

a resurrection comes into view only in the very latest of the Old Testament writings and then apparently a resurrection to life in this world rather than in any other sphere of action. (Dan. 12: 2.)

When we pass to the New Testament, however, it is at once obvious that a wider horizon has come into view. Jesus Christ has much to say about the Kingdom of heaven which is near at hand, and which is to grow until it fills the whole world, very much along the lines of the prophetic anticipations, only spiritualized and exalted above all national or political conceptions that had naturally attached themselves to these. The full establishment of that Kingdom would be brought about by his return to the world to reign in great glory on the earth. The full enjoyment of its blessings would come only after his people had been raised up again from the dead and a final judgment had taken place which would separate the righteous from the wicked and the awards to the two classes, had been assigned. These awards are made to extend throughout eternity, and in one form or other are made to bear upon the conduct of life here, with a view of deepening responsibility, stimulating devotion, and furnishing consolation. For the earliest Christians the thought of the Master's return seems to have had an extraordinary fascination, so much so that it led to some serious excesses of fanaticism, as for example in the Church at Thessalonica, which made it necessary for the Apostle Paul to write two letters to that Church within a few weeks of each other in order to correct them. We do not know precisely what statements the Apostle had made in his preaching of the Gospel to them which led to their error, but in all probability it was some version of such sayings of Jesus himself as are preserved for us in the 24th chapter of Matthew and parallel passages, which on the face of them convey the impression that they might expect his return to the earth in glory during the lifetime of that very generation which he was addressing. Even in seeking to correct their practical errors the Apostle does not dash their hopes altogether, but only moderates their expectations by pointing out that some things must yet happen before he can appear, and that even if his appearing should be delayed they would not be any losers by the delay. This attitude is probably the reflection of other sayings of Jesus in which he hints at the great uncertainty of the time of his coming again and even at