

shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect, and to hasten Thy kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed this life in the true faith of Thy holy name, may have perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Thy eternal and everlasting glory." This bright hope of the children of God is shared in by the very world that they inhabit; creation herself sympathises with them, and looks forward with longing expectation to the consummation of the saints.

It was for the purpose of enhancing the conception which believers should cherish, of the "glory that shall be revealed," that the apostle introduces the mysterious and magnificent passage that you have just heard. He is speaking of the hope of the righteous as weighed against their sorrows; and he thus writes: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." For how great (as if he had said) is that glory!—

"for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity; not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

In these times of rebuke and blasphemy and confusion, when "the foundations are out of course," "what can the righteous do?" When the present is perturbing, and the immediate future brooding and gloomy, it is indeed a time for the true servants and soldiers of Christ's cross to be looking above, and looking beyond, and deriving their strength and drawing their consolation from other than earthly sources. And, therefore, beloved brethren, the subject before us is one every way seasonable, as it is sublime.

It is not our purpose and intention to enter into any doubtful speculations, as to the personal advent and reign of Christ, pre-millennial, or post-millennial; it is not our purpose to enter into discussions with regard to the precise period or time when the great event, which prophecy foreshadows, shall be accomplished; but it is simply our purpose to endeavour to unfold to you this deep and blessed passage, with a view to the tendency that it has, to animate our hopes, to quicken our labours, and to sustain and strengthen us in this and every "work of faith" to which our heavenly Master calls us, in order that we may set forth His glory, and set forward the salvation of our fellow-sinners, and be "fellow-workers with God," to hasten on the blessed events, and the wondrous triumphs, which await the Church of the Redeemer and the Redeemer himself.

We shall, on the one hand, turn your attention to the mournful condition of creation since the fall; and we shall then turn your attention, on the other hand, to the glorious hope which animates creation in her fallen state.

May the good Spirit of God attend us; that in simplicity, and soberness, and faith, we may understand and receive the truth of His holy Word.

I. The mournful condition of creation since the fall. We say, of "creation;" and you will perceive at once that we take this to be the fitter word to convey the meaning of the apostle in the original. The translators of our Bible, indeed, seem to have felt this, because the word which they render in the nineteenth verse and in the twenty-first verse by the word "creature," they, in the twenty-second verse, render by the word "creation." There seems to be no ground for this change of word; and if the word be rendered "creation" in the last instance, it ought equally to be rendered "creation"