

ther he would not." James is killed by the sword. As to the rest all we know is this, that they lived and died under the promise, "Lo! I am with you alway."

3. "The end of all things" then must mean just what has been usually understood by the word—the close, viz. of the whole economy of human affairs as it is at present constituted. Temptation will end; and persecution, and sorrows, and the rasping of an evil world; and the scoffing and the scorn of the wicked; and all the hurry, and all the show of life; and the weary toils and unrequited sacrifices of the good, and all the gathered earthly results of this long development of years. Even the dispensations, which have successfully died into each other, will all die again, that God's new creation may spring out of their dust. There will be an end of the very earth itself, which has sheltered and occupied for a few brief days so many toiling pilgrims, and of the heavens that shine above us "as they now are," while "new heavens and a new earth"—the same material universe, it may well be the same stars and systems, only transfigured and purified—will take their place. This world is like a clock, striking the hours, and ticking the moments as they pass. But the heavy leads are falling inside with every moment, and there will come the moment when they can fall no farther, and then all the machinery of life will be still, and He, who, at first, put all the parts together will take them asunder and put them up again in a higher and more permanent way. "The end of all things" then is that supreme crisis in human affairs, predestined from the beginning, and to which all things inevitably tend, which may well be spoken of in such language, as "the end," although it be equally true that, without waste of energy or loss of time there will be a fresh beginning. But the end must come first to give opportunity and occasion for such a beginning. Rewards have been promised and they must be paid; penalties threatened and they must be inflicted. The glad, the awful word "come" and "depart" must fall on different ears; moral government must be vindicated; the glory of

the kingdom displayed. "Lo! He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." "They also that pierced him," not alone on the day of his crucifixion, but they who in every age have pierced him with their neglect, their scorn, their self-righteous pride—they shall see him on that day, and mourn because of him. It is this coming of the Lord, in the end of all things, which is so much put forth in the apostolic writings as a motive—a very powerful motive they evidently thought it—to Christian diligence, and watchfulness and prayer.

4. This motive is, manifestly, in their estimation, much strengthened by the near proximity of the events. There can be no mistake in this interpretation since all the apostles write in the same strain. St. Peter says "The end of all things is at hand." St. James, "Be ye also patient, for the coming of the Lord is at hand." St. Paul, "Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand." St. John, "Little children it is the last time" Here we have the four leading apostles, all testifying to the same thing—the near end of the dispensation, and the coming of the Lord, and all drawing the same practical lessons from it and making use of it as a motive to promote the same states of mind, and the same Christian behaviour.

Did they then really expect the almost immediate appearance of the Lord, in their own life? Many of our ablest critics agree now in the opinion that they did, and that it is not possible to make any other interpretation of their language. Yet the point is not quite so clear. Compare this passage with other in the same apostle's writings in which he says "But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," To our thought and in all our reckonings, the difference is vast between one day and a thousand years. Try as we may, we cannot think them the same, or as much alike. "One day," how short! "A thousand years," how long! Since this time yesterday how little has happened in our individual life! How little, relatively to all history, in the world!