

kilns and taskmasters tell us, and the exacted tale of bricks without the accustomed straw, just as the Lord was sending Moses and his rod for their deliverance. So again in Babylon. The enemy was insulting their bonds, making merry in infidel despite of the captivity of Jerusalem and her Temple, when, that very night, the deliverer of Israel entered Babylon. So again in Persia. The decree had fixed a day for their destruction, and that decree would not, *could* not be changed. Their Amalekite persecutor was in power, and all, as far as the eye could reach, was utter destruction—but Haman fell, and the Jews were delivered. And so will it be again with the same people (Deut. xxxii. 36 and Is. lix. 16). “At evening time it shall be light.” The city will be taken; all the peoples of the earth will be round it in its day of siege and straitness; half of it will go into captivity; the houses shall be rifled, and all will be waste and degradation—but the Lord from heaven shall, in that instant, plead their cause. “At evening time it shall be light.” The shadow of death shall be turned into the morning (Is. xxix. 1-8; Zech. xiv.). And again, Cæsar Augustus was in strength and majesty. His proconsuls were in far distant provinces, his decree had gone to the ends of the earth, and the whole Roman world was set in beauty and order, just as Jesus was born (Luke ii.) But the remnant were feeble. The family of David lived at Nazareth, and not in Jerusalem. The Hope of the nation lay in a manger at Bethlehem. A devout, solitary, expectant saint or two frequented the temple, and it was shepherds during their nightly watches who had glories revealed to them. Israel had thus fallen, together with the house of David; and fallen, each of them, by their iniquity