

course from year to year, and hear of nothing else from generation to generation, they are apt to imagine that things will and must continue to move in the same way always and forever. "You are mistaken," Peter says, "the Lord shall be here;" or, as Paul expresses it in the Hebrews, "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come and not tarry."—Heb. x. 37.

There are reasons of a weighty kind why he that shall come will come. He must and will come to do the work of this great day, because this day is needful, nay necessary, to justify God's wisdom, and power, and holiness, and goodness, before his creatures. Let God close up the history of this earth without a day of this kind, and he would give occasion to the adversary to rejoice over Him, and to say as Moses feared they would say, if Israel were left to perish in the wilderness, "he could not have done otherwise." A day of judgment, further, is necessary to satisfy the expectation of his own people. There is in the breast of every bad man, dim dark apprehensions amounting at times to horrible forebodings of a day of retribution: but let us suppose that wicked men can by long and deep indulgence in sin, silence this voice; the fact still remains, that those who love the Lord and serve him do look and wait and long for his second coming, and it is needful and necessary, therefore, that he should not put to shame the expectations of his poor ones. The necessity of meeting the expectations of his people is increased to the highest degree by the promise God gave of this day. This day is contained in the very first announcement of Christ's coming. The bruising of the head of the serpent is not fully accomplished till the final judgment is finished. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God the father, when he shall have put down all rule

and all authority and power, for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.—1 Cor. xv. 24, 25.

For the day of judgment, therefore, there is the greatest certainty. It is more certain than any future event. The sun shall cease his rising and setting, and spring shall cease to visit us. We are not sure of seeing next year, or next week. "But *he that shall come will come and will not tarry.*"

III. BUT WHAT OF THE MANNER OF HIS COMING? The manner of Christ's coming is a point with which the Church ought to be familiar. He has been coming indeed since the beginning. A great king sends an ambassador before his face, the ambassador enters the country with great pomp, as becomes the servant of a great king. But the king himself is coming. What shall the manner of his coming be? His coming is foreshadowed in the coming of his servant. Now our Lord has had occasion to come in the person of others frequently since the world began. He came to destroy the old world; to deliver his people from Egypt: he came to destroy that same people. The Lord comes in times of great revolution, he comes in storms of nature, he comes in sickness and death. But there is a final coming in which all these comings meet as types meet in the antitype. Like his other comings the last coming has these three features; his coming will be (1) *sudden* like a thief in the night. The image is striking and terrible. Picture to yourself a house in which there are comforts and luxuries. The inmates spend a happy night. They retire to rest. They are in deep sleep. A noise awakes them. The house is in possession of thieves, robbers; such men as left the man going down to Jericho half dead. There is no use to resist: everything is lost. That is a picture of the way of Christ's second