

THE

PROSPECTS OF THE WORLD,

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

APPROACHING RETURN OF THE
LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Second Lecture.

LONDON:

I, WARWICK SQUARE, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1842.

Price 3d.

THE PROSPECTS OF THE WORLD,

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

APPROACHING RETURN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

WE can hardly be said to receive the testimony of the Holy Scripture, if we are not expecting the times of light and blessing which they so fully promise. There are, I trust, few, very few amongst you now assembled in this room, who doubt the oft-repeated promise of God—"As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord"—(Numb. xiv. 21).

But it is not sufficient, in order to our communion with the thoughts of God, that we should be merely looking for this period of glory. We have also to enquire concerning the *means* by which this divine purpose will be effected. But here, as I was lately endeavouring to show, is the great delusive error in the Church of God. They have first forgotten the appointed means by which this blessed purpose is to be accomplished, and then they have imagined means of their own. Forgetful of the failure of man under all circumstances, and specially in this our present dispensation—forgetting that the Gentile branch itself has not continued in God's goodness—they are expecting that the testimony of the Churches, the decayed and fallen Churches, will be the means of introducing the promised glory. But this delusion becomes the more wonderful when we remember that new and strange blessings, such as the binding of Satan, and the freedom of Creation from the curse, are promised in the age to come; blessings of such a nature as never could be within the compass of any powers communicated to the Church of
C. & S.

God. How mistaken then are all such expectations. Indeed so far from the fallen Churches being the effectual revivers of blessing, they are themselves to be the subjects of judgment. "If thou continue not in God's goodness thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. xi.) This is spoken to those who are gathered out from the Gentile world into the profession of the name of Christ. And Protestantism is itself a witness—a witness confirmed by every subsequent form of dissent—that such continuance there has not been; excision therefore must surely follow.

But what entire estrangement from the thoughts of God must there be, if, while this is so, these very Churches are assuming to be the very instruments of Millennial blessing. But I would fain hope that our own moral sensibilities are sufficiently alive to see that this cannot be. If the heart be right, if there be truth of feeling there, our understandings will not long remain in error. I can hardly suppose that any Christian heart could reflect upon the present condition, both of the world and of the professing Church, without seeing that the foundations of all things are out of course. The fierce spirit of rivalry and contention—superstition and infidelity in their several spheres—were never more manifested than at the present hour. There is no semblance of approach to the time when the sword shall be beaten into the ploughshare, and violence cease to be in high places. The instinctive feelings of your hearts are, I trust, leading you to recognise this.

Again—do you not value the type of the Paschal Lamb? Is there any type in Scripture more full of comfort to those who know themselves to be in the midst of a great Egypt ripening for judgment; they themselves resting under the covenanted protection of that precious blood? Would you not shrink from losing the application of this blessed type to yourselves? Yet how could it be applied to you, if instead of expecting this Egyptian world to be visited by the destroying Angel, you were expecting gradually to see it converted into the Church of God. The type of the Paschal Lamb can only apply to those who are the little few amongst the scoffing and rejecting many. If the Church assume to itself any other place than this, it must cease to apply to itself the type of the Paschal Lamb.

But this cannot be with those who trust in the Lord Jesus and love His appearing. They *know* that they are the few amongst the many. They *know* that the earth is not gradually becoming filled with the knowledge of the glory of God. They are themselves securely sheltered beneath the blood, and they wait for salvation; they know their portion and their hope. But this is not all they know. It is also theirs to understand the prospects of the world around them.

And what are the present prospects of the world?

I suppose all have been struck by the manner in which the oriental nations have begun to attract the interest of mankind. Egypt, Edom, Tyre, Jerusalem, and even Babylon, are being revisited; and plans are already in operation for their revival under the shelter of European greatness. You know, I suppose, what anxiety there is among the Jews to return and repossess the land of their fathers, and that two measures of importance have lately been adopted, in order to give to Jerusalem the stability of European protection.

These lands are all of them most interesting to us, but specially the land of Abraham. First, because He who has declared, that He has ordered the arrangement of the nations with reference to the children of Israel, and who intends the land of Abraham to be the source of truth and government among all nations of the earth, has given to that land advantages of natural position, such as are possessed by no other country on the earth.* Connected by the Euphrates with the East, and by the Mediterranean with the West; having Asia on the one side, and Africa on the other; it may be said to be the meeting place of the world: and when human energy is allowed to act upon this and the immediately adjacent countries the effects will soon be discernible. The natural causes which made Tyre and Egypt and Babylon what once they were have not ceased to operate.

The natural advantages then of these countries make them subjects of interest to us, whether we regard them as at present attracting, because of these advantages, the avarice and pride of men, or as in future to be the gathering-place of all nations under the hand of God. When many people

* It extends from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, including all the countries *at present* known by the general name of Syria.

shall go and say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah ii.)

Neither is this all. They are countries in which God once visibly displayed His almighty power—they are countries which His judgments have debased—countries against which his curse still continues written in His word—countries in which He will yet again visibly display the power of His righteous vengeance. These are the circumstances which give to these countries so great an interest; an interest peculiarly awakened just at the present hour.

And if it be asked, Why is it that God has ceased visibly to act among these nations as he once did? the answer is this,—It is because Jerusalem has ceased to be owned as his nation among the nations. He has long said to Jerusalem, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate." Though not ceasing providentially to control by His secret power, God has ceased to regulate as he once did the ways of nations; and for nearly two thousand years He has been engaged in the ministry of reconciliation. It is now peculiarly the time of the long-suffering and patience of God. This has allowed the nations a liberty for selfishness and sin. They have been those who have done according to their will. A few years ago I could have said no more than this. I could merely have spoken generally of the self-will and ungodliness of the mighty nations amongst which we dwell. But now there is quite another feature in their course. Their counsels are beginning to collide with the counsels of God. They are seeking to revive, and for a season they will revive, these very countries upon which His curse has rested, and against which it still remains written in His word.

I say they will succeed in reviving them. For the scripture uniformly speaks of all these countries being existent, and that in greatness and splendour, at the time when the day of his visitation comes, and when the remnant of Israel is forgiven. Look for example at the xiii. and xiv. chapters of Isaiah, when Babylon is visited with its *final* judgment; "The stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not

give their light : the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. . . . I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger." And again, "It shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee (Israel) rest from thy sorrow and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb against the King of Babylon and say, How hath the oppressor ceased !—the golden city ceased !"—That is, the golden city had not ceased, neither its oppression, till then.*

And here I would ask you carefully to observe, how wonderful is the place in which these communications from God cause us to stand. They truly enable us to speak of the *things which are not, as though they were*. And this it is which causes the servant of God to appear as one that mocketh among them that believe not.

It was given to Isaiah to speak of the destruction of the glory of Babylon at a time when its name was almost unknown among the nations of the earth ; for Babylon did not rise into greatness till the days of Nebuchadnezzar, who lived 150 years after Isaiah. To Daniel also it was given to speak of the destruction of the glory of Persia, before Persia had assumed its place of greatness in the earth. And this is our honoured place, if we receive the testimony of the word of God. We speak of the destruction of a greatness which is not yet apparent before the eyes of men. But we see it in the word of God—we know its rise, its history, and its end. Was not the place of Isaiah an honoured place ? What a glory then for the Church to have it in principle assigned to itself now ! What a nearness of application to present circumstances is thus attached to these parts of the

* See this subject more fully treated in two papers severally entitled, *Babylon and Edom*, in *Christian Witness*.

The annual invitation to united prayer from Mr. Haldane Stewart, of Liverpool, to the Christians of this country, published since this Lecture was delivered, will show how much the attention, even of Christians, is directed to the East. Syria, it will be observed, and Chaldea, are mentioned by name—and their present prosperity regarded as indicating the approach of light and blessing from God, instead of the great hour of temptation which is coming to try them that dwell on the earth.

word of God—parts which have been by so many regarded as exhausted, and as no longer having any bearing upon ourselves !

Do you value this? Do you think it would bring the light of scripture to bear upon the delusive circumstances around you? And is not this essential to holiness? If we have not the light of God's truth shed upon the circumstances of our present way, we must be left to the darkness of our own imaginations. There was one who said, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, because thy testimonies are my meditation." All other light becomes darkness when the light of these testimonies is seen. Such is prophecy. It is a light shining in a dark place, whereunto ye do well to take heed. God declares it to be a dark place, though men kindle many sparks to hide the darkness.

The place of Isaiah may be almost said to be ours now *in fact*. We are contemplating and speaking of a rising greatness not yet developed before men. But there is another place also in which we may stand by anticipative faith; and faith always anticipates. We may stand by the side of one greater than Isaiah, in the midst of Jerusalem, restored as she soon will be by man, and there hear the words of our Lord himself. I have remarked on the anxiety of the Jews to return to Jerusalem. That they will return, and return in unbelief, is placed beyond a doubt by the xii. and xiv. chapters of Zechariah, and many other passages, which all speak of their *final* visitation in judgment, and their subsequent conversion being *in Jerusalem*. If converted in Jerusalem, they must of course have returned to Jerusalem in unbelief. Let us imagine then a few weeks, or months, or years to have passed—and ourselves standing in Jerusalem, restored as a city of unbelieving Jews, and there to be reading our Lord's prophecy in the xxiv. of Matthew. His words are these: "There shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the

Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, and He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”*

I press these words upon your consciences. Can any words be more plain? I know it has been said that all these things were fulfilled when Jerusalem was taken by the Romans. But this is only a device of Satan. It is true that God has in the case of Tyre and Babylon and Jerusalem allowed certain judgments to fall upon them which are intended as precursory, and warnings of what the great final season of visitation is to be—they mercifully indicate beforehand the character of the future end: but it is Satan’s device to make us mistake these precursive warnings for the end of which they warn. I say, therefore, beloved friends, believe it not! The time of unequalled tribulation *has not yet come*—the Lord Jesus *has not yet come* in the clouds of heaven, nor sent out His angels, nor gathered together His elect from the four winds. All these events are yet before us. And I appeal to your own consciences for the truth of what I say. Would you like to teach your little children that Jesus has already come in the clouds of heaven; that He has already gathered His elect, and that the end has already come? Would not your lips falter while you spoke? Would you not fear that you were deceiving their souls?

Almost all similar passages have been thus perverted! Do you remember the 63rd of Isaiah—“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment: for the day of vengeance is in mine heart,” &c. These words, it

* For further remarks on this chapter see **Tract** entitled “Prophecy in the xxiv. of Matthew, considered.”—Sold at 1, Warwick-Square, London.

has been said, are figurative. They may be figurative. But do these figures teach us of a season of mercy, or of a season of judgment? Do they refer to Jesus when led like a lamb to the slaughter, and like a sheep dumb before her shearers ... or when he treadeth the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God? When Jesus was led to the cross, his garments were not stained with the blood of others: He was shedding his own blood. He was not then glorious in His apparel, or travelling in the greatness of His strength—but crucified in weakness! Yet this is one of the passages which has commonly been applied to His first advent. So also the 97th Psalm, “A fire goeth before Him and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world; the earth saw and trembled.” This Psalm also, though so full in its reference to His future advent in glory, has been commonly applied to His advent in humiliation, when he came with no lightnings and no fires—when he refused to call down fire from heaven, and said the Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save.

Far be it from me to throw a veil over the pity and mercy of the Lord Jesus. It is my privilege to say, Come, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, if ye do but touch the hem of His garment. He is indeed the Lamb of God that taketh away sin. But I cannot conceal that He is also the Servant of the Most High God in executing judgment: that He is to tread the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God. We read in Scripture of “the great day of the *wrath* of the Lamb” (Rev. vi.) It is this character of the Lord that Satan has sought to conceal: and therefore many have been led not only to say that the passages are fulfilled, but to apply them to an act of mercy instead of judgment!

And I must add that the word of God ceases to be a lamp to our feet just in proportion as we believe this. For if we do not recognise this coming visitation of the Lord in righteous judgment we shall surely not recognise the evil that causes that judgment to come. And so, our estimate of the character and progress of all things in this our present dispensation being essentially at variance with the estimate of God, we shall be approving and nurturing that which, in its ripeness, God will judge!

And there need be no uncertainty in the mind of any saint

as to the character and tendency of things now around them. For the concurrent testimony of Scripture marks the close of this dispensation as being the very climax of blasphemy and abomination! Enoch's prophecy is in itself a sufficient proof of this. He was the seventh from Adam. He lived in the very infancy of the world. But of what did he prophesy? Not of the flood; not of Jerusalem's destruction; not of the sin of those who shed the blood of the Lord Jesus; he passed over all these things, and spoke of the evil that should arise out of the bosom of the professing Church. There are certain men (says the Apostle Jude) crept in unawares (into the Church), ungodly men—spots in your feasts of love. Enoch prophesied of THESE; saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, &c. This gives a fearful and wonderful character to the close of this dispensation. The progress of sin is first to misuse and prostitute the blessings which God has given, and then to deny Him who gives them. So has it been where merely natural blessings were given. They misused their blessings—they liked not to retain God in their knowledge—God gave them up, and they are worshipping stocks and stones. But it is not from the heathen, not from those who have misused mere natural blessings, that the last great abomination will spring. Sin is always aggravated in proportion to the preciousness of the blessings it perverts. They therefore who have first abused, and then forsaken, the truth of CHRIST, will manifest what the apostasy really is!

The scope of this awful apostasy will be the Roman world.* For therein Gentilism, Judaism, and Christianity have put forth in most completeness their respective energies. The eastern part of the Roman world will be more peculiarly its sphere—but Jerusalem will be its centre. In Jerusalem, a man, raised up in the energy of Satan, will command the admiration and the worship of the apostate

* See Daniel.—Ten horns of fourth beast—ten toes of the image,—ten kings (Rev. xvii.) For further information, see Tract entitled "Man of Sin," sold at 1, Warwick-Square, London.

nations: "for God shall send on them strong delusion that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. ii.) This is the time when the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, shall stand in the holy place (Matt. xxiv.) A time of wonderful magnificence and splendour—the time of Satan's and man's triumphant dominance—but a time when God's name will be openly blasphemed! Men turned away from the acknowledgment both of God and of Christ unto this Man of Sin. "Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him" (Dan. xi. 45). The Lord shall consume him with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of His coming (2 Thess. ii.)

Such are the prospects of the earth.

Suppose then I was speaking to a Jew; to a Jew who was clinging to the hopes of his nation, and was desiring to bend his steps towards Jerusalem. I would fully admit all that he could say of the future glories and blessings of Israel in Jerusalem. I would not deny the truth, nor explain away the import, of such passages as these—"Behold the days come that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah" (Jer. xxxiv.) And again, "Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation,—for I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed, for the Lord dwelleth in Zion" (Joel iii.) And again, "I will plant them upon their own land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos ix.) "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isa. xxvii. 16). I would not deny the truth of these prophecies, but I would remind him that there are other passages besides these. I would read to him those passages which describe the condition of Jerusalem *at the moment of her final deliverance*. "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel. And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee. And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust,

and thy voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust. Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly. Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire." And again, the 2nd of Joe., "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand," &c. &c. So also in Zech. xiv., "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled," &c. "Woe is me, for that day is great, it is even the day of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." "Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver and brass and iron and lead and tin into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it to melt it, so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury. And I will leave you there and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof, and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you" (Ezek.xxii.) It is into this fearful furnace that Israel is about to go. It is true that God, who does remember his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob your fathers, will interfere, and bring a "third part" of you through the fires. But it will only be a remnant. "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor remnant." In the day of your anguish and bitter sorrow, Jesus my Lord will come, "His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east;" and you will tremble and flee from his presence, though he will spare a remnant. It is not until after this that "living waters shall go forth from Jerusalem; and that Jehovah shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord and His name one."

Thus, then, I could give to the Jew a plain simple

declaration of what will yet take place in Jerusalem. For such is the character of Zech. xii. and xiv. These chapters really need no exposition, they need only be read with a simple mind to be understood. And they accord entirely with Matt. xxiv.

Therefore, if any Jew hears me now, I say to him—Your nation shall indeed be restored, the pride of the Gentiles shall be abased, and Jerusalem become the joy and the praise of the whole earth, for her name shall yet be Jehovah-Shammah.* But the dark—dark—day of which I have spoken to you must first come.

As to the prospects of his nation, such would be my testimony to a Jew. To himself as an individual I would preach the blood of Jesus.

But suppose I was speaking to a worldly Gentile—one who was pursuing the world's present schemes for glory and prosperity, and who was engrossed with the interests of this nation and the other Gentile nations which fall within the Roman world.† If he believed the word of God, I would seek to shew him the end of those nations. I would say to him—this country is indeed a country of great power: in conjunction with the other European nations, she exercises commanding influence over the whole world. But what does Scripture show to be the last condition of these mighty kingdoms? They will confederate to give their power to one who is described as a beast, upon whose heads are writ-

* The Lord is there—Ezek. lxviii. 35.

† In the time of Augustus, the Roman Empire included all the European countries west of the Rhine, and south of the Danube; all the Turkish dominions in Asia, as far as the Euphrates; all the Islands of the Mediterranean; Egypt, and all the northern coast of Africa, as far west as Sallee on the coast of Fez.

Agricola and others added the greater part of Britain, bounded by the wall of Antonius from the firth of Dumbarton to the firth of Forth. Ireland was never included in the Roman empire. Trajan added in Europe the province of Dacia. The modern names of the districts included in Dacia, are part of Hungary and Transylvania, now subject to Austria; Bessarabia in Prussia; Moldavia and Wallachia, subject to Turkey. In Asia, he reduced Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria-proper, and some adjacent districts, so that to speak generally, the shores of the Caspian and the mountains of Persia, may be given as the eastern boundary of the Roman earth, at the period of its most extended dominion.

ten the names of blasphemy (Rev. xiii). It is to this all you are so engrossed in, is fast progressing. In Dan. vii. you will find this mighty Roman empire represented by a beast "exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass, which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet." This is the kingdom, over which in its last form, as the ten toes of the great image, the Man of Sin shall reign (verses 24, 25). But then the stone of destruction shall fall on it (Dan. ii.), and it shall be utterly swept away, as the chaff of the summer threshing floor!

Such is the end of these mighty nations as revealed in Daniel—and this is again confirmed in the New Testament. For there we find all this Gentile power and glory described under two names—Babylon and Armageddon. If you read what is said in the book of Revelation concerning these, you will see that God uses them to describe the character and end of all that in which you are so interested. And would you like to stand at the end in the place either of Babylon or of Armageddon? (Read Rev. xvii. and xviii.) Would you wish to bear judgment like this from the heavy hand of God? Then if you shrink from this, how can you now help on to that which will be so visited? The principles of Babylon and Armageddon are the principles of Gentilism.

This is what I would say to one interested in the rising greatness of these nations. I would beseech him at least to see what God has said as to their end. I would say—read in Revelation concerning Babylon and Armageddon—read in Daniel about the Image smitten with the stone—(chap. vii.)—and the vision of the great tree which God watches, and which he will cut down—(chap. iv.)—read these most important chapters—chapters describing the moral character and certain end of Gentile greatness and glory as developed in the very kingdoms in which we are living.

But now suppose I was speaking to a Christian: to a Christian who might now be going to Jerusalem, because believing it to be the place where he might most efficiently labour for the Lord. I would show him the xxiv. Matthew—and I would say—Are you prepared for these things? Can you stand in the midst of Jerusalem in peace through faith in Jesus, though these things are surely at hand? I lately saw a Christian to whom I said these things. He

was going as a servant of God to Jerusalem. I asked him if he had considered what God had written concerning her coming peril and judgment. He replied—"Yes, I believe these things are coming to pass;—I have no other prospect before me in going there,—but I desire to witness there for Jesus, though these things are so." Well, I answered, if you can indeed say this, if God has given you faith to stand in such a place, it is well. But it is well to see the gathering cloud. It is well to stand in the midst of Jerusalem as hearing the Lord's own words concerning the things coming to pass therein.

But suppose I saw a Christian going to distant heathen lands, thinking of preaching the gospel there. I would say to him, Remember the parable of the wheat and the tares—and that of the foolish and wise virgins. Remember that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of Man comes. The Lord who bids you go and preach the gospel of his grace to sinners of every clime, tells you also that thus shall it be when he returns. Let your expectations then be formed by his word. And be watchful—for as a snare shall that day come on all those that dwell upon the WHOLE earth. Be faithful in your testimony, that "when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them."

The profession of Christianity may indeed extend—Christendom may advance her borders, and make many inroads on Heathenism—but it will be a field of wheat and tares until the end. Beware, therefore, of deception as to this. Beware of supposing that the preaching of the gospel will ever do more than *gather out*—or that the extension of Christendom is the dawning of Millennial blessing.

Thus would I speak to these persons respectively.

And thus we have again been furnished with a description of the condition of the world when the Lord comes. The Jews and the nations of the Roman earth in apostasy—Christendom, as the tares and the wheat—Heathen still in Heathenism.

And is not the long-suffering of God wonderful? Has He not long patience? But the hour will come for the Ancient of Days to sit. He will clothe himself with majesty—"thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten

thousand times ten thousand stood before him." This is what the Prophet saw. The throne set—not Jesus' throne, but the throne of God. The throne on which Jesus now sits, but before which He will then stand to be invested with the power and dominion under the whole heaven.

He found refuge on the throne of God when rejected and cast out from the earth. And there in patient mercy he sits—permitting the throne of iniquity to be raised by man. But then he will come forth—and the pride of man shall be laid low in that day.

He will come! And what will he *FIRST* do? Can you tell? Think of Jesus, and think of all at that time on the earth, and can you not tell what He will *first* do? It will be that which the love of His own heart has so long yearned for. Long has he yearned to claim and deliver and fully bless His own—to make manifest His Father's love for them by glorifying them together with Himself. And therefore the first thing Jesus will do, will be to raise and change his saints. This will be done in the twinkling of an eye—the instant consequence of his appearing. Wherever throughout the whole earth there is one who has touched the hem of His garment by faith, there will that one be instantly changed into the likeness of Jesus. Thus will the living saints be changed. And the dead saints will arise also. The graves will open—and wherever a saint has died and been laid in dust, there also will a glorified saint arise!

This marvellous event is before us—this scene of indescribable glory is nigh at hand. Think what a scene this will be. The Lord and His Angels above in glory; from the earth glorified saints arising and caught up in clouds to meet Him in the air! This is the sight that will burst suddenly upon the astonished world—“for when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape.” But the saints shall be made *like* Him, and they shall be *with* Him on that day. He will not inflict any of the judgments he comes to administer—nor stand upon Mount Olivet—nor tread the wine press of wrath—until all His saints are with him. They must be glorified together. The earth cannot be blessed, nay, the purifying judgments cannot be poured out—until Jesus has thus His own around Him. But when this has taken place

the Lord will utterly cast down the throne of iniquity and bring in the reign of righteousness and blessing.

Now what craft is it of Satan to throw a veil on such an event as this ! an event too which shall come—"suddenly"—"as a snare." Beware of his delusions, therefore. There has been no event like this—it is the grand event of the world's history !

And now suppose that I was able to suspend all your natural powers, and to place you in a vision in the Spirit. And suppose that while in that vision I were to show you an "angel descending from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand," and laying hold on Satan, and casting him bound into the pit. Suppose that you next saw disembodied spirits, souls departed from the body ; and then that you saw these souls reunited to the body, and, after being thus restored to life, seated on kingly thrones, and reigning together with Christ. Suppose all this to pass before you in vision, while a voice said to you, "This is the first resurrection ; blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection ; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be Priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." Do you think you could misunderstand this ? Do you think a child would misunderstand it ? Can any thing be more simple or distinct ? Surely we need only be as little children, and this will be as plain to us, as that Adam eat of the fruit of the tree in Eden, or that the Lord Jesus died upon the cross.

This, then, is what God has revealed. Satan is to be bound, but the saints are to rise and reign with Jesus. Accordingly you will find that this was the special hope of the apostle Paul—that he might "attain unto the resurrection *from* the dead." Surely he had no doubt whether all would be raised finally—nor could he have spoken of a universal resurrection as an object of special privilege and attainment. Neither could he have referred to any thing he desired for his soul merely—for the soul is never raised, because it never dies. The *body* only is raised ; and therefore the Apostle must be speaking of this first resurrection, so plainly revealed in Rev. xx., as the object of his earnest desire. And this accords with the words—"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the *first* resurrection."

Indeed Scripture teems with proofs of the first resurrection—the resurrection of saints only. “The *rest of the dead* lived *not* until the thousand years were ended.”

And those thus raised will, as this blessed vision shows us, reign with Christ in His kingdom of glory. They will all be like Jesus in body soul and spirit. They will be in the image of God. Man was first created in His image—but this was only a type of what should be. So that I look back at that first creation as a sorrowful scene of ruin—all its beauty and order lost—but I can also look at this book of visions, and here I see the new Adam and his Eve upright, holy, and blessed for ever, before God. How happy to be able to look at the beautiful things that are past for ever, and say—I care not for their being as shattered fragments *now*, because, in their original beauty, they were only pledges of that which *shall yet be* in the power of Him who quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that are not as though they were.

And why should it seem strange to us that the risen, perfected, glorified saints should, from heaven (which will always be their home) revisit this earth, and reign over it? We read of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day—and of Moses and Elias appearing in glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. If we believe this, then surely we can believe that when the time comes for the saints to rise, Satan to be bound—Israel to be blest, and creation freed, and in joy and beauty—that then it will not be a strange thing that Jesus, the Son of Man, should visit a creation which has been brought beneath the power of His redemption, and over which he will be king—for it is written, “The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one” (Zech. xiv). And again—“All people, nations and languages shall serve him,”—and again, “The saints of the high places shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever” (Dan. vii).

Again—is it not the glory of God Himself to be the dispenser of goodness and blessing? “He openeth His hand and supplieth the want of every living thing.” Will it not then be worthy of the Church to be, with her Lord, the fountain and channel of every order of blessing—the source

of health and peace to the whole creation? Well, this is the prospect given to the suffering saints of God. They will bring blessing and peace and love into this very creation.

Above, they will have fellowship with God—The Church is the fulness of Him who filleth all in all. Her place is above every name that is named in this world or in the world to come.

But in the heavenly city those leaves will grow which are for the healing of the nations. This may be said to be a symbol; but it matters not what the symbol is, it is enough for us to know that something is found there for the healing of the nations, to show us that that heavenly city is to minister healing *to others*. For none will need healing in her; but beneath there will be those who need healing and cure. Provision is made therefore for this in the heavenly city. The nations shall walk by means of the light of it, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor unto it.

Do you ask who are those nations who will thus be healed? Most of the heathen nations—many Jews—all indeed left on the earth after the vengeance has been poured out. And will they not need to be healed with heavenly mercy?

Suppose yourself a poor dark Jew to that hour, and that you went through that awful day. Suppose you saw the world around you emptied by destruction from God. Every strong hold and boastful work of man swept away as with a flood, and that you were left terrified and amazed, not expecting these things and yet spared—spared a monument of mercy amidst the ruin wrought by His righteous hand—having seen the Lord and the glory of His Majesty when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth—suppose this, and you can easily conceive how you would need healing in your soul—how you would need comfort and peace and instruction from God—how you would need to receive His Holy Spirit.

For remember nothing that I preach to you about the coming of Jesus alters any of these great relations of man to God. Only through the blood of Jesus can any ever know peace—only the Holy Spirit can ever lead any into truth. Therefore we read, “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants

of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. xiii. 1). "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," &c. (Joel ii.)

Thus, therefore, will the spared ones of Israel be taught to rejoice in the salvation of God. They will put their mouths in the dust—they will mourn and weep in bitterness—but Christ will comfort them. He will deal with them as Joseph dealt with his guilty and trembling brethren—"I am Joseph your brother whom ye sold into Egypt; now therefore be ye not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life" (Gen. xlv). This will be the character Christ will then sustain towards his brethren in the flesh. He will pour oil and balm into their troubled souls, and make them at length rejoice and sing. Yea, soon after shall men look on them and call them the priests of the Lord. Ten men shall lay hold on the skirt of him that is a Jew, and shall say we will go with you for God is with you. Their land shall be no more desolate—strangers shall no more possess it—but it shall be a delightsome land; the land from whence instruction, and healing, and cure shall flow out among all nations of the earth. Then will it be seen that the receiving back of Israel is as life from the dead (Rom. xi.) How distinct as to this is the lxvii. Psalm:—"God be merciful unto us, and bless us, &c. &c., that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health unto all nations:—God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." That is—after mercy has been shown to Israel, blessing shall flow forth through them unto all the ends of the earth. Then will Isaiah xi. be fulfilled, and then shall Israel sing that blessed song of thanksgiving and praise found in Isaiah xii. "With joy shall they draw water out of the wells of salvation."

I ask you to observe what a change all this will produce—how contrasted as to every circumstantial matter the present dispensation is from the next.

Now—Christ is not seated on His own throne, but on the throne of God, waiting for that word, "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies"—

Now—Israel is blinded, wrath is on them—

Now—Christians suffer reproach ; their calling is to do well and suffer for it, having thus to follow the footsteps of Christ (1 Pet. ii. 20, 21)—

Now—Satan is unbound, going about as a roaring lion on earth, and accusing the saints before God in heaven—

Now—The kingdoms of the earth are represented as beasts—monsters.

Here are five great marks of this present age:—but as soon as this day of man is over,

Then—Christ will have sat down on His own throne, as now He sits on His Father's throne—

Then—The saints will be risen and in glory, their day of reproach and suffering past, reigning together with Jesus—

Then—The Jews, no longer sunk in darkness, and beneath God's curse, but established in blessing and honour, according to that word, " Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the beauty of the Lord is risen upon thee"—

Then—Satan, no longer at large, deceiving the nations and harassing the saints, but bound in the bottomless pit—

Then—The kingdoms of this earth, no longer destroying monsters, but governed by the Son of Man, and so ruled that all nations shall call him blessed.

Such is the picture which Scripture gives of the present and the coming dispensations. In Scripture you have God's history of the world ; its past, present, and future history. But how different is God's history of the world to man's ! You may take then either one or the other. You may study things past, present, and to come, either according to the unerring word of God, or according to the notions and surmises of man.

Indeed there can be no right understanding of Scripture if these things are not seen. For all past Scripture affords types of what is now before us—as for example, Gideon and his victory. And thus events so long past become sure pledges of events yet future. We stand between the two : so that this is another place in which the saint may now stand. Not only as Isaiah, looking forward in prospect to eastern nations yet to rise in grandeur and yet to be abased by God—not only as the Apostles with Jesus, as in Matt.

xxiv.—but also as able to look back on every type of blessing, and forward to every accomplished blessing, and say— all this is in principle true of me *now*. Such is the place of the Church through faith in Jesus—all the promises of God in Him are yea and in Him Amen, and we are established *in Him* of God. Thus by faith we have all things even now.

But then as to external, actual circumstances :— Am I now in a quiet resting-place—am I now surrounded by nought but witnesses of righteousness and peace? Do our actual circumstances accord with our portion in Jesus? No, indeed. Therefore we must carefully distinguish as to this. It is true that all things are ours in spirit—faith knows this. But this is not outwardly true. The outward picture is indeed widely different. But Satan labours by ten thousand devices to conceal the outward circumstances both of the future and the present; he seeks to gloss over present facts and to hide the revelation of God as to future things, and thus lead you to think that you have already entered into all the blessing; that the world around you is ripening for blessing also, and that the time of rest is come. But it is not so—and this those who have learnt rightly to divide the word well know.

And now in conclusion I would say, are these things felt to be depressing? Do you feel that just as they obtain power over your souls you are humbled and restrained? Well—this is what God desires and intends; this is the way God leads into blessing. “The voice said, Cry—and he said, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass!” It is the intention of God to have this inwrought into your souls if He would bless you. This is very contrary to man’s ways, but it is God’s way with every soul whom He blesses. He makes us feel those words, “All flesh is grass,” if He intends to speak comfortably unto us. And we need this; for we have Egyptian hearts. We have the world within. And this is why we so like to make the world fairer, that we may thus flatter our own hearts. But God desires to write destruction on every natural thought, and every merely natural feeling. And when we are able to say this of self and of things around, then are we able to prize the Saviour and

lean only on God. "Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help" (Hos. xiii. 9).

May you know more and more, therefore, of the chastening comfort of the truth of God. It is the bruised soul which knows the preciousness of the oil of grace—that forgiveness and tender mercy which comes through the blood of the Lord Jesus!