

grandeur, which are, thus, according to God's word, destined to precede their judgment? These things, I own, are very plain and simple to me.

But again I ask—is there any notice in God's word, that the *saints* or the *church* are to rise to any condition of beauty or of strength befitting them, ere the hour of their translation come? The *apostate things*, as we have seen, are to be great and magnificent just before their judgment—but I ask, is the *true thing* to be eminent in its way, strong and beautiful in that strength and beauty that belong to it, ere its removal to glory? This is an affecting inquiry. What answer do the oracles of God give us?

Paul, in 2nd Timothy, contemplates “the last days,” in their perilous character, and the ruin of the church, which we have seen, and do see at this day, all around us. But what condition of things among the saints does he anticipate as following that ruin? I may say with all assurance, he does not contemplate the restoration of the church's order as a whole, any rebuilding of God's house, so to speak, any recovery of corporate beauty or strength worthy of this dispensation; but he exhorts those who find themselves in what has become as a “great house,” if they would be vessels unto honour sanctified and meet for the Master's use and prepared for every good work, to purge themselves from the vessels unto dishonour, and follow the virtues and cherish the graces which become them, calling on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Peter, in his 2nd epistle, contemplates “the last days” also, and very unclean abominations among professors, and very daring infidel scorning of divine promises in the world. But he gives no hint that there will be restored order and strength