

his plain declaration to the contrary, yet there are few who will doubt that the new heavens and earth described in Revelation are subsequent to the judgment day, so vividly described in the verses immediately preceding.

And as to the promise referred to by Peter, if he really describes the heavenly state, surely it may be found in a multitude of places; wherever, indeed, immortal life and blessedness are offered to faith and obedience. Isaiah, therefore, may be giving a figurative description of a glorious state of the Church in this world, under the terms "new heavens and new earth," emblematical of those real new heavens and new earth beyond the grave, described by Peter. And hence, it seems to me, the language of the prophet should not be allowed to set aside, or modify, the plain meaning of the apostle.

I shall quote only one other passage of the Bible on this subject. I refer to that difficult text in Romans, which represents the whole creation as groaning and travailing together in pain until now; and that it will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

I have stated in a former lecture, that Tholuck, the distinguished German theologian, considers this a description of the present bound and fettered condition of all nature, and that the deliverance refers to the future renovation of the earth. Such an exposition chimes in perfectly with the views on this subject which have long and extensively prevailed in Germany. And it certainly does give a consistent meaning to a passage which has been to commentators a perfect labyrinth of difficulties. If this be not its meaning, then I may safely say that its meaning has not yet been found out.

In view, then, of all the important passages of Scripture concerning the future destruction and renovation of the earth, I think we may fairly conclude that none of them require us to modify the natural and obvious meaning of Peter which has been given. In general, they all coincide with the views presented by that apostle; or if, in any case, there is a slight apparent difference, the figurative character of all other statements besides his require us to receive his views as the true standard, and to modify the meaning of the others. We may, therefore, conclude that the Bible does plainly and distinctly teach us that this earth will hereafter be burned up; in other words, that all upon or within it, capable of combustion, will