

The Spared Remnant.

Paper 14 of 20 'Plain Papers on Prophetic and Other Subjects'.

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The word "remnant" is well known to signify "the residue," or "that which remains" of anything with regard to which it is used. In Scripture it is very frequently employed to designate the faithful, godly portion of a people, more especially of the Jewish people, or nation of Israel, after the nation generally had apostatised from God. Prophecy leaves no room for doubt, that there will be such a portion, or remnant, amid the scenes of matured evil and terrific desolation in which the nation at large will yet be involved, ere the moment of final deliverance arrives.

"Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." (Isaiah 1: 9.) Such is the prophet's acknowledgement, in view of the unnumbered calamities which even in his day had overtaken the nation on account of their sins. Still "the Lord of hosts had left a very small remnant." *The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.* For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness." (Isaiah 10: 21, 22.) Here it is evidently of "the remnant" in yet future days that the prophet speaks. It is as obviously to a yet future "remnant" that the following passage refers. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover *the remnant* of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, from Egypt and from the islands of the sea." (Isaiah 11: 11.) The same may be said of Joel 2: 32; Joel 3: 1, 2. "For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in *the remnant* whom the Lord shall call. For, behold, in those days, and in that time, 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, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel." It is here in manifest connection with the last great crisis in the land of Israel, that mention is made of "*the remnant* whom the Lord shall call." "And I will make her that halted *a remnant*, and her that was cast far off a strong nation; and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever." (Micah 4: 7.) This passage depicts to us the triumph of *the remnant*, when the crisis of their sorrows and of the nation's final calamities is past. "*The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies.*" Zeph. 3: 13.) Here it is their moral character which is the subject of the prophetic pen. In the New Testament the apostle quotes Isaiah's words: — "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, *a remnant shall be saved;*" and there can be no question that he refers these words for their fulfilment to the brief coming crisis in Israel's history. "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." (Romans 9: 27, 28.) He acknowledged, however, the existence of *a remnant* in his own day. "Even so then at this present time also there is *a remnant* according to the election of grace." (Romans 11: 5.) These passages may suffice to show the sense in which the appellation "the remnant" is ordinarily used in Scripture. It is often employed of other nations besides Israel, as, for instance, "the remnant of Syria," "the remnant of Ashdod," "the remnant of the Philistines;" and it is sometimes applied to other subjects. Matthew 22: 6, is an instance of this kind: "And *the remnant* took his servants,

and entreated them spitefully, and slew them." In the vast majority of cases, however, the phrase denotes the godly, repentant part of Israel, when the nation at large has utterly departed from God, and especially such a portion of that race in days yet to come. Many Scriptures treat of "the remnant," thus understood, where the expression itself is not used. Indeed, when once the mind is awakened to the fact, it is surprising to find how large a portion of Scripture is occupied with our present subject.

As long as the nation itself so far maintained the testimony and worship of Jehovah, as that He could own it as a whole, we hear nothing of "a remnant." But when the ten tribes had quite abandoned the worship of Jehovah, and established that of Baal, the Lord not only raised up Elijah as a public testimony to his power and Godhead, but in answer to the complainings of this distinguished prophet, who spake of being left alone, the Lord assured him, "Yet I have left me (reserved unto myself, see Romans 11: 4,) seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him." The "seven thousand" were the remnant of that day. In Judah, in like manner, when Uzziah and Ahaz had so grievously departed from God, Isaiah's prophecy began to recognize the existence of *a remnant*, in passages we have already quoted. It was "in the year that king Uzziah died" that the prophet had the vision of the glory of the Lord, recorded by him in Isaiah 6 and it is in that chapter, after hearing the sentence of judicial blindness upon the nation — a sentence to be fulfilled throughout the period of their long dispersion — he is told, "But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten; as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves, so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof." It is thus during the nation's long, dreary winter, that the remnant — the holy seed — are to the nation what the sap of the tree is to its leafless, withered stump. The sap rises afresh as spring advances, and new verdure appears where nothing has met the eye but the barrenness of death; so will the remnant ere long become the living nucleus of the restored and happy and prosperous nation in millennial times. Sad, however, are the scenes, and deep the trials, which await both the remnant and the nation ere that day arrives.

Jeremiah prophesied on the eve of the Babylonish captivity, an event which he lived to witness and record. The sins of Manasseh, who had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, having rendered it impossible for the sentence long before passed on the guilty nation to be repealed, or even to be much further put off, Jeremiah is commissioned to declare the irreversibility of their doom. Space had been given for repentance. The Lord had again and again, on some signs of contrition being shown, deferred its execution, but now He declares Himself "weary with repenting," and the prophet is charged with the message, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people; east them out of my sight, and let them go forth." Should they ask, Whither? they were to be told, "Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity." The judgment was inevitable, and no intercessions, as of Moses or of Samuel, could turn it aside. The prophet bemoans his lot, to be charged with such a message. It is then that he is comforted by the assurance of mercy to the remnant. Though the sentence against the nation could not be reversed, "The Lord said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant; verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction." (Jer. 15: 11.) Jeremiah and "the remnant," of which he was one, were thus distinguished from the wicked, apostate nation. They were to go into captivity, indeed, and be subject to a stranger's yoke, but the Lord would cause the enemy to "entreat" them "well."

Ezekiel, who prophesied a little later than Jeremiah, bears distinct testimony to the preservation of a remnant in those days of retribution for Judah's sin. In vision he sees six men with slaughter-weapons in their hands, and another clothed with linen, and a writer's inkhorn by his side. To the latter it is said, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry, for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." The others were to go after him, and smite, and not spare; but they were expressly cautioned "not to come near any man upon whom was the mark." The *remnant* was to be spared.

We are not to suppose however, that all who survived the overthrow of Jerusalem, and went into captivity, sustained this remnant-character. Some who survived the destruction of the city were Jeremiah's worst enemies, and perished in their sins by other and subsequent calamities; and as to those who reached the land of the Chaldeans, all were not like Ezekiel, and Daniel, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These, and all who were like-minded with them, formed the true remnant, during the seventy years' captivity. How interesting to observe that these men, though not exempted from the general lot of the nation as to subjection to a Gentile yoke, were yet honoured of God as the depositories of His secrets, and the confessors of His name.

At the expiration of the seventy years assigned to the captivity in Babylon, a number of the Jews returned to Jerusalem. There we find *the remnant* in such men of God as Ezra, Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, Joshua, Haggai, and Zechariah. How touching the language of Ezra, when confessing his sin and the sin of his people, in respect to the unholy alliances which had been made with Gentile strangers; he says, "And now for a little space grace hath been showed from the Lord our God, *to leave us a remnant to escape*, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage." (Ezra 9: 8.) Both in Ezra and Nehemiah, as well as in the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, we have full proof even as to the few returned captives in Judea, that "all were not Israel who were of Israel." It was but in a few that the true remnant spirit and character were found; and ere the voice of prophecy was entirely hushed, we find Malachi in the most solemn way distinguishing between the true remnant and the mass of the nation, whether people or priests. As to the latter, the greater part of his prophecy is occupied with detecting and denouncing their wickedness; of the former, the true remnant, he speaks as follows. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (Mal. 3: 16, 17.) It is important to bear in mind, that however this may apply, as it surely did, to the remnant in Malachi's day, it is connected in the prophecy with anticipations of "the great and dreadful day of the Lord." The reason of this is obvious: *the remnant have one character throughout*. Humble, obedient, separate from abounding wickedness, and heart-broken on account of it, they are comforted whether in past or yet future times by the prospect of that great interposition of God in judgment, which will at once and for ever break down and set aside the power of wickedness, and which, in so doing, will accomplish the deliverance and usher in the full blessing of the faithful remnant. "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave

them neither root nor branch. *But unto you that fear my name* (the remnant) shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye (the remnant) shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." (Mal. 4: 1-3.) This passage deserves the most serious attention of the christian reader, as distinguishing entirely between the prospects of "the remnant," and those held out to the believer under the present dispensation. *The deliverance promised to "the remnant" is effected by God's solemn interposition in judgment on the wicked; an interposition which becomes thus to the remnant the object of their hope; and in the results Of which, when it actually takes place, they are represented as partaking.* They are to "tread down the wicked," who are to be it as ashes under the soles of their feet in that day." How different is all this from the heavenly hopes of the Church, and the character of grace which attaches to its present relations to a world in which it is entrusted with "the ministry of reconciliation!" But more on this subject at a further stage of our inquiries.

It is deeply interesting to connect the notice of the remnant in Malachi with what we find in the Gospels as to the few who were ready to hail the Messiah on His appearance among men. Malachi refers to the remnant as fearing the Lord, thinking upon His name, and speaking often one to another. The evangelist, having recorded the birth of Jesus and His presentation in the temple, says of the aged Anna, that "she, coming in that instant, gave thanks likewise to the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." (Luke 2: 38.) Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna, and their unnamed associates, formed "the remnant" at the time of the Saviour's birth. Of one it is said, he was waiting for the consolation of Israel;" others are described as looking for redemption in Jerusalem;" and it is evident that, as in Malachi's day, they were known to each other, and accustomed to speak together of their common hope. An Edomite was on the throne; the chief priests and scribes were ready to be his confederates in searching for the infant Jesus to destroy Him; the tidings of one "born King of the Jews" troubled the king, and "all Jerusalem was troubled with him;" but in the midst of a state of things so deplorable, there was still a remnant, true to the faith, and confiding in the promises of Jehovah. It was of such that the prophet had long before been inspired to write, "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."

In the remnant at the time of the Saviour's birth there were doubtless many degrees of spiritual intelligence. Some, like Simeon and Anna, could instruct the rest; while others, such as the shepherds of Bethlehem, seem to have had but little intelligence indeed. All who were separated in heart from the abounding hypocrisy and wickedness of the times, and who were looking forward with expectation and desire to the accomplishment of Jehovah's promises, were, in spirit, the remnant of that day. Such, mainly, were those who became disciples of John the Baptist, and such were afterwards the disciples of our Lord. Whether previously devout, like Nathanael, or suddenly converted by the call of Christ, as Levi the publican, Zaccheus, and others, in hearkening to the words and following the steps of Jesus, they became "the remnant." With them the Saviour graciously identified Himself. When forced by the unbelief of the nation to disown all His natural relations to them, He stretched forth His hands towards His disciples, and said, "Behold my mother, and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt. 12: 49, 50.) He immediately afterwards fulfils to His disciples a quotation from Isaiah 8: 16, 17, which in its original connection evidently refers to "the remnant" during the time of Israel's national

rejection. "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him." These are the prophet's words, or rather Messiah's words anticipatively recorded by the prophet's pen. In Matthew 13 our Lord applies to the nation the sentence of judicial blindness foretold in Isaiah 6, and, distinguishing between the nation and His disciples, says, "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them (the nation) it is not given." He thus "binds up the testimony and seals the law among his disciples." He owns them as His remnant, and confides to them the knowledge of His Father's ways.

Few things are more essential to an intelligent apprehension of much that the four gospels contain than to perceive this remnant character of our Lord's disciples. They were "the remnant" in their day. Doubtless there were higher destinies awaiting them, when once the national rejection of their Lord had been consummated at the cross. The foundation of "the church" having been laid in the atoning death of "the Christ, the Son of the living God," when God had raised Him from the dead and exalted Him to heaven, the Holy Ghost came down, and the actual formation of "the church" began. No doubt those who had till then been simply Christ's disciples, and as such the godly Jewish remnant of their day, did then become "the church of the living God," into which Gentiles afterwards were introduced, both becoming "one body in Christ." But while such was the place of privilege and dignity in reserve for the disciples, and while a vast portion of our Lord's instructions were addressed to them prospectively as having, in the counsels of God, to fill this place, they were actually, until the day of Pentecost, "the remnant" of Israel, and were often in this character addressed and instructed by the Lord. This accounts for many passages in the Gospels which would not strictly apply to the Church as such. The sermon on the Mount, and the prophecy on Mount Olivet, in Matthew 24, 25, may be referred to as containing passages of this description. Matthew 23: 3, and Luke 18: 3 and 7, are also instances occurring at the moment to the mind.

When Christ had been fully rejected by Israel and the earth; when He had not only been by man's wicked hands crucified and slain, but when pardon through His death had been proclaimed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and national blessing and restoration offered to Israel in case they should even then repent and be converted; (see Acts 3: 19-21;) when this testimony had been borne and borne in vain; when the murder of Stephen had as definitely marked Israel's rejection of the Holy Ghost, as the crucifixion of Christ had declared their rejection of Him, all question of the Jewish nation, and of a Jewish remnant, passed into abeyance. The nation was given up to its long and fearful desolations; and "the remnant according to the election of grace" became lost sight of in "the church" of which it already formed a part. For a little while after Pentecost this remnant formed the whole of "the church:" then, on the introduction of Gentile believers, "the remnant" formed but a part of the Church, and its Jewish hopes and prospects were absorbed in the brighter hopes and higher calling of the body in which it was merged. As centuries have since rolled on, the Church has become almost entirely composed of Gentiles: any of the natural seed of Abraham who have been turned to the faith of Christ, have, of course, been incorporated with it; and Jewish hopes have in their case been replaced by the prospects peculiar to the Church, as "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." The Church has no earthly portion but that of fellowship with the sufferings of her rejected Lord. These sufferings are her glory; and instead of expecting respite by the execution of judgment on her enemies — a judgment to be followed by the earthly rest and prosperity of God's earthly people, and of the nations, under the reign of

Christ — instead of expecting this, we say, the Church knows her immediate hope to be the descent of Jesus into the air, and her translation to meet him there. This is an event which may at any moment occur; an event which introduces her into the full heavenly portion and joy of her Lord. This, however, is a subject already considered: we refer to it here only to remind the reader of the entire distinction between the Church and the Jewish remnant, as to their calling, portion, and hopes. So different are these, the one from the other, that it is difficult to conceive of both being on earth at the same time. Our conviction is that they will not — that the Church will be completed and caught up to meet the Lord ere the approaching crisis begins. Perhaps it might be more correct to say that the translation of the Church is the commencement of the crisis. But all this we must reserve for future consideration, if the Lord will.

That there will be a godly remnant of Israel in the future crisis, through which the nation will pass, is fully proved by many of the passages quoted at the beginning of this paper. The greater part of those who first return to the land will be entangled in the snares of the great deceiver, and be found in alliance with the last proud adversary of God and of His Christ. But his triumph will not be universal. There will be some, quickened by the Spirit of God, made sensible of their individual and national sins, and penitentially bewailing them before God, who will refuse allegiance to Christ's foe, and stand apart from the abominations of that awful hour. Of these many will seal their testimony with their blood: the remainder will be preserved throughout that time of tribulation, and be delivered by the coming of Christ with all His saints. Let us first consider the testimony of God's word as to those who survive — the spared remnant.

In Zech. 12 - 14, we surely find ourselves amid the scenes and circumstances of the latter day. One or two passages in these chapters may look back to events long since accomplished: but that the subject of the prophecy is to be found in events yet future, no one can reasonably question. Zechariah 12: 2, 3, affords evidence to mark with sufficient distinctness the epoch to which the prophecy applies. It is the time when "Jerusalem shall be a burdensome stone for all people;" when all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. "In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf: and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left, and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem." Such is the issue of the crisis. "In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem." Who can doubt the futurity of the period here indicated? What then is the light shed by the passage on the subject of "the remnant?"

1. We have their conversion attributed, as conversion always is in Scripture, to the Spirit of God. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications."

2. We have their repentance, and the solemn occasion for it: "and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." Their fathers said "his blood be on us and on our children;" now the children perceive who it is of whose blood they

have thus been guilty, and their penitence is according to their crime. "In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon."

3. It is not a mere burst of popular grief that takes place — there is deep personal exercise of soul. "And the land shall mourn, every family apart, the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart." So of Nathan, Levi, Shimei, and their families. "All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart."

4. The sin of the nation, thus bemoaned by the remnant," is washed away. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." We need scarcely explain here, that the opening of this fountain "to the house of David" and "to Jerusalem," must denote the application to them of the benefits of Christ's death. There is no other fountain for sin and for uncleanness. But though eighteen hundred years have elapsed since the death of Christ took place, the application to Israel of its cleansing efficacy, all must admit to be future; and it is of this the passage before us treats.

5. Zechariah 13: 2-5, seem to treat of the thorough cleansing that the land will undergo, when the national sin has been thus forgiven; while in verses 6, 7, we seem to be carried back to the repentance of the remnant as foretold in the previous chapter. Here we get a closer view of it. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced" is Messiah's language in Zechariah 12. Here we read, "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." Not only do "the remnant" discern that it is their Messiah whom they have pierced, but also that their Messiah is Jehovah's fellow — that the One who was wounded in the house of His friends, is the One against whom the sword of divine justice awoke, when as the sin-bearer He became exposed to its stroke. Thus are the secrets of redemption fully opened to them.

But, 6, it is in the midst of outward trials, — trials the most overwhelming, — that they are prepared for these discoveries, and gradually led on to the apprehension of them. "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, 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 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; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." The slaughter of two-thirds, while the remaining third are brought through a seven-times-heated fire of tribulation, are the circumstances amid which "the remnant" will be brought to call upon Jehovah's name, and be by Him acknowledged as His people. Finally, it is when these troubles have reached their utmost extremity, that the Lord appears — that the adversaries are overthrown — that the remnant are delivered and millennial blessedness introduced. Of these things Zechariah 14 affords the fullest proof.

We would now turn to another important passage, which, equally with the one just considered, embraces the whole period of the final sorrows of the remnant, and of their issue in the deliverance and full blessing of the nation under the reign of Christ. It is to Isaiah 63 - 66. we refer. The opening verses, which for want of space we must not quote, foretell, in the

magnificent imagery of the prophetic style, God's great interposition in judgment at the coming of Christ — that interposition in which the wicked will be trodden down in the Lord's anger, and all their strength brought down to the earth. At verse 7, chapter 63, commences a long prophetic strain, in which the writer records "the loving-kindnesses and praises of the Lord" according to all His "great goodness toward the house of Israel." "For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted,* and the angel of his presence saved them." Thus does the Lord identify Himself with the people of His choice. But Israel had been rebellious; and the righteous Lord, who loveth righteousness, had been obliged to fight against them and turn to be their enemy. Ver. 10. He is represented, however, as remembering the days of old, calling to mind His ancient mercies to His people. When the Lord's compassions are thus turned afresh toward Israel, we need not wonder to find the hearts of the remnant turning towards Him. Accordingly, from Isa. 63: 15 to the end of Isa. 64, we have the cry of the remnant in the latter day. "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? Are they restrained?" It is with this touching appeal that their cry begins. In the progress of it, evidence the most distinct arises that it is to yet future times this language applies. It is long after the sentence of judicial blindness or hardness has come upon them, for they acknowledge themselves to be under it. "O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?" It is subsequent to Israel's rejection, and the extension of mercy, as at present, to the Gentiles, for to this also they seem to refer. In fact, it appears as though (in the remnant, at least) God's present dealings had begun to provoke Israel to jealousy, as the apostle intimates. (Rom. 11: 11.) Speaking of the Gentiles as adversaries, the remnant say, "We are thine: thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name." That this is not a cry which saints of the present period could use, is obvious from its being a cry for judgment, for vengeance, on the adversaries. "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, . . . to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence." How could the Church, or the sinners saved by grace who compose it, thus ask for judgment on the nations? Yet the repentance of "the remnant" is very deep, and their confessions truly affecting. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." While such is their sense of their own and of the nation's sins, they are afflicted at the insensibility of the nation at large. "And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee." They own all that they suffer to be the deserved chastenings of the Lord for their sins: "for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities." The pleadings of their souls with God, with which this cry of the remnant concludes, are earnest and importunate indeed. (See verses 8-12.) We only give the last. "Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?"

*This is a most important passage, disclosing to us as it does, in the most touching way, the relations of Christ (Jehovah-Jesus) to "the remnant." It explains to us how, as in the Psalms and elsewhere, language, which in the full extent of its meaning, could only be used by the Lord Himself, is nevertheless used by "the remnant," to express *their* sorrows, *their* confidence, *their* integrity, *their* hopes.

The Lord's answer to this cry is next given. The remnant having rightly identified themselves with the whole nation, as confessing their sins and the sins of their fathers, the Lord first answers roughly, as Joseph did his brethren when they came to him in Egypt. He is found of them that sought Him not, that had not been called by His name. Israel are a rebellions people to whom he had all day in vain stretched out His hands. All their pharisaic services are but a smoke in His nose, a fire that burneth all the day. "Behold, it is written before me; I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord, which have burned incense upon the mountains and blasphemed me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom." But while pronouncing thus upon the nation the sentence of its crimes, the Lord declares his purpose to spare and to bless "the remnant." "Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; *so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.*" They are not only to be spared, however, but also to become the nucleus of the nation in millennial times. "And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, *for my people that have sought me.*" The remnant, whose cry we heard in the two previous chapters, are to possess the land, when their ungodly Jewish brethren, as well as the Gentile adversaries, have been cut off. We saw, indeed, in our last number, that both will form one confederacy of evil in those days.

In the verses following, "the nation" and "the remnant," are distinguished from each other, and alternately addressed. "But ye (the nation) are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number." We saw in our last how the nation, with its chiefs, will be in league with antichrist, making a "covenant with death" and an "agreement with hell." It seems to be to this that reference is here made. "Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake ye did not hear: but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants (the remnant) shall eat, but ye (the nation) shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall bowl for vexation of spirit. And ye (the nation) shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants (the remnant) by another name: that he who blesseth himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes." The remainder of the chapter is a glowing prediction of millennial blessedness.

Isaiah 66 returns to the subject of the previous one. In our last, it was shown from Dan. 9 that in the closing and yet future week of the seventy to which that prophecy relates, Jewish worship and sacrifices will be restored at Jerusalem. The "prince that shall come" will permit this for the former half of the week, but then he will break his covenant with the Jews, abolish their worship, and set up "the abomination of desolation" in the holy place. It is to this revival of Jewish services and sacrifices that the opening of the chapter before us points. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build

unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord." It will not be the rebuilt temple, and the restored Jewish worship, which will be acceptable to the Lord. His sacrifices are of another order. The remnant, whose cry was heard in the previous chapters, are really precious in His sight. "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word." Such is the character of the remnant. As for the nation at large, the Lord utterly repudiates their self-righteous offerings. "He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man." Such is his estimate of them and of their worship. They have chosen their own ways, and He also will choose their delusions. When God spake to them by His Son they refused to hear; and now He will not hear them. How solemn! "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

From verse 5, it is clear that the remnant will not only suffer at the hands of the Gentile oppressor, but also from the hatred of their brethren according to the flesh. "Hear the word of the Lord ye that tremble at his word; your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified." It will be under religious pretensions then, as heretofore, that they who are of the flesh will persecute those who are of the Spirit: "but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." As in Zech. 14 so here, it is the Lord's appearing that terminates the sorrows of "the remnant," brings confusion on the adversaries, and introduces the period of Jerusalem's full glory and the earth's full blessedness under the sceptre of Christ. Verses 7-9, depict the solemnity and suddenness of the transition; then, to verse 13, the prophet exultingly portrays the blessing and glory which ensue; recurring in verse 14, to the event itself, the coming of the Lord. "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 toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies. For, 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." The remainder of the chapter foretells the glory of the millennial reign, and Israel's place of special blessedness and exaltation therein.

Another prophecy to which it is well to direct attention is Isa. 24 - 27 In it we have repeated notices of the spared remnant. That the prophecy at large refers to the closing crisis, a glance through the chapters will convince the reader. The earth made empty and waste and turned upside down — people and priest, servant and master, borrower and lender, all alike involved in the wide-spread, awful catastrophe — the inhabitants of the earth burned, and few men left, — these must surely mark with sufficient distinctness the period to which the prophecy applies. But what place amid these closing scenes is here ascribed to the remnant? "When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea. Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea." While the fire of God's judgment burns up the earth and its inhabitants, there will be those who will sing for the majesty of the Lord, and glorify Him in the fires.

The latter part of Isa. 24 repeats the predictions of the judgments, and unfolds the happy sequel to them all, in the glorious reign of the Lord of hosts in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients. Isaiah 25 gives us the song of the remnant. How it expresses their

weanedness from every earthly confidence, the simplicity of their faith in God's protection, and the vigour of their hopes of the glory to ensue. "For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall." This is what they own Jehovah to have been. From this they anticipate their own deliverance by His power, and the universal blessing to succeed, the feast to all people of fat things, and of wines on the lees, well refined. Anticipating this, they sing "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord: we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Such is their confidence, and such are their hopes, while passing through the depths of their distress.

The next chapter gives us another of their anticipative songs. They have not emerged from the tribulation, but they count unwaveringly on the Lord's faithfulness to bring them through, and in this confidence they can say beforehand what their songs of deliverance will be. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." This is the key-note of the song. All that follows is in harmony therewith. They call upon the gates to open "that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in." They can look all the intervening trouble in the face, extreme and unutterable though it be; for they are now by faith in their strong city, and can say, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Afflicted saint! what a lesson of strong consolation is here. Not only does Scripture comfort us by recording the experience of God's saints in bygone days — it draws back the veil which hides the future from our view, and disclosing to us the scenes of unequalled tribulation of which our Lord says, "Except these days should be shortened no flesh should be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened," — unfolding to us those scenes, we say, a voice comes back to us from "the elect" of those yet future, awful days — and what is the message it conveys? "Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." As the fruit of their experience amid those scenes which no mortal pencil can portray, this exhortation is addressed to us. Kept in perfect peace, they disclose to us the secret of their strength, and call upon us to trust in the Lord for ever.

How interesting, in the light of this, their holy confidence, to hear the invitation to them, at the close of this chapter, to enter the hiding places prepared for them; "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 shall no more cover her slain." Noah entered into the ark, and the Lord shut him in: Lot was led by angels to the place prepared for him, ere a drop of the fiery deluge descended on the cities of the plain: the Israelites were directed to keep within their houses, under shelter of the blood on the lintels and the door-posts: and thus will the remnant be called into their chambers, and shut their doors about them, while the final, avenging strokes descend on the congregated enemies of the Lord, and on their wicked associates throughout the whole earth. At a previous stage in these calamities, when they see the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place, they will find that they have the Lord's directions in Matt. 24: 16-18, to flee with all possible haste from Judea into the mountains: but here they are represented as receiving their final summons into the prepared place of safety, when the Lord Himself is coming forth. Matt. 24 exhorts them to flee

from their enemies at the beginning of the time of unequalled tribulation. Isaiah 26: 20, 21, invites them to their chambers when the Lord's coming is about to bring that period to a close.

Isaiah 27 after predicting the punishment to fall upon the "crooked serpent," reviews, as it were, and celebrates, the whole course of events. We learn thus, if we may so speak, the moral of the whole. The remnant are compared to a vineyard of red wine, and we read, "I the Lord do keep it: I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Happy vineyard! "Fury is not in me:" it is not in anger that He has dealt with the remnant. Had it been, they must have perished: "Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together." No, the remnant are afflicted and tried, that they may learn to trust in Him who chastens them. "Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me." The saints who compose the Church have trials deep enough; but they are given to know at the outset "the blood of the cross" as having "made peace." and it is in the enjoyment of this peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, that they are called to pass through trials for the perfecting of God's inward work in their souls. The trials of the remnant, on the contrary, commence while they and the nation still seem to be under God's wrath, and it is in the progress of their trials that light gradually breaks in upon their souls. The whole issues, as so many passages have instructed us, in their full deliverance and joy, both as to their outward circumstances and their spiritual state: "He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." As to all the trials of the, remnant, the prophet asks, "Hath he (the Lord) smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? Or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?" God's enemies, Antichrist and his confederates, are used of God in chastening the remnant; but it is chastening for their good, and has its limits, while the destruction of those who are God's instruments in this chastening, is final and complete. "In measure, when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it: he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind. By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin." When "the east wind" of the enemy's utmost wrath begins to blow, the Lord stays "the rough wind" of His previous chastenings. As is often said, "man's extremity is God's opportunity." So the remnant will find it: and all the trial and anguish they will actually endure, will be seen by them in the end to have been, to purge them from the tin and dross — "the fruit, to take away their sin."

The chapter closes with a prediction of the gathering, one by one, of all the children of Israel, who may yet, after these troubles, and the deliverance of the remnant, be left in any of the lands of their dispersion.

The ten tribes, whose captivity began long before the first coming of Christ, and who have not to suffer for the sin of crucifying Him, will not be involved in those final troubles of which the Holy Land is the special theatre. They will be restored by the Lord's own hand, and the wicked will be purged out from among them before they reach the land of Israel. I will bring you out from the people. and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered. and I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: *I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel;* and ye shall know that I am the Lord." (Ezek. 20: 34-38.) It would appear from this that

all that portion of the ten tribes which actually enters the land will consist of godly persons, brought back by the Lord's own power. It is to this return of the remnant of the ten tribes that Jer. 31: 8, 9, refers. "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: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a Father to Israel and Ephraim is my firstborn." Their return would also appear to be in progress at the time the Jews are undergoing their final sifting in the land, their arrival occurring soon after this sifting has been completed. Isaiah 49 affords a most touching picture of the effect of their arrival, on the poor heart-broken remnant who survive the desolations at Jerusalem. See verses 9-19. Nothing can exceed the beauty of those which follow, verses 20 and 21.

Besides this, there is the restoration of any Israelites who may remain in any of the lands, after the coming of Christ with all His saints. This is what has been already noticed in the latter part of Isaiah 66 and which also seems to be the subject of Isaiah 49: 22, 23, and of other scriptures which want of space forbids us to specify.