

emphatically that John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ. But the world contend that he filled his mission as the forerunner of Christ in His first coming. I will take the privilege of questioning that, if you please, and will tell you why I do so. By referring to the 40th chapter of Isaiah, we there find these words: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." It then goes on to say: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low." Now, when John the Baptist came, did he speak comforting words to Jerusalem? When the Priests and Pharisees—those professedly holy men—came to him to be baptized in Jordan, what did he say to them? "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, etc." He was the forerunner of Christ. He declared so himself. The Lord Jesus bore testimony of him. He said: "This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before thee." Now, it is true that John the Baptist came as the forerunner of Jesus; it is true that he filled his mission so far; but we know very well that the people generally did not receive him, and ultimately they beheaded him. We know that they did not receive Jesus. They crucified Him. Instead of speaking comforting words to Jerusalem, He exclaimed: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou

that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Were these comforting words to Jerusalem? I think not. It is very evident that John the Baptist was not only the forerunner of His first coming, but also of His second advent. The Scriptures are plain on this matter.

But let us follow the history of the Apostles, and what do we find? Martyrdom for every one of them, John the Revelator alone excepted. What do we find concerning the Saints? Cruel persecution and death, until, in consequence of the awful crime of the shedding of innocent blood, God in His displeasure withdrew the Priesthood from the earth, and left it as it was before the coming of the Messiah, without divine authority. Was this statement of things predicted? Most assuredly it was predicted by the Prophets of old. It was foretold by Paul, who declared that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in among the flocks and destroy them. He also beseeches the Thessalonians not to be soon shaken, or troubled, in regard to the day of Christ being at hand. He told them not to be deceived by any means: "for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first." Has there been a falling away? Why, the prediction is verified by every sect in Christendom, when they calmly tell us that the spiritual gifts of the Gospel have been done away with, and that they are no longer needed. I argue that it is just as necessary today—if God is an unchangeable God, if He is the same yesterday, today and