

**THE FUTURE OF THE
HUMAN
RACE. LECTURES**

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The future of the human race. Lectures by Alfred Bowen Evans

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ALFRED BOWEN EVANS

**THE FUTURE OF THE
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THE
**Future of the Human
Race.**

Lectures

DELIVERED DURING THE SEASON OF ADVENT.

BY

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LECTURE I.

THE ORDERS OF THE SAVED.

REV. xxi. 9.

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me saying, Come hitber, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

TIME'S ever rolling wheel hath once more, as on this day, brought round to us the period, in sacred reckoning, when for six months to come, the minister of the Church, so far as that department of his office which consists in his "teaching and preaching the things of the kingdom of God" is concerned, is left, so far as himself is a faithful learner, with little or no choice of his subjects of discourse; those subjects being indicated to him by the annual recurrence, in commemoration, of those facts in the history of "the Author and

finisher of our faith," upon which are based the saving truths of the holy religion we profess. This plan, adopted by the Church, both as regards her pastors and her people, is one that is not without both its advantages and its disadvantages. It is not without its advantages, in that it provides, that once in the year, at least, every vital verity of the Christian system shall be, in its turn, prominently presented to the people's minds. It is not without its disadvantages, in that it by no means follows, that the pastor shall be in the best frame of mind for treating successfully any particular verity, when its turn cometh. Such uncertain creatures are we that it is quite as likely to be the reverse. The subjects which the preacher is likely to handle the most effectively, are not those that are chosen for him, but those he chooses. It hath often struck us, and a brother in the ministry lately agreed with us, in the remark, that probably the least interesting of the discourses we deliver, save so far as their themes render them otherwise, are some of those composed for special times and seasons. The sermons we make to order, so to say, are seldom the best that are made. The teaching, therefore, of the former half of the ecclesiastical year, demands at our hands all the greater

carefulness; seeing that on it will rest the faith and the practice of the family for which our Lord "suffered death upon the cross," during the latter half. Soon indeed do the Seasons return. Soon does the end land us again at the beginning; soon does the beginning speed us onward again to the end. No sooner, as we say, is it Advent Sunday than it seems to be Trinity; no sooner is it Trinity than it seems to be Advent. While the preacher is choosing for himself a variety of topics for his weekly discourse, before he is aware of it, he is again brought face to face with that cycle of weeks which leaves him no choice. So it is, that life's sea bears us away the more swiftly, the greater are the number of its waves that have tossed themselves against the eternal shore. One wave makes room for another, and the many which have rolled by, leave but the freer channel for the few that are still surging towards the confines of the same land.

There is this characteristic of religious Truth that there is of none other; that it is both definite and infinite: capable both of compression and expansion. In the few words of the Creed or the Catechism, this truth may be comprehended; in the mighty volumes of an Augustine or an

Aquinas, this truth is not exhausted. It is wide as the heavens, narrow as its small sanctuary in the human breast. There is a broad way of stating Christian verities and there is a narrow. You may compress these verities, or expand them, as you will. The duty of the Pulpit, we take to be, to expand them, not to compress. The business of the preacher, is, as occasion serves, to map out the whole of the territory which the Lord God hath given to the children of men: it is so to delineate the features of the celestial landscape, that every traveller may be taken with one or more of them, if not with all; so to describe the offices and purposes of the kingdom of God in the earth, that every citizen of the same, may clearly identify his own place and prospects therein. We know of no subject that is capable of more compression, on the one side, or of more expansion, on the other, than the one brought before us by the return of this day; that of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to judge the world. The subject may be stated thus: that our Lord Jesus Christ, will, by and by, come back to judge the world, when He will summon all mankind before His bar, and dividing them into the two classes of the saved *and the unsaved*, shall assign the one class to

heaven for ever, and consign the other for ever to hell. To state it thus, is to compress the subject into its narrowest compass. And some of you may be inclined to say, "This is all we want to know about it, or can be required to believe." Whether this be all that *you* are required to *believe*, or not, of this we are persuaded, that it is not all that *we* are required to *teach*. Of the utmost importance is it that religious truth, if set forth at all, should be so set forth as to accord with the facts of natural observation. It is for want of this accordance, that we find so many about us who hold the facts to the rejection of the truth. We do not believe that the truth requires any forcible accomodation to the facts observed: it will be found, if rightly stated, just to agree with them. It must do so, or it is not what it professes to be. The only question is as to its method of statement. If properly stated, it will fall into harmony, at once, with all the facts of the world. Were we to assert, for instance, that this world of our's is so good a world, that it is difficult to meet with a bad man in it, we should simply contradict the facts of the case; or, were we to assert that the world is so bad a world, that it is scarcely possible to alight upon a good man in it,

we should equally contradict these facts : therefore would neither of these assertions, or these modes of statement, be true. In like manner, the common Theological statement, that the world is, or is to be, divided into but two classes, does not coincide with the facts of the case ; hence, this statement of the truth, as it purports to be, cannot be correct : there must be some other way of stating it, to bring it into agreement with the facts observed. We say, *is*, or *is to be*, divided,—because what is to be is dependent upon what is. If men be not divided into but two classes in this world, but will carry with them to the grave a much more multitudinous and intricate classification than this, we see no reason to conclude that they will fall into but two classes in the world to come. As a fact, then, the world is not divided into but two classes. It would simplify considerably our prospects of future retribution were it so : if we could say, “ Here is a line of separation ; so many of mankind are on this side of the line, and all the rest on the other.” There is nothing in the world, however, which is less of a fact than this. And if observation convince us that the world is divided into many more classes than two, the Theological statement that it *is*, or *is to be*, (and if it be not, it