; 1The 1:3; 2The 1:11). And this one organic product of "work" is traced back to the root of faith (1The 1:3; 2The 1:11 where the genitive *pisteos* is a genitive of *origin*), and as a rule, Paul speaks not of *poiein* but of *prassein*, *i.e.* of the *practice*, the systematic *doing* of that which is good.

The judgment assigns to each individual his eternal destiny, which is absolute in its character either of blessedness or of punishment, though admittedly it is of degrees within these two states. Only two groups are recognized, those of the *condemned*, and of the *saved* (Mat 25:33, 14; Joh 5:29); no intermediate group with as yet undetermined destiny appears anywhere. The degree of guilt is fixed according to the knowledge of the Divine will possessed in life (Mat 10:15; 11:20-24; Luk 10:12-15; 12:47, 48; Joh 15:22, 24; Rom 2:12; 2Pet 2:20-22). The uniform representation is that the judgment has reference to what has been done in the embodied state of this life. Nowhere is there any reflection upon the conduct or product of the intermediate state as contributing to the decision (2Cor 5:10). The state assigned is of endless duration, hence it is described as *aionios*, "eternal." While this adjective etymologically need mean no more than "what extends through a certain aeon or period of time," yet its eschatological usage correlates it everywhere with the "coming age." And this age being endless in duration, every state or destiny connected with it partakes of the same character. It is therefore exegetically impossible to give a relative sense to such phrases as *pur aionion*, "eternal fire" (Mat 18:8; 25:41; Jude 1:7), *kolasis aionios*, "eternal punishment" (Mat 25:46), *olethros aionios*, "eternal destruction" (2The 1:9), *krisis aionios* or *krima aionion*, "eternal judgment" (Mar 3:29; Heb 6:2). This is also shown by the figurative representations which unfold the import of the adjective: The "unquenchable fire" (Mat 3:12), "the never-dying worm" (Mar 9:43-48), "The smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever" (Rev 14:11), "tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev 20:10). The endless duration of the state of punishment is also required by the absolute eternity of its counterpart, *zoe aionios*, "eternal life" (Mat 25:46).

¹ Not only in the forum of the conscience, but in the forum of the world.

² A defense of God's goodness and justice in the face of the existence of evil.

Annihilationism

In support of the doctrine of conditional immortality it has been urged that other terms descriptive of the fate of the condemned — such as *apoleia*, “perdition,” *phthora*, “corruption,” *olethros*, “destruction,” *thanatos*, “death” — point rather to a cessation of being. This, however, rests on an unscriptural interpretation of these terms, which everywhere in the Old and New Testaments, designate a state of existence with an undesirable content; never to the pure negation of existence — just as “life” in Scripture describes a positive mode of being, never mere existence as such. Perdition, corruption, destruction, death, are predicated in all such cases, by the welfare or the ethical spiritual character of man, without implying the annihilation of his physical existence.

Universalism

No more support can be found in the New Testament for the hypothesis of an *apokatastasis panton*, “restoration of all things,” *i.e.* absolute universalism implying the ultimate salvation of all men. The phrase occurs only in Act 3:21; there, however, it has no cosmical reference, but relates to the fulfillment of the promises to Israel. Josephus uses it of the restoration of the Jews to their land after the Captivity; Philo uses it of the restoration of inheritances in the Year of Jubilee (compare Mal 4:6; Mat 17:11; Mar 9:12; Act 1:6). Absolute universalism has been found in Rom 5:18; 1Cor 15:22, 28; Eph 1:10; Col 1:20. But in all these passages, only a cosmical or national universalism can be found, not the doctrine of the salvation of all individuals. The latter would bring the statements in question, in direct contradiction to the most explicit deliverances of Paul elsewhere on the principle of predestination, and the eternity of the destiny of the wicked.

IX. The Consummate State

Side by side with “the future age,” and characterizing it from a less formal point of view, the phrase “kingdom of God” designates the Consummate State, as it will exist for believers *after* the Judgment. Jesus, while making the kingdom a present reality, yet continues to speak of it in accordance with its original eschatological usage, as “the kingdom” which lies in the future (Mat 13:43; 25:34; 26:29; Mar 9:47; Luk 12:32; 13:28, 29; 21:31). With Paul, the phrase bears preponderatingly an *eschatological* sense, although occasionally he uses it of the *present* state of believers (Rom 14:17; 1Cor 4:20; 6:9, 10; 15:24, 50; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:5; Col 1:13; 4:11; 1The 2:12; 2The 1:5; 2Tim 4:1, 18). Elsewhere in the New Testament, the eschatological use occurs in Heb 12:28; Jas 2:5; 2Pet 1:11; Rev 11:15. The idea is universalistic, unpolitical — which does not exclude that certain privileges are spoken of with special reference to Israel. Although the eschatological kingdom differs from the present kingdom (largely in the fact that it will receive an external, visible embodiment), this does not hinder that even in the eschatological, the core is constituted by those spiritual realities and relations which make the *present* kingdom. Still, it will have its outward form as the doctrine of the *resurrection* and the *regenerated earth* plainly show.

Hence, the figures in which Jesus speaks of it — such as eating, drinking, reclining at table — while they are not to be taken sensually, neither should they be interpreted allegorically, as if they stood for wholly internal spiritual processes. They evidently point to, or at least they include outward states and activities of which our life in the senses offers some analogy. But they are on a higher plane of which, at present, it is impossible to form any concrete conception of them, or to speak otherwise than in figurative language. Equivalent to “the kingdom” is “life.” But, unlike the kingdom, “life” in the Synoptics remains an exclusively eschatological conception. It is *objectively* conceived: the state of blessedness the saints will exist in; not *subjectively* as a potency in man, or a process of development (Mat 7:14; 18:8, 9; 19:16, 29; 25:46; Mar 10:30). In John, “life” becomes a present state. And in connection with this, the idea is subjectivized; it becomes a process of growth and expansion. Points of contact for this in the Synoptics may be found in Mat 8:22 (Luk 9:60); Luk 15:24; 20:38. When this eschatological life is characterized as *aionios*,

“eternal,” the reference is not exclusively to its eternal duration, but the word has in addition to this, a *qualitative* connotation. It describes the kind of life that belongs to the *Consummate State* (compare the use of the adjective with other nouns in this sense: 2Cor 5:1; 2Tim 2:10; Heb 5:9; 9:12, 15; 2Pet 1:11, and the unfolding of the content of the idea in 1Pet 1:4). With Paul, “life” sometimes has the same eschatological sense (Rom 2:7; 5:17; Tit 1:2; 3:7). But most often it is conceived as already given in the *present* state, owing to the close association with the Spirit (Rom 6:11; 7:4, 8, 11; 8:2, 6; Gal 2:19; 6:8; Eph 4:18). In its ultimate analysis, Paul’s conception of “life,” as well as that of Jesus, is that of something dependent on communion with God (Mat 22:32; Mar 12:27 = Luk 20:38; Rom 8:6, 7; Eph 4:18).

Another Pauline conception associated with the *Consummate State* is that of *doxa*, “glory.” This glory is everywhere conceived as a reflection of the glory of God. And to the mind of Paul, *this* is what gives it religious value, not the external radiance in which it may manifest itself. Hence, the element of “honor” is conjoined to it (Rom 1:23; 2:7; 8:21; 9:23; 1Cor 15:43). It is not confined to the physical sphere (2Cor 3:18; 4:16, 17). The outward *doxa* is prized by Paul as a vehicle of revelation, an exponent of the inward state of acceptance with God. In general, Paul conceives of the *Final State* in a highly theocentric fashion (1Cor 15:28); it is the state of an immediate vision of, and perfect communion with God and Christ. The future life alone can bring the perfected sonship (Rom 6:10; 8:23, 19; compare Luk 20:36; 2Cor 4:4; 5:6, 7, 8; 13:4; Phi 1:23; Col 2:13; 3:3; 1The 4:17).

The scene of the *Consummate State* is the new heaven and the new earth, which are called into being by the eschatological *palingenesia* “regeneration” (Mat 5:18; 19:28; 24:35; 1Cor 7:31; Heb 1:12; 12:26, 27; 2Pet 3:10; 1Joh 2:17; Rev 21:2.¹ In this last passage, however, some exegetes understand the city to be a symbol of the Church, the people of God). An annihilation of the substance of the present world is not taught (compare the comparison of the future world-conflagration with the Deluge, in 2Pet 3:6). The central abode of the redeemed will be in heaven, although the renewed earth will remain accessible to them, and a part of the inheritance (Mat 5:5; Joh 14:2, 3; Rom 8:18-22; and the closing visions of the Apocalypse).

X. The Intermediate State

In regard to the state of the dead, previous to the *Parousia* and the resurrection, the New Testament is far less explicit than in its treatment of what belongs to general eschatology. The following points may briefly be noted here:

(1) The state of death is frequently represented as a “sleeping,” just as the act of dying as a “falling asleep” (Mat 9:24; Joh 9:4; 11:11; 1Cor 7:39; 11:30; 15:6, 18, 20, 51; 1The 4:13, 15; 2Pet 3:4). This usage, while also purely Greek, rests on the Old Testament. There is *this* difference: that in the New Testament (already in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books) the conception is chiefly used with reference to the righteous dead. And it has associated with it the thought of their blessed awaking in the resurrection; whereas in the Old Testament, it is indiscriminately applied to all the dead and without such connotation. With Paul, the word “sleep” always occurs about believers. The representation does not apply to the “soul” or “spirit,” so that a state of unconsciousness until the resurrection would be implied. It is predicated of the *person*; and the point of comparison is that as one who sleeps is not alive to his surroundings, so the dead are no longer *en rapport* with this earthly life. Whatever may have been the original implications of the word, it plainly had become a figurative mode of speech, long before the New Testament period; just as *egeirein*, “to wake,” was felt to be a figurative designation of the act of the resurrection. Because the dead are asleep to our earthly life, which is mediated through the body, it does not follow that they are asleep in every other relation — asleep to the life of the other world, such that their spirits are

¹ **Rev 21:2** Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

unconscious. Against the unconsciousness of the dead, compare Luk 16:23; 23:43; Joh 11:25, 26; Act 7:59; 1Cor 15:8; Phi 1:23; Rev 6:9-11; 7:9. Some have held that for Paul, the sleep was a euphemism employed in order to avoid the terms “death” and “to die,” which the apostle restricted to Christ. 1The 4:16 shows that this is unfounded.

(2) The New Testament speaks of the departed in an anthropomorphic fashion, as though they were still possessed of bodily organs (Luk 16:23, 24; Rev 6:11; 7:9). No inference can be drawn from this in favor of the hypothesis of an intermediate body, as appears from the fact that God and angels are spoken of in the same manner; and also from passages which more precisely refer to the dead as “souls,” “spirits” (Luk 23:46; Act 7:59; Heb 12:23; 1Pet 3:19; Rev 6:9; 20:4).

(3) The New Testament nowhere encourages the living to seek converse with the dead. Its representation of the dead as “sleeping” with reference to the earthly life, distinctly implies that such converse would be abnormal; and in so far, it discountenances it, without explicitly affirming its absolute impossibility. Not even the *possibility* of the dead taking knowledge of our earthly life, is affirmed anywhere. Heb 12:1 does not necessarily represent the Old Testament saints as “witnesses” of our race of faith, in the sense of spectators in the *literal* sense. But perhaps in the *figurative* sense, we ought to feel, having in memory their example, as if the ages of the past and their historic figures were looking down upon us (Luk 16:29; Act 8:9; 13:6; 19:13).

(4) As to the departed saints themselves, it is intimated that they have mutual knowledge of one another in the Intermediate State, together with memory of facts and conditions of the earthly life (Luk 16:9, 19-31, *Lazarus and the rich man, Dives*). Nowhere, however, is it intimated that this interest of the departed saints in our earthly affairs, normally expresses itself in any act of intercession, not even of intercession spontaneously proffered on their part.

(5) The New Testament does not teach that there is any possibility of a fundamental change in moral or spiritual character in the Intermediate State. The doctrine of a so-called “second probation” finds in it no real support. The only passages that can with some semblance of warrant be appealed to in this connection, are 1Pet 3:19-21 and 4:6. For the exegesis of the former passage, which is difficult and much disputed, compare “Spirits in Prison.” Here it may simply be noted that the context is not favorable to the view that an extension of the opportunity of conversion beyond death is implied; the purport of the whole passage points in the opposite direction, the salvation of the exceedingly small number of eight of the generation of Noah being emphasized (1Pet 3:20). Besides this, it would be difficult to understand why this exceptional opportunity should have been granted to this peculiar group of the dead, since the contemporaries of Noah figure in Scripture as examples of extreme wickedness. Even if the idea of gospel-preaching with soteriological purpose were actually found here, it would not furnish an adequate basis for building upon it the broad hypothesis of a second probation for all the dead in general, or for those who have not heard the gospel in this life. The passage is especially ill fitted to support this latter view, because the generation of Noah had the gospel preached to them before death. There is no intimation that the transaction spoken of was repeated or continued indefinitely.

As to the second passage (1Pet 4:6), this must be taken by itself, and in connection with its own context. Some assume that the sentence “the gospel (was) preached even to the dead” must have its meaning determined by the earlier passage in 1Pet 3:19-21. This has exercised an unfortunate influence upon the exegesis. Possibly the two passages had no connection in the mind of the author. For explaining the reference to “the dead,” the connection with the preceding verse is fully sufficient. It is there stated that Christ is “ready to judge the living and the dead.” “The living and the dead” are those who will be alive and dead at the *Parousia*. The gospel was preached to both, that Christ might be the Judge of both. But it is in no way indicated that the gospel was preached to the latter in the state of death. On the contrary the *telic* clause,¹ “that they might be judged

¹ *Telic*: denoting the final end or purpose, as distinguished from *ecbatic*.

according to men in the flesh,” shows that they heard the gospel during their lifetime; for the judgment according to men in the flesh that has befallen them, is the judgment of physical death. If a close connection between the passage in 1Pet 3 and that in chapter 4 *did* exist, this could only serve to commend the exegesis which finds in the earlier passage, the gospel preached to the contemporaries of Noah during their lifetime — since, on that view, it becomes natural to identify the judgment in the flesh, with the Deluge.

(6) The New Testament, while representing the state of the dead before the *Parousia* as definitely fixed, nevertheless does not identify it with the final state which follows upon the resurrection, either in degree of blessedness or punishment. Although there is no warrant for affirming that the state of death is regarded as a positively painful condition for believers, as has been mistakenly inferred from 1Cor 11:30 and 1The 4:13, nevertheless Paul shrinks from it as from a relatively undesirable state, since it involves “nakedness” for the soul. This condition, however, does not exclude a relatively high degree of blessedness in fellowship with Christ (2Cor 5:2-4, 6, 8; Phi 1:23). In the same manner, a difference in the degree or mode of punishment between the Intermediate State and the *age to come* is plainly taught. For on the one hand, eternal punishment is related to persons in the body (Mat 10:28); and on the other hand, it is assigned to a distinct place, *Gehenna*, which is never named in connection with the torment of the Intermediate State. This term occurs in Mat 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; Luk 12:5; 18:9; 23:33; Mar 9:43, 45, 47; Jas 3:6. Its opposite is the eschatological kingdom of God (Mar 9:47). The term *abussos* (abyss) differs from it, in that it is associated with the torment of evil spirits (Luk 8:31; Rom 10:7; Rev 9:1, 2; 11:7; 20:1). In regard to it, no such clear distinction between a *preliminary* and *final* punishment seems to be drawn (compare the verb *tartaroun*, “to bind in *Tartarus*,” said of evil spirits in 2Pet 2:4).

Where the sphere of the Intermediate State is locally conceived, this is done by means of the term *Hades*, which is the equivalent of the Old Testament *She’ol*. The passages where this occurs are Mat 11:23; 16:18; Luk 16:23; Act 2:27, 31; 1Cor 15:55 (where others read “death”); Rev 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14. These passages should not be interpreted on the basis of the Greek classical usage, but in the light of the Old Testament doctrine about *She’ol*. Some of them plainly employ the word in the non-local sense of the state of death (Mat 16:18; possibly Act 2:27, 31; 1Cor 15:55 [personified]; Rev 1:18; 6:8 [personified]; Rev 20:13 [personified]). The only passage where the conception is *local* is Luk 16:23. And this occurs in a parable, where aside from the central point in comparison, we cannot assume any purpose to impart topographical knowledge concerning the world beyond death; the imagery is simply that which was popularly current. But even if the doctrine of *Hades* as a place distinct from *Gehenna* should be found here, the terms in which it is spoken of — as a place of torment for *Dives* — prove that the conception is *not* that of a general abode of neutral character, where without blessedness or pain, the dead jointly await the Last Judgment, which would first assign them to their separate eternal habitations. The parable plainly teaches (whether *Hades* is local and distinct from *Gehenna* or not) that the differentiation between blessedness and punishment in its absolute character (Luk 16:26) is *begun* in it, and it does not first originate at the Judgment (see further, “[Hades](#)”).

Man of Sin:

(*ho anthropos tes hamartias*; many ancient authorities read, “man of lawlessness,” *anomias*):

1. The Pauline Description:

The name occurs in Paul’s remarkable announcement in 2The 2:3-10, of the manifestation of a colossal anti-Christian power prior to the Advent, which some of the Thessalonians had been misled into thinking of as immediately impending (2:2). That “Day of the Lord,” the apostle declares, will not come till, as he had previously taught them (2:5), there has first been a great apostasy, and the revelation of “the man of sin” (or “of lawlessness;” compare 2:8), named also “the son of perdition” (2:3). This “lawless one” (2:8) would exalt himself above all that is called

God, or is an object of worship; he would sit in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God (2:4). For the time being, another power restrained his manifestation; when that was removed, he would be revealed (2:6,7). Then “the mystery of lawlessness,” which was already working, would attain its full development (2:7,8). The coming of this “man of sin,” in the power of Satan, would be with lying wonders and all deceit of unrighteousness, whereby many would be deceived to their destruction (2:9,10). But this would be only for a season (2:6). Jesus would slay (or consume) him with the breath of His mouth (compare Isa 11:4), and bring him to nought by the manifestation of His coming (2The 2:8).

2. The Varying Interpretations:

Innumerable are the theories and speculations to which this Pauline passage has given rise. A very full account of these may be seen in the essay on “The Man of Sin” appended to Dr. J. Eadie’s posthumous *Commentary on Thessalonians*, and in Lunemann’s *Commentary*, 222 ff, English translation).

(1) There is the view, favored by “moderns,” that the passage contains no genuine prediction (Paul “could not know” the future), but represents a speculation of the apostle’s own, based on Dan 8:23 ff; 11:36 ff, and on current ideas of Antichrist (see ANTICHRIST; BELIAL; compare Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 93 ff, etc.). This view will not satisfy those who believe in the reality of Paul’s apostleship and inspiration.

(2) Some connect the description with Caligula, Nero, or other Roman emperors. Caligula, indeed, ordered supplication to be made to himself as the supreme god, and wished to set up his statue in the temple of Jerusalem (Suet. *Calig.* xxii.33; Josephus, *Antiq.*, XVIII, viii). But this was long before Paul’s visit to Thessalonica; and the acts of such a madman could not furnish the basis of a prediction so elaborate and important as the present (compare Lunemann and Bousset).

(3) The favorite Protestant interpretation refers the prediction to the papacy, in whom, it is contended, many of the blasphemous features of Paul’s representation are unmistakably realized. The “temple of God” is here understood to be the Church; the restraining power is the Roman empire; “the man of sin” is not an individual, but the personification of an institution or system. It is cult,¹ however, to resist the impression that the apostle regards “the mystery of lawlessness” as culminating in an individual, a personal Antichrist. In any case, the representation outstrips everything that can be conceived of as even nominally Christian.

(4) There remains the view held by most of the Fathers, and in recent times widely adopted, that “the man of sin” of this passage is an individual in whom, previous to the Advent, sin will embody itself in its most lawless and God-denying form. The attempts to identify this individual with historical characters may be set aside; but the idea is not thereby invalidated. The difficulty is that the apostle evidently conceives of the manifestation of the “man of sin” as taking place, certainly not immediately, but at no very remote period — not 2,000 years later — and as connected directly with the final advent of Christ, the judgment on the wicked (compare 2The 1:7-9), and apparently without any reference to a “millennial” period, either before or after.

It seems safest, in view of the difficulties of the passage, to confine one’s self to the general idea that it embodies, leaving details to be interpreted by the actual fulfillment.

3. The Essential Idea:

There is much support in Scripture — not least in Christ’s own teaching (compare Mat 13:30,37-43; 24:11-14; Luk 18:8) — for the belief that before the final triumph of Christ’s kingdom, there will be a period of great tribulation, of decay of faith, of apostasy, of a culmination of both good and evil (“Let both grow together until the harvest,” Mat 13:30), with the seeming triumph for the

¹ *Cult*: favored among a few.

time being, of evil over good. There will be a crisis-time — sharp, severe, and terminated by a decisive interposition of the Son of Man (“the manifestation of his coming,” the Revised Version margin “Gr. *presence*”); in what precise form may be left undetermined. Civil law and government — the existing bulwark against anarchy (in Paul’s time represented by the Roman power) — will be swept away by the rising tide of evil, and lawlessness will prevail. It may be that impiety will concentrate itself, as the passage says, in some individual head; or this may belong to the form of the apostle’s apprehension in a case where “times and seasons” were not yet fully revealed: an apprehension to be enlarged by subsequent revelations (see REVELATION OF JOHN), or left to be corrected by the actual course of God’s providence. The kernel of the prediction is not, any more than in the Old Testament prophecies, dependent on its literal realization in every detail. Neither does the final manifestation of evil exclude partial and anticipatory realizations, embodying many of the features of the prophecy.