

These things were so. But it is better to be judged of the Lord, than to be condemned with the world; for the poor, weak, and judged thing is drawn forth in the light and redemption of God, while the proud and the strong bow under Him.

So, I say, there is no New Testament promise, that the church shall recover her consistency and beauty, ere her translation comes. She passes from her ruins to her glory, while the world goes from its magnificence to its judgment—ruins, too, I add, which witness the judgment of God. The sword has never departed from the house.

May I not say, beloved, in the light of these truths, comfort yourselves as you look abroad, and see what it is that is *strong* now-a-days, and what it is that is *weak*. But let me add—let not the weakness of which I speak, the corporate or church weakness of the saints, be the least occasion for personal moral relaxation. This would be a sad and terrible use to make of the truths we are speaking of, and gathering from Scripture. We are, most surely, to be separate from evil as distinctly as ever, and to cherish all the thoughts and ways of holiness as carefully as ever.

But further.—We may find some hesitation in knowing exactly how to speak of Israel's history, whether it be that of a *martyr* or a *penitent*. It has something of each in it—more, however, I judge of the latter. But whether or not, their recoveries and redemptions illustrate the mystery which we have now before us, that the apostate thing goes to judgment in the hour of its chiefest strength and greatness, and the true thing rises from amid its infirmities and ruins to its glory and blessedness.

They were in a low condition in Egypt, as brick-