

The Ways of God: Government, Grace, and Glory.

At a time like the present, so full of events crowding themselves together in the history of this present age — an age which ends with consequences so deep and solemn to the world, and so full of blessing to the Christian, and to the Church of God — it is a blessing from the Lord to have our minds directed towards the prophetic word, and to the ways of God. It is said of the prophetic word, that unto it "ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." It is desired as briefly as is consistent with the end in view, and as the Lord may graciously afford guidance and blessing to our need; to bring before the mind of the people of God the general scope of the great dispensational dealings of God, which it has pleased Him, in His infinite grace, to make known to us in His word, so as to display those dealings in government, grace, and glory. In this way some may be enabled to follow those dealings in their *consecutive* order, as nearly as such may be followed, so as to grasp the purposes of God thus revealed.

Truly we may say, we only "know in part;" but the Lord is very gracious, and waits on our slowness to learn.

It is not pretended to give a complete view of the details of these things, but such as may lead the mind to a closer searching after the more minute details in the word of God, and a more perfect apprehension of His purposes and ways.

In carrying out such a desire, many truths, well known of late amongst the Lord's people, will be before us — needfully so — that the more important parts may not be forgotten or omitted, in the consecutive order of God's ways. And should it be found that it is necessary to depart from this order, it will be but to link together more fully and clearly the events, that the mind may be enabled to pass along the chain without leaving a link behind.

The purpose of these papers is to put the truth plainly and simply before the mind from Scripture, for "godly edifying which is in faith;" not to combat with error, however useful and necessary such may be in its season. For it is strongly felt that, when the truth with its clear and perfect light shines into the soul, it dispels the darkness around, and finds a resting-place in the heart that desires to be subject to the word of God.

May the consideration of these truths prove a blessing from Him, who alone can bless; and may He enable us to live in the power of the things which are unseen and eternal, and abundantly bless His own word!

In searching into these subjects, a very large scope of Scripture will be before us, besides the prophetic scriptures, which embrace five great distinct subjects, viz.: — first, the corruption or ruin of Israel; secondly, judgment following the ruin; thirdly, the times of the Gentiles; fourthly, the crisis of the world's history; fifthly, the glory or kingdom. I would premise one remark upon 2 Peter i. 20: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." There have been certain partial fulfilments of prophecy in times past, which, no doubt, bore largely upon them the features of the occurrences to which, when fulfilled, in a primary application, they referred; but if we were to say that their scope ended there, we should miss the mind of the Spirit in the subject of the scripture, and make it of private interpretation. Prophecy begins in the mind and counsels of God, and only ends in His own glory to be revealed and perfected and displayed in his Son; it links together two things, the counsels of God and their accomplishment in Christ. We cannot, therefore, begin at a subsequent point, or stop at any one prior to the end, without losing its great aim. No matter how exact may have been the apparent fulfilment of certain prophecies, when we come to examine the details, we are sure to find features which clearly show that, when God was pleased to use the circumstances that were coming, or that were then before Him, He has always shown that He had other thoughts in view reaching on to the accomplishment of His full purposes and glory, of which the matter before Him served as a type. Prophecy, too, is occupied about earthly events, not about heavenly. "There is one glory of the celestial and another glory of the terrestrial" truly; but prophecy is silent as to "the mystery which, from the beginning of the world, had been hid in God." "The mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest." "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

1. — The General Scope of the Dealings of God.

With reference to this subject, we will refer to three scriptures as follow: "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." (Gal. iv. 4.) "In the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him; in whom we also have obtained an inheritance." (Eph. i. 10, 11.)

"And the angel . . . sware by him that liveth for ever and ever . . . that there should be time (delay) no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." (Rev. x. 6, etc.) These three portions of Scripture mark out three great leading events or epochs of God's dealings towards the world: the first of them is past, and the two others manifestly future; the difference in the two last lying in this, that the one ends when the other

begins. We shall now endeavour to ascertain from Scripture, to what past dealings and ways of God the expression in Galatians refers, "When the fulness of time was come." We must, consequently, take a general glance at the past history of the world as revealed to us.

We turn to Genesis i., ii., and there we find that God, having created the man and woman, bestows upon them the "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." A universal dominion bestowed upon them over all created things. We pass on to Genesis iii., and there we find that Satan had come in and succeeded in obtaining this headship through man who had fallen, and through his lusts, when estranged from God. To Adam alive and innocent had been given a law upon the observing of which the retention of the blessings and dominion depended, and which would, as a creature, have kept him in his proper place of subjection to God. Adam thus fallen hears a promise, that the woman's seed (which he was not) should, in due time, bruise the head of Satan, who had thus obtained the headship by his deceit; and thus he passes out from the presence of God. "So he drove out the man." Then begins the probation of man in this condition, which lasted about four thousand years, till "the fulness of the time was come."

For about sixteen or seventeen hundred years of this time of trial men are left to themselves (God never leaving Himself without a witness) till the flood, when the earth was "corrupt before God, and . . . was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world" having been "clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead," leaving them "without excuse." And so God said, "The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them: and behold I will destroy them with the earth." "And so he brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly . . . and the world that then was being overflowed with water perished," and thus ended the trial of man left to himself.

Noah and his family are saved through this judgment, and we find him on the earth thus cleansed. Into his hand is given the "sword;" government is entrusted to him — "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man." Noah thus entrusted, began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard, and he drank of wine, and was drunken; thus losing, morally, the position in which he had been placed by God.

The worship of devils began. Men, when they knew God, "glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imagination,

and their foolish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God."

Self-will thus fills the heart of men — self-will that would prove a centre in itself, having lost the link which linked it to God, the only centre of good: men unite to make a centre of unity apart from God. "Let us build a city and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven; and let us make a name, lest we be scattered about upon the face of the whole earth." Man would call this unity, God calls it confusion, (Babel,) and He goes down and scatters men abroad, giving them the restraint of tongues, "an iron band round men."

When the world had thus gone into idolatry, "and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever;" God separated to Himself one man, Abraham, and in him a family, a nation, that He might (amongst other counsels) place man under another test, on new ground. In course of time He separates this nation of Israel from the world (Egypt) to Himself, giving them thus separated, Himself dwelling amongst them, His law. This law represented to man the rule of his responsibility as a sinner, and also represented the authority of God. Ignorant of themselves, they accept it as the condition of their relationship with God; the law-giver goes to receive it, and before the conditions are named, those who accept the conditions, set up a golden calf and worship it as their God, and fail! God then puts the law into the hands of a mediator and adds the conditions of longsuffering and mercy to its claims. The history of the nation of Israel, thus set on new ground, gives us the result of this fresh trial of man. It lasted till the captivity in Babylon. During that time of trial we listen to the pleading voice of the prophets and messengers of God, striving to win back the rebellious people to the observation of the conditions of their relationship with Him, and to keep the law that defined them. "But they," says the prophet, "like Adam, have transgressed the covenant; they have dealt treacherously against me." (Hosea 5: 7.) They broke the covenant upon which the blessings depended, as Adam had done.

Man now gets another trial. Supreme power is put into his hand. Universal dominion is given into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon: "Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory; and wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all." (Daniel ii. 37, 38.) How then will he use it? Will it be to the glory and honour of Him from whom he had received it? The result is known. Lifted up in pride of heart,

he makes of himself a centre, and for a religious and idolatrous unity apart from God persecutes His people. Lifted up in pride he says, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty." (Daniel iv. 30.) He loses his moral reason and becomes a beast!

And now into this wilderness of the world, into the spot where God had put His vineyard and planted His vine, that it might bring forth fruit for Him — the vineyard that He had fenced and gathered out the stones, and planted with His choicest vine, and of which He could say, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" and when He looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes, with all His care and culture, "the degenerate plant of a strange vine:" — into the moral wilderness of this world, and into that little spot on which He had bestowed such care, came His last trial of man! "I have one Son, it may be they will reverence him when they see him." The tale is soon told: they gave Him a cross when He came to seek His crown! They gave Him spitting when He came to seek for fruit! And thus ended the probation of four thousand years under every form of trial; the fulness of time was *come!* Man cannot now say that one single way was left untried of God; he is left without excuse. The fulness of time was come, and God sent forth His Son. The Son came to seek and to save that which was lost! He took the twofold position: "made of a woman," through whom sin had entered; "made under the law," through which men were under condemnation, "to redeem them that were under the law," that we might receive the adoption of sons; that God might display the exceeding riches of His grace to those who were poor and miserable through sin. The result to those that believe is, "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

To such His purpose is revealed: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance." And when these fulness of times shall have run their course, the strong angel shall swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there shall be no longer delay, and that when the seventh angel should sound, the "mystery of God" should be finished. (Rev. x.) "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. xi. 15.)

Let us now look at these "times" that are running on to their "fulness."
"The fulness of time" is evidently past; the "dispensation of the fulness of times" plainly future.

1. It is now the time of the testimony of the cross and resurrection of Jesus, and the gathering together of the joint-heirs for Him, in whom we

have obtained an inheritance; the time when God's secret work is progressing, fitting the spiritual stones to His spiritual house.

2. The time of the Church suffering in brokenness and weakness here below, in the kingdom and patience of Jesus.

3. The time of confusion and misrule, when judgment is so far separated from righteousness, that when the only righteous One stood before the judgment-seat, owning that the power which was there was given of God: "Thou couldst have no power at all, unless it were given thee from above" — it condemned the Guiltless!

4. The time of the blindness of the beloved people, the veil being over their face, the fulness of the Gentiles being gathered in.

5. The time of the Gentile domination, when the great image of Daniel has not yet received the blow upon his feet from the stone cut out without hands.

6. The time when the whole creation groans and travails in pain, waiting for the manifestation of the sons and heirs of God.

7. The time when Satan goes about, a roaring lion unbound, seeking whom he may devour; whose voice we hear in the evil spirits, "torment us not before the time."

8. The time of the "mystery of God," when He bears with much longsuffering the evil, without judging it; when wickedness is in high places, and goodness trampled under foot; when falsehood triumphs, and truth is fallen in the streets.

9. And the time when Jesus, rejected by the world, sits at God's right hand, waiting until His enemies are made His footstool.

But we must now retrace our steps. We saw that man had lost the headship and dominion given to him in Genesis i., ii. We turn to Psalm viii. and find that there is a "Son of man" on whom this dominion is bestowed. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands, thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea." Who is this "Son of man?" and when is this dominion to be exercised and enjoyed? Hebrews ii. answers us: "Unto angels hath he not put in subjection the habitable earth to come, (*oikoumene*) whereof we speak; but one in a certain place testified saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels, thou crownedst him with glory and honour, thou didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet . . . We see *not yet* all things put under him, but we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour." It is in the *age to come* this dominion is to be exercised and enjoyed by Him who is also the "Son of man," now "crowned with glory and honour."

We turn to Ephesians i. 19-23, and find the apostle again quoting the same Psalm. He speaks of the exceeding greatness of the power which was wrought in Christ "when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. *And hath put all things under his feet*, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." We learn from this and other portions of chapters i. — iv., that, while He is exalted thus, a body is being formed for Him from Jew and Gentile; and that the same power that was put forth to raise Christ and exalt Him as man to God's right hand (He was always the eternal Son, the Word that was with God) is put forth to quicken, raise up, and unite to Him the joint-heirs, which form His body the Church.

Again, in 1 Corinthians xv. 27, the apostle quotes this psalm. Thence we learn that this dominion is accomplished in resurrection, the resurrection of the saints from among the dead, of which the chapter treats; that when that day comes, some shall not have been laid asleep by Jesus, but all (living and dead) shall be changed. It is at that period that the dispensation of the fulness of times shall have course, and God shall have gathered together all things in heaven and earth in Christ: and when the saying shall be brought to pass, "death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians xv. 54; Isaiah xxv. 8.) Then He shall proceed, as we find by the kindred passages of Isaiah, to bring in the blessing of the earthlies; and then the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, "when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."

We find this in Isaiah xxiv. — xxvi. The world and its systems brought under judgment, when it will reel to and fro like a drunkard under the judgment of God. When He will punish the host of the high ones that are on high: Satan and his hosts shall then be cast out of the heavenlies (Rev. xii.), after having so long obscured and hindered the blessing from God. The kings of the earth shall be punished on the earth, when they are gathered together against the King of kings and Lord of lords. (Rev. xix.) This universal judgment makes way for the establishment of His throne in Zion. "In that mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all nations a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. He will remove the veil that is spread over all nations. He will take away the rebuke of His people Israel, the remnant of the nation that have waited for him, who was "the strength to the poor, and the strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, and a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." He will bring the branch of the terrible ones low, and cause "the feet of the poor and the steps of the needy" remnant

of his people to "tread it down," and teach them in that day of their deliverance and restoration to sing this song in the land of Judah, "We have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." The whole three chapters are of exceeding beauty, showing what the Lord will do at the day when the saying is brought to pass, "Death is swallowed up in victory," when all that has been marred and destroyed in the hands of the first Adam, shall be made good in the last Adam," and when He shall exercise the headship of Psalm viii. taken as Redeemer-Heir — the joint-heirs united to Him; when the name of the Lord shall be excellent in all the earth; and His glory, not only as King in Zion, but that which He has set above the heavens shall be displayed in the heavens and the earth, at "the times of the restitution of all things."

In fine we see that man has destroyed himself; every fresh trial only proving how complete has been his ruin and failure. He has sinned away his blessings as soon as he has received them. We see that God will make good in a far higher sense, and to His own glory, everything that man has ruined, and under which he has failed, in the Son of man — the second Adam — in Christ! What we have considered embraces only the period of probation up to the cross and rejection of God Himself in the person of Christ. We shall see, in considering over other subjects, this humiliating, yet necessary, discovery, more clearly brought out. True it is that man — the first Adam — was as really lost and ruined at the day of Genesis iii. as in his rejection of Christ; but it was this which brought out definitely the enmity of his heart to God and good. Before the cross there was no distinct proof of this. He had failed in many a patient trial from God; but his ruin was fully proved, when God, gentle, humane, loving, full of grace and truth, came into his midst and was rejected in the person of Jesus Christ!

2. — The Past History of the People of Israel.

After our short survey of the general dealings of God, we now come to consider His ways, as exhibited more in detail; and in doing so we turn to that people, or nation, which was peculiarly the platform for their display, in government, longsuffering, and mercy — the people of Israel.

We have seen the state of the world and failure of man in the days before the flood: and afterwards Noah set up on the renewed earth, the world going into idolatry, and, amongst the jarring elements of human wills, man striving to make a centre and a name apart from God, and the judgment of God thereon — the divisions of the world into nations in the family of Noah. There was a purpose with God at that time, in His mind and counsels, which we find in Deut. xxxii. 8. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people, according to the number of the children of

Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." Here we find that centuries before they existed as a nation, the counsels of God were occupied about them. His dealings with the nations of the world were arranged with reference to the seed of Jacob.

The world had lost the knowledge of the one true God and had gone after idols, even the family of him of whom it was said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem." Satan had succeeded in gaining the position God should have had in the minds and hearts of man. "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods." (Joshua xxiv. 2.) We learn from 1 Cor. x. 20, in which the apostle quotes Deut. xxxii., that these gods were devils. This being the case, God chose one man, whom He called to separate himself from his country, associations, and his family to be a witness in the world and against the world for Him. To this man, Abraham, God gave certain promises, both of a temporal and of a spiritual nature. The question before us being the past history of the nation of Israel, we pursue only the temporal promises. When Abraham came into the land of Canaan, God said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." (Gen. x. 11.) When Lot had separated from him, these promises are renewed. "Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed for ever," etc. (Gen. xiii. 14, etc.) Again in Genesis xv. we find the promise renewed and the bounds of the land named. "And he said unto him, I am the God that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it." And again, "Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates." In a vision in the same chapter God reveals to Abraham that his seed would be a stranger in a land that was not theirs and that they should serve them. "And they shall afflict them four hundred years And afterwards they shall come out with great substance."

Now these promises were *entirely unconditional*: they were given by God and received by Abraham without any condition whatsoever. We find them, still without condition, repeated to Isaac in Genesis xxvi., and to Jacob in Genesis xxviii. We turn to Exodus ii., when the four hundred years were expired, and we find these promises to the fathers alluded to; "And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; and God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them." The people are now redeemed, and taken out of Egypt, the covenant name of Jehovah revealed to them. Afterwards they are told God's purpose in thus taking them out. "Unto thee it was showed that thou mightest know that the Lord (Jehovah) he is God, there is none else beside him." (Deut. iv. 35.) Or, as He says in Isaiah xliii. 12, "Ye are my witnesses that I am God." On the redemption of the

people God takes up His dwelling amongst them in the cloud and the glory.

The question of righteousness had not, however, yet been raised. The people journey from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai, the objects of perfect grace. Here God proposes certain terms of relationship with them; "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, *then* ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine." etc. (Exodus xix.) "And all the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." See also Exodus xxiv. 3, 7, where the covenant is ratified by blood. Thus they enter upon a covenant of obedience as the terms of relationship with God. Instead of saying, "No, we cannot trust ourselves in the least; if we accept conditions as these, we shall surely fail: we shall not be able to keep our blessings for one hour." Instead of this, they were full of confidence and ignorant of themselves. The result is plain and solemn. The lawgiver goes up to the mount that burned, to receive the terms of the covenant; and, ere he returns, the people make a calf and worship it, as the god that brought them up out of Egypt: they say, "Up, make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the *man* that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." (Exodus xxxii. 1.) Moses returns with the tables of the law in his hand; he sees the music and the dancing when he came *nigh* unto the camp: he saw that on the side of the people the terms of the relationship were broken; and his anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hand, and broke them beneath the mount. Pure and unmixed law never, therefore, came amongst the people. The lawgiver returns to the mount; he goes up again, "peradventure he might make an atonement for their sin;" and in answer to the prayer of Moses, the people is spared, and a covenant of long-suffering, patience, and mercy added to that of the law; and it is established in the hands of the mediator and the people. (Exodus xxxiv. 27.)

The Book of Leviticus, with other matters, settles the approach to God, who dwelt amongst them, and the priesthood.

The Book of Numbers gives the journey through the wilderness.

When about to enter the land, the covenant is renewed, establishing the terms of their possession of the land on condition of their observing them, in the plainest way in the Book of Deuteronomy. Deut. xxvii. states the principle of legal righteousness, and Deut. xxviii., as other parts of the book, the conditions of their inheritance and blessing in the land. "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I

command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth, and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field: blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep: blessed shall be thy basket and thy store: blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out." (Deut. xxviii. 1-6.) And the alternative, "But it shall come to pass, that if thou wilt not hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field; cursed shall be thy basket and thy store; cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land; the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep: cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out." (Deut. xxviii. 15-19.) The whole chapter states in the most solemn manner the conditions of their possession and retention of their blessings in the land. And we read in Deut. xxix. 1, "These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab (in the borders of Israel), beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb."

Accordingly we find them entering the land under the leadership of Joshua, the waters of Jordan separating themselves, and the "*Lord of all the earth*" passing into the land before His people, to possess the land in them. This was an important title which the Lord thus assumes, to which we shall have occasion to refer again.

The Book of Joshua gives the history of their conquest and establishment in the land. In the last chapter we find Joshua establishing a covenant with the people, in which they bind themselves to serve the "Lord their God," and to obey His voice, and under these conditions to retain the blessing.

We now see one point established clearly, of the utmost importance, which is, that the people never yet possessed the land, or the blessings promised to the fathers, under the unconditional terms promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These promises are yet to be fulfilled and accomplished in grace.

The results of their inheritance of the land, and the blessings conditionally, we find in the Book of Judges, as in other scriptures. "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baalim: and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods; of the gods of the people that

were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel: and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my *covenant* which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice: I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died; that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord, to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it or not," etc. (Judges ii. 11-13; 20-23.) This book shows their failure, and the faithfulness and longsuffering of God, who raised up judges and deliverers from time to time, to bring temporary relief to them out of the hands of their enemies.

In 1 Samuel we find the failure of the priesthood in the family of Eli. We read, "Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord." (1 Sam. ii. 12.) The entire chapter treats of this failure, and the cognizance the Lord takes of it. In 1 Samuel iii. the Lord establishes the regular line of prophets in Samuel, "ere the lamp of God went out in the house of the Lord," to form the link between Himself and the consciences of the people. In chapter iv. the ark of God, on which He manifested His presence, is taken. Eli dies, and the wife of Phineas, dying on giving birth to her child, names him "Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel." The prophet Samuel is now the link between God and the people. "He judged Israel all the days of his life." When he became old, he set his sons to be judges over Israel, but they "walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment."

The people now desire a king, and "the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us; and Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected *thee*, but they have rejected *me*, that I should not reign over them." The Lord now gives them a king, a man of their own choice, Saul the son of Kish. 1 Samuel ix. — xv. give us the history of his appointment and failure. He fails in what he had been raised up to do. "And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from *thee* this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou." (1 Sam. xv. 28.) God now gives them a king, a man of His own choice, "David the son of Jesse," who at last is settled in the kingdom. After him, his son Solomon is established on the throne of the kingdom, in the full tide of prosperity and blessing, "neither adversary nor evil occurrent." (See 1 Sam. xvi. — 1 Kings x.) But "Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt," and he multiplied wives unto himself. Both of these things were expressly forbidden in Deuteronomy xvii. "And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned away from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice; and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not

go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded." (1 Kings xi. 9, 10.)

They had now failed under prophets, priests, and kings. Solomon had for a little moment united all these in his own person, serving as a type of Him in whom all shall be established. We read in 2 Chron. ix. 3, 4, when the Queen of Sheba came up, she heard the *wisdom* of the *prophet*, and saw the magnificence of the *king*, and the ascent of the royal *priest* to the house of the Lord — a faint shadow of the coming day of the glory of the kingdom.

God now stirs up the adversaries of the kingdom against Solomon, declaring by His prophet that He would take the kingdom from him; yet He would still preserve one tribe to David's house, that he might always have a light before Him. Accordingly, when Rehoboam came to the throne the mass of the nation revolted under Jeroboam, who established a separate kingdom, and an idolatrous centre of unity. The tribe of Judah only was preserved to the house of David.

From this time we pursue the histories of these two divisions of the nation, under the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. That of the former is a tale of evil without any redeeming point, till we come to 2 Kings xvii., when, under their last king, Hoshea, Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria came up and led away the nation of Israel captive. "In the ninth year of the reign of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." (2 Kings xvii. 6.) Read the entire chapter, which gives the account of this. These tribes have never been restored.

We follow the history of the kingdom of the house of Judah from Rehoboam's day, which is such another tale of wretchedness, and failure, and departure from God, occasionally relieved by the reign of some faithful king, such as Josiah and Hezekiah, till the house of David consummated its guilt in Ahaz. This king had set up the altar of a strange god in the house of the Lord, and made molten images for Baalim, and followed the abominations of the heathen. He was scarcely exceeded in iniquity by Manasseh after the reign of Hezekiah. In the reign of Zedekiah the time had come when those touching and solemn words were pronounced: "The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes and on his dwelling place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." (2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.) Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came against the city of Jerusalem, and besieged it and took it, and brought the nation captive into the land of Babylon, and put out the eyes of the king and slew his sons, rifled the house of the Lord, and burnt

it and the king's house, leaving a few of the poor of the people to be vine-dressers and husbandmen in the land. They had failed under prophets, priests, and kings, and God pronounced these words by the prophet concerning their last king: "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." (Ezek. xxi. 25-27.)

The glory, or presence of Jehovah, that had dwelt amongst them since they had been redeemed from Egypt, departs from its house. Turn to chapters ix. to xi. of the prophet Ezekiel. In Ezekiel ix. the prophet sees the glory of the God of Israel gone up from the cherub, and standing upon the threshold of the house: the Lord marks His own, who were faithful, then executes judgment. In Ezekiel x., the glory departs from off the threshold, and stood over the cherubim that were to bear it away. And in Ezekiel xi., the glory goes up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mount of Olivet, that is upon the east side of the city.

As soon as the people had gone into captivity, the "sword" of government is handed over to the Gentile king, and the "times of the Gentiles" begin. "Thou, O king, art a king of kings, for the God of *heaven* hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all." (Dan. ii. 37, 38.) Israel had been God's servant up to this (in this *position*, however faithless). See Isaiah xliii. 10 — "Ye are my . . . servant whom I have chosen." (See also Isa. xli. 8; Isa. xlii. 19; Isa. xliv. 21.) The Gentile king now takes the place of the Lord's servant, though in another sense. (See Ezek. xxix. 18, 20; Jer. xxv. 9, etc.) During the times of the Gentiles, God assumes the title of the "God of heaven," as we see all through the Book of Daniel, which treats of these times. He had gone over Jordan into the land of Israel, as we saw, under the title of the "Lord of all the earth," and had exercised His government from the centre of Israel. The people having proved themselves worse than the heathen around, utterly untrue witnesses to the "Lord of all the earth," God removes His presence from amongst them, and bestows the government of the world into the hands of the Gentile king.

Thus ends, properly speaking, the past history of the nation of Israel. In the language of Hosea, "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim." And again, "Call his name, Lo-ammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God."

We must not, however, close our brief view of their past history, without looking shortly at the return of the remnant, of part of Judah and Benjamin at the close of the Babylonish captivity. We turn to Jeremiah xxv. and we find that when they were about to be sent into captivity into Babylon they are told by the prophet, "Behold I will send . . . Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof . . . and this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." We find in the Book of Esther how God secretly watched over His people without publicly owning them or manifesting Himself to them, in the land of their captivity. We read in Daniel ix. that as soon as the seventy years of the kingdom of Babylon were run, and Darius the Mede had taken the kingdom, "I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem." When the seventy years were over, a remnant of Judah and Benjamin came back, and settled in the land (Ezra i., etc.); they rebuilt the temple, and reared up and repaired the city. (Nehemiah.) The history of this remnant is touching and impressive. It was, however, an empty temple; they had neither the Shekinah (or the glory of the presence of Jehovah), nor the ark, nor the Urim and Thummim. They did not pretend to more than they had, but did what they could in the ruins of everything around. This was not the *national* restoration as was promised by the prophets; nor was it the inheritance of the land according to the promises to the fathers; only a remnant of Judah and Benjamin returned under the permissive patronage of their rulers, to whom they were still subject. "Behold we are servants this day; and for the land that thou gavest to our fathers to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it; and it yieldeth much increase to the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and our own cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress." (Nehemiah ix. 36, 37.) When the national restoration takes place God declares, "I will make them *one* nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and *one* king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. (Ezek. xxxvii. 22.) And again, "They shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors." (Isaiah xiv. 2.)

This remnant of the nation remained in the land under their oppressors until the coming of their Messiah, and His presentation to them; only a little band of disciples attached themselves to Him, and received Him as the Christ: *the* mass of the people refused Him and chose a murderer in His stead. They were warned by Him that He had come in His Father's name and yet would reject Him: and that if another would come in his own name, him they would receive. (John 5) With His own blessed, unwearying

love He pleaded with, and yearned over, and wept for the people — still beloved for their fathers' sakes, till compelled to say, "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, for I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. xxiii. 37-39.) The sentence of judicial blindness and hardness of heart, pronounced by the prophet seven hundred years before, but in longsuffering withheld, (Isaiah vi. 9, 10,) came to pass. (Matt. xiii.; John xii.) The householder had sent his Son to receive the fruits of His vineyard, and the husbandmen said, "This is the heir, come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours; and they caught him and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." His love was not turned aside even by this; the Holy Ghost takes up the voice of Jesus on the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," by the mouth of Peter in Acts iii., who says, "And now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also our rulers." Repent and be converted and even now He will return. But they gnashed their teeth upon His witness Stephen, and stoned him, and sent a message by him after Jesus "We will not have this man to reign over us." Still in longsuffering He lingers till the days of Acts xxviii., when the final carrying out of the sentence was pronounced by Paul, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive, for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed: lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (Acts xxviii. 25-27.) It only remained to complete the sentence by the armies of Titus — till "the cities be wasted without inhabitants and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate and the Lord removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land." (Isaiah vi. 11, 12.)

The great Prophet had come into the midst of His people: to Him they would not hearken. Rejected, He had gone to heaven to be a Priest for those who believe; and when He comes again as King, He will unite all these glories in His own person, and His kingdom shall have no end!

3. — The Times of the Gentiles, and Their Judgment.

We have shortly traced the past history of the people of Israel to the Babylonish captivity, when the sentence "Lo Ammi" (not my people) was passed upon them, the presence of Jehovah, or the glory, departed from their midst, and the government of the world was transferred to the Gentiles. That is, the "times of the Gentiles" began. We have also followed

the history of the remnant of Judah and Benjamin, which returned to the land to have their Messiah presented to them, the sentence "Lo Ammi" not having been nor to be removed* till after their complete dispersion and the destruction of the cities of the land. (Isa. vi. 10.)

[* The prophets who prophesied after the captivity count the years by the years of the Gentile oppressors, and none address the people as the people of God thus owned, save for the future.]

Just before the time when Judah was finally carried into captivity, we find God sending His prophet to Zedekiah, who was plotting with the nations around to throw off the yoke of the king of Babylon, requiring that he and they should bring their necks under his yoke. He says, "I have made the earth, the man, and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power, and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live." (Jer. xxvii. 5-12.) It is with this Gentile power, and those which succeed him, until the end of their "times," we have now to do. We turn to the Book of Daniel and read of one of the Hebrew captives enabled of God to recall and interpret his dream to the Gentile king, who had forgotten it. (Dan. ii. 31-45.) The dream was of a great image, whose head was of gold; the breast and arms of silver; his belly and thighs of brass; his legs of iron, and his feet part of iron and part of clay. The interpretation shows that this image typified the Gentile power from the days of the first king, Nebuchadnezzar, till its close. When in its *last* state, a stone "cut out without hands," a kingdom set up by the God of heaven, smites the image on its *feet*, i.e., at the close of its existence. Accordingly the compound parts of the image then fully formed are broken to pieces and consumed by a crushing act of judgment, inflicted by the stone. They become like chaff in the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carries them away, so that no place is found for them. Thus it is that the stone, which executed this act of judgment, becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth. The vision is plain, and needs but few words. The Gentile power exists in different stages, each inferior to the other, the farther it removes from the source of its first power, until an act of judgment most complete and destructive on its last state is executed by a power not entrusted to the hands of men, so that every vestige of the image disappears from the scene; and the power that strikes the blow becomes expanded and exalted, and stands for ever.

Babylon was the head of gold; its source was the gift of God, as we have seen; its power absolute and unquestioned. "For the majesty that God gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before

him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down." (Dan. 5: 19.)

After it came the Medo-Persian, the breast and arms of silver, a united power (two arms), inferior to the first in its absolute power, inasmuch as if he who wielded the power made a law he was himself subject to that law as another; for "the law of the Medes and Persians altereth not."

The third kingdom, of brass, the Grecian, was still inferior; as the fourth, that of the iron, and the iron mixed with the miry clay, degenerates yet more.

The great point for us to understand is, that the great power given to the Gentile king, to which succeeded the other powers, as typified in the great image (which, as its existence is prolonged, deteriorates), runs on till one great, crushing, complete act of judgment, *yet to be executed*, carries the whole and every vestige of it away, replaces it, and then fills the whole earth. I say "yet to be executed," because it is a common thought to misapply this kingdom, which destroys the others and then fills the earth, to the gospel. Grace, or the gospel, is never represented in Scripture as doing this. In the first place, the image did not exist in the state typified by the *feet* in the beginning of the Gospel-day. In the next, it is on *them* the blow is struck, which is a crushing act of judgment, not grace. And next, it is the *first* act of the stone, an act of judgment, *before* it begins to grow and to fill the earth. This is noticed only in passing, as the object of these papers is rather to establish the truth in tracing these Gentile powers to their end, than to combat with error.

We now turn to Daniel vii., where these four great powers are expressed under the form of four ravening beasts. From the vast sea of human passions and wiles, which floated unorganized in the world, striven upon by the four winds of heaven, came up four wild beasts or kingdoms. The first like a lion, king among the beasts of the earth, with eagle's wings, the chief of birds: a power rapid in its flight, and soaring above the other powers of the world. This we know was the first of the four great monarchies — Babylon. (Dan. i. 1; Dan. ii. 37, 38.)

Another wild beast follows — the Medo-Persian, which succeeded that of Babylon. (See Dan. 5: 28, 30, 31.)

Then a third — the Grecian empire, formed by Alexander the Great, which followed the Medo-Persian (see Dan. viii. 21, 22), afterwards divided into four heads.

The fourth, diverse from all the other beasts and yet partaking of the qualities or materials of all (see Rev. xiii. 2), strong exceedingly,

devouring and breaking to pieces and destroying the rest, which also had ten horns. It is with this fourth empire we have more particularly to do: the chapter we are looking at is principally occupied with him. The fourth great power was Rome, which replaced the Grecian empire after it was broken into four heads. (Dan. vii. 6: Dan. viii. 21, 22.) This imperial power is introduced by the ancient name of that which surrounded it, its centre, Rome, in Dan. xi., where we read, "the ships from Kittim shall come," etc. This is merely referred to, to show that we have all four powers defined from Scripture, either by name or circumstances adjacent. This power existed in its vast unbroken state in the days of Christ, as we read in Luke ii. 1, "And . . . there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that *all the world* should be taxed." And it is with this power we, as Christians, called out from the Gentiles, have most to do.

In the second vision of Dan. vii., we find that the fourth beast had ten horns, and that amongst the horns came up another horn, before whom three fell; and this horn had eyes, expressive of active intelligence and design; and a mouth speaking great things. He speaks great words against the Most High, wears out the saints of the Most High, prevailing against them; thinks to change times (Jewish festivals), and laws (ceremonies), which are given into his hand for a time, times, and the dividing of a time (three years and a half). Thrones are set, and the Ancient of days sits, the dominion of the little horn is taken away (he personifies the beast in the end, taking the lead amongst the other horns, and so becomes the expression of the whole), his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. Judgment is given to the saints of the Most High (the heavenlies, "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world," 1 Cor. vi.), and the saints possess the kingdom (the earthly, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. xxv.) Afterwards we find, in another vision, the kingdom of the Son of man substituted for that of the fourth beast (the Ancient of days is the Son of man Himself, see verse 22), which is personified in the little horn that came up last amongst the other horns.

The questions now arise, 1st. Has not the fourth kingdom long ceased to exist in its vast iron power? 2ndly. Has it ever assumed the features conveyed by the ten horns? 3rdly. Has it ever done what is attributed to it in verse 25?

Now these questions will be satisfactorily answered by other Scriptures. We turn to Revelation xiii., and read of a wild beast which the prophet sees arising from the sea. It partook of the characteristics of the three foregoing beasts of Daniel vii., but it has another added, which was, that the dragon gave him his power, and seat, and great authority; this it had not before. It had seven heads and ten horns — seven forms of government, and ten divisions in its administrative power. John saw one

of its heads wounded, as it seemed, unto death, and the deadly wound was healed. There is no doubt but that this head was its imperial form, which has long ceased to exist: some think for ever — that the wound was unto death. But the apparently deadly wound was healed, and all the world wonders; and they worship him, and, through him, Satan, who had given him his power, and seat, and great authority; and they say, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" This is clearly the little horn of Daniel vii., for the same doings are attributed to him. But we have in Revelation this added — that he was the full expression and instrument of Satan when revived; for (as in Daniel vii. 25) we read that there was given him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given to him to make war forty and two months (three and a half years). He blasphemeth God and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, "the saints of the heavenlies;" and makes war with the saints on earth, and overcomes them — we know from Daniel vii. until what time.

Turning to Revelation xvii., in the explanation of the vision, to the prophet we find the same beast, which "was, and is not." It had existed in its one vast empire, the fourth kingdom of Daniel vii.; it had ceased to exist, and "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit;" it would again appear, but when it did, it would be the full expression of Satan — "The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." (Rev. xiii. 2.)

But we must proceed with his description under his last form. "There are seven kings," seven forms of government of the Latin empire. "Five are fallen," five had disappeared when the prophet wrote. "One is," it existed then. Another form, not yet come, was to arise, and continue for a brief space. Then the beast that was, and had ceased to exist, — he would be an eighth form, yet of the seven. There would now be a feature explained as to the ten horns, not belonging to his former state of existence. The ten horns are ten kings, they had received no kingdom then, they did not belong to his antecedents of one vast empire, but they would appear, and receive power at the same time as he when he would re-exist in his final form. They would have one mind, and they give their power and strength to the beast; they would have each his separate existence, and yet would own the beast as their chief — the expression of the entire. These make war with the Lamb, and He overcomes them. Their end we find in chapter xix. The rider upon the white horse, with the armies of heaven, comes forth at the last daring and blasphemous defiance of his authority; and the beast and these kings are gathered to make war against Him that sat upon the horse and His armies; and the beast was taken and was "cast alive into a lake burning with fire and brimstone." His armies, too, are judicially slain.

We have one point to remark, to account for the presence of Satan on the earth at this closing scene, when he gives his power to the last form of the

Latin empire three years and a half before the execution of judgment, which introduces the kingdom of the Son of man. We turn for this to Revelation xii. There we find the man-child (Christ and the Church, His body) caught up to God and to His throne, which is immediately followed by war in heaven. Satan is cast out to the earth; rejoicing in heaven follows; woe is pronounced upon the inhabitants of the earth, "for the devil is come down unto you, in great wrath, having but a short time."* He then turns his malice against the Jewish saints below, who are then the objects of the attention of God. He gives his power and authority to the beast for the 1260 days, or forty-two months, or "time, times, and the dividing of a time," before the end of the beast's existence.

[* This casting out of Satan from the heavenlies is important. Satan and wicked spirits are spoken of as being in the heavenlies at this present time. He is termed the "prince of the power of the air;" and the Church of God is said, in Ephesians vi., to "wrestle not with flesh and blood, but wicked spirits in the heavenlies."]

Let us now sum up shortly what we have gathered from Scripture, i. e., the history of the Gentile powers from its beginning to its close.

We have seen that four great kingdoms arose, commencing with Babylon, which had its power directly from God, followed by the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman; this last was in existence when John wrote, and for some hundreds of years in more or less of its iron sway. It was then broken up into different kingdoms, and continued thus for a long time. Three and a half years before the end of the Gentile power, Satan is cast out of heaven. Next, the Latin empire, so long apparently destroyed and forgotten, is restored, but in a new form; not one vast iron power, but its divided kingdoms uniting to own one man amongst them as their chief, and giving to him their power and force. Satan makes him his ready tool, and the world wonders and worships. This chief blasphemes God, and as Satan cannot now accuse the saints in the heavenlies, he makes his instruments blaspheme them. He turns his rage through this chief against the Jewish people then gathered into their country. And, finally, he leads him to turn his heart in open rebellion against Christ, who comes to take possession of His world-kingdom, and put an end to the Gentile power. This chief and his allies gather together against the King of kings and His heavenly saints, and the end of the Beast is the lake of fire and brimstone.

We have now followed, without much diversion from our subject, the history of the Gentile empires to their conclusion, looking especially upon the features the fourth empire will assume, when revived as an imperial power, three and a half years before the close of its existence; when, in the person of its leader, it will be the plain and complete expression of

diabolical power. Possessed by Satan, it will be instigated in rebellion against God and Christ, and so be destroyed.

But, dear friends, we may remember when considering the past history of Israel, we saw that when Christ was presented to the Jews at Jerusalem, He was rejected, and received only by a little band of disciples, and that He told them that He had come in His Father's name and Him they would *not* receive; and that if another would come in his own name, him they *would* receive. Now during the time of the crisis of the world's history, synchronical with the three and a half years of the full-formed evil of the beast, which we have seen, the Jews will again have been gathered into their land in a state of apostacy. Scripture largely shows that a false Messiah will present himself to them at that time, who will be received by the mass of the people, and rejected by a remnant of faithful ones — just the reverse of what occurred in the day when our Lord Himself was there. This personage is the connecting link between the Gentile power in a state of apostacy and revolt and the Jews in a similar state. Christ was presented to Pilate as the representative of the fourth monarchy, and to Caiaphas who represented the Jewish nation in that day: both united in crucifying Him. At the same time He was rejected by the mass of the Jews and received by a little band of disciples. At the close of the existence of the fourth monarchy in its revived state, this false Messiah will appear, the mass of the returned Jews will receive him, and he will be recognized by the imperial head of the restored Latin empire, into whose hands he will play his game; but he will be refused by a little remnant, whose hearts God is training, through unexampled tribulation, for the kingdom about to be substituted for that of the Beast, when judgment is executed.

After thus shortly introducing this false Messiah, we will follow in order the scriptures that speak of him. He is introduced in Daniel xi. 36–89; and we may remark that the prophet is told in chapter x. 14 that the angel was come to make him understand what would befall the Jews in the latter days. Chapters x. — xii. are all one vision and are occupied with this subject, and the Lord Himself in His directions to the Jewish remnant in Matthew xxiv. alludes to this prophecy (Daniel xii.) as still future, and that when the circumstance of the abomination of desolation, etc., come to pass, it would be the sign for the remnant to flee, adding that, "*Immediately after those days . . . shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven . . . coming . . . with power and great glory.*" We can apply it, therefore, to no other time than to the hour of the great tribulation, or the closing 1260 days, before the appearing of Christ and the judgment executed by Him and the kingdom set up (see also Daniel xii. 11, where 30 days are added) and substituted for that of the beast.

The king is at once introduced in chapter xi. 36-39 as one who has that title in the eyes of the Jews. He does according to his own will, exalts

himself and magnifies himself above every god, speaks marvellously against the God of gods, and prospers till the indignation is accomplished. He regards not the God of the Jews, nor the Messiah, nor any god, magnifying himself above them all. The "indignation" is spoken of in Isaiah x. 5, 24, 25, where we find that there is an appointed time for its duration.

We turn to Revelation xiii. 11, where we find this personage brought before us again, as the second beast, which comes up out of the earth, having two horns like a lamb — some imitation of Christ, but his voice like a dragon. He cannot set aside the power of the Gentile king, the Beast — that is reserved for Christ; but he ministers to him and "exercises the power of the first beast before him" — the power of Satan, but subordinate to that of the Beast. "And he doeth great wonders, so that he causes fire to come down from heaven, on the earth, in the sight of men," etc. He thus imitates the great power of God (of course it is not so, but only in the sight or apprehension of men).

Read now Revelation xvi. 13, 14, where we find the three great allies in wickedness, the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, unclean spirits proceeding from each to gather together the kings of the whole habitable earth to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.

In Revelation xix. 20, we find Satan's two great instruments — the Beast and the false prophet. The Beast, with his vassal kings, as we have seen before, gathered together to make war with the Lamb, the Lord of lords, and King of kings. The Beast and the false prophet here meet their doom. Allies in wickedness and blasphemy, they are allied in judgment. "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

There is a link now wanting, beloved friends, in this sad and sorrowful history. Sad and sorrowful it is, because in the judgment of these two men we see the end, first, of one who personifies, in the close of the times of Gentile domination, the abuse of the power that had been delivered into the hands of man by God: filled with moral madness and impotent pride, he becomes the ready instrument of Satan, in the last and closing acts of his stupendous wickedness, till he is bound by Him whose heel he bruised when here, and who then exhibits in this world, so long the playground of Satan's deeds, the blessings He had prevailed to procure for man when He went down under the dark domain of him who had the power of death. Sad and sorrowful, too, as to the second, that the minds of men, ever ready to receive the veriest lie of Satan, and ever ready to doubt the love of God, at last become so besotted in wickedness and moral blindness, as to receive such an one as he for their Christ. But there is, as we were remarking, one link yet wanting, and that is, how this consummation of spiritual wickedness, this false Messiah, becomes the

link, as we may say, between the history of professing Christendom and the Jews, in the close and the crisis of the history of this age, before the introduction of an age of blessedness and peace. This will be brought before our minds again; but before this we must consider another subject which comes in during the great Gentile parenthesis, which fills up the space between that time when Israel was the earthly people of God, owned and acknowledged, and that when they shall be so again. That subject is the "calling of the Church." In it is involved the second coming of Christ *for* His saints, before His manifestation *with* them to the world, in the judgment which we have been partially considering; also the first resurrection, the resurrection from among the dead (of which Christ was the firstfruits) of the saints, the "children of the resurrection." This subject, dear friends, is a blessed one, near to the heart of Christ — the secret that was hid in God; the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

4. — The Calling of the Church, and Her Glory.

We turn to Psalm ii. and we read, "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and his anointed (or, Christ), saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us." Here we find a confederacy between Gentiles and people of Israel, the kings and rulers, to reject the authority of the Lord and His Christ. We now turn to Acts iv. 24-26, where we find this psalm quoted by the Holy Ghost as far as we have read, and the comment then added, "for of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." He was presented to Jew and Gentile, rulers and kings and people, as King in Zion, and rejected. The Lord is represented in this psalm as laughing at their impotent rage. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision." But with all their rage and rejection of Christ, God says, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." They could not turn His purpose aside. Now while we are assured that the full rejection of Christ, as their Messiah by the people of Israel, was at the cross, when they said, "We will have no king but Caesar," still when we examine the gospel narratives we find that the spirit which showed itself in full hostility at the cross had been exhibited in various ways, especially amongst the rulers and chief ones of the nation, during the Lord's ministry amongst them. This caused Him, after declaring the new era that his rejection would introduce, to desire His disciples to say no more that He was "the Christ;" (there was no further good to be got by this testimony to the people, that is, to His rights as the Messiah). He adds immediately, "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be

slain, and be raised the third day." This latter clause He always adds to the declaration of His rejection and sufferings. Consult Matthew xvi. 20, 21; Luke ix. 20-22, which convey, I doubt not, the truth we are about to see.

In considering Psalm viii. in connection with other subjects, we saw that there was a "Son of man" to whom dominion was bestowed in all the earth, which Adam had sinned away and lost. He, we saw, was the Lord Jesus Himself, as Hebrews ii. informs us, even as His inheritance will be enjoyed in an age to come. This title the Lord takes to Himself according to that psalm, after His rejection as King in Zion according to Psalm ii., taking it in resurrection. He takes the headship and inheritance, with its load of sin and guilt upon it; and inherits it not only as His by right, but by redemption also. He takes it as the Redeemer-Heir. "We see not yet," says Hebrews ii., "all things put under him; but we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honour." Men said, "We will not have this man to reign over us;" God said, "Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

We turn to Ephesians i., and there we find that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ (looked upon here as the exalted and glorified Man), had raised Christ from among the dead, and "set him at his own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in *this* age, but also in *that* which is to come; and hath put all things in subjection under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Here we find Him raised and seated in the heavenlies, as the glorified Man, all things not yet visibly put under Him, but His title declared; and while as the expectant Heir, He is seated there, we learn that a work is going on of quickening, raising up, and seating together in Him, the second Adam, in the heavenly places, the joint-heirs of all His glory. It is a work, that, the more we search into and meditate upon its depth and magnificence, humbles us to the dust at the "exceeding riches of God's grace." Human words can but feebly convey to us just thoughts of a work which takes up the Magdalenes, and outcasts, and vile ones, lost and defiled through sin, and sets them in the same glory as the Son of God! Not only blessing them *through* Him and His blessed work on the cross, but *with* Him! conferring upon them every dignity, every glory, and every honour, conferred upon Christ Himself as the risen, and exalted, and glorified Son of man! and yet a work in which God is glorified, and in which He is even now exhibiting to the heavenly hosts the fruits of His own precious grace

This serves truly to level every pretension of man, to think on these things. We look at ourselves, and we are inclined to ask the question, "How can these things be?" But we look at God and His purpose, for the

glory of His Son; and thus we serve now to manifest to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, and to teach them the meaning of "Grace!" May we learn to be silent, and to submit ourselves to Him, who does all things well!

The Epistle to the Ephesians is that Scripture which so fully brings out these things. We find there the purpose of God and the execution of that purpose: His own counsels and the good pleasure of His will revealed; Himself the *source* of the blessings; His Son Jesus Christ the *measure* of them, ourselves, by nature dead in trespasses and sins, the *objects* of them!

But to return. We have seen for a moment the work that is going on while the Head is seated in heaven — raising up and uniting to Him the joint-heirs. This is the work of the Holy Spirit since His descent at Pentecost. Now it is most freely admitted that regeneration has been the same in all ages and dispensations. Sinners have been, since the fall of man, quickened by the Holy Ghost and led to trust in the promises of God for salvation by a coming Redeemer, faintly seen in types and shadows of old. Still the saints were quickened; they trusted, and died in faith, and were saved. But individual salvation is not the Church of God. Every individual of that Church, no doubt, is a saved one; still, collectively, they occupy a place, as we shall see, beyond all that went before, and peculiar to the dispensation in which we live. It was reserved for the day when the Lord Jesus, rejected, crucified, dead, buried, risen, ascended, and seated at God's right hand; not only as God's eternal Son, but as a glorified Man, who had fully accomplished redemption in His own person, had put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, glorified God to the utmost as to sin, substituted Himself for His people on the cross, and had been thus seated far above all heavens — it was reserved for such a time to bring out this mystery, which, from the beginning of the ages, had been hid in God; the mystery of "Christ and the Church."

The first notice of this work we find in Matthew xvi., where the Lord declares the foundation in Himself, as Son of the living God. He speaks of the Church as that which was to come. He says, when Peter confessed Him to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God," "Upon this rock I *will* build my church." The apostle afterwards learned the true meaning of the foundation here declared, when he says by the Spirit, "To whom coming as unto a living stone Ye also, as living stones are built up a spiritual house," etc. This, however, is by the way, as to Paul's ministry, and to it alone, is entrusted the revelation of the mystery of Christ and His body. The Lord Himself does not reveal it. He had disciples during His ministry here, but not disciples gathered into one body and united by the Holy Ghost to a glorified Man in heaven.

In the days of Judaism, it was an unlawful thing for a man that was a Jew to have any dealings with those of any other nation. He was separated from amongst the other nations of the earth to God. "You only have I known of *all* the families of the earth," says God, by His prophet, to that people.

When we come to look upon the Lord's life and ministry here, we find that He was constantly going beyond the middle wall of partition which surrounded the Jewish enclosure, in the outflow of His own blessed grace to those who had no relationship with God even in an outward way. Witness the woman of Canaan in Matthew xv., and the woman of Samaria in John iv. "He was a minister of the circumcision for the *truth* of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his *mercy*." (Rom. xv. 8, 9.) Still, the middle well of partition was not really destroyed till the cross, however our Lord's actions may have shown what was coming. We find the position of Jew and Gentile forcibly contrasted in the following scriptures: "Who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." (Rom. ix. 4, 5.) And again, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." (Eph. ii. 11, 12.)

We find in this epistle, that the apostle speaks in the first chapter of the purpose and counsels of God, and the redemption of His people, the latter being an accomplished thing; adding His further purpose to be executed in the dispensation of the fulness of times, when all things shall have been gathered together, in heaven and earth, under His headship; and when those who believe have obtained an inheritance with Him and in Him in these things. He goes on to show that the Head, who had been in death (he sees Him only thus) was alive again, raised up and glorified, Head of all principality, etc., set then as Head over all things to the Church, which is His body. In the second chapter he sees both Jew and Gentile dead in trespasses and sins, as children of the first Adam. In verses 1 and 2, he states what the Gentiles were, and then turns round upon the favoured Jew and writes, "Among whom we also and . . . were children of wrath even as others." This was the position of both Jew and Gentile by nature. We go on and find that Christ "hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the law of commandments contained in ordinances: for to make in himself of twain, one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity *by it*."

There could be, and there was, salvation for individuals, as we have seen, before the cross, and by virtue of what Christ would accomplish there; but the cross itself is the foundation of this unity of Jew and Gentile in one body. "He came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him (Christ) we both (Jew and Gentile), have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. ii. 17, 18.) Here we learn the power of this unity, of which the cross was the basis. The Holy Ghost, then, is the power by which this unity is formed.

Now it is freely admitted that everything good, and of God, that ever has been done in this world, was by the Holy Ghost. But, dear friends, it was reserved for that day when God's people, by virtue of an accomplished redemption, had their consciences so perfectly purged, that God could come and inhabit by the Holy Ghost, the believer's body; and that the Holy Ghost could be given in such a sort, as in this dispensation, since the day of Pentecost.

We do not find in the experience even of a David, the possession of a purged conscience. There was the most blessed and perfect trust and confidence in God displayed and enjoyed, but a purged conscience never. That was reserved till the cross had made it possible to be enjoyed.

We read in John xiv. of the Lord, before He departed, promising His disciples the Holy Ghost, as the Comforter. He says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter (He had been that when with them), that he may abide with you for ever . . . he . . . shall be in you." "In that day (when He was come), ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you." This was the knowledge and experience the personal presence of the Holy Ghost would communicate. In John vii. 36-38 we learn that His presence thus was a new thing, and that although there were believers before His descent, still it was on believers, as such, who had been constituted such by His quickening power, that the Holy Ghost was to be bestowed. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet; because Jesus was not yet glorified." We find an example of this in Acts xix. Long after the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost, we find Paul finding certain disciples at Ephesus. He asks the question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They reply, "We have not so much as beard whether the Holy Ghost is yet." (Compare John vii. 39, where the word "given" has no business.) He asks again, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" They reply, "Unto John's baptism." "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on

Christ Jesus." He found here a company of disciples, believers as far as they had heard, but who had not yet received the Holy Ghost. Far from the centre of the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit, they had not yet heard if He had come, not "whether there be any Holy Ghost." Our English Bible is faulty here and might lead to wrong conclusions. As soon as "they heard, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them."

It is sought to show that the great distinguishing feature between the state of the individual believer, under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost's presence, and the saint in that which is past, is, that he now receives the Holy Ghost to dwell in him; that "in the Spirit" is the proper state of his existence as a Christian, and the link which unites him with Christ risen. The corporate blessings we will see again.

In the instance quoted there was the laying on of the apostle's hands; but, doubtless, God was showing to us that there is a twofold thing — the *quickenings* and the *indwelling* of the Spirit, the latter belonging specially to the present time.

Not seeing this is much of the reason for the low state of numbers of God's children. They think that Christianity is a sort of spiritualized Judaism, and that saints are the same now as before the descent of the Holy Ghost, as to their state. Consequently you have in the lips of many a one of them the prayer of David — "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me;" while others are ever praying for the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon them. Now the least intelligent saint who has been instructed in Christianity, *as such*, could not use such prayers. He knows that he receives the Spirit now, as he does eternal life, by faith, and consequent on redemption. As the apostle asks the Galatians, who were getting under law, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" And again, "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." A Christian may, doubtless, sad to say, by his unfaithfulness, grieve the Holy Spirit much indeed, so much so, as almost to think he had never had the Spirit at all; but he could not with the least intelligence in Christianity say, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." In Romans viii. the Spirit is the principle of our relationship with God; He constitutes the link between the believer and Christ; and this only is christian life (life in the Spirit), which depends on redemption being accomplished.

This is a fact assumed to be the case in all the apostolic teaching to the Church. In Ephesians i. 14 He is given as the seal of redemption and an earnest of the inheritance yet to be enjoyed, till its redemption out of the enemy's hand, the price for its purchase having been paid. In no epistle are the official glories of the Holy Ghost brought before us more fully than

this, which reveals the heavenly calling of the Church of God. In Ephesians i. 14, He is the seal of redemption. Ephesians ii. 18, He is the medium of access by Jew and Gentile, constituted one body, through Jesus Christ unto the Father. Verse 22, God inhabits the assembly on earth by His Spirit. In Ephesians iii. 16, He strengthens the saints in the inner man, enabling them to lay hold of and enjoy their position and standing. In Ephesians iv., precepts are founded upon doctrines; the saint is told not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby he has been sealed till the day of redemption. In Ephesians 5 he is told to be filled with the Spirit. In Ephesians vi. is the power of the warfare in the heavenly places, and his prayer is to be "in the Spirit." To multiply examples were needless.

This being established, we will now look into those scriptures which speak of the body and the unity of the Spirit. We saw that the Lord speaks of the Church as a future thing during His own ministry here. He had disciples, but not disciples gathered into one body, constituting the "fulness" of a glorified Man in heaven, by the power of the Spirit, uniting them in one. Such, and such only, is the Church of God. It was reserved for the ministry of the Apostle Paul to bring out this grand central truth of the Church. He tells us that he had it "by revelation," and not therefore from others.

After the rejection of the Lord and the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, we find the Church gathered in Jerusalem, and principally composed of Jews, affording a wondrous spectacle to the world around, united in one heart and soul, a dwelling-place of God by the Holy Ghost. The Lord lingered, in His longsuffering love, over his beloved though now cast-off people, to see if even the testimony of the Holy Ghost to a risen and glorified Christ would touch their hearts. The enmity of the Jews and the religious leaders of the nation increased every hour, till it arrived at its full height, when the Sanhedrim (the great council of the nation) gnashed upon the witness of the Holy Ghost to a risen and exalted Christ, in the person of Stephen, who, filled with the Holy Ghost, sees heaven opened, and, stoned by his murderers, is received by the "Son of man standing at the right hand of God." The Church at Jerusalem is broken up as to its outward manifestation, and dispersed. Saul of Tarsus, the young man at whose feet the murderers laid their clothes, on his journey from Jerusalem to Damascus with the high priest's commission in his robe, and the purpose in his heart of wiping out, so to speak, if it were possible, the very name of Jesus from the earth, is struck down at mid-day with the vision of the glorified and exalted Jesus. He hears the wondrous truth, for the first time now proclaimed, that the poor persecuted Christians on earth were members of the body of Christ. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." He arises and straightway preaches Jesus that "he is the Son of God."

The short period of its earthly manifestation at Jerusalem having passed, the Church henceforth fully assumes its heavenly position in the mind of the Spirit. While on earth, wherever locally represented by saints gathered to the name of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Ghost, it is the tabernacle of God through the Spirit.

To the Apostle Paul is committed the testimony of the mystery, hidden in God in other ages, but now revealed. He tells us that he had it by revelation. (Eph. iii. 3.) We will briefly notice some of the testimony by him as to this. The Epistle to the Romans being chiefly confined to the revelation of Christianity and the individual relationship of the saint with God, and His dispensational wisdom in His dealings with the Jew, the subject is but shortly referred to in Romans xii. 4, 5. He writes, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." In 1 Corinthians xii. 12-27, this subject is brought out more fully. The bare reading of the passage should be sufficient: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit," etc. Nothing can be clearer to the mind subject to Scripture. The Holy Ghost is the centre and living power of the unity of the body. Christians are "members of Christ" and "members one of another." How this overturns the ideas of men, who speak of being members of such and such a church (so-called) or religious association! This is the only unity a Christian is bound to acknowledge and own, and to endeavour with all his heart to observe, and to witness for the unity which has been made by the Holy Ghost, constituting every Christian a member of one body, and gathering them together to be subject to Christ as Lord. The Holy Ghost is, we may so say, the life which animates the whole, dwelling not only in the individual believer, but in the body collectively. And when saints are thus gathered together, owning this unity, and this alone, they form the sphere for the manifestation of His presence, in the ministry of the word, "dividing to every man severally as he will;" taking up and using, according to His divine pleasure, those who have been gifted and set in the Church for the building up and edifying of the body, and for the perfecting of the saints. "God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." (1 Cor. xii. 18.) So of Christ, "when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints," etc.

The assembly thus is on earth the tabernacle of God by the Spirit. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in

you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16.) Again, Ephesians ii. 22: "In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God by the Spirit." We are now, of course, looking at those scriptures that view the assembly here; others, as we have seen, view it as the body of the risen Man in heaven. Both are true. Ephesians i. speaks of the latter, chapter ii. of the former.

Such being the calling of the saints, the apostle founds upon it his exhortations, in Ephesians iv. 1-6. He puts their privileges first before them and then looks upon their responsibility. "For *this* cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, . . . beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called . . . Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, one Spirit . . . one Lord," We have purposely passed over the entire of chapter iii. from verse 2 to the middle of verse 1, chapter iv.; as the reader may remark in his English Bible that this entire passage is a parenthesis.

This then is the Church of God — this the unity we are exhorted to keep: not to *make* a unity for ourselves, or choose one out of the many existing factions around, that best suits one's education, thoughts, feelings, circumstances, etc., but to endeavour, with hearts subject to Jesus as Lord, to preserve a unity which has been formed by the Holy Ghost since the day of Pentecost — the body of Christ.

We have in the same chapter (Eph. iv.) the care of Christ for His body. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive." He went into the domain of Satan and bound the strong man; but before He exhibits the results of His victory amongst men, in the blessing of the millennial earth, He does so in His body, bestowing gifts on men for the setting free of those captive under Satan, and the building up of those who have been delivered, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ." When that fulness is attained, the complement of the body for its Head, it will be taken away to be united in actual fact to the Head in heaven. Then will come the resurrection of the sleeping saints, and their translation with the living saints, when all shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

The Scriptures teem with this blessed hope of the Church. In the earliest epistle (1 Thess.) we find that, however unintelligently it may have been understood, the saints had been converted to this blessed hope. "Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven." It was the hope set before the sorrowing disciples, as they gazed up into heaven after the vanishing form of the Lord, in Acts i., that He "would so come in like manner." The Corinthians came "behind in no gift, waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. i. 7.) In Ephesians, the saints are looked upon as already seated in the

heavenlies in Christ, there waiting for the gathering together of all things in the fulness of times. Their blessing is in the heavenlies, Ephesians i. 3; their position, Ephesians ii. 6; their testimony, Ephesians iii. 10; and their conflict, Ephesians vi. 12. In Philippians iii. 20, 21, the citizenship of the saints is in heaven, from whence they look for "the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body," etc. In Colossians iii. 4, the life of the saints is so bound up with Christ's, that, when He is manifested to the world, they are manifested with Him. In Thessalonians, the whole epistle is taken up with the hope. In 1 Thess. i., it was connected with their conversion; in 1 Thess. ii., with the labours of Christ's servant; in 1 Thess. iii., with practical righteousness and holiness: in 1 Thess. iv., the whole matter and the manner of its accomplishment is detailed. 1 Thess. 5 shows the design of the apostle for their practical sanctification, and their being preserved blameless to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thessalonians sets the hope aright in the minds of the saints, which had been disturbed by the receipt of a spurious epistle; and distinguishes the coming of Christ *for* his saints and their gathering together unto Him (their proper hope), from His manifestation in judgment to the world, in which we know, from other scriptures, He is accompanied by them.

I forbear to quote other scriptures on this subject. It is almost sad to be obliged to press so blessed a hope on the hearts of the Lord's people — a hope, of which the scriptures of the New Testament are so full. Sad to say, it has become necessary to do so: even God's people have imbibed so much of the evil and worldly-minded servant, who said in his heart, "My lord delayeth his coming," and of the scoffers of the last days who say, "where is the promise of His coming?"

In considering our first subject — "The general purpose of God" — we referred to the places in the New Testament where Psalm viii. was quoted. The first was Hebrews ii., when the "Son of man," to whom all dominion was given, is seen in heaven, "crowned with glory and honour," all things not yet put under Him — the headship to be enjoyed in the habitable earth to come. The second was Ephesians i., ii., when the body was being prepared for the glorified head. The third remains now to be quoted again. "For he hath put all things under his feet." (1 Cor. xv.) This will come to pass, as the chapter shows, in the day when the scriptures of Isaiah xxiv. — xxvi. are fulfilled, in the day of the first resurrection. "Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed . . . So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, *then* shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (Isaiah xxv. 8.) The whole chapter treats of this resurrection, of which Christ was the first fruits, it is a resurrection in power and glory. "It is sown in dishonour,

it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power." There is no thought in the chapter of the resurrection of the wicked. We have before considered shortly, that, at that time, the restoration of the nation of Israel will take place — the veil will be removed from all nations. And it will be a period of universal judgment of powers on earth, and in the heavenlies, introductive of the kingdom in Zion and the renewed earth, which the saints of the first resurrection will inherit and reign over in the heavenlies as joint-heirs with Christ. In short, it is the time of "the restitution of all things." This period of universal judgment is identical, as we may see, with that spoken of in considering the "times of the Gentiles," and their judgment.

5. — The Corruption of Christendom.

We have seen, in some measure, the nature and unity of the Church of God, and her heavenly calling — the Church to which Christ has imparted the glory given to Him, as man, by God the Father. The glory was His by right as the eternal Son, as well as by creation. But the only way in which we could partake of His glory, was, by His becoming a man, and taking this glory, and headship over all things, through death and resurrection — thus accomplishing the redemption of His people. How little do they enter upon and realize, and walk in the power of their heavenly calling! Rather may it be said of many, "They mind earthly things." They are engrossed and absorbed in the pursuits and aims of this world — "this present evil age;" from which He died to deliver them. (Gal. i. 4.) They are conformed to its ways, its vanities, its projects, rather than following a rejected Christ, whom the world united under its prince, to cast out of the world; and declaring plainly in their walk and ways that theirs is strangership on earth, and citizenship in heaven, and that they are of those of whom Christ said, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John xvii.); and of whom the apostle, "As is the heavenly, even so are they also that are heavenly." Would that there were more of that intense personal devotedness amongst those who are Christ's — amongst those to whom He has in His marvellous grace, taught the nature and meaning of this heavenly calling, and the truth of His Church, His Bride; who are in the place of the testimony of God just now, in His own sovereign goodness!

Would that this testimony of God might press itself more deeply on our souls, and lead us to that intense separation from the world; and personal, individual devotedness, as witnesses, or servants, as it may please Him! Surely all may serve Him in the former capacity: all may be witnesses, if all are not labourers! And surely the corporate testimony without the personal devotedness — or the personal devotedness without the corporate testimony, is faulty: both must go together to be in accordance, in our little measure, with the mind and purposes of God.

For a little moment the desire of Christ, "That they all may be one . . . that the world may *believe*" (John xvii. 21), came to pass at the first blush of the unselfish joy of the Church at Pentecost, when the world beheld with wonder the great multitude of one heart and soul, having all things in common. But we may remember in our former paper, when considering the testing of man from the garden of Eden to the cross, that we found that, tried in every way, he had failed; let us now see what man under grace will do — if such a position will succeed. It is just such another tale of sorrow, with this difference — that he has now failed in and corrupted, as to its testimony in the world, that which was best!

When the Church assumed fully her heavenly calling, after the persecution and dispersion which arose at the death of Stephen, we find Paul raised up of the Lord, that He might bring out by him the true heavenly calling and doctrine of the Church of God — the body of Christ. In the devoted labours of the apostle, and the scriptures given to us by his instrumentality, we find that it became necessary for the Holy Ghost to reveal the consequences which would result to the Church, from its witness on earth being entrusted into the hands of man. Evil had crept in from the very beginning, but as long as the apostolic energy was there it was kept from gaining head, and was judged. Judaism, and false brethren, and ungodly men crept in unawares, amongst those who were true disciples; and even those who were truly disciples, became impregnated with the spirit of the world, and with the evil. Witness those solemn words of Paul to the elders of the assembly at Ephesus, the scene where all they of Asia had heard the word of the Lord: "I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock: also of *your own selves* shall some arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." And in view of such a state of things, he directs the heart of the faithful disciple to "God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." God and the Scriptures of His truth were to be his sure and never failing resource in the time of ruin, which was fast closing in. In Corinth we find schools of doctrine and human wisdom, taking the place of revelation and divine wisdom amongst them. (1 Cor. i., ii.) In the epistle to the Galatians, the influence of law-teachers and Judaizers compelled the apostle to stand in doubt of them for the moment as to whether they had abandoned the ground of Christianity altogether or not; still he had confidence in them through the Lord. In Philippians "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." (Phil. ii. 21.) Again, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." (Phil. iii. 18, 19.) In Colossians, Satan had succeeded in introducing ordinances, and philosophy, and vain deceit after the tradition of men; meats and drinks, holy days, will-worship and

neglecting of the body — between the Head and His members. 1 Timothy, law-teachers and Judaizers, "understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm;" and the warning of the apostacy of the *latter* times. 2 Timothy, the tide of evil came in with such a torrent, that the apostle sees the Church which he had laboured for, and watched over, and builded, as a wise master-builder, — that which the Spirit terms "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15), the house inhabited by the Holy Ghost — fallen into dilapidation and ruins, and transformed into "a great house," with "vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour." In such a state of things, in the "perilous times" of the "last days," the faithful disciple has but one pathway — not to be satisfied with such a state, nor to think of being able to mend the ruin, but — to purge himself from the vessels to dishonour, and to walk with the faithful, who "call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Tim. ii. 20-22.) And again does the apostle turn the heart of the faithful one to the Scriptures of God as profitable for all and every difficulty, that he might "be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." So deeply solemn is the warning here in 2 Tim. iii. 1-5 that that which bears the name of Christianity, and which before men has the character of godliness, shelters all the worst features of the corrupt human heart, that the words are literally nearly the same, and morally the same, as those which the apostle uses in describing the corruption and moral degradation of the heathen world in the close of Romans i. There is also the active energy of evil in those who, "reprobate concerning the faith," are deceiving and being deceived; from such the man of God was to turn away, leaving them to the judgment of God. In Titus we find the unruly talkers and deceivers spreading their baneful influence around. 2 Peter also testifies as to these evil influences at work amongst the saints. Jude traces the apostasy from the time when "certain ungodly men crept in unawares" until the Lord comes with His saints to execute judgment upon such. In verse 11 we have a summary of the apostasy of the natural man: "the way of Cain;" teaching error for reward, and using truth for corrupt ends, "the error of Balaam;" and lastly, where the apostasy ends, "the gainsaying of Core." This, it will be remembered, was the revolt of the Israelites, instigated by the Levite Korah, against the authority of Christ, in His royalty, represented by Moses, and His priesthood, represented by Aaron. The Levites sought the priesthood ("Seek ye the priesthood also?" Num. xvi.), and were the moving spring of the revolt of the simple Israelites. And thus it has been ever, the ecclesiastical evil urging the civil power on to rebellion. See the revolt of Absalom against David: the moving power was Absalom's counsellor, Ahithophel, who was a priest. (See 2 Samuel xv. 12.) And so it is in the end, a beast, and a false prophet who urges on the former, and "exercises all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. (Rev. xiii.) Such has been the corruption

from the beginning of Christianity. Those who ought to have occupied the position of the Levite, that is, those who were sent into the Church to labour for the Lord, instead of retaining the *Levite place*, recognising that *all* the people of the Lord are *priests*, and thus entitled to enter into the holiest (see 1 Peter ii. 5, 9); the ecclesiastical, or priestly, position has been assumed as the medium between Christ and His people; and this is not confined to the grosser evil and corruptions of Rome, but it is the same in principle throughout Christendom, although not developed in the same measure. Both these epistles 2 Peter and Jude — testify of the rejection of the *Lordship* of Christ. Rev. ii., iii., give us in successive stages the different phases in which the evil would be developed in the Church, looked at in her place of testimony here below, from her departure from her first love, till threatened with full rejection, as something loathsome to Him — a false witness in the world. "I will spue thee out of my mouth." We have also the testimony in Matthew xiii. from the Lord Himself in the parable of the tares, by which we see that the evil produced at the beginning by the introduction of the tares amongst the wheat, goes on till the harvest, when the righteous are gathered into the garner, and the tares bound in bundles and then cast into the fire and burned; thus cleansing the kingdom of the Son of man. Instead of a change, such as men think, coming over the world; and, by the gospel, the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea, the evil increases till the harvest. How do the thoughts of men who look for a millennium brought in by the preaching of the gospel, fall in with this? Properly Matthew xiii. including the parable of the tares and the wheat, is a similitude of the kingdom of heaven, in the phase it would assume when the King would be fully rejected, not the Church, which had no existence; in a subsequent chapter (Matt. xvi.) the Lord speaks of it as a future thing. He came as their Messiah, to His people Israel — His vineyard — to seek for fruit, and He found none. He then sowed in the world ("the field is the world") that which was to produce fruit — "the word."

I have purposely passed over 2 Thessalonians and the Epistles of John, for in them we find the personage named who shall consummate all this wickedness in himself — "the man of sin" — "the Antichrist." In the former epistle, given to us on the occasion of a spurious epistle having been received by the Thessalonians as if from Paul (chap. ii. 2), telling them that the "day" of Christ was there, the apostle (ver. 1) beseeches them by their proper hope, which he had taught them in the first epistle, that of the coming of Christ, and their being gathered together unto Him, that they would not be shaken with the thought conveyed by the false epistle, that the "day," or manifestation, was then present (*enesteke*). The apostle clearly distinguishes the "coming" from the "appearing," or "day," which is to bring rest to them from the trials and tribulations of the world, and judgments on their enemies; for, when the "day" of His manifestation

would come, the saints would be manifested *with* Him in glory. He goes on to show that before the "day" would come there would be, there is, "the mystery of lawlessness," or iniquity, which already worked; secondly, the apostasy from Christianity (ver. 3); thirdly, the revelation of the man of sin. (Ver. 3, 4, 8.) The judgment executed by Christ Himself would be the "day" in which the false epistle told them they were. We have seen before that in this He will be accompanied by His saints, previously gathered to Him. We have seen some of the testimony of Scripture as to the mystery of lawlessness, and also of the apostacy from Christendom; but there was a good hindering power (ver. 7), which, when removed, *then* would the lawless one be revealed. The principles were all at work, but the Holy Ghost was in the Church, the power of God was here below, and the unbridled self-will of man, exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, was still restrained, till the fitting time was come; *then* the evil would assume its definite shape in "the man of sin."

We will follow to its close the mystery of iniquity. We turn to Revelation xvii. and find the fourth Beast, or Latin empire, in his revived state, ridden upon by a false woman, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." Imperially and gloriously arrayed, and her cup full of idolatry and fornication, drunken with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus, and the blood of saints. The prophet wonders at the end of what was once so precious, so beautiful — the work of grace at Pentecost! She overrides the peoples, nations, and tongues, and their kings, who have been intoxicated with the wine of her fornication; until at last, tired with her oppression, the ten horns and the Beast, "these shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." She waits not for the appearing of Christ for judgment, but suffers it at the hands of those over whom she exercised her pernicious influence so long. Revelation xviii. gives her judgment, and the lamentation of the kings of the earth, and those who had profited by her traffic and rewards, for her overthrow. Such is the end of corrupt Christianity in Rome, and wherever it is found; for she is the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.

In considering the history of the Gentile powers, from its beginning to its close in judgment, and that of the Beast, who represents it, urged on by Satan in the end, we also saw his connection with the false Messiah, whom the Jews would receive in the end of the age, and his judgment under the character of the false prophet with the first Beast: we desired to show how this personage forms the link between their history and that of false, professing Christendom in the end. We saw from 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, 8, that that wicked one would not be revealed till the good restraining power was removed: the mystery of iniquity worked, and the apostasy would come; this we traced to its end in the judgment of the corrupt woman of Revelation xvii., but the day of Christ's manifestation in judgment would

not come till the man of sin was revealed, the good restraining power having first been removed. Revelation xiii. showed us also that it is during the revived form of the Latin empire, at the close of the existence of the fourth beast, that this man should be fully revealed. He who has title of king amongst the Jews, the second Beast ministers to the power of the first Beast (not being able to set aside the Gentile power) during the short period before the close, when Satan shall have given him his power, and seat, and great authority. We also saw that it was after the taking up of the saints, that Satan was cast out of the heavenlies (Rev. xii.); so putting all these things together, we find that it is between the coming of Christ for His saints, and His appearance in judgment *with* them, that the man of sin, the lawless one, is revealed. As described in 2 Thessalonians ii., he does similar things to those attributed to him in Daniel xi. 36-38: he "opposeth and exalteth himself above *all* that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God . . . whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders:" even as Christ, as the Man of righteousness, was "approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which *God* did by him." (Acts ii. 22 — see Greek.) The attainment of this position — i.e., of God — was the first suggestion of Satan to Adam. Here we find it is Adam fallen, fully developed and filled with the energy of Satan, in this man of sin, who opposes the Lord Jesus — Man in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (Col. ii.)

When examining Revelation xiii. with regard to this personage, we saw that the miracles he performs have, in the apprehension of men, the *appearance* of divine energy, and they are mostly of a Jewish character. In 2 Thessalonians ii. they are more an imitation of Christ. With regard to those in Revelation xiii., we may remember that when Elijah was raised up to witness for the name of Jehovah, before the apostate tribes of Israel (1 Kings xix.), the question whether Jehovah or Baal was God, was decided by fire, which came down and consumed the sacrifice, and that the people then fell on their faces crying, "Jehovah, he is the God." in 2 Thessalonians ii., as we have seen in quoting Acts ii., it is more an imitation of Christ, though of Satanic origin.

In the First Epistle of John he is termed "The Antichrist," who denies the Father and the Son; or, the revelation of Christianity. Thus it is plain that in these days of strong delusion — when men, not having received the love of the truth that they might be saved, will be given up to believe a lie — he forms the connecting link between apostate Christianity, and apostate Judaism, and the apostasy of the fourth beast or Gentile power, and is in himself the expression of the apostasy of *man*, claiming to be God. *Judaism*, for he sits in the temple of God (I need hardly add, in Jerusalem) — Christianity, as we have seen. And we find him coming to his end, with his coadjutor in evil, in Revelation xix. 20, under the title of

the "false prophet," which is more his Jewish character; the false woman or ecclesiastical corruption having been destroyed, not by the Lord, but by those she had overridden.

We have now traced to their end the different agents in evil in the apostasy of the natural man entrusted with power, personified by the beast, the Antichrist to his end, and false Christianity to her end. Deeply solemn subjects, and yet needful (or God would not have warned us about these things), they affect not ourselves as to their judgment and their end, but we are in the midst of, and have to do with, the principles which are fast ripening up around us. Ours is a calling out of, and above, the world and we shall be with the Lord, when the evils are fully manifested, and the world carried away in delusion by them. Our citizenship is in heaven, where these evils cannot come. Blessed be our God! Evil is fast ripening to its head and the minds of men more blinded, and there are many antichrists. May the consideration of these things lead us into a more growing separation in all our pursuits and ways from that which ends so sorrowfully. And may we with greater earnestness long for the coming of Him who will put an end to the evil, and fill the world with blessing under Himself.

Our considerations have led us thus far. We see that the three great systems (1 Cor. x. 32) set up in the world for the display of God's government and His grace (viz., the Jew, under law; the Gentile, without law, and entrusted with universal dominion and the Church, as Christ's epistle in the world — His witness for grace and truth, and under grace) have all, as far as man's responsibility reaches, been a scene of ruin and failure and corruption — the ruin of that which was most excellent proving the worst of corruptions.

6. — The Judgment of Israel and the Nations Introductory of the Kingdom.

In the opening subject of our considerations of the ways of God, we mentioned that the prophetic scriptures are occupied with earthly events, and embrace five great leading and distinct subjects, some of which, if not all, are often found grouped together in the same prophesy. It is with the fourth of these subjects we shall now be specially occupied — the crisis, or short period of judgment, which cleanses the world of all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, preparatory to the setting up of the kingdom — "the hour of temptation which comes upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. 10); "the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." (Jer. xxx. 7.) The nation of Israel is most prominent during this period, and is the subject of judgment, in which the Gentiles are sharers. The testimonies of Scripture are very full on this subject; and to help to clear it in our minds, I have classified them into three points, as follows:

1. The promises made of restoration to Israel, after their failure, and in view of it, besides the unconditional promises made to the fathers, both of which will be fulfilled to a remnant of the nation, who will be established in the kingdom under Christ in the land.
2. The testimonies of Scripture that Israel would be set aside for a long timeless period, known only to God, and again taken up to be restored.
3. That when this timeless period shall have run out, the nation will be restored by judgment, which not only falls on the apostates amongst them, delivering a remnant, but is a universal judgment on the nations of the world as well, and is introductive of God's kingdom in Zion, and the millennial period, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

As to the first point, we will turn to Leviticus 26, where we find the result put before Israel consequent on their observing the conditions they had accepted as the terms of their relationship with God, and retention of their blessings in the land, and the alternative in case of the non-fulfilment of these terms — "If ye will walk in my statutes . . . *then* I will give you rain," etc. (Lev. 26: 3-13); "But and if ye will not hearken . . . I also will do this unto you." etc. (Lev. 26: 14-39.) It goes on assuming that the latter would be the case, till the cities are wasted, and the land and her sanctuaries brought to desolation, and the nation dispersed amongst the heathen, in their enemies' land; and then, even when in the enemies' land, God says, "I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them, for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God." The Lord then turns back to His own unconditional promises to their forefathers, after they have destroyed themselves: and when in their enemies' land, He forgets them not, nor casts them off utterly. "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers . . . and that they have walked contrary to me . . . *then* will I remember *my covenant with Jacob . . . also my covenant with Abraham, will I remember, and I will remember the land.*" (Lev. 26: 40-42.)

Turn now to Deuteronomy xxx. 1-10: "And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind amongst all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God . . . that *then* the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee . . . and bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it: and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers," etc. This is not so striking as Leviticus xxvi., where the promises to the fathers are alluded to. Deuteronomy is more the *principle* of their acceptance as a

nation after failure, and when "Lo Ammi" had been written upon them. It also lays down the principle of their acceptance *as individuals* in the interim by the gospel, and righteousness by faith. See the use made by the Apostle Paul of Romans x. 11-14.

There are other promises in view of their restoration, especially that to the house of David, to be made good in Christ. We read in 1 Chronicles xvii. 11-14, "And it shall come to pass, when the days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house and I will establish his throne for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son; and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee, but I will settle him in my house and in my kingdom for ever, and his throne shall be established for evermore." This passage is applied to Christ in Hebrews i. 5.

We find the promises to the fathers alluded to in view of their full deliverance in the end. See Micah vii. 19, 20. The prophet expresses the adoration of his heart in contemplating the goodness of God in their deliverance; he says, "Thou wilt perform the truth to *Jacob* and the mercy to *Abraham*, which thou hast sworn to *our fathers* from the days of old." We must ever remember that if God were to fail in fulfilling those earthly promises to Abraham, we have no reason to suppose that He would not also fail in His spiritual promises to him, which latter come to us. Consult Galatians iii. 6-14. Neither, we know, can ever fail.

Again, when Christ came, "As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever." (Luke i. 54, 55.) In verses 69-74, when both the promises to the fathers and to David's house are recalled, "He hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David . . . to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he sware to our father Abraham." It is almost needless to say that the earthly blessings were deferred, because of the rejection of Christ by the nation.

Turn now to Isaiah xlix. We find that Israel having failed as God's servant, is set aside, and Christ presented as the true servant; and yet He says, "I have laboured in vain;" for we know that Israel rejected Him. The answer of God comes in verse 5, etc. It was a light thing to raise up the tribes of Israel, but He should be exalted and given as a light to the Gentiles. In verse 8, He is given as a covenant to the people to deliver them in the end. The language of the prophecy is very beautiful: "Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains, for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted." Zion, apparently forsaken, then learns that the Lord's faithfulness is greater than a mother's towards her sucking child. "Behold, I have graven thee

upon the palms of my hands; thy walls (Jerusalem) are continually before me." Her children make haste to return to her, and her destroyers go forth from her. "Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold all these (the restored and gathered remnant of the people) gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee as a bride doeth. For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold I was left alone: these, where had they been? Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee, with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me." The thought of applying this to the Church is almost too over-strained to need a remark. When does the Church ever say, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me" and that at the very time when the blessing is complete?

In Romans xi. the Apostle Paul deals with this subject, showing that God hath not cast off His people; and he gives three leading reasons as his argument. First: there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Secondly: through the fall of his nation, salvation is come to the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy (See Deut. xxxii. 21), and not to reject them. And, thirdly, "There *shall* come out of *Zion* the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob," at the time that *all* Israel (that is, as a whole, or nationally), shall be saved.

When we consider the third point proposed, many of those promises of restoration will come before us, connected with the judgment of the apostates of the nation, and the Gentiles.

As to the next point, we will turn to Daniel ix. 24-27, where we find the answer to the prayer of Daniel, who was one of the captives of Israel in Babylon. Naturally the subject of all others most dear to his Jewish heart and affections was the restoration of his people; and the subject of most importance was to ascertain the length of time they would be subject to their captors, under whose yoke they were reaping what they had sown when owned of God. In the beginning of the chapter we find that, like any

godly man, Daniel was a student of Scripture; and in the first year of Darius the Mede, who took the kingdom after the fall of Babylon, he had ascertained from the book of Jeremiah that the seventy years of the desolation of Jerusalem were now past. Faith was at work in his soul, and he set his face to wait upon God and to humble himself before Him about his nation with prayer and supplication, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. He puts himself in the position of the nation according to its sins before God, and identifies himself with them. (See Lev. xxvi. 40, 41.) His heart owns the God with whom he had to do, as One who never changed — a merciful and gracious God. God *Himself* is his confidence. "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, *though* we have rebelled against him." It is something beautiful how his faith calls Jerusalem "thy city," and Israel "thy people," as Moses did when the people made the golden calf, and God could not own them. We read, "Whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel . . . the man Gabriel . . . informed me," etc; and in the communication which follows — that is, the prophecy of the seventy weeks — the answer to his prayer. We may remark that God speaks of the people to Daniel as "thy people" — as to Moses on the occasion to which we have referred; and the prophecy relates to the Jewish people, and to Jerusalem. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy (place). Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after (the) threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off and shall have nothing (marg., which is correct): and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm a (marg.) covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Here then is a clearly defined period mentioned, at the end of which a remarkable change would be brought to his people, the Jews, and to their city — their return and complete re-establishment in grace — transgressions pardoned, sins made an end of, iniquity forgiven, and everlasting righteousness introduced, the vision and prophecy sealed up, and the most holy place anointed. Now let us call to mind the state of Judah and Jerusalem, as we saw when examining the past history of the people of Israel, at the time that Judah went into captivity to Babylon, in

the closing chapters of 2 Kings. The king of Judah and the nation were brought into captivity (Israel, or the ten tribes, had long before been brought into captivity by the Assyrian), the city was broken up, and the house of the Lord burned with fire, and a few of the poorer of the people left to be vinedressers and husbandmen in the land. And let us compare that state with what is here, in Daniel ix., where we find a complete and perfect restoration and re-establishment promised.

During the continuance of those seventy weeks of years (490), it assumes, or declares, that the people or a remnant of them, will be in the land; but not yet owned as God's people, and still under the power of the Gentiles; the temple rebuilt, and the city restored. This is of much importance, so let us bear in mind those three points which characterize the continuance of the seventy weeks.

1. The people (or some of them) are in the land, but not owned of God.
2. The temple rebuilt, and the city.
3. The Gentiles still in possession of the throne of the world, or in other words, the "times of the Gentiles" not run out.

These *three* things do *not* characterize the *present* time.

The seventy weeks are divided into three periods, or divisions: seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week. The first division of seven weeks, or forty-nine years, counts from the going forth of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, this was the starting point. "Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." First this rebuilding goes on for seven weeks of years. We read in Nehemiah that it was a time of great distress and trouble. "But it came to pass that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?" etc. Then we have sixty-two weeks of years from the rebuilding of Jerusalem unto Messiah, in all sixty-nine weeks of the seventy. Messiah is then cut off and rejected, and does not get His kingdom. "After the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off and shall have nothing." Christ presents Himself to the nation as their King, and instead of getting His kingdom, He is crucified after the threescore and two weeks; and the counting out of the seventieth week ceases for the time. Then the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. This was accomplished under Titus and the Roman armies at the destruction of Jerusalem, after the rejection of Christ. The people whose armies accomplished this were the Roman people. In John xi. 48, we find the fears of the Jewish leaders absolutely

prophetic of this event. "If we let him (Christ) thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." And the Lord Himself predicted when He beheld the city, and wept over it, "For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground." (Luke xix. 43.) And again, "And some spake of the temple how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, He said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down . . . and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Luke xxi. 5, 6.)

Messiah having been cut off after the sixty-ninth week, the chain of events with the Jewish people ceases (absolutely, when the city was destroyed), and time therefore ceases to be counted from that period to the present. God, as we have seen, becomes occupied with other things. The seventieth week was to bring in and establish in full prosperity and blessing the people, according to verse 24; but instead of the blessing, the cutting off of Messiah after the sixty-ninth week, the city and sanctuary trodden down, and a long nameless period of desolations to the people and city follow. Evidently, as we have seen, it was the Roman people who were to do what is stated in verse 26. "The people of the prince that shall come," etc. The *prince* was not there, only the *people* are named, but the prince himself was not come. He is brought before us after this long timeless period of desolations, still running on, "He shall confirm a covenant," etc.

The rejection of Christ, therefore, suspended all relations and dealings of God with the Jewish people, as His people, and this allotted period of seventy weeks ceases to run on. And when the Jews are the objects of God's dealings again in the short period of judgment before He owns them as His nation, the period which remains of the seventy weeks will be counted out and will bring in the full restoration. This short period is, therefore, as we may easily see, synchronical with the closing events, or crisis of the history of the world, introductive of the kingdom.

We find the same thing in many other scriptures either assumed or declared. (See Isa. viii. 14-22; Isa. ix. 1-7.) Christ becomes a stone of stumbling to the nation — the testimony is confined to His disciples — the Lord then hides His face from the house of Jacob for a long, timeless period, and the prophet passes over to the last days, which introduce the kingdom by judgment. Again in Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, when the Lord announced His mission in the synagogue of Nazareth, He stops short in the middle of verse 2, which is separated from the next clause already for more than eighteen hundred years, and which clause announces the "day of

vengeance," and the comforting them that mourn, the remnant of the nation in the kingdom.

Now consider the testimony of Scripture as to the third point proposed. Turn to Deuteronomy xxxii. In the closing verses of chapter xxxi. Moses gathers the elders and officers of the people of Israel together to recite in their ears the prophetic song given to him by the Lord as a witness, in view of their failure. He says, "I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way that I command you, and evil will befall you in the latter days, because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the works of your hands." Then in chapter xxxii. they are viewed as having corrupted themselves. "They have corrupted themselves; their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation." He then goes on to relate their wonderful history, and the counsels and care of God as to them, and the return they made to Him. "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked . . . they provoked him to jealousy with strange gods . . . they sacrificed unto devils And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them . . . and he said, I will hide my face from them; I will see what their end shall be, for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God . . . and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people." And then in His anger He casts them off utterly, heaping mischief upon them. When thus cast off He acts in His own sovereignty, and in view of this He declares, "For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he sees their power is gone, and that there is none shut up or left." He judges His people, avenges the blood of His servants. When His hand takes hold on judgment he renders vengeance to His enemies — makes His arrows drunk with blood — His sword devours much flesh; then He turns in mercy to His people and to His land. The result of this judgment on the nations, is that the Gentiles sing the song of deliverance with the remnant of His people who are delivered. (See Psalms lxxvii., cxvii.)

Psalms ii., viii. — x. In the first of these Psalms we find Christ presented as King in Zion and rejected, yet God's purposes only set aside for a while. Christ takes in resurrection the wider glory of the Son of man, according to Psalm viii.; we saw before that the Holy Ghost, in Acts iv., quotes the first two verses of Psalm ii. and stops. The Lord is represented as laughing at their rage, but for all their rage He declares, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Messiah is desired, "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance," etc. When rejected, and about to be crucified, He represents Himself as praying for His disciples, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world" (John xvii.), but the time is coming when He will ask for His inheritance, and the answer comes, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." He inherits them by judgment, in which His people

now being gathered have their place with Him; a proof that, wherever *Christ* is spoken of in the Old Testament, we find the portion of the *Church* as well. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken in pieces, even as I received of my Father." (Rev. ii. 28.) This however is not his best portion, for "I will give him the morning star" — Christ Himself. And then not only is the name of Jehovah excellent in all the earth, but He sets His glory *above* the heavens (Psalm viii. 1), and stills the enemy and the avenger. Psalm ix. and Psalm x. show us the position and circumstances in which the nation is found in this crisis of judgment. The delivered remnant say, "For thou hast maintained my right and my cause . . . thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God. For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail; let the heathen be judged in thy sight. Put them in fear, O Lord; that the nations may know themselves to be but men." It is when there is none to say, "How long?" that the Lord appears to their deliverance. Again, "The Lord is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land. Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart (that is of the spared ones who are trained for the kingdom); thou wilt cause their ear to hear," etc. How mistaken to think the Psalms are the expression of *Christian* experience as such! How often the simple-hearted Christian has been stumbled at the cry for vengeance on enemies, running through this class of Psalms, put in his mouth, whose calling is to do well and suffer for it, and take it patiently, while in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ! The kingdom and power will be looked for by these Jewish hearts, as that which brings their deliverance. The trials of the heavenly saints end, just before those of the Jewish saints begin. See Revelation xii., where we find rejoicing in heaven when the accuser is cast down, and woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, "for the devil is come down to you." He then turns his rage against the woman and her seed, the Jewish people. The Spirit of Christ has graciously entered into these trials, that He might give a voice to the remnant, in the closing days, before the kingdom.

Read now Psalm cx. Christ rejected by men, and by His people as their king — who said, "We have no king but Caesar," "We will not have this man to reign over us" — is exalted to God's right hand. God said, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (See Heb. i. 13; Heb. x. 13.) He remains then for the nameless time "until" that hour known only to the Father. The Lord, when that hour comes, sends out of Zion the rod of His strength; and Christ rules in the midst of His

enemies. His people are willing in the day of His power. (They are unwilling in the day of His humiliation.) "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen," etc.

Turn to Isaiah i. — iv. Blessing and rest are proposed in chapter i. consequent on the repentance of the nation; but they would not hearken. Eventually it is brought in by judgment — "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness; and the destruction of the transgressors, and of the sinners shall be together." The result of this judgment is in Isa. ii. 1- 4; Isa. iv. 2-6, a time of peace and glory. "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . and *all* nations shall flow unto it He shall judge among . . . the nations . . . and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall *not* lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." How different the time in which we live, while the times of the Gentiles are running on, characterized by those words of our Lord, "Nation *shall* rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom . . . upon earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth," precursors of the Son of man's coming with power and great glory. (Luke xxi. 10, 25-27.) The remaining part of Isaiah ii., etc., shows the connection between the judgment of the nations and that of Israel. "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty: and the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day *when* he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." The result of this universal judgment is the establishment of His people in the glory of the kingdom. "It will come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy; even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and a smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." His own presence will be there, when His people are delivered, as in the wilderness of old.

Isaiah xi. The reading of this chapter is so plain as scarcely to need a word. A time of universal blessedness and peace; His people restored and

under the government of Messiah, introduced by judgment, which falls on them and the nations. "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." "The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off," etc

Isaiah xiii., xiv., treat of the same time, a time of universal judgment on the imperial throne of the world. (Chap. xiii.) "The day of the Lord," when "all hands shall be faint and every man's heart shall melt." "For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land; and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob . . . and they shall take them captives whose captives they were, and they shall rule over their oppressors . . . in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve." "This is the purpose that is purposed upon the *whole earth*; and this is the hand that is stretched out upon *all* the nations." (Chap. xiv. 1-3, 26.) It goes on to the destruction of the Assyrian *after* their deliverance (the power that occupies at that day the territory of their ancient enemy); I say "after," because before the Assyrian fell *before* Babylon; here, which proves its future application, he falls after Babylon is judged.

Isaiah xxiv. — xxvii. This prophecy we have examined and the deliverance of a remnant; the Lord's throne is established shortly before; it shows the universal judgment upon the nations and Israel, in Zion, the reproach of His people removed, the vail taken away from all nations. The Lord had hidden his face from the house of Israel while they were disowned: but He is spoken of as coming out of His place for their deliverance. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."

Isaiah xxx. "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun: and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people and healeth the stroke of their wound. Behold the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy; his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: and his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: i.e., and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people causing them to err And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the

indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hail-stones. For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down which smote with a rod. And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass" (the rod of vengeance which God hath decreed), "which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps" (when it is laid on the Assyrian, it is the source of joy and deliverance at the end of the indignation, to the remnant of Israel): "and in battles of shaking will he fight with it. For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared" (the Antichrist, who has this title amongst the apostate nation); "he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

Isaiah lix.15–21. Verse 20 of this passage is quoted by the apostle in Romans xi., in view of the future restoration of the people. "The Redeemer shall come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." And then He establishes the new covenant with Israel; His spirit is with His people, and His words are in their mouth, which would abide with them for ever. Verse 18, etc., shows that it is introduced by judgment. "He will repay fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies: to the islands he will pay recompence; so shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun." The next chapter declares that Jerusalem is restored in the glory of the kingdom, and her sons and daughters gathered from every side.

Isaiah lxvi. This chapter gives the judgment which introduces the glory and blessedness of the restored nation described in the latter portion of Isaiah lxxv. First we have the remnant who fear the name of Jehovah and wait for Him; then the apostates of the nation. The former are encouraged with the promise that the Lord would appear to their joy and deliverance, and to the shame of the apostates, who said in contempt, "Let the Lord display his glory." "Behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with *all* flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many." (Isa. lxvi. 15, 16.) This passage shows that He comes suddenly, like a whirlwind, and renders to His enemies the fire of judgment. Then we have the result of this in verses 6–14; the laws are set up again in a wondrous manner, and Jerusalem restored. "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her all ye that love her: . . . rejoice with joy for her, all ye that mourn for her: . . . for thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to *her* like a river, and the glory of the *Gentiles* like a flowing stream . . . as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you: and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb: and the hand of the Lord shall be known towards his servants, and his indignation towards his enemies." Then, in verses 19, 20, the spared

remnant go forth to declare the glory of the Lord among the Gentiles, and to bring back the dispersed of Israel. The whole chapter shows most clearly the connection between the universal judgment of the nations and Israel, with the deliverance of a remnant, and the Gentiles who are spared blessed around the people of God.

Turn to Jeremiah xxv. We referred to this chapter before; it declared the length of the captivity of Judah in Babylon to be seventy years: but God, having given the throne of the world to Babylon, when He had set aside His people and removed His presence from their midst — in principle, when Babylon is overthrown His people are delivered, because it was the only power that held its dominion directly from God — the other Gentile powers followed providentially. Jerusalem was only partially restored; however, it shows the principle. In examining this chapter, we find that the judgment goes on to the end, in which His people are involved; primarily it referred to the judgment which was executed on Jerusalem and the nations at the time to which the prophecy referred, Babylon falling last of all, which had executed it; and serves as a type of the final crisis of judgment of *all* the nations of the world. "For, lo, . . . I will call for a sword upon *all* the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts A noise shall come even to the *ends* of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with *all* flesh . . . and the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth," etc. (Ver. 29–33.)

Jeremiah xxx. — xxxiii. In this beautiful series of prophecies we find, first, Judah restored; then Israel; then both established under the new covenant; the land restored; Messiah and the priesthood, all introduced by judgment on the Jews and the nations, which finds Jacob at the height of his distress. Let us examine it more closely. In Jeremiah 30: 7; the prophet writes, "Alas for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him, but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord, neither be thou dismayed, O Israel, for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee, though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure and will not leave thee altogether unpunished Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured, and all thine adversaries, every one of them shall go into captivity, and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil and all they that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health

unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord, because they called thee an outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after . . . the city shall be builded upon her own heap And ye shall be my people and I will be your God The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until he has done it, and until he has performed the intents of his heart: in the *latter days* ye shall consider it." Jeremiah xxxi. sets forth the deliverance, at the same time, of all the families of Israel: and they shall plant vines in the mountains of Samaria and eat them as common things. The language of this deliverance is touchingly beautiful. "Behold I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child, and her that travaileth with child together; a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them, and I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters by a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn He that scattered Israel, will gather them Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (both houses, the entire nation), "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which covenant they brake But this shall be the covenant I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts . . . and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more If those ordinances" (of creation) "depart from before me, saith the Lord, *then* the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever." When Messiah was cut off, the blood of this new covenant was shed, and all necessary on God's part was accomplished to their righteous establishment under it. Plainly the return from Babylon, of the remnant of Judah, was not this re-establishment; for it will be established with *all* Israel, as it declares, and in grace. The blessing of it however never brings them within the veil, as is the place of Christians now. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord, from the tower of Hananeel, unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook Kidron, unto the corner of the horsegate towards the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; and it shall not be plucked up nor thrown down, any more for ever."

In Jeremiah xxxii. the Lord takes up the circumstances of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar to declare His counsel in grace as to their final restoration. The prophet is caused to buy a field in token that the people would again possess the land. "Behold, I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them in mine anger . . . and I will bring them again into their place, and I will cause them to dwell safely Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul."

Jeremiah xxxiii. repeats the blessings, looking forward to the day when their Messiah would be with them. "I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel (both) to return . . . and I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me: and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David: and he shall execute judgment and righteousness *in the land.*" ("Judgment shall return to righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it." Psalm xciv. 15.) "In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness. For thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of *Israel*," not merely Judah. "Thus saith the Lord, If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy upon them."

Turn now to Ezekiel xx. The Spirit here retraces the idolatry of the entire nation from the time of their deliverance out of Egypt. God had brought them out, and given them His sabbaths to be a sign between Him and them: but they had ever rebelled in the wilderness against Him, and polluted His sabbaths. "Notwithstanding the children rebelled against me: they walked not in my statutes . . . they polluted my sabbaths . . . in the wilderness." God had told them (Deut. xxxii.; Lev. xxvi.) that He would scatter them amongst the heathen. Yet when they had been brought into the land they had forsaken the Lord for the high places, and the Lord had sworn that He would not be enquired of by them; but the nation, hardened in their idolatry, had resolved to be like the heathen, and serve wood and stone. Then the Lord said that with fury poured out He would rule over them. "And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered . . . and I will plead with you face to face . . . and I will cause you to pass under the rod . . . and I will purge out from among you the rebels (the apostates), and them that transgress against me . . and they shall not enter into the land of Israel For in my holy mountain . . . there shall *all* the house of Israel, all of them *in the land*,

serve me . . . when I shall bring you into the land of Israel; into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to *your fathers*. And I will kindle a fire in thee . . . and *all* flesh shall see that I the Lord have kindled it: and it shall not be quenched." (Ezek. 20: 33-48.) Israel is here dealt with, amongst the nations of the world, for idolatry; as Judah for the rejection of Christ (for Israel never returned to have their Messiah presented to them, as Judah), which was her special sin, in which she was joined by the fourth Gentile empire, represented by Pilate. In the end she is found in close alliance with, and politically favoured by, the Gentile empire in its revived state. The unclean spirit of idolatry did not return to the Jews after the return of the remnant from Babylon. The Lord notices this in Matthew xii.: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished; then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation." Verse 48 shows the connection of the judgment of the nations with that of Israel.

Ezekiel xxxvi. — xxxix. In this series of chapters we get, first, the moral renewing of the nation; then the quickening and restoration of the people in national resurrection; then when restored and in their land, their last great enemy, which occupies the territory of the Assyrian, comes up against them; and is destroyed in the mountains of Israel.

Ezekiel xxxvi. The past failure of the nation is put before them that they may own it before God. The heathen said, "These are the people of the Lord and (yet) they are gone forth out of his land." (Ver. 20.) But then God remembers that His name is involved, and for His holy name's sake He delivers them. Then, as He had shown to Nicodemus, a master in Israel, the new birth was necessary even to the enjoyment of earthly blessings; which, as a teacher in Israel, he ought to have known from the testimony of the prophets. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you . . . a new heart also will I give you . . . and I will put my spirit within you . . . and ye shall dwell in the land that I gave your fathers . . . And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field . . . I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded," etc. The nation is thus morally renewed that they may loathe themselves for their sins before God.

Ezekiel xxxvii. In the vision of this chapter we have a figure of the national resurrection of the people. The prophet sees a valley of dry bones, to which he prophesies as commanded; and there was a noise and a shaking, and the bones came together, and the sinews and flesh came up upon them; and the breath came into them and they lived. "Then said be unto me, Son of man, these bones are the *whole* house of Israel; behold,

they say (in captivity), Our bones are dried, our hope is lost; we are cut off from our parts Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel . . . and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live; and I shall place you in *your own land*." The figure of resurrection is here used to show the gathering of the nation, long apparently lost amongst the nations of the world, into their land. Clearly it only applies to this, not actual resurrection of the saints who have died in the Lord; it would not be "in the land," but to heaven, they would be brought. In what follows, we find that Judah and Israel, long apart, are united into one nation, under one king. God sets up his tabernacle and His sanctuary amongst them, and establishes His covenant of peace.

In Ezekiel xxxviii., Ezekiel xxxix., the Assyrian, the ancient enemy of the people when owned of God — "the rod of the Lord's anger" (Isaiah x. 5) against His people, to chastise them for their sins — is here introduced under the title of Gog, the prince of Rosh (Russia); Meshech (Moscow); and Tubal (Tobolsk). He embraces the territory under Russia, or which that power shall have gathered under her in that day. He is represented as wickedly coming up against the nation in Palestine when at rest and restored. "Thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely . . . to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thy hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land Thus saith the Lord . . . it shall be in the *latter days*, and I will bring thee against my land Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel . . . and it shall come to pass . . . when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face . . . and I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood . . . and I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God; this is the day whereof I have spoken. . . . Then shall they (the house of Israel) know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; but I have gathered them into their own land Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." Compare also for this destruction of the Assyrian, after the people are restored, Isaiah xiv. 24, 25; Isaiah xxxiii. We must carefully distinguish Gog the land of Magog in Ezekiel xxxviii., Ezekiel xxxix., from Gog and Magog of Revelation xx. The former comes up when the people are restored, in the *beginning* of the kingdom; the latter, *after* the thousand years of the kingdom have expired. "When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog," etc., (Ver. 7, 8.)

Daniel xii. We have before seen that the time of the great tribulation, spoken of here, is that to which the Lord Himself alludes, as happening at the time the abomination of desolation is set up in the temple, and which ends by the coming of the Lord Himself, and the deliverance of the people. It is the closing half of the seventieth week, when the reformed Latin empire is the full expression of Satanic energy, the destruction of which makes way for the kingdom under Christ. We read, "At *that* time shall Michael stand up . . . for the children of *thy* people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time; and at *that* time shall thy people be delivered And many (not all) of them that sleep in the dust of the earth" (this is a figure analogous to the moral death and resurrection in Isaiah xxvi. 13-19, and the national resurrection as conveyed by the figure of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel xxxvii.) "shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to (instruct many in) righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever And one said . . . How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" that is, to the end of the tribulation, and he sware, "that it should be for a time, times, and a half," to put an end to the dispersion of the holy people: the closing half of the seventieth week of Daniel ix.

Joel iii. It is but necessary to read verses 1, 2, 9-17, to show the connection. "For, behold, in those days . . . when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather *all nations*, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat (the judgment of Jehovah), and will plead with them there for my people, and my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about. Let the heathen be waked, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about" (this is the judgment of the quick, or living nations). "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and . . . will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and then shall no stranger pass through her any more." She shall be no more trodden down of the Gentiles; their times shall have been fulfilled.

Micah 4, 5 This prophecy shows in the most wondrously beautiful manner, the coming and rejection of the Bethlehemite by His people, who are then given up for a time until Zion, which travails, shall have brought forth, and the Son be owned as born to the nation (see Isaiah ix.); and the remnant shall be restored. The Assyrian then comes up, and He whom they had rejected is then their peace. "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord And this man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces." He shall

“deliver us from the Assyrian . . . and the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people, as the dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.” Jacob shall be the channel of refreshing grace from God to the world, and a testimony to His power.

Zephaniah iii. 8-20. "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations . . . to pour upon them my indignation . . . for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." The remnant is thus encouraged to wait for this time of judgment from the Lord, when He would rise up to the prey; this alone would set them free, and teach the nations to call upon the Lord, and serve Him with one consent. In that day God would gather his dispersed people from beyond the rivers of Ethiopia (Euphrates and Nile) and have in their midst a people that trust in the name of Jehovah; and "the remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem; the Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy; the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will *rest in his love*; he will joy over thee with singing . . . I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord."

Haggai ii. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts . . . The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former . . . I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen . . . saith the Lord of hosts." This universal judgment, introductive of Christ and the glory of the restored nation, is referred to by the Holy Ghost in Hebrews xii. 26, as yet to come.

Zechariah x. — xiv. In this series of chapters we have the restoration of Judah and Israel at a time of universal judgment; and this is spoken of still as *future, long after the return of Judah from the Babylonish captivity*. "And in that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it . . . And Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. . . . And it

shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all nations that come up against Jerusalem." The verses following, which speak of the repentance of the house of David and the nation, are extremely beautiful. The rejected Messiah is the Jehovah who delivers them. They look upon Him whom they have pierced. There is a great mourning in the land as in the valley of Megiddo of old. This allusion to 2 Chronicles xxxv. 22, etc., is touching in the extreme. *There*, in the closing days of their former history, their faithful king, Josiah, had fallen, and there the nation had mourned and made great lamentation over their slain king. *Here* they learn to mourn in the dust, when they learn that the king whom their nation crucified is the Lord of hosts Himself.

In the past history of the nation we saw how that they had failed — the people, the priests, the prophets, and the kings. Here we find these classes all represented in this national and yet individual repentance. The house of David, which represents the kings — the house of Nathan, the prophets — the house of Levi, the priests — and the house of Shimei (Simeon), the people.

Judah is here dealt with, in the land, for the rejection of Christ; not like Israel, as we have seen, for idolatry. "And . . . in all the land . . . two parts therein shall be cut off, and die, but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; (Ammi) and they shall say, the Lord is my God." The sentence "Call his name Lo Ammi, for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God," (Hosea i. 9,) is removed.

In Zechariah xiv. the Lord appears to their deliverance, in the place from which the "glory" of the God of Israel departed, when He transferred the "sword" to the Gentile. From the same place He had entered Jerusalem as their King, according to this prophet (Zech. ix. 9.) riding upon an ass's colt. On the same mount of Olives He sat, in Matthew xxiv. surrounded by His Jewish disciples; after He had left His nation, until the day when they would say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," and instructed them as to the restoration and gathering of their nation from the four quarters of the world, at the coming of the Son of man in His glory. And from the same mountain did He ascend, having been rejected by His nation and crucified, to heaven. (Acts i.) And on that same mountain shall His feet stand when He returns to their full and complete deliverance in grace! "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem And the Lord shall be King over all the earth All the land shall be turned as a plain, from

Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem; and it shall be lifted up and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate, unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the towers of Hananeel unto the king's wine-presses And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."

We have now followed without much comment, and allowing scripture to speak for itself; which it has done, from the law, the prophets, and the Psalms, giving the testimony of a time of universal judgment; when God turns to occupy Himself, directly, with the world again; the nation of Israel being the special object before Him. All these dealings making way for God's kingdom in Zion and the restored earth; at the time of the restitution of all things — and we have seen most distinctly that this time of judgment is synchronical with the counting out of the closing part of the seventieth week of Daniel ix. — the crisis of the history of this world. And before closing this subject, I would shortly notice the position of the heavenly and glorified saints — the Church of the firstborn — during these scenes of universal judgment. We saw them taken up at the time of the first resurrection to be "ever with the Lord," (when the saying of Isaiah xxv. 8, 1 Corinthians xv. 54, is brought to pass, "Death is swallowed up in victory,") when this period of judgment begins. We find this in the Book of Revelation, in Rev. iv. — xix., which are occupied with this period of judgment, precursory of the kingdom. It is assumed also in other Scriptures. In Rev. i. we have "the things which thou hast seen," the vision of Christ walking amongst the candlesticks. Rev. ii., iii., "the things that are," (ver. 19,) or the time-state of the Church as a light-bearer here below for Christ. In her place of responsibility the various features which would mark her existence in the world are portrayed, from the time of her departure from her first love, till she is threatened with total excision — "I will spue thee out of my mouth." No doubt seven actual assemblies in Asia are addressed, but the moral state of each is seized to describe that which would be found in Christendom. That these seven assemblies, and they *alone*, could not be termed "the things that are," is clear, as they did not constitute all that existed then; and besides, Rev. iii. 10 clearly indicates that the whole *time-existence* of the Church is converged, as it promises that the overcomer who kept the word of Christ's patience would be kept from "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth" — the period of judgment we have been considering, which introduces or rather precedes the kingdom. Rev. iv., etc., "The things which shall be after these things" (*meta tauta*) begins this period. "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be after these things." There are doubtless features in these chapters that show the leading features which characterize the protracted period from the apostolic days to the end of the age; but when we come to

details, the interpretation can only apply, in truth, to the crisis of the history of the world.

All through the course of these chapters of the Apocalypse, we find a company seated in heaven, calm and peaceful, amidst the thunders and lightnings and judgments, cognizant of the mind of God; and with full understanding of all that goes on beneath them in the world. In chapter iv. we find them, in the presence of a throne of judgment, seated as kings and priests, clothed with white raiment, and on their heads crowns of gold — the complement of the heavenly saints received up at Christ's coming. In Rev. 5 one of their number explains to the prophet that which caused his thoughts to be troubled; and they are again seen exercising priestly services around the Lamb. Again in Rev. vii. we find them in heaven, and one of their number explains to the prophet the one hundred and forty-four thousand of Israel, and the palm-bearing multitude of Gentiles who had been sealed for preservation through the judgments for the millennial earth, no more to be subject to hunger, or thirst, or sorrow. Again, in Rev. xii., we hear their voices celebrating the casting out of Satan and his angels from the heavenlies: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, proclaimed because Satan had gone down in great wrath, having but a short time — the closing one thousand two hundred and sixty days of the beast's power. The sorrows of the saints for the heavenlies cease when they had been caught up, and just before those of the Jewish saints, sealed for preservation, begin. In Rev. xiii. these saints are the objects of Satan's blasphemy through the beast; he can now no longer accuse or cause them sorrow, so he blasphemeth "those that dwell in heaven." In Rev. xix., after the marriage of the Lamb, we see Christ as King of kings, and Lord of lords, coming forth to judgment, accompanied by the armies of heaven, clothed with fine linen, which is the righteousness of saints. (Comp. also Rev. xvii. 14.) He comes forth to exercise His power over the nations, and to rule them with a rod of iron, in which the saints have a part with Him. See Psalm ii. 9, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel," with Revelation ii. 28, "He that overcometh . . . to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken in shivers: even as I received of my Father." Then, in Rev. xx., the thrones are set, and "they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years." In verse 4 we find three classes. First, those who had been received up at the coming of Christ; second, those who, during the interval of judgment before His appearing, "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God," the souls that were martyred under the fifth seal (see Rev. vi. 9); and, third, those who, during the raging of the beast in his last effort, set on by Satan, "had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands." These last two classes are not deprived of their blessing

for having suffered. They lose those of the kingdom below, but are not forgotten, and receive the heavenly blessing with the others who had been received up at Christ's coming.

7. — The Glory, or Kingdom.

The short period of universal judgment which we have been considering cleanses the sphere of the kingdom from everything which offends, and them which do iniquity: and ends in the coming of the Son of man Himself with power and great glory, to execute the last blow of judgment; and to reign over the world during the continuance of the kingdom. When *it* is established, God will have accomplished in and under His Son, His counsels and purposes as to everything which had been put into the hands of the first Adam, and by Him defiled and destroyed.

We have seen the *first Adam*, innocent, and surrounded with blessing, failing: losing his place of dominion over the earth, and subjecting the creature to vanity by his fall. (Rom. viii. 20.) Left to himself when fallen, and outside the centre of good, he fills the earth with corruption and violence, and Satan usurps the place God should have had in his mind. Afterwards the three great systems, set up in the world — the Jew under law, the Gentile without law, and entrusted with supreme power, and the Church under grace — each proving a failure where entrusted to men; I speak of the Church as a witness in the world, in the place of responsibility and testimony, not as the body of Christ in heaven.

In the days of the kingdom the *last Adam* will be there. In His own perfect, stainless manhood, He came and stood among the ruins of a lost world, and was confronted by Satan, who had obtained his power through the lusts of the first Adam when fallen. (Luke iv.) He stood in His inheritance, and found the "kingdoms of this world and the glory of them" in the hands of Satan, sin-defiled and in ruins. He took it thus, with its load of sin and defilement. He foiled and vanquished Satan in the place of his power; bound the strong man, and then proceeded to spoil him of his goods. The prince of this world came, but had nothing in Him. He went down into the domain of "him that had the power of death, that is the devil" (Heb. ii.) and through death He destroyed his power. In due time He will cast him out of the heavenlies with his angels (Rev. xii.); and when he has for a short period consummated his stupendous wickedness, in the revived Latin Empire, and the Antichrist, He will bind him and cast him into the bottomless pit till the thousand years of the kingdom are ended, and then He will cast him into the lake of fire. When Christ was here, He exhibited the "powers of the world to come," or of the kingdoms, casting out evil spirits and healing man. When that day shall be here, Satan shall be in the bottomless pit, and "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of

the deaf shall be unstopped: then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." (Isaiah xxxv.)

The creature, which was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of man when he fell, groaning and travailing in pain, waiting for that day of its deliverance, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. We read in Genesis iii., "Cursed is the ground for thy sake . . . thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." But of the day of its regeneration, "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree." "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." Again, the sentence pronounced upon Cain, "When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength," shall be removed; for we read of the day when God shall cause His face to shine upon restored Israel, that "then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us; God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him." (Psalm lxxvii.)

The Jew, restored, will be the centre of God's recognized government in the world under Christ. Supremacy over the Gentiles established in Him, who shall rise to reign over them; Jewish royalty restored to the house of David, and priesthood in its excellence and purity made good.

Men had attempted to form a name and a centre, apart from God at Babel, and had been broken into nations and tongues. (Gen. xi.) Israel was the nation with regard to which they had received their inheritance; it was proposed as the centre of God's government in the world. (Deut. xxxii. 8.) It became unworthy of the trust; as we read of Jerusalem, "Thus saith the Lord God, This is Jerusalem; I have set it in the midst of the nations and the countries that are round about her. And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her; for they have refused my judgments, and my statutes they have not walked in them." (Ezek. 5: 5, 6.) And the Gentile king endeavoured to make a religious unity apart from God. (Daniel iii.) Many have been the centres of gathering proposed amongst men to reverse that sentence of scattering pronounced at Babel by God: and as many times have they failed — God has but One! "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until *Shiloh* come; and unto *him* shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. xlix. 10.) When He came to Judah He was rejected. — "Beauty and Bands" were broken (Zech. xi.); and there was no gathering of the nations. Again His name was proposed as a centre, when mercy rejoiced over judgment at Pentecost, and God in grace took occasion of tongues, the sign of judgment, to let the nations hear, each in the tongue wherein he was born, of the wonderful works and grace of God. But again, His centre

was refused, and there was no gathering of the nations, but of a people out of them for His name and for heaven, to which the centre of gathering, refused on earth, had been removed. In the days of the kingdom, of which we speak, that which we find revealed in Genesis xxviii. to the wanderer Jacob in a dream, of a ladder connecting the heavens with the earth (God Himself doing in grace what man had assayed to do in self-will at Babel). We see a type of the days of the kingdom, when Christ (as John i. 51 informs us) will be this link of union between the heavens inhabited by the glorified saints, and the millennial earth, when the seed of Jacob, wanderers now on the face of the earth, without land or altar, "shall be as the dust of the earth;" and when God will have brought them again into their land, and have done all that He hath spoken of. (Gen. xxviii. 15.) The seed of Jacob will then be the head and not the tail (Deut. xxviii. 13); and "many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." (Zech. viii. 23.)

Again, Jehovah had passed over Jordan before the tribes under Joshua, in their former days, by the title of "The Lord of all the earth" (Joshua iii.); but when Israel ceased to be a witness to this title, and was set aside, and the dominion transferred to the Gentile king, God assumes the title of the "God of heaven," as we have before seen, and retains such all through the "times of the Gentiles." But during the introductory scene of judgment which we have considered, His claims as the "God of the earth," are again proclaimed by His witnesses. (Rev. xi.) He then assumes that title fully, and the substance of the Gentiles, who desired to have the world without God, is consecrated unto the "Lord of the whole earth." (Micah iv. 13.) "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." (Zech. xiv. 9; see also Isaiah liv. 5.)

Jerusalem — trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled — will, at that day, be restored; when the "Redeemer shall have come to Zion." (Isaiah 59: 20; Rom. xi.) It will be said to her, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee; and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side; the forces of the Gentiles shall come to thee, the multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the

Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall minister unto thee; they shall come with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory Thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night: that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish: yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas, thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron; I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness, violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders: but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates praise." See also Isaiah lxxv. "Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying And they shall build houses, and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people: and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble! for they are the seed of the blessedness of the Lord, and their offspring with them . . . the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord." (Isaiah lxxv.) Jerusalem, long forsaken of Jehovah, as the beginning of Ezekiel informs us, when His glory departed to heaven, and He transferred the sword to the Gentile, becomes again the dwelling place of His glory. Ezekiel, in view of her day of glory (Ezek. xl. — xlv.) describes the restored city and the sanctuary. We read in chapter xliii. 2-5, "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, and his voice was like the noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city . . . and the glory of the Lord came into the house . . . and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house." And again, "The name of the city from that day shall be Jehovah-Shammah," or "the Lord is there." (Ezek. xlv.) "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord: and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem" (Jer. iii. 17), and this in the day when Israel and Judah shall be one nation in the land.

Her people shall be all righteous, as we read, Isaiah iv. 3: "It shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall

be called holy, even every one that is left among the living in Jerusalem." And again, "Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hand, that I may be glorified." (Isaiah lx. 21.) The law shall be written in their hearts. "After those days, saith the Lord I will put my laws in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer. xxxi. 33.)

The nations also shall all call upon the name of the Lord. When He has executed the judgment which delivers the remnant of His people, we read, "Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may *all* call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." (Zeph. iii. 9.) Again, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." (Psalm xxii. 27.)

The unconditional promises to the fathers will then be fulfilled in grace, and brought in, as we have seen, by judgment. Psalm cv. is prophetic of this, and offers thanksgiving to Jehovah, and calls upon the seed of *Abraham* and *Jacob*, to whom they had been made, to sing unto Him, and glory in His name. For "He is the Lord our God; his *judgments* are in all the earth. He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, which covenant he made with *Abraham*, and his oath unto *Isaac*, and confirmed the same unto *Jacob* for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance." (Ver. 7-11.) We may remember that in considering the past history of the nation we saw that these promises have never yet been fulfilled: the people having taken their inheritance under law — lost it. They will be made good to them in sovereign grace, and, as verse 7 declares, by judgment, evidencing most clearly their still future application.

The knowledge of the Lord and of His glory shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea; and the throne of God, and His righteous government shall be known in the world. "Judgment will have returned to righteousness." (Ps. xciv. 15.) And "righteousness and judgment shall be the habitation of his throne." (Ps. xcvi. 2.) Christ will be the Prince of this world, and Satan bound, who is its prince now. Obedience will be paid to His manifested power, and when this obedience is not observed, excision will be the result, which, if it takes place during the continuance of the kingdom, it will be recognized that it is by the judicial acts of God's government; and all will go on peacefully and happily. Satan will not be there to act on men and tempt them to sin. We find the principles of Messiah's government in the land in Psalm ci. — "A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off; him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer. Mine eyes shall be on the faithful in the land, that

they may dwell with me He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight. I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all the wicked doers from the city of the Lord." We have excision the result of sin also in Isaiah lxxv. 20, where we read, "The sinner living an hundred years old shall be accursed," that is, if cut off it will be recognized as excision for sin in the government of God. The kingdom of Israel will be the earthly centre of the administration of God's government in the world. "He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; and the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like the grass of the earth Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen." (Psalm lxxii.) Again, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." (Isaiah xxxii.)

Thus far we have briefly seen the *earthly* blessings of the kingdom. We left the saints of the heavenlies, who had been received up at the *coming* of Christ to heaven, as well as those who had been martyred during the crisis of judgment which introduced the kingdom, seated on thrones at His *manifestation*, to reign with Him for a thousand years. Let us now look at the *heavenly* blessing of the kingdom. In Rev. xxi. 9, Rev. xxii. 5, we find a description of the millennial display of the *heavenly* Jerusalem to the world. The prophet sees her "descend~~ED~~ING," (not descend~~ED~~: that she never does) out of heaven from God. What the saints should be in this day of trial — "lights in the world" (Phil. ii.); the Church is in the heavenly places to the world in the day of glory, reflecting all the glories of God and of the Lamb; the seat of the *heavenly* administrative power of the kingdom ("know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?"); her *heavenly* character and position, and yet her *connection* with the *millennial earth* is revealed — clothed with divine glory, such as that of Him who sat upon the throne in Rev. 4. Angels are the willing door-keepers of that secure city, which is the chief fruit of the travail of Christ's soul. It has the fulness in perfection of administrative power towards and over the world; twelve gates, for the gate was the place of judgment. The varied displays of God's nature, under the figure of precious stones, which shone in

creation (Ezekiel xxviii.), and in grace, in the high priest's breastplate (Exodus xxviii.), here shine in glory. The city and its street is formed in divine righteousness, of which gold is always the fitting emblem, and holiness of truth, "like unto clear glass." The Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb are its temple and its light. The nations (spared through the judgments on earth) walk in the light of the celestial city, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour *to* it (never "into" it); they own that the heavenly kingdom now established, and the heavens themselves, are the source of blessing to the earth. "The Lord shall hear the heavens and they shall hear the earth;" and they own that "the heavens do rule." (Daniel iv. 26.) No evil of man or Satan is there, and nothing enters in that defiles or makes a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. The river of God and the fruits of the tree of life are for the refreshing of the Lord's redeemed; no tree of *responsibility* is now there, but *one* tree, which is the tree of life, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations of the world. The city is the vessel of grace to the world at that day — *grace* characterizes *her*; as the *royal supremacy* of the restored earthly sanctuary, and city of *Jerusalem*, is ever preserved; for we read, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish." (Isaiah lx. 12.)

Thus we find all that has been ruined and defiled by the first Adam, made good in the day of the kingdom, in and under Christ. The three great systems set up by God, and destroyed by men, established in glory. The Jew in earthly supremacy and blessing; the Gentile subordinately blessed around, governed in righteousness, and the Church of God in the heavenly glory; the centre of the administration of kingdom, and the vessel of grace to the world; the river of God. (Psalm lxvi.) His stream of blessing, ever full of water, has ever been dried up in its outflow in this world, not as to its source, but as from time to time God formed a channel for the blessing in and towards the world; it has been corrupted, and He has been forced to remove the pure stream to other courses, ever intent upon the blessing of man; the channel having proved itself unworthy of the stream. In Eden it took its rise in the beginning when the dispensation proposed was one of earthly good, and it divided into four heads, to bear to the world the riches of such a dispensation. Soon, however, as we know, its channels became corrupted, and there was found no place for such blessing to flow, and so the sources were stopped, and channels obliterated by the waters of the flood.

Again, when Israel was redeemed, and God amongst them, the river took its rise in the rock which was smitten for His people in the wilderness. "They drank of that spiritual rock which followed them," during the forty years' journey, till they were safe in the land. Then, in the daily and yearly round of feasts and gatherings to Jehovah, the people was refreshed with the waters of Shiloah, which ran softly amongst them — of the river "the

streams whereof made glad the city of God." (Psalm xlvi.) But again the channels were corrupted, so that when He, who was their source, came to visit that one family, whom He knew of all the families of the earth (Amos iii. 2), and whom He had chosen to form the objects of the outflow of the river of God, and to be its channel to the Gentile world, He found it had so corrupted itself that He could not own it or permit it to defile the stream; and so, again, the source was transferred to another place, and the world became *fully*, what it was to Him and what it has been ever since to His people, "a dry and thirsty land where no water is." (Psalm lxxiii.)

The source was now to be the glorified Son of man in heaven; and the dispensation one of spiritual blessings in the heavenlies; and the channel of the blessing, His members on earth. We read in John vii., where the Lord passed by and could not own the channel (the yearly returning feasts), which had rendered itself unfit for the river of God: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" Faithless as His people have proved themselves in this dispensation, and much hindered as the stream has become, still it flows on and will never be exhausted or dried up. "He (the Holy Ghost) shall abide with you for ever."

But the day is coming when it will be not only a dispensation of spiritual blessings in *heavenly* places, but one of *earthly* good as well. When there will be one glory of the *celestial*, and another of the *terrestrial*. When all things, both which are *in heaven* and which are *on earth*, will be gathered together in Christ. When the Lord "will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel" (Hosea ii. 21, 22), the seed of God. The river of God will then have a twofold source — in heavenly and earthly blessing, its source in the *heavenly glory* will be the *heavenly* Jerusalem — the Church of the glorified: "The pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeds out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb in the midst thereof." (Rev. xxii. 1.) And the source of the *earthly glory* will be the sanctuary of the *earthly* Zion, when living waters will flow out of the restored Jerusalem, for the blessing of the Gentiles and of the millennial earth. "Behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward," etc. (Ezek. xlvi.; comp. also Joel iii. 18, Zech. xiv. 8.) And Christ will be the true Melchisedec, a Priest on His throne; the link between the heavenly and the earthly glory. The true feast of tabernacles will be kept both by Israel and the Gentiles, but also by the saints in the heavenlies, after the harvest or ingathering, and the vintage of judgment, at the end of this age. "And it shall come to pass that every one that is left

of all the nations which come up against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." And the nations that refuse to go up, will not partake of the refreshing streams of the river of God. The Lord hasten the day in His time.

8. — Satan Loosed for a Little Season, the Great White Throne, and the Eternal State.

After the close of the kingdom, before Christ delivers up the kingdom to the Father, and God is "all in all," we find another testimony of man's ruin. Having beheld Christ, and having been set in the midst of, and surrounded by the blessings of the kingdom, still we learn that man is ever the same. We had the testimony of Scripture that all are righteous at the commencement of the kingdom. The inhabitants of the world had learned righteousness by the judgments which introduced it, but we have not the same testimony as to those who shall be born during its continuance. And the closing scene proves to us the fact that grace and regeneration are as necessary then, as now, that man may be brought to God. It is clear from this, that there will be a declension during the continuance of the kingdom.

After the close of the kingdom, Satan is loosed for a little season, and goes out to the four corners of the earth (he never returns to the heavenlies), and the nations are thus tested for the last time, and the unrenewed fall, in numbers as the sand of the sea, into his hands. They who are thus deceived, go up against the camp of the saints on earth, and are destroyed by the fire of God's judgment — thus separated by judgment from the faithful. Satan is then cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet had been, after which the great white throne is set; and the earth and the heavens flee away from the presence of him that sat thereon; and no place is found for them. The wicked dead stand before the throne, and are judged by Him who judges the secrets of men (Rom. ii.) and who knows them! This judgment is according to their works, and their responsibility. The book of life was opened but none of them are found therein, and they are cast into the lake of fire. Death the last enemy is destroyed, and hades, the place of departed spirits, exists no longer; its whole contents were cast into the lake of fire. "Then cometh the end, when Christ delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto him

that put all things under him, that God (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) may be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 24-28.)

Then follows the eternal state, the new heavens and the new earth "wherein *righteousness dwells*" (2 Peter iii.), not that over which "*a king shall reign in righteousness,*" but where righteousness *dwells*, for all things had been brought into full order and subjection, so that blessing unhindered flows forth from God. God dwells amongst men! Yet in this state of supreme blessedness we find that the Bride, the New Jerusalem, has her own peculiar place, she is the tabernacle of God among men! He wipes away all tears, and there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain; for former things, connected with sin, have passed away. The overcomer has God for his God, and he shall be his Son. And yet — solemn thought for those who would oppose the truth — even in this eternal state, when the Lamb's mediatorial kingdom has passed away, and God is all in all, eternal punishment goes on, side by side, through the endless ages of eternity, with eternal blessing! Unto God "be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen!"

[Note. — We may have observed that Rev. xx. and part of Rev. xxi. is succeeded by the description of the millennial state of the Bride, the Lamb's wife. Chapter xx. begins with the binding of Satan, at the commencement of the kingdom, and goes on through the time of the kingdom, or 1000 years, to verse 7, then it takes up the interval of Satan's last acts of wickedness when loosed for the little season; and finally the judgment of the dead, and destruction of the last enemy, death, before Christ gives up His kingdom to God (to Him who is Father), and God is all in all; so that verses 1-8 of chapter xxi. follow on in their consecutive order into the eternal state, as the verses we have quoted in 1 Cor. xv. Then the Spirit turns to describe that which had not before been given, the millennial glories of the Heavenly Jerusalem, during the days of the kingdom, as is evident from verses 10, 24, 26, and verses 1 and 2 of chapter xxi. The division into chapters and verses has thus disconnected the true order.]

9. — Conclusion.

We have now passed along the chain of the great dispensational dealings of God in their larger features, as through grace we have been enabled: from the fall of man in the garden of Eden to the eternal state.

We read in Psalm xxv., "The meek will he guide in judgment, the *meek* will he teach *his way* The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." And, in His dealings with His servants, we find that He acts according to the principles of His own

word: for we read in Numbers xii. "Now the man Moses was very *meeek* above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." And in Psalm ciii. 7, "He made known his ways to Moses, his *acts* unto the children of Israel." It is to those who are morally near Him He deals thus, giving them capacity to understand Him, and the communications of His mind. This is solemn. For while Israel could only know Him in His overt acts, they were morally far from Him, and consequently unfit to hear the communications of His counsels and ways. This is ever so: there is a moral fitness in one Christian — a practical obedience to His mind and will as revealed — a desire to bow to Him, and respond to the way He has revealed Himself, that He waits upon, and guides and instructs; while another is dull of hearing, and learns but little, and even that little has not its freshness and power in his soul. "The natural man," on the other hand, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) "If any man will (desire) to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John vii. 17) is a simple principle, and yet how much it involves! God does not reveal His truth, to be a mere sum of knowledge learned, for the gratification of the mind. What He teaches, with so much condescension, is imperfectly learned, if learned at all, when the conscience has been unexercised, and the claims of His truth have not found a response in the soul, so as to judge the darkness, and set the feet to walk in, and use, and live in the power of it. And besides this, divine truth is so contrary to every thought of men, even of the best of men, that even the soul which enjoys the revelation of it, is prone to sink into human thoughts, and human use of the truth.

Our meditations have led us, we trust, through grace, into some understanding, of the greater features of the dispensational dealings of God, than which nothing is more important: without an understanding of dispensational truth, the soul is unsteady in its testimony. If labouring for the Lord, it makes the need of souls the paramount object; and the claims of the Lord upon the souls of His people are too often forgotten. The "alabaster box of ointment" should be joined with "this gospel," that is, the publication of the activities of the grace of God by the Gospel, meeting the soul's need, united to such teaching as would lead the soul, through grace, thus satisfied and set at rest, into such an apprehension of the person of Christ Himself, and such an appreciation of Him, that the knowledge of His mind and will is sought; and the heart learns to bow to His claims, and to walk in the path of intelligent obedience, which His eye would mark out, and His written word direct, so that it may please God. (1 Thess. iv. 1.) I am bold to say that without a knowledge of dispensation, this is quite impossible: doubtless there may be, and there is piety amongst many; but piety, while it meets with a certain amount of respect, even from the man of the world, whose heart is not seared, is not "the truth of God." It is one thing to be pious, another to walk in the truth.

The soul that has been established in dispensational truth, and that has ascertained the ways of God during the various dispensations (and even when the testimony entrusted to men in each dispensation has been corrupted and destroyed), learns how to respond to God's way; how to walk before Him in accordance with His mind and will; even when the dispensation has fallen into ruins. Surely one judges that the path marked out in one dispensation, would be unsuited for another; and judges, too, with spiritual discernment, that a path right in the *beginning* of a dispensation, necessarily changes its character when the dispensation has fallen into ruins through the unfaithfulness of those to whom the testimony is entrusted; yet all the while recognising that divine principles *never* have changed, even while the vessel proved that it could not hold the treasure committed to it. The Christian, thus instructed, sees that which answered to God in a divine way, the fruit of the Spirit's teaching, in the soul of a godly Jew under law, when his nation, as an elect earthly one, was owned of God, necessarily altering its character when his nation became corrupted; while the divine counsels altered not. And still he is able to see the more vividly that the pathway of a godly Jew, in an earthly nation, under the law, cannot be that of a Christian in a dispensation where his calling is one *out* of and *above* the world altogether; and, moreover, that the experience of a godly Israelite in *his* dispensation is not such, in its best state, as is suited to a member of the body of the risen Christ; that to be satisfied with such is to ignore the position, of the Christian *as such*, and to return to Judaism in principle. It is to walk as those of whom it is said, "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the *law* of the Lord" (Psalm cxix. 1), is right and blessed in its time, while to "walk in the *light*, as he is in the light," is quite another, and far beyond it; it is to realize that the dispensation with an unrent veil has ceased, that the things permitted in such a dispensation have passed away, and that the Christian is now within the veil, in the full light of God's presence, set there to walk as becomes such a position, and to judge everything in his ways inconsistent with the place, in the liberty of grace. The whole range of his responsibility flows from his position and from the relationship in which he is placed.

The Christian, so instructed, is enabled to pass through the world, with the truth girding his loins, and with a moral apprehension as to the work of all its vaunted progress in civilization, religion, politics, and everything around; and although his testimony may be, as it were, an individual one, "clothed in sackcloth," still his faith is confirmed by the very principles around him which tend in an opposite direction — and he feels that through grace "none of these things move" him; and that the day is coming when his testimony, if in accordance with the mind of the Lord, will be owned, and that then he will see to the full, the use the Lord has had for him as a witness, when to outward appearance he was, as

Jeremiah, "shut up" — and when he "sat alone," the word of the Lord the joy and rejoicing of his heart.

Let me ask the christian soul a question. Are the claims of the Lord Jesus on you, of deep and paramount importance in your eyes? In proposing such a question, I do so to those who profess to love and own Christ as their Lord; and whose consciences have been for ever set at rest; and introduced by faith into the full cloudless presence of God, in Christ — to those who see every question that could hinder their perfect peace, answered by the atoning blood — past, present, future — all secure. Are the claims of Christ of sufficient weight, that you would seek to know His mind and will, even if it were to break up the most cherished associations of your heart? And, knowing His mind and will, are you seeking for grace to walk therein? I feel this a deeply solemn question in the present day, a day of the highest sounding profession, without conscience or life toward God. Religion is putting forth her fairest and most seductive forms; seeking the aid of science, and poetry, and art, to deck herself withal; holding in her hand a cup of prostitution, which stupefies the senses, lulls to sleep the conscience. And even where she is not putting on the outward adorning, she practises all sorts of deceits. Those whose senses would not be ensnared by the outward adorning, are ensnared by the specious arguments of expediency, and a round of evangelical activity — works perfect, it may be, before men, but not perfect before God. (Rev. iii. 2.) She is suiting herself more and more to natural, unregenerate man, and under the name of Christ, she turns away her eye from Christ, and boasts that she is "rich and increased with goods and has need of nothing." (Rev. iii. 17.) "The form of godliness, without the power" surely is the condition of things around us. The Lordship of Christ is ignored. The presence of the Holy Ghost either denied in words; or, what is worse, professed to be acknowledged in words, and completely denied in practice. This is truly solemn. The very vital central truth of Christianity, and of the Church of God — that which marks off, in a clear line, this dispensation from all that went before or which follows, denied; and the whole merged into a heap of confusion, out of which souls can find no clue; and are "ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." "The foundation of God stands sure," whatever man's unfaithfulness has been. God's principles do not alter. And the responsibility of His people never alters either. While it is their blessing to know that "the Lord knoweth them that are his," still their responsibility is, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity," iniquity connected with the great house and its corruptions. (2 Tim. ii. 19, etc.) The Christian is to purge himself from the vessels unto dishonour, that he may be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for his master's use, prepared unto every good work. He must not, as we have before touched upon, rest satisfied with the corruption — nor need he try to repair the injury that has been done; that will never be repaired till the professing mass meets its end in judgment.

His path is a plain one. "Depart from iniquity." "Purge himself from the vessels to dishonour." And now comes his personal walk of holiness. He is to "flee also youthful lusts; and then his walk, in the company of others, to "follow righteousness, faith, peace, charity *with them* that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." This is the principle — a plain one — separation *from* evil, and *to* God in the midst of it. May He, who alone can do so, give subjection to His word to those whose eyes fall upon these pages, and a growing separation and deepening subjection, as they go on their pathway, to those who by grace have learned in their measure to walk therein! "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;" and "if a man love me, he will keep my words." (John xiv.) This is characteristic of Christianity. It is intelligent obedience rendered to a *person*, not to a *law*. The time was when the faithful and undefiled in the way were blessed, who walked in the law of the Lord. (Psalm cxix. 1, etc.) Then God was unrevealed. He was hidden behind the veil and the dispensational barriers of the age. He was hidden and had sent forth His claims to men in the law; and although it had said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and with all thy strength," still it did not reveal a *person* to attract the heart. That time has passed away. Christ has come; and "by him we believe in God" (1 Peter i.), and to him we owe the love of our hearts and the obedience of our lives — one whose love constrains us to live henceforth, "not unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us and rose again." (2 Cor. 5) It is a *person* we are thus called upon to live for and to love; one who has sanctified us unto obedience such as that which characterized His own (1 Peter i. 2), surrendering self, life, all, for those who hated Him. The law proposed that a man should love his neighbour *as himself*. The obedience of Christ was the *surrendering of self* altogether for His enemies!

The Lord Jesus appealed in His day to the Jews (Luke xii. 54-57) to discern "the signs of the times," even by the force of natural conscience, and to judge what was right. His word should find an echo in many a christian heart now, that has sunk down to sleep amongst the dead. (Eph. 5: 14.) Everything around us in the present day, religion, the state of men, nations, powers, kingdoms are each gradually and perceptibly taking their places for the closing scenes of judgment. The Christian, instructed beforehand of these things, can watch them calmly and quietly, awaiting the coming of his Lord. He knows his calling is a heavenly one where judgments cannot come. The coming of the Lord, the Son of God, for His people, is the one boundary, or horizon, of his hopes. His actions, and service, and plans, and sojourn here, are arranged in view of that event; and if called to serve his Lord and Master here, he does so in the sense that he serves as in the last days. May a deepening sense of this fill the souls of His people; and may this, their proper hope, ere the day dawn, be formed in their hearts, and serve to direct their ways! It has been, I believe, said by some one, that the Old Testament scriptures end with the

hope of the coming of the Sun of Righteousness, and the New with that of the "Morning Star." Sweetly beautiful is this. The godly remnant of Israel who feared the Lord and spake often one to another, etc. (Malachi iii.), had that precious consolation before them — that of the coming of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings. (Malachi iv.) And we find them in Luke ii., the Simeons and Annas, and "all them that looked for redemption in Israel" (ver. 25-38), rejoicing in the advent of the "Sun of Righteousness," the "consolation of Israel." But, alas, His beams fell coldly on the hearts of His nation; they had no heart for Him. Men were morally unfit to have God amongst them; and so He was obliged to hide His beams of blessing in the darkened scene that surrounded the cross, and to reserve the day of blessing till another season. Meanwhile, *our* calling was revealed, and *our* hope presented to us; not as the "Sun of Righteousness," but as the "Morning Star." The more we contemplate the fitness of this symbol of our hope, the more does its divine origin appear. It is the watcher during the long night who sees the morning star for a few moments, while the darkness is rolling itself away from off the face of the earth, and before the beams of the sun enliven the earth with their rays. And so with the Christian's hope; he watches during the moral darkness of the world, till the dawn; and just as the darkness is deepest and is about to roll itself away before the beams of the advent of the "Sun of Righteousness," his hope is rewarded in seeing the "Morning Star" (Rev. xxii. 16), in His earliest brightness, coming to take His people to Himself, that they may shine forth with Him as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. xiii. 43), when He reveals Himself to the millennial earth as the Sun of Righteousness.

May He, who alone can give blessing, abundantly bless the consideration of these things, and give that hope its own sanctifying power in our souls!

"I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify these things in the churches; I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and the Morning Star He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus Amen."