

"A thousand years!"—it takes us back in English history nearly two centuries beyond the Conquest, and to the days when Alfred the Great was young. Yet to the Lord, those two measures of time are much alike. The one is "as" the other. Time, no doubt, is a reality to God, even as it is to man. If the real measure of time be our own consciousness, those whose consciousness is most vivid and rapid having most of it, then how long must time be to the consciousness of God! How long, as well as how short! But this is a mystery too deep for us to solve. We only know that man is finite, mortal, human, although made in the image of God, and endowed with immortality: and that God is immortal, infinite, and eternal, and therefore his view of time, as of other things, must be almost inconceivably different from man's. "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past; and as a watch in the night." "Your years and days," God seems to say, "they are not distinguished on my dial. All human history on earth is but a day: *my* thousand years—you can have that only in heaven." Now it may be that the apostle in this passage is writing in the remembrance of this principle and under the influence of it. Understood so, it is not necessary to regard him as looking for "the end" and the coming of the Lord in his own time. This is supposition only but it is a fact that the apostle Paul in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, corrects the mistaken conceptions that had arisen in their minds from the perusal of the first Epistle, and tells them that a great many things must happen before that day can come. He corrects *their* impressions: he does not even hint that he himself had been mistaken.

5. But suppose we take the language in the plain and ordinary sense, and regard this apostle and the others apostles as really looking for the second advent in their own time—What then? Knowledge of times and seasons, as we know on the highest authority, was never given to an apostle, or to the most gifted of the prophets before them. They have never been, and they are now, reserved in the power of the Father. But naturally the apostles and first Christians would think a great deal about the coming again of their now glorified Lord and Master. They would long for it very much. They would have their private surmises and conjectures about; and, at intervals, in moments especially of pressure, or in hours of high expectation, would naturally think, "He cannot much longer delay. We seem almost to hear at times the roll of the chariot wheels." And if they write it down so, and put it into nearness and immediacy, God allows them to do this. He does not endow them with His own infinite knowledge, or make them partners of His throne. He puts forth so much influence upon their thought when they write for others, as will make what they write true in the large sense, and according to His own great principles of reckoning. And that is enough.

And this is the last time. There is no dispensation of a resembling kind beyond this gospel one. When it is finished the end will come. The first and second comings are indissolubly joined with each other, morally and dispensationally. The one is incomplete without the other.