

I freely acknowledge that this is a serious objection to my theory: and perhaps it is insuperable, unless we resort to miraculous interference. It were easy to say, that God can, in a moment, convert a globe of fire into a paradise of beauty, and make its landscapes smile with charms transcending the bowers of paradise lost. Indeed, the Scriptures represent the New Jerusalem as prepared by God's own hands, and let down at once upon the earth to form the metropolitan abode of the righteous.

But, after all, I am unwilling thus to dispose of the difficulty. For it is a clumsy way to meet objections, when we undertake to philosophize upon events, either past, present, or future, to foist in a miracle, in order to eke out our hypothesis. We thus make an image of as incoherent parts as that in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and as easily broken in pieces.

There is a second mode by which the difficulty under consideration can be completely obviated, could we only admit the theory on which it rests. Some theological writers have maintained that the day of judgment will occupy a long period, thousands and tens of thousands of years perhaps, in order that every individual may experience a literal trial before the universe for all his conduct on earth, so that the conscience of every one in that vast assembly shall approve the final sentence. They appeal to various texts of Scripture, where it is strongly stated that rigid inquisition will be made on that solemn day into the conduct and motives of every individual. And it may be, indeed, that such descriptions are to have a literal fulfilment; and if so, we should have a period long enough for the new earth to be recovered by natural means from its volcanic desolation, and to be covered over with new forms of beauty. But I confess the theory of such a long period of judgment does not seem to me to be sustained by the most approved rules of exegesis, and therefore I am unwilling to rest upon it to sustain my own hypothesis.

But is it not possible that our difficulty of conceiving how the spiritual body can enter at once upon its residence in the new heavens and earth, while yet the globe is only a shoreless ocean of fire, results from a mistaken conception of the nature of the spiritual body? Do we not judge of it by our own present bodies, and imagine that it must necessarily possess such an organization as would be destroyed by the