

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

GOD'S ESTIMATE OF TIME.

A Sermon

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"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."—2 Peter iii. 8.

FROM this text certain persons, more desirous to find arguments for their theories, than a truthful exposition of the apostle's meaning, have drawn the inference that a day in Scripture is typical of a thousand years: that is to say, that inasmuch as God was six days in creating the heavens and the earth, and then rested on the seventh day, so we must expect to have a thousand years for every day; a thousand years in which the new heavens and the new earth will be in preparation, and then we shall enjoy in the seventh thousand a period of perfect peace and holiness. Now such may possibly be the case. It may so happen that when the six thousandth year of labour shall be over, we shall enter upon the millennial rest; the last chiliad may be a Sabbath to the preceding six. But even if we knew this, I am not sure that it would be of any great assistance to us in foretelling the day when the Church militant should be universally triumphant through the coming of her Lord, for the chronology of the past is surrounded with so much obscurity that we question whether any man will be able to tell us when the six thousand years will be over, or within a hundred or two of how old the world is. Our curiosity would be rather tantalized than gratified, even if this theory could be verified; for all the chronologies we have, even that which the translators have put into our Bibles, are matters of conjecture, and their accuracy is far from indisputable. We could not, therefore, ascertain the times and seasons any the more certainly, nor ought we to desire to do so, for the Father keepeth them in his own power, and as for the time of the end we believe no man knoweth it, no, not the angels of God. Brethren, we would not wish to discover what God has hidden, nor to question where he declines to answer. It is certain, however, that our text does not teach the doctrine of the Sabbatic seventh thousand years; for looking at the whole drift of the passage, you will see that the words were written to meet the arguments of some who said, "Where is the promise of his coming; for

since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." "No," answers the apostle, "It is not so;" and then he quotes the memorable case of the flood as an instance of Divine interposition. Knowing, moreover, that even the faithful had begun to chide the tardy hours, and think the promise long in fulfilment, he meets the adversary and consoles the friend by the words of our text. He as much as says, "You know not what you say when you speak of length of time, for you forget that in God's estimate one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." The apostle, no doubt, wrote this also for the encouragement of Christians in our day, who, because the chariot of Christ is long in coming to the triumph, are growing weary, and are ready to cast down their arms and leave the conflict. Like a good officer rallying the dispirited, he exhorts them to patience; "Beloved, it is not long; it may seem a tedious age to you; but it is fitting that you tarry for a while. Cease your impatience, and while you cry, 'Why are his chariots so long in coming?' remember that the time is not long to him; to him one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day." What the apostle seemed to teach was, the general principle that our estimate of time is not the right one, certainly not the Divine standard; and that when we look at time in relation to God, we must remember that the distinctions which are known to us are not observed by him.

Before, however, I enter upon the subject itself, let me remark that the apostle says he would not have us ignorant concerning this matter; and therefore, beyond a doubt, great importance is to be attached to it. Some have a wilful ignorance, and of them the apostle speaks in the preceding verse: "This they willingly are ignorant of." See to it, brethren, that ye do not commit this sin of shutting your eyes to the light. Others have an idle ignorance; they will not study; they do not search the Scriptures; and, therefore, many things are not revealed to them. That the soul should be without knowledge is not good; and more especially, that the Christian's mind should be without knowledge of God must be exceedingly harmful. We cannot form an idea of what God is, but we should be very careful that we do not make him to be what he is not. Our apostle is the more earnest that upon this point of God's eternity we should make no mistakes, and should not estimate and measure the existence of the Infinite One by our rules and standards, because, practically, the worst effects may flow from an error here; impatience may ripen into unbelief; this may rot into petulant complaint, and that may breed inaction, sloth, disobedience, rebellion, and we know not how many other evils.

But now, to the text at once, and we will handle it, as God shall help us, in three ways. First, we shall say a little as to *the general principle of the text*; secondly, taking the words of the passage, we shall dwell upon *God's estimate of a day*; and then, in the third place, still keeping to the words of the sentence, we shall enlarge upon *God's estimate of a thousand years*.

I. First of all, then, we shall take the statement before us AS A GENERAL PRINCIPLE, "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

1 In opening up this general principle, we remark that *all time is equally present with God*. When we know that an event is to transpire to-day, it appears very near to us; but when we know that it will not occur until a thousand years have elapsed, we think nothing of it; we feel that we shall have gone to our graves long before that era, and therefore, the event does not strike us as having any connection with ourselves. Now, it is not so with God. All things are equally near and present to his view; the distance of a thousand years before the occurrence of an event, is no more to him than would be the interval of a day. With God, indeed, there is neither past, present, nor future. He takes for his name the "I AM." He does not call himself the "I WAS," for then we should conceive that he used to be something which he is not now; that some part of his character had changed, or some attribute ceased from existence; for there is an ominous sound of annihilation in the sound of the word, "He WAS." Is it not rather a knell for the dead, than a name for the living? Nor does our Lord God speak of himself as the "I SHALL BE," for that might lead us to imagine that he is not now something which he is to be in the ages to come: whereas, we know that his being is perfect, his essence infinite, his dominion absolute, his power unlimited, and his glory transcendent. Development is out of the question, he is all to-day that he will be in future. Of the Lord Jesus we read that he is the Everlasting Father, and yet he has the dew of his youth. Childhood, manhood and old age belong to creatures, but at the right hand of the Most High they have no abode. Growth, progress, advancement, all these are virtues in finite beings, but to the Infinite the thought of such change would be an insult. Yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow, belong to dying mortal, the Immortal King lives in an eternal *to-day*. He is the I AM; I AM in the present; I AM in the past; and I AM in the future. Just as we say of God that he is everywhere, so we may say of him that he is always; he is everywhere in space; he is everywhere in time. God is to-day in the past; he is to-day already in the future; he is to-day in that present in which we are.

This is a subject upon which we can only speak without ourselves fully understanding what we say, but yet, perhaps, a metaphor may tend to make the matter a little simpler. There is a river flowing along in gentle slope toward the sea. A boatman is upon it; his vessel is here; anon it is there; and soon it will be at the river's mouth; only that part of the river upon which he is sailing is present to him. But up yonder, on a lofty mountain, stands a traveller; as he looks from the summit he marks the source of the river and gazes upon its infant stream, where as yet it is but a narrow line of silver; then he follows it with his clear eye until it swells into a rolling flood, and he tracks it till it is finally absorbed into the ocean. Now, as the climber stands upon that Alp, that whole sparkling line of water adorning the plain is equally present to him from its source to its fall; there is not one part of the stream which is nearer to him than another; in the long distance he sees the whole of it, from the end to the beginning. The boatman yonder has shifted his place since we have been looking upon him from the top of the mountain; he cannot see the whole of the river; he can only speak of the river under the heads of where he was, where he is,

and where he is to be ; but we who see it as a whole speak of it as a whole, and it is all present before our view. Such, we think, is the stream of time to God. From the altitude of his observance he looketh down upon it and seeth it at one gaze ; taking in, not at many thoughts, but at one thought, all the revolutions of time and all the changes of ages, and seeing both the thousands of years that have gone, and the thousands that are yet to come, as present at one view before his eye. Or, to use another figure : there are some stars which are known as double-stars, and with the strongest telescope it seems impossible to discover any distance between them ; they are all but joined ; there are certain motions by which the astronomer perceives they are two stars and not one, but to the common observer they seem one. Even with the strongest telescope, we say, no distance is apparent between them ; and yet it is perfectly certain that there may be millions and millions of miles of space between those two stars, but from the distance at which we stand they resolve themselves into one. So it is with the events of time. Such, for instance, as the fall and the redemption ; there is to us a space of some thousands of years ; but God, who is far-seeing, from his lofty throne looketh down upon them and they resolve themselves into one. He sees the fall as taking place in the morning of time, and the redemption as completed ere even-tide has come. To him they are one thought. We look at the fall and weep over it, and then afterwards we view the restoration in Christ and rejoice ; but God regards the whole as one—the fall and the rising again of Israel are one. He linketh them so closely together that he clearly beholds the glory which by the whole occurrence is brought to him, and the common good which is given to the creatures that his hands have made. I know that by figures, however simple we may make them, we cannot set forth God to human eyes, for the face of none of his attributes can be seen ; yet it seems to me that we may by these thoughts be led to remember that a thousand years in the future are to God but as one day, and so too with the past, since he looketh upon all things in one eternal NOW, as they stand perpetually present before his eye.

Let the sinner recollect this. His sins, he says, were committed ten or twenty years ago ; to God they are present in unmitigated hue of scarlet at this moment. Let the sinner recollect this when he thinks of death and of the penalty after death. “Ah,” he says, “it is a long time to come.” Not so, sinner ; to God it is but as a day, and if thou couldst estimate it aright, how near the judgment is to thee, and how close are those consuming flames into which impenitent souls must be cast ! Think of this, I pray thee, O dying man, tremble, and God help thee to look upon thy years as one day, and oh ! remember, that one day in hell will be more painful than a thousand years on earth. God keep thee from that place, for his name’s sake !

2. Still, taking the text as a general principle, it teaches us in the next place, *that all time is equally powerless with God to affect him*. A day does not make any particular change in us that we can notice. We do not meet our friend at night, after having seen him the previous morning, and say, “My dear Sir, how much older you look !” There is no doubt we all do grow older in one day, but the change is not very perceptible.

at least by such coarse, common optics as those which mortal men possess. But if you take fifty years—what a difference is perceptible in any of us! Some of my dear friends round about me, who are now grey or bald, were, fifty years ago, fine, tall, handsome young men, in the full strength and vigour of their days; and others of us, twenty years ago were prattling boys, fond of play and frolic, and now we have come to manhood, and are bearing the burden and heat of the day. The fingers of time blot the epistle of life very sadly. As to this present congregation, wait but a hundred years and where shall we all be? Unless the Lord come we shall every one of us be slumbering in the dust, awaiting the trump of the archangel. But as a day seems to make no change with us, so, but far more truthfully, a thousand years make no change with God. Ages roll on, but he abideth the same as when the waves break themselves against the rock, but the rock standeth fast for ever. Brethren, we need be under no apprehension that God will ever be affected with *weakness* through the revolutions of time. The Ancient of Days, ever omnipotent, fainteth not, neither is weary. Is the Lord's arm waxed short? Is his ear heavy that he cannot hear? Is his arm shortened that he cannot save? We shall find, if this creaking earth is to perform revolutions upon its axle for another thousand years longer, that the Lord will shew himself as strong to help his servants, and as mighty to crush his foes as aforetime. And as time brings no weakness, certainly it shall bring no *decay* to God. Upon his brow there is ne'er a furrow; no signs of palsy are in his hand. In the vision his head and hair, we are told, are white like wool, as white as snow, as the emblem of his eternity, as the Ancient of Days; but "his locks are bushy and black as the raven," said another, as the emblem of his perpetual youth and of his eternal strength. O Sun, thy fires shall one day become extinct! O Moon, thou shalt hide thy light! and you, ye Stars, when ye are ripe shall fall like fig-leaves from the tree! and as for thee, O Earth, thine ancient mountains already crumble to decay, and thou thyself and all that dwelleth on thee shalt pass away as a garment that is worn out! but as for thee, O God, thou art the same, and of thy years there is no end; from everlasting to everlasting thou art God! And as no weakness and no decay can be brought to God by time, so *no change in his purpose* can ever come through revolving years. To that which he hath set his seal he standeth fast, and what his heart decrees, that will he do. He knoweth no repentance; he is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent.

Moreover, as there can be no change in his decree, so *no unforeseen difficulties can intervene to prevent the accomplishment of it*. Hath he not said, and will he not do it? Hath he not commanded, and shall it not come to pass? There shall be no unforeseen and unprovided energy required; no unexpected impediments shall block up his path. Up till to-day he has levelled the mountains and bridged the seas; up till now his own right hand and his holy arm have gotten him the victory; up till now no weapon formed against him has prospered, and every tongue that has risen against him in judgment he has condemned; and so shall it be world without end. As long as there is a work to do, he

shall do it; as long as there is an enemy to conquer, that enemy shall be overcome. Conquering and to conquer is thy course, O Lord, and throughout all ages thou art the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. One day, in the matter of change, is to God as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

3. Yet further; no doubt the text intends to teach *that all time is insignificant to God*. Within the compass of a drop of water we are told that sometimes a thousand living creatures may be discovered, and to those little creatures no doubt their size is something very important. There is a creature inside that drop which can only be seen by the strongest microscope, but it is a hundred times larger than its neighbour, and it feels, no doubt, that the difference is amazing and extraordinary. But to you and to me, who cannot even see the largest creature with the naked eye, the gigantic animalcule is as imperceptible as his dwarfish friend, they both seem so utterly insignificant that we squander whole millions of them, and are not very penitent if we destroy them by thousands. But what would one of those little infusorial animals say if some prophet of its own kind could tell it that there is a creature living that could count the whole world of a drop of water as nothing, and could take up ten thousand thousand of those drops and scatter them without exertion of half its power; that this creature would not be encumbered if it should carry on the tip of its finger all the thousands that live in that great world—a drop of water; that this creature would have no disturbance of heart, even if the great king of one of the empires in that drop should gather all his armies against it and lead them to battle? Why, then the little creatures would say, “How can this be; we can hardly grasp the idea?” But when that infusorial philosopher could have gotten an idea of man, and of the utter insignificance of its own self, and of its own little narrow world, then it would have achieved an easy task compared with that which lies before us when we attempt to get an idea of God. The fact is, it is only because he is infinite that he can even observe our existence. We think of the infinite nature of God in being able to marshal all the stars, and govern all the orbs which bespangle the brow of night; but I take it to be quite as great a wonder that he should even know that such insignificant nothings as we are in existence, much more that he should count every hair of our heads, and not suffer one of them to fall to the ground without his express decree. The Infinite is as much known in the minute as in the magnanimous, and God may be as really discovered by us in the drop of water as in the rolling orb; but this is wonderful of God, that he even observeth us. What think you now, brethren? Do you not think that the thousand years which we make so much fuss about are only comparable to a drop, and that the one day that we think so little of is a particle of that drop, and that both the drop and the particle are alike to God, and are utterly insignificant to him? They are not to be mentioned; they are but cyphers in his great existence; they are but drops in the ocean of his life; they are but one leaf in an eternal forest of existence; they are but one grain of sand on the mighty shore of the perpetual being of the ever-living one. A thousand years are as a day, and a day as a thousand years.

4. I think we ought also to learn from the text *that all time is equally obedient to God*. You and I are the servants of time, but God is its sovereign Master. I cannot make an hour longer than it is—I often wish I could. When there is but an hour's space between some important labour, and more preparation is needed, one would pull an hour at both ends if one could; but it is rigidly an hour, and refuses to be lengthened. There are times when we would make a day, if we could, much shorter; when we are racked with pain, we say in the morning, "Would God it were evening!" We want to bring the two ends of the day together, but unhappily they refuse to start from their fixed position. Time, inexorable Time, goes on, with so many ticks of the clock, and though every motion of the pendulum may be as the cutting of a sword into our vitals, yet Time will not relent, but on he goes—to the miserable he will never be fast, and to the happy he will never be slow; he himself and his footsteps retain incessantly one ordained motion. Not so, however, with God. Time is not his master. If he shall say to the sun, "Stand still, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon," they must stand there eternally, unless he bids them move again; and if, on the other hand, he should bid them speed their course till the dial should go forward many degrees, it must be so. The horses of the sun must hasten their speed; they must fly onward as God himself shall ordain, for he is their charioteer, and the reins are in his hands. To him if the days were longer, or if they were shorter, it would be nothing; he careth not for these. Oh, brethren, we understand him not; but let us adore him; we cannot comprehend him, but let us admire him. I say again, this is wonderful that he is Time's Master, and bids him move slowly or rapidly, and Time is obedient to the behests of the Eternal God. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

II. Only a few words upon the second head.—GOD'S ESTIMATE OF A DAY. He can make a day as useful, and to him it shall be as long as a thousand years.

Brethren, I think this is one of the most brilliant of the Church's hopes. We have been saying, "How many converts have been made by the Missionary Society during fifty or sixty years?" and we have said, "Well, at this rate, how long will it be before the world is converted?" Ah! "At this rate;" but how do you know God's rate? God can do as much in a day as has been done in a thousand years that are past, if so he wills it. To the snail a furlong is a very long distance, but to a stag or a hound how little it is; and then to a steam-engine it is nothing; and then to a ray of light it becomes nothing at all; and then there may be something that travels as much more swiftly than light as light does more swiftly than the snail, and then where would distance be? It is annihilated; it is gone. So is work, and labour, and toil with God. It is for you and I continually to work, work, work, and if our pace be but that of the snail, we must still persevere, hoping to reach the end. But the day may come when God shall make one minister more mighty than a thousand; when one sermon shall be enough to convert a congregation; when that one congregation shall in an instant be endowed with fiery tongues and all the brethren shall go forth and themselves become preachers; and ere one day, one natural day is set,

it may be possible for God to have made the light of the gospel flash from one end of the earth to the other, as quickly as the light of the sun travels from east to west. Limit not the Holy One of Israel.

“When he makes bare his arm,
What shall his work withstand?
When he his people's cause defends,
Who, who shall stay his hand?”

When he cometh forth out of his chamber like the sun, what thick darkness shall shade his light? He looseth the bands of Orion, and guideth Arcturus with his sons; shall he not when he chooses loose the bands of his Church, and guide forth those stars of his right hand—the chosen preachers of the gospel of Christ? Only let him will it, and there shall be one day written in the records of the Church that shall be equal in achievements, in conquests, and in triumphs, to any thousand years of her history recorded aforetime. This should lead us to remember that when God speaketh of judging the world at the day of judgment, he will find no difficulty in doing it. Two hundred judges might find it difficult to try in one day all the cases that might be brought before them in a single nation, but God, when he holdeth the great assize, shall be able to convict every guilty one, and to absolve every penitent, and that, too, in one day. The Judgment could not be performed better if it lasted through an age; it shall be none the worse because it is confined to a day. Oh Master, let us see thy great works! Come thou forth, and once again make days illustrious things. When thou broughtest up thy people out of Egypt, when thou didst lead them through the Red sea, thou needest not a thousand years to break the chivalry of Egypt, and to raise a wail from the sons of Mizraim. 'Twas but an uplifted rod; a few hours of divided sea, a terrific union of the parted floods, and lo, Egypt's horses and chariots passed away, and they sank like lead in the mighty waters. Thou needest not a thousand years to break the power of Jabin, king of Hazor,—thou didst but speak, and the mighty river, the river Kishon, swept them away; the stars fought from heaven, the stars fought against Sisera. The might of the heathen was broken, and Israel was free. Thou didst not need a thousand years to drive back Sennacherib. Lo, thou didst put thy bit into his mouth and thy hook into his nose, and in one night the angel of the Lord smote the horse and the rider and they lay dead, and thou leddest him back into confusion into the house of his God, and he fell by the hands of the offspring of his bowels. Glory be unto thee, Jehovah! When thou risest up in the greatness of thy might thou shalt slay kings and overthrow mighty kings; the two-leaved gates of brass shall open and the bars of iron shall be cut in pieces; thou shalt in one day cause the nations of the earth to say, “The Lord, he is God, the Lord, he is God, the Lord, he is God alone.”

III. But we now turn to notice GOD'S ESTIMATE OF A THOUSAND YEARS. A day is to him as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The complaint which is brought by mournful unbelieving Zion is, “He is long in coming; his widowed spouse waiteth for him, but the bridegroom tarrieth.” Oh, the long and dreary winter, oh, the dark and dreary winter, when will summer come? When shall the rain

be over and passed, and the voice of the turtle be heard in our land? We have tarried 1860 years and more, and yet no coming of the Son of Man. The dweller in the isle bringeth no tribute, the inhabitant of the wilderness boweth not to lick the dust. Christ reigneth not yet in Jerusalem, nor do his ancients behold his face wearing the crown of his Father David. "How long, how long?" the saints under the altar cry, "How long?" and the saints at the altar here to-day take up the same wailing notes, "How long? how long? how long?" But he answereth. "I am not long. What if I have waited and the time is long to you; yet it is not long to me." God bids you think for a moment, that if you really measure aright, it is no lengthened period of time that he has made the vision to tarry. For see you first, my brethren, the time that has elapsed since Christ's crucifixion is not long *compared with eternity*. Try if you can to measure Eternity. You will find your task impossible. Even should another thousand years roll on, what would some three thousand years be compared with Eternity? You might form a comparison between a shellful of water from the sea in the child's hand and the whole of the sea itself, but it were not possible by human figures to put down the comparison between two or three thousand years and Eternity. Nay, the comparison cannot be made; it is nothing contrasted with all things; it is the unit put in comparison with the infinite. Wherefore, therefore, do you think him long? If in all eternity you are to meditate upon the riches of God in Christ revealed to you in these 6000 years, if through all the eternal cycles this is to be the subject of your meditation, do you wonder that it should have been so long? Marvel you not rather that it should be so short a time?

Then, again, when ye say that God is long in the accomplishment of his great purposes, remember that *he has no need to be in a hurry*. Whatsoever you and I find to do, we must do it with all our might: for there is neither work nor device in the grave whither we are hastening; but God liveth, and liveth for ever. Our sun goes down; if the labourer would get his day's work done, he must toil with the sweat upon his brow; but God's sun never goeth down; he may, like a God, take his own time, and go about his work leisurely; surely he need not run to reach his purpose. When two little kings grow offended with one another, straightway they hasten into war; but when some mighty monarchy becomes provoked, it can take its time, and wait, and marshal all its troops for the affray. Ye might have seen yesterday, the clouds gathering hastily, with the winds pursuing them in fierce rushings. Their black host speedily covered the face of the sky, the rain fell in rattling drops, and poured upon the earth in torrents, there was haste and fury, but we knew from the very haste with which the clouds came together, that they only betokened a hurried storm. But it is when the clouds come slowly up to the great rendezvous—when at last God's trumpet sounds to summon his black warriors to the battle—when ye behold, at length, the sharp flash, the glitter of his spear, who is the Lord of tempests, and his mighty ones come up to be marshalled in their line: then the trumpet soundeth again exceeding loud and long, and for many an hour the earth shall be deluged with the rain, and men shall shake when they hear the voice of God breaking the cedar and rending the moun-

tain-tops. That which gathereth long lasteth long; the little is always in a hurry, but the great can wait. "He that believeth shall not make haste," simply because believing makes him great; and God, on whom believers rest, makes no haste because of his greatness; he may well take his time, and go leisurely about his work. There is no need, we say, that the Lord our God, who is rich in years, should spend his time as we must needs do who have but slender store.

Besides, there is an advantage in his being slow—*it tries our faith*. We are getting weary, some of us, because we have little faith; but if the Church of Christ shall keep on from this day till another thousand years sending out the pick of her ministry to the most desolate regions to preach; if she shall continue to send her young, brave sons, fresh to the altar of distant martyrdom; if our Churches at home shall continue to pay a spiritual taxation like that which Israel paid when Solomon's temple was in the building; if every one of us shall be willing to spend and to be spent for God; and if the Church shall keep at that stretch for two thousand years to come; (we pray God she may not have the trial,) but if she should, then there will be honour unto her God, who by his grace sustained her, and there will be honour to her faith, which thus honoured God. To win a fight when it lasteth but for an hour, what is there in it? One gallant charge and the foemen have fled. Comrade, but that is a battle worthy to be written with your Waterloos and your Marathons, when hour after hour, and day after day, valour disdains to succumb, and patience endures the fight while foot to foot the soldiers stand. To see gallant courage fiercely longing for the charge, but obediently awaiting the signal. Look, brethren, how they stand like lions at bay, stand bearing wounds, and agony, and the horrors of death, until at last, the captain giveth the triumphant signal, and they dash upon their foes, the ranks of the enemy are broken, and the foemen fall at their feet. So is it to-day. We are standing in our Churches, like British soldiers in their solid square, we roll our deadly musketry against our enemy, but the foe is in the distance, and we cannot reach him as we would. Great Master, thou shalt come, and then at one triumphant charge, we shall give but one great cheer—"The Lord God omnipotent reigneth," and they shall fly like chaff before the whirlwind, and like the mist before the storm.

Further, it is well that God should thus be long, *because he is unravelling revelation*. I fear me, I have seldom been in the position of those hearers, who would wish the preacher to be longer, but there have been books of which one could say when we have reached the last page, "Would that there were another volume, that our interest might continue!" Now, what is the history of the Church, but the great book of God's revelation of himself to man? The Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to loose the seals, and to open the book for us, and year after year he reads another page, and yet another in the Church's history. Brethren, if Christ should come to-day, if we should have no more conflicts, no more difficulties, no more trials, then we might suppose that the book had come to its brilliant golden finish; but if it keepeth on a thousand years to come, so much the better: the glowing eyes of angels wish not for the end of the story, and the bright eyes of immortal spirits

before the throne, when it shall be all over, shall not regret that it was too long. No, let it go on, great Master; let a thousand years run on; our loving hearts will patiently bear it, as though it were but one day.

And more: the victory of Christ at the end will be all the greater, and the redemption all the more glorious, because of this long time of strife and confusion. I have often admired, in reading history, how in the grand duel between good and evil, God has seemed to give all the advantage to his foe. Did you notice this in the combat of old between Patience and Suffering? God is in Job; Job is on a dunghill: the messengers come in such an order as most naturally to break his spirit: at last he is touched in his bone, and in his flesh with sore blains, and yet in spite of that, Job on the dunghill, is master over the Prince of hell, with Providence at his back. God gave the foeman the advantage, and yet won the victory. So, in the greater battle which is waging now; when first the gospel was preached, learning, eloquence, and power, all these might aid the cause, but Christ disdained to take them. "No," said he, "my enemy shall have the learning; the philosophers of Greece shall have the wisdom of men; their orators shall wield all eloquence, but not my apostles; as for power, I have not chosen the great ones of this world." So that the eloquence, learning, pomp, and power of nations were put into the opposite scale, and then Christianity came out, like a naked wrestler, all unarmed against one that was clothed from head to foot in mail of proof. The gospel cometh out like a David with nothing but a sling and a stone against one the staff of whose spear is like a weaver's beam. See the hosts of Philistia come up armed to the teeth every one of them, and there are thousands of them: there is God's hero; he is but one man; he has no weapon save the decayed bone of an ass's jaw, but he dashes at them right and left, hip and thigh, with a great slaughter, and smites them till heaps upon heaps with the jaw bone of an ass has he slain a thousand men. Brethren, whenever you see anything in the world which would lead you to believe that the enemy is getting the upper hand, say, "Ah, it is only God throwing in the advantage on the side of his enemies." The battle was fair enough before, but he is giving them all on their side, letting them have every weapon, bidding them take all the power, and all the wit, and all the eloquence and learning. We will beat them yet. Now in the name of him that liveth and was dead once more we, who are God's servants, full of weakness, throw down the gauntlet against the world that seems to be omnipotent; against your learning, and your eloquence, and your multitudes, and your authorities, and your dignities, your powers and your state alliances, we still throw down the gauntlet; take it up, O earth, if thou darest, but remember when we make the challenge, we expect stern fighting. We know from God's authority, which cannot lie, that a glorious victory awaiteth us. Now see ye, brethren, this is why God is a thousand years about it. He can shake the old harlot of the seven hills to-morrow if he will; he can knock down the idol gods to-day if so it pleaseth him. To-night, before you and I go to sleep, every idol might be cast to the moles and to the bats if Jehovah willed it, but he does not. "No," says he, "they shall have their time; they shall have their opportunity; they shall strive against

me; I will hold in my power; I will not go forth against them; I will let them lay their plans with deliberation and execute their schemes at their leisure, but I will laugh at them in their preparations, and I will at last crush them in my hot displeasure;" and then the shout shall be the louder, and the choral song shall be the more mighty, and the everlasting hallelujah shall have a deeper bass, and yet it shall have a shriller note of glory when at the last the triumph shall be won. After all the four hundred years of Israel's bondage, Egypt's power was broken and Israel went free; while Miriam took her timbrel and danced before the Lord: so we also shall, in a few days, when all the adversaries are overthrown, take up for ourselves the same song of Moses and the Lamb—"Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he cast into the sea. So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord, and let them that hate thee become as the fat of rams."

I shall now leave my subject to the consideration of the faithful to cheer their hearts. If you think the work has been long and tedious, you will not think so any more, brother, if you obey Peter's exhortation, "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." As to those present who know not Christ, may the one day of their conversion take place to-day; and that one day of God's grace and favour in their hearts they shall find to be as good as a thousand years spent in the pleasures of sin. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned." God help us to believe, for Christ's sake!
Amen.