

Scholars who consider the teaching of the Book of Revelation by itself, in order to see exactly what is intended by its author, and who do not come to it with a pre-conceived system into which they wish to fit its teachings, are almost certain to find the same interpretation as Alford and Zahn have taken. Thus the noted Oxford scholar R. H. Charles, in his work on the Book of Revelation, (published 1920) in the International Critical Commentary, finds this to be the teaching of the author of the book. In his comment on the words "This is the first resurrection" in Rev. 20.5 (Vol. 2, Page 184-5), he says:

"This must not be construed in a purely spiritual sense and taken to mean a death to sin and a new birth unto righteousness. . . . The earliest expounders of the Apocalypse, such as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Victorinus, quite rightly take the words in a literal sense of an actual reign of Christ with the glorified martyrs on earth. . . . Attempts to revive the spiritualizing interpretation of the Millennial Kingdom are to be deplored from every standpoint."

Charles, as might be expected, thinks John was mistaken. He says (Vol. 2, Page 456-7):

"The need for this supernatural method of Christianizing the world has not arisen. There has been no universal martyrdom of the Church. Hence since the faithful survive, Christ has committed into their hands the complete evangelization of the world. . . . The peculiar form of this expectation must be relegated to the region of unfulfilled prophecy." Of course we cannot follow Charles in his idea that John was mistaken. But