

The Jews in relation to the Coming of the Lord.

Matt. 23: 37-39.

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Lecture 2 of 'The Second Coming and Kingdom of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Our Saviour's words seem to me to be clear and conclusive. They meet a notion that prevails too largely even among the children of God — the notion that God has done with the Jew as such; that there is no longer a hope for them, as a nation; that they are merely to be converted individually now, or it may be later on multitudinously, as Christians through the preaching of the gospel, to be brought into the membership of the body of Christ, and joined with the Gentiles who believe in the Saviour, so as to form one body. Clearly too our Saviour was here not speaking of the gospel or any word of God that was about to proceed from Him seated at the right hand of God. He speaks of Jerusalem, loved but guilty Christ-rejecting Jerusalem; He speaks of that city, the holy city in title, but in fact the rebellious city, the once idolatrous city, that had killed saints and prophets, that was now summing up her guilt in the cross of her own Messiah. Yet to Jerusalem, as such, our Lord makes known that she would repent and welcome the now despised King as surely as desolation was to be her portion meanwhile, yea, of the very house, once the house of God, but now degraded before God (He, the Lord who has all rights, being disowned). Thus the Saviour puts it: "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."

And what or whose faith is this? Of Christians now? or of Jews by and by? "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" The Christian faith is, that He has come, that He has died, and is now risen and glorified. Not so does the Lord speak of the shape which the faith in question is to take. I say not that they will not identify their coming Messiah with Him who suffered on the cross, but that distinctly and unmistakeably our Saviour carries them back to the ancient oracles, and applies that word to them written in the 118th Psalm, which looks for Israel to be blessed, but Israel blessed in the coming of Him who was rejected by the builders, the masterbuilders The despised Messiah is no longer refused, but on the contrary most welcome to their hearts, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" The passage therefore is equally definite in showing that, if the present Jerusalem and her temple were to be left desolate, all that was her distinctive glory being taken from her, and this at the word of the Saviour Himself, yet the time would come when their hearts would desire Him, saying, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah." Jerusalem is not forsaken for ever. He who left her to herself, to her sin and shame in refusing Him, even He is our warrant for knowing that the self-same people and city will look for Him, hail Him, and have provided for their song in the utterance of their faith the great Hallel.* What a proof that God has in no wise abandoned His people; that He will make good every word He has uttered about them; that, although for a time there is a painful gap, and Israel is forsaken of her Lord apparently, and in a sense really too, yet in truth, as His heart yearned over her in the midst and in spite of her sin, so her heart will turn to Him in that blessed day when His people shall be "willing in the day of his power." (Ps. 110)

* The technical name for Psalms 113 - 118.

This then is our Lord's own answer to the thoughts of men. If we search the doctrinal unfoldings of the New Testament, we shall find that the Holy Ghost affirms the same great truth, and in the same epistle where, above all others, He insists on the indiscriminate grace of God in the gospel I do not speak now of such an epistle as that to the Ephesians, where the heavenly character of the Church as an entirely new thing leaves out of sight the thoughts and hopes of Israel. But let us take the epistle to the

Romans, which makes it so much the more striking, because unquestionably the Jew by and by will be saved by the same Saviour, by the same sacrifice will be set apart to God. Yet it is in Romans that the Spirit of God gives us the truth of God as to this, elaborately laid down with the utmost possible distinctness. All is set before the saints from His perfect mind. We have dispensation in the epistle to the Romans, and there we find the Gentiles brought in as such now. This led to the question, Has God cast away His people? What people? Clearly not Christians. On the contrary God was only then gathering such believers, not casting them out. What people then are in question? The Jews, and none other. The answer is, that He has not cast them away. The apostle gives various proofs that there is no abandonment save for a time. There is a limit, just as we have before seen, "until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh." So here we find the Holy Ghost confirming the same blessed truth, and we are shown on several plain grounds that the Holy Ghost distinctly looks onward to the gathering together of Israel as a people unto the Lord.. It is the blessing of the Jew as such, after the Lord has closed His present work and calling from the Gentiles.

Hence, inasmuch as it is a question of the dispensation of God upon the earth, we have the figure of the olive tree introduced — not the one body of Christ, but an old thing, which had begun in early days — begun indeed, I may say, before Israel in him who was the father of Israel. Accordingly the olive tree appears before us with certain of its branches — the unfaithful Jewish branches — broken off, and the wild olive of the Gentile grafted in. Next, the Spirit of God intimates that, for the Gentiles, all turns upon their faithfulness, upon their continuance in God's goodness. That is, it is a question of dispensation. Where it is an outflow of saving mercy, where it is simply the sovereign grace of God, there could be no such question as the condition of the faithfulness of the people; but, inasmuch as it is evidently the course of God's dealing upon the earth, it is made known to them that they stand by faith, that they stand only in the goodness of God. They are admonished to take warning by the severity God has used towards the Jews, and to hold fast their trust: otherwise they also should be cut off.

Then we have more than this. In the same chapter (Romans 11) the argument of the apostle makes it perfectly plain that the Spirit of God contemplates nothing less than all Israel, brought in as a people to the enjoyment of their ancient and cherished hopes, though upon the ground of the sovereign mercy of God, and therefore with a real work of the Holy Ghost in their souls. The argument in the eleventh verse is this: "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy." The actual blessing of Gentiles by the gospel was in no wise to leave the Jews for ever outside the promises of God as a nation. You must remember, there was nothing in the mind of God, or indeed of the saints at that time, to forbid the thought that many individuals of the Jews would be brought in meanwhile by the faith of Jesus. The fact is, a very large portion of the believers then living were Jews; certainly in the places where the gospel was first preached, they formed the great majority of those who bore His name. The work was extending among the Gentiles, and, no doubt, in no long time, the Gentiles that believed far outnumbered the Jews; but still, in the earlier days of evangelisation, it is plain that the mass of professors were from the nation of Israel. Therefore, manifestly, it was no question at all of God's mercy to individuals out of Israel. The only point to decide was, whether God had abandoned Israel as a people. The answer distinctly negatives such a conclusion. If His mercy now went out to the Gentiles, it was to provoke Israel to jealousy in the long run, it was to win back the nation as such. "Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?" Then, instead of seeing a mere remnant of believers separate from the main body of the Jews, there should be a nation born of God, an entire people publicly enjoying all that God had promised, and, by faith, knowing the sweetness of the promises infinitely more because they had found their King, as well as their forgiveness, in that very Saviour whom they

had before despised, rejected, and crucified. Accordingly, in the latter part of the chapter, he gives us no longer the fact of a remnant as a witness that God had not definitively cast off Israel as a whole, no longer a process of reasoning from the end of provoking Israel to jealousy, but the most distinct textual proof from direct prophecy. He says: "I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits" [the very danger of Christendom and the snare into which it has fallen]; "that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." What doctrine or deduction can be plainer? It is certain, from the language of the Holy Ghost, not merely that there shall be a vast accession to the remnant of believers out of the Jews (for this is not the matter in hand), but that there is the surest warrant from the word of God that the nation, as such, shall yet be blessed. "All Israel shall be saved." It is in contrast with a mere remnant.

Thus we find the Spirit of God citing this portion of Isaiah as authority, and adding the most conclusive reason why it cannot be a part of the present work of God in gathering out the Church of God. In the Church, the Jew and the Gentile, as such, are unknown; there the distinction has entirely disappeared. Here, on the contrary, you have "all Israel" saved, in contrast with the divine action that is now going forth toward the Gentiles, where a remnant of Jews coalesces with a mass of Gentiles. This is in progress now, and in Christ, in the Church, the distinction does not exist. Whereas, on the contrary, when God has finished His present work, all Israel shall be saved. This entirely explains the language of verse 28, "Enemies, as concerning the Gospel" — an expression which could not be used if it were by the gospel as now preached. No doubt in that bright day they will be brought into reconciliation; but then it will be by a distinct work of God. It will be, not by a message which supposes the distinction of Jew and Gentile at an end as in that which God is doing now, because He is acting from Christ at the right hand of God, where Jewish and Gentile distinctions have no place. But God, after this work is done, takes up the links of the ancient promises and prophecies, and brings them home to Israel by the power of the Spirit, so that the whole nation shall be saved.

I have used therefore these two scriptures as a kind of introduction, before we look at the prophecies of the Old Testament which refer to this weighty subject. I hope to show, as far as the limits of a single evening will permit, what will precede the real work of God in restoring Israel and bringing them into a true Spirit-taught knowledge of redemption.

The prophet Isaiah presents the fullest revelation of God's ways with His people. In Isaiah 1 we have a moral pleading between God and Israel. Throughout it is the same Jerusalem; but first Jerusalem is viewed as no better than Sodom and Gomorrah. The faithful city was become a harlot. It was full of judgment, but now murderers were there. "Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water: thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves." There can be no question what city is meant. Certainly it is not the heavenly Jerusalem; but the literal, historical, earthly Jerusalem is regarded as already corrupt, becoming more and more rebellious, about to be altogether apostate. "Therefore (ver. 24) saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: and I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city." Can any fair-minded person affirm or conceive that there has ever been even the appearance of an accomplishment of this moral restoration? It was uttered considerably more than a century before

the wickedness of Jerusalem was such that God could tolerate it no more. Then Judah was carried away into captivity to Babylon. Has there been anything since answering to this promise? Doubtless a small body of Jews returned from that captivity; but was Zion restored as at the beginning? Was Jerusalem at any time afterwards "the city of righteousness?" On the contrary, did they not come back feeble and few, a poor broken remnant, the slaves and prey of Gentile lords? Did they not incur after that the further and deeper guilt of rejecting their own Messiah?

But this is not all. The second chapter gives us a view of the restoration that is really intended, certain features of which make plain whether it has been accomplished, or whether, on the contrary, we have still to look forward and wait. "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." There are those who interpret passages like this in the mystic sense of converts to Christ gathered out of the Gentiles by the gospel, and brought into the church; but let us read a little farther. "Many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob." Now, does not the gospel go out to souls? Is it not so that the Lord now works? Does He not send out His servants with the glad tidings to every creature? Is it not in the most precise contrast with such a gathering as this to an earthly centre? Is there not the activity of grace in the apostolic mission? It is not waiting for souls to gather to Jerusalem, or anywhere else on earth, but, on the contrary, going out to them, as it is said, "Neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, shall men worship the Father; but they that worship must worship in spirit and in truth; for the Father *seeketh* such to worship him." In "the hour that now is" we have this excluded. In the prophecy of Isaiah the gathering of nations is to an earthly metropolis, to Jerusalem, to that mountain. That is, our Lord describes the Christian order of things in terms as pointedly in contrast, it seems to me, as could well be conceived. The prophet contemplates another day, a totally different scene. Nothing has answered to it since Isaiah uttered these words. The gospel, we have seen, which is the only active work of God's grace that there has been since, is in contrast with it, instead of being its accomplishment. But there is even more. We have here the law going forth out of Zion. It is clearly not the gospel, but the living oracles, as of old. "Out of Zion shall go forth the law." I do not understand by this that it is merely a question of the ten commandments, but the revelation as God gave it before the cross — a revelation founded on the promise of exalting the people of God on the earth, and of maintaining them as a centre of blessing for the nations when Messiah shall reign. Such seems to my mind its clear unequivocal character. Mark what follows. "He shall judge among the nations." It is not the revelation of One who, in grace toward sinners, though as a basis of divine righteousness withal, bore the judgment of sin upon the cross. He will be King then, King not of Israel only, but of nations also, as it is in Jeremiah 10, and should be in Revelation 15. Here, however, it is rather a question of judicial authority, exercised in respect of them, and assuredly it will be in contrast with what He is doing now. "He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares." Need I say that there has been no accomplishment of such words as these? Need I insist, that even the so-called Christian nations are rather the leaders and chiefs in the invention of every kind of implement for mutual destruction? Is this beating swords into plowshares? The contrary is the fact in this age most evidently. But the age is coming when "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." Let any one compare this with what our Saviour Himself utters (Matt. 24) immediately after the portion of Scripture we began with tonight. You will find that from the mount of Olives He, instructing the disciples in what they were to expect, distinctly says that nation should rise against nation, that they were to look for wars and rumours of wars. Can this then be the same time as

that intended in Isaiah 2? How are we to decide then? Make them to be the same time, and you set the Old Testament against the New; distinguish the periods, and the balance of truth is restored. Both are true, Old Testament prophet and New Testament apostle; both were divinely inspired. The Lord, embracing that which, while going on to the end of the age, more or less was at hand for His disciples, conclusively shows that the character of the world should not be changed yet; that it was only the testimony, the *gospel* of the kingdom, that was now going forth, not the kingdom itself set up in power and judging the habitable earth, as it is said, "He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people." As yet it was no more than the witness borne to it, it was the working of His Spirit by the word of God; but this in no wise alters the face of things here below as a whole. Only individuals are brought to the knowledge of Himself, and saved everywhere out of all nations; but as to the nations themselves, instead of being rebuked they have abused and insulted the goodness of God, they have refused to bow to the divine testimony, and, their passions being unchanged, they rise against each other, learning, teaching, and carrying on war and every ambitious scheme with as much zest and impetus as ever. So it has been, so it is to this very day. And what, then, of this early prophecy of Isaiah? Never having been accomplished to this hour, it remains to be accomplished. Nothing more simple. Everything falls into its place when we leave time and space for the working out of the magnificent ways of God.

Thus, without dwelling upon each chapter, though there is hardly one that would not furnish evidence, if it were needed, upon the subject, I would refer to chapter 4 as a striking picture in contrast with anything that God is doing now. "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." That is, the prophet fore-shows a condition where men will have been cut off by the judgment of God, where there has been a fearful desolation by divine judgment. "In that day shall the branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious." Judgment proceeds, and then there is the breaking forth of the branch of Jehovah into beauty and glory. "The fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel; and 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 written among the living in Jerusalem." It is to be a real work of God. No Christian should allow the thought of a mere carnal restoration, or of anything which could be achieved by the revolutions of the political wheel.. But it is not, on the other hand, the effect of preaching the gospel as now. "That nation" will once more come into prominence, and in their own land — at least the escaped of Israel. It will be souls blessed of God, but at the same time blessed as the seed of Jacob in the earth, "When Jehovah 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 by the spirit of burning." Is this the gospel — "the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning?" "And Jehovah will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night." What delusion to spend our time and breath vainly imagining how the Spirit of God is thus at work now? Is there anything in the least degree resembling it? "For upon all the glory shall be a defence." Now, on the contrary, the power of God is put forth not in defending the witnesses of His grace, but in nerving the Christian to suffer, in strengthening him to endure with joy as well as patience. Here, on the other hand, it is an openly displayed and glorious vindication of His people, so long broken down, when all war and trouble are ended. It is another state of things altogether. "There shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." Are we to fritter away the blessed word of God? Are we to suppose that this really means spiritual comfort for souls? Surely souls will be blessed by its spirit now; but every word of the Lord shall be fulfilled, and Israel shall be His witnesses when glory shines on the earth.

Without dwelling on the intervening chapters, I would point your attention to the opening of chap. 9, where we have a prophecy partially accomplished. It may serve as an instance of that which is very common throughout the Old Testament. "Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations." As I apprehend, the Spirit of God shows a much more severe affliction coming upon that land than would be under the king of Babylon. The Roman, the last great power of the Gentiles, was to be the instrument of an affliction incomparably more intense. This furnishes occasion for the Spirit of God to bring in a partial application to Christ, because it was under the fourth empire that our Lord appeared. Consequently there was readiness for the final scene. At any rate there was One who brought them in light divine, and this into Galilee; as it is said here, by the way of the sea, Galilee of the nations. "The people, that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." This is the point that the Spirit of God applies in the New Testament; and nothing can be more simple; but then He does not apply what was not accomplished. Then let us read on: "Thou hast multiplied the nation, and [let me refer now to the margin] increased the joy to him: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of the oppressor, as in the day of Midian." Is this, too, fulfilled? When was there any appearance of it? Under Pompey, under Augustus, under Tiberius, under Titus? What took place then? When the Romans came up, was the rod of the oppressor broken? On the contrary, did it not fall more heavily, and without the smallest intervention from God? Did the predicted facts occur? "For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire." The Spirit of God here most clearly looks onward to the time when the crisis should be no longer a mere clash of earthly arms, but another character of conflict, God dealing with burning fuel of fire. It is evidently judgment, not the judgment of men before God's throne, but His dealing with them when He destroys the enemies of His people Israel. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, the Father of eternity, the Prince of Peace." Unquestionably the King in person, the Messiah, appeared under the Caesars; but the Jews rejected Him, and the kingdom was postponed. Hence the execution of judgment awaits another day, and blessing shall follow according to all the promises of God. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." The passage proves, that before Jehovah establishes the kingdom of David that is spoken of here, there must be not the mere shock of human armies, but the Lord smiting, consuming destroying the enemies of His people. This has never yet been, but rather the contrary. Instead of the Jews being delivered by divine judgment, and their enemies overthrown in a manner wholly exceptional and suitable to the action of God Himself, the Romans were permitted to destroy Jerusalem and to sweep away the Jews from the face of their land, carrying off those they spared, and dispersing them over the earth even unto this day. There has been no semblance of the accomplishment of the prophecy.

Let us turn now to Isaiah 11. We have there the same Messiah without doubt. There is no question as to this. All, whether Jews or Christians, admit beyond controversy that here we have Messiah described. The question is as to the character of His kingdom. But read from verse 4, "With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." Is this an adequate account of the ways of the Lord in the gospel? Is He not meeting His enemies now? Is He not emphatically saving the lost? How does "judging" or "reproving with equity" meet the case? Doubtless

to the poor the gospel is preached; but here it is righteous rule controlling and blessing the earth, not salvation by grace gathering souls for heaven. Our chapter, therefore, is in no true sense a description of what the Holy Ghost sets Himself to do for the glory of the name of Christ at this present time. Here it is judging, it is the functions of a king — of One reigning in equity. It is a state of things differing entirely from the present. What will further confirm it is the connected word that "He shall smite the earth." Does the gospel as such contemplate this? "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he [not quicken souls by the grace of God, but] slay the wicked." Can it be doubted that the mystical interpretation is completely set aside by the use which the Spirit of God makes of this verse in 2 Thess. 2: 8, where the apostle Paul quotes it? To what is it applied? To the gospel? Not to the consequences of Christ's first coming, not to the grace God sends out now the message of Christ founded upon the cross, but expressly and exclusively to the manifestation of Christ's coming, the bright shining out of His second advent, when He shall deal with the lawless one.

Thus we have a divine warrant for our interpretation of the prophecy. We learn from the apostle that the Lord at His appearing, when He sets up this kingdom, will introduce His power into the earth by a literal smiting, by a judgment that destroys. Allow me to add, for the sake of any who may not be familiar with these subjects, that from Isaiah 30: 28-33 a distinct light is cast upon the expression, "spirit of his mouth" in 2 Thess. 2. The breath of the Lord's mouth is not compared to the mercy of the gospel, but is the expression of His anger and indignation. It is "like a stream of brimstone." In other words, this is divine unsparing judgment of the wicked, while the gospel is God's glad tidings of grace to the wicked, winning them to God by the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, not their consumption by the vengeance of Jehovah.

Before going farther, let me call your attention to a few more points in the chapter, without anticipating that which will come before us in a future lecture. "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people." What is the force of this "second time," if you turn aside the stream of prophecy from Israel? Give it its plain, unadulterated meaning, and what can be clearer? Jehovah had once redeemed His people from Egypt: He will deliver them a second time. This is not the only reference to His bringing the people out of a house of bondage. The close of the chapter repeats the allusion. "He shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah." Where and when has there been any approach to a fulfilment of this prophecy? "The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." Thus it will not only be a national restoration in the fullest sense (the ten tribes as well as the two tribes, or "all Israel" according to the doctrinal statement of the New Testament), but, besides, there will be a great spiritual action upon souls; there will be the removal by the grace of God of all strife, rivalry, vexation, and envy between the different portions of Israel. It will be a work in every part of it worthy of the mighty transforming goodness of God Himself. But, further, it is said that "Jehovah shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." No just principle of interpretation can be applied to this chapter without confessing the plain meaning of a future restoration of Israel as such by the power of God in the latter day. That which would here sanction its application to Christianity, if carried out fully

elsewhere, would shake to the very foundations the whole truth of God as revealed in the Bible. Neither verses 6-9 nor verse 14 can be regarded as serious difficulties by those who look for a vast relief for the lower creation under the last Adam, and the re-appearing of ancient races, when Israel's restoration becomes the question once more.

So, again, in Isaiah 14, we find that Jehovah 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 the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of Jehovah for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors. And it shall come to pass in the day that Jehovah shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb. In vain one asks where anything in the past answers to this predicted turn of mercy's tide towards Israel.

Another portion of deep interest in some sort will be found in Isaiah 18, especially as the time hastens when it will find its accomplishment. You will have noticed how, in passages already brought before you, Jehovah is said to set His hand to the restoration of His people. It would be a mistake to suppose that the only thing disclosed in prophecy is that divine intervention on their behalf. Degraded as are the Jews, scattered up and down the earth, they are more than ever pining after their own land. No doubt there are differences, and some share, if they do not lead, in the rapidly increasing rationalism of the present day; but in those who have not abandoned in every respect the thoughts and aspirations of Israel, there are symptoms of a restless uneasy but strong feeling in the direction of their own land. This chapter shows, that as Israel will desire to return there in their own strength, and after their own wisdom, as they will endeavour to settle themselves there, so they will go down for help to some unnamed Gentile nation. "Woe" (or rather "Ho!") "to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia" (Cush). This means beyond the limits that Israel of old had to do with. There were two famous rivers, both of them called rivers of Cush, the Nile on the one hand, and the Euphrates on the other. A people beyond either of those rivers will undertake the task of protector to Israel: it will set its hand to bring them safely and settle them under its patronage in their own land. This people is further described as a maritime power, by figures drawn, of course, from that which was familiar to the Jews in those days. It is a land "that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto." The nation spoken of as "terrible from their beginning hitherto," is obviously the Jewish people, who are said to be "meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled." All the world knows how they have suffered from the oppression of enemies. "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet." God calls upon the nations to observe what He is doing, and not only what *He* does, but rather what *they* are doing, when He is but a spectator of their ways. The moment is critical, and dangers loom to all. "For so Jehovah said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest. For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches." Things promise well. It looks as if all were hastening to the desired accomplishment of Israel's hopes. But it is only the sour grapes; there is no real ripening of fruit for Jehovah to taste. Jehovah will act then; but as yet it is to blow on the hasty plan. He cuts down without sparing, and brings to nought all hope of restoration by the interference of men. He judges everything that betokened the readiness of the Jews, as they might conceive, for the latter-day blessing. He will not own Gentiles in presuming to be instruments of accomplishing His people's deliverance. "They shall be left together unto the fowls of

the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth." The nations are untrustworthy: vain is the help of man. The Gentiles will turn once more from Israel, and oppress them; they will devour and ravage as before. "And the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them." Is this, then, the end of Israel? Have their hopes, excited after a carnal fashion, and sought to be made good by human policy, for ever come to nought thus under the judgment of God? Nay, "In that time shall the present be brought unto Jehovah of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of Jehovah of hosts, the mount Zion." It is the hour for Jehovah to work by *His* hand. But, as in other cases so in this, man first tries his competency to bring about the purpose of God, and so entails utter ruin upon all. But Jehovah at that time will receive Israel and lead them to mount Zion. To Jehovah shall the present be brought of a people and from a people scattered and peeled. They shall bring a present and at the same time be a present, to Jehovah of hosts in mount Zion.

Such is the clear statement of the Spirit. This prepares us for human methods of restoring Israel, and is an important safeguard for the children of God now, lest they should be excited by rumours here or there of great things for the Jews. The believer should have no confidence in any plans of men for the bringing of Israel into their own land. God is not working to that end; He is gathering souls out of Israel as He is out of the Gentiles; for Christ is still at God's right hand in heaven. When He has done the heavenly work, He will permit man in his confidence to think he can repair the ruins of Zion, and gather back the dispersed of Israel; but all will prove fruitless in the pride of man. Gentile affection for Israel will be proved utterly worthless; but just when all appears to fail more hopelessly than ever, at that time Jehovah will accomplish His long-deferred purposes. All this again declares, in the strongest possible way, that Israel must be restored; but first there will be an attempt to restore themselves, through the help of the Gentiles, and its entire failure, the issue of which will be to bring upon them Antichrist; and this again will be the signal for other Gentiles to pour down as a scourge upon the Jewish people. All the birds and beasts of prey from among the nations break loose upon them, because of their apostasy as well as presumption; for idols and Antichrist will be set up in Jerusalem and the holy place; and because these abominations find shelter there, a desolator shall be (I presume the Assyrian), even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate, *i.e.* upon Jerusalem. (Dan. 9: 27)

Of course I cannot enter into all the proofs of this tonight, nor indeed do I propose to attempt curious detail in this course of lectures; but we may turn to two or three other chapters of our prophet before we have done. In chapter 24 we have the closing scene of this age. "The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again." Perhaps there are some here disposed to think this the end of the world, or the dissolution of all things. But read the next verse, and judge for yourselves. "And it shall come to pass in that day [it is not *eternity* you see, but "that day"], that Jehovah shall punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth on the earth." I am only leaving out the words in italics which have no business here whatever. The arena of evil is also that of retribution. "And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed" [figurative language I admit], "when Jehovah of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." In a word, it is not the passing away of the heavens and earth that now are, and the introduction of the new heaven and earth in the final sense. It is a figure of it, no doubt, and such as actually appears in Isa. 65, Isa. 66, but no more. Nothing can be more certain than that here we have,

not the reigning in life (Rom. 5) such as will be throughout eternity, as a general expression of a glorious state before God through the Lord Jesus, but an earthly scene, however blessed and glorious too. It is Zion or Jerusalem, over which Jehovah reigns, after He has punished the hosts of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth on the earth. It is not in any sense the great white throne judgment and the eternal condition connected with it; but it is the introduction of "that day" in the blessing and glory of God for the earth, and specially for the people of Israel.

This is entirely confirmed by what follows. Isaiah 25 tells us, "Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear thee. 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." The reference is clearly to that same time of trouble, when the Gentiles summer and winter upon Israel, according to the language of Isaiah 18 "Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low. And in this mountain shall Jehovah of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well relined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and Jehovah God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it." This scripture is the more to be weighed, because of the quotation in 1 Cor. 15: 54. Hence it appears on apostolic authority that the epoch of the resurrection of the righteous is bound up with the return and deliverance of Israel, as well as with the millennial blessing of all nations. "If the casting away of them [the Jews] be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

In the next chapter we have yet more. "In the way of thy judgments, O Jehovah, have we waited for thee" — it is Israel's song in answer to these dealings of God — " the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." It is not the gospel in the world calling souls out of it to heaven, but the judgments of God that are in the earth, and then the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. "Let favour be showed the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness." This is notoriously the result of the gospel where it is refused, as man treats it without faith. He hears of the full favour of God, but despises it. The consequence is that the Lord will let fall His heavy hand in judgment, and the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. "Jehovah, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them." I need not dwell upon the verses that follow. They may come before us more appropriately upon another occasion, and for another purpose; but this may suffice to show not only that the Israelites are to be gathered as a people, but further, that it will be introduced by divine judgments which separate "that day" from all the past. Jehovah will deal with those wicked spirits that seek to corrupt every blessing of God, if it were possible; He will also put down everything that is high and lifted up on the earth. Then and thus will Israel be brought into that which they long for, but long for as yet after a carnal sort, impenitent and unbelieving as they are.

Isaiah 27 closes this section of the prophecy, and is most explicit. "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. . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. 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." (Verses 6, 12, 13.) To refer all this to the Christian or the Church is untenable: apply it to the Lord's dealing with the Jews brought into their land, after He has translated us to heaven, and all is transparent.

The next chapters (Isa. 28 - 35) dwell on the special circumstances of the trial and triumph of the Jews at the end of the age, their internal evils which exposed them to such severe discipline, the blessed change introduced by the reign of the Messiah, the judgments executed on their enemies, and the character of the times of restitution of all things. Then follows the historical episode (Isa. 35 - 39) — the invasion and overthrow of the Assyrian in the person of Sennacherib, the sickness well-nigh to death but revival of the Son of David (Hezekiah), and the announcement of the captivity in Babylon. The rest of the book (Isa. 40 - 66) has important sections also, on which it is not now the time to dilate. Suffice it to say, for the purpose in hand, that the last eight chapters are an almost continuous tissue of evidence to the future blessing of Israel as such, and therefore, on principles essentially distinguished from the indiscriminate grace which is characteristic of the gospel. The end of Isa. 59 is the scripture cited by the apostle in Romans 11, and itself decisive of the question. While the gospel is going out now, they are evident enemies: when "that day" comes, they will with repentant hearts turn to the Messiah, who will come to and out of Zion, and all Israel shall be saved — the proof that they are beloved for the fathers' sakes, and that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. The past of Jewish history fails to meet this prophecy; so does the present work of God in the gospel. The glory of the Church by-and-by issuing in resurrection is quite distinct. There remains the future restoration and blessedness of Israel here below. This alone fulfils the exigencies of the word.

Then how rich as well as distinct is Isaiah 60 "Arise shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but Jehovah 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. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of Jehovah thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore 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 glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The sons also 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 Jehovah, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel." A perverted eye can alone account for missing the force of declarations so plainly converging on Israel's blessing in that day, in contrast with heavenly grace in Christ now appropriated through faith while the Jews are for the most part blinded. And this is in no way weakened, but confirmed, by the striking use our Lord made of Isaiah 61, as recorded in Luke 4; for, as is well known, He closed the book after reading the first clause of verse 2, though it was not even the end of a sentence. He thus marked how far there was an accomplishment. His first advent proclaimed the acceptable year of Jehovah: only at His second coming will the day of vengeance of our God begin. Then the two appear together. Between them

Christianity, properly so called, has come in, founded on the rejection, death, and resurrection of Christ, and calling souls out from the world meanwhile to have their portion in and with Christ in heaven. This done, and they glorified with their Head, He will link the acceptable year of Jehovah with the day of God's vengeance, judge the quick at His appearing, set up His kingdom manifestly over the earth, and bless His ancient chosen people, who will then be the head, and the Gentiles the tail. "Ye shall be named the priests of Jehovah; men shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves . . . All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which Jehovah hath blessed." (See especially Isa. 62, Isa. 65, Isa. 66)

Jeremiah, though less copious in visions of coming glory, and more characterized by moral appeals to the conscience than Isaiah, presents ample testimony to the bright future of Israel in their own land. Thus, Jeremiah 3 points to the time when the most sacred associations in the Mosaic institute shall pale before the actual blessing from the Lord. "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers." (vv. 17, 18.) Compare also Jeremiah 23: 5-8, where it is declared that the first deliverance from Egypt shall be eclipsed by a future and far mightier recovery from all the lands where the Jews are still dispersed, the whole people being specified, Judah and Israel. The raising up of their long-expected King, the righteous Branch, also excludes all notion of the return from Babylon, as well as of the Spirit's way under the gospel. Still fuller, as well as more precise, are Jeremiah 30 - 33. The great day of Jacob's trouble, which precedes their deliverance and the humiliation of their Gentile oppressors, is yet future. They are far as yet from serving the Lord their God, and David their king, raised up of God unto them. "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah," etc. — It is important to observe, that the Apostle, in citing this passage in Heb. 8 and 10, does not speak of the new covenant as our proper portion, still less denies (what the prophet affirmed) that it will be made good to Israel under their Messiah in His coming kingdom. The first citation is to prove the perpetuity of the first covenant an error; for the mention of a *new* covenant makes the first old, and ready to vanish away. The second citation is simply to show from its terms an inspired witness to the grand truth, that God, in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, remembers our sins no more, — the very reverse of the action of the old covenant. — The last of these chapters (33.) goes farther, and not only pledges the restoration of Israel in joy and glory to their land, people, King, and priests, all settled in abiding divine order, but sternly censures the Gentile conceit, that God had cast off His people, that they should be no more a nation. (Compare Rom. 11) It is not a question of saving souls by the gospel, of gathering out from Jews and Gentiles into the Church, but of the two families the Lord chose, the seed of Jacob and David.

Ezekiel is not less distinct. Compare Ezekiel 16, 17, 20, but particularly Ezekiel 34, 36, 37, and 40 - 68. It is the blessing of Israel, under the Messiah, and in their own land.

So to Daniel (Dan. 12) the angel makes known the revival of the prophet's people Israel, by divine judgment of their Gentile enemies, which is not yet fulfilled.

Hosea plainly intimates the same truth in the close of Hosea 1 and Hosea 2. Still more striking is the sketch given us in the brief but instructive Hosea 3: 4, 5: — "For 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 seraphim: afterward shall the people of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king; and shall fear Jehovah and His goodness in the latter days." Since the

captivity, and especially the destruction of Jerusalem, what a comment on these words! To this day (many days indeed) they abide a people in the midst of peoples, yet not absorbed, — a people yet without the bonds of national conservation; for they are "without a king, and without a prince." Still more peculiar is their religious condition, and as exactly fulfilled in the Jews alone of all races since the world began. They are "without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without seraphim." They lack the sacrifice and the ephod which they had according to divine institution, and essential to the Levitical worship; but they have, on the other hand, neither image nor seraphim, the symbols of idolatry in its public and private forms. Thus they are in the anomalous position of a people who are no people, incapable, somehow, of true worship, yet not idolaters, and thus the contrast not only of all other nations, but most of all of their own antecedents. How evidently divine the picture of verse 4! What an earnest of the fulfilment of verse 5! "*Afterward* shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, *and David their king.*" Thus their future will be peculiar, their conversion not to God only, but to their rightful King, the Messiah. It is not the gospel now, but Israel blessed as such in the latter day. So chapter 14 predicts a repentance and consequent blessing from God, neither of which has yet been seen in Israel from that day to this. Both are future.

Again, men may reason on Joel 2 because of the accomplishment of the pouring out of the Spirit, but it is impossible to treat Joel 3 as fulfilled, which supposes all nations gathered and judged of God when He brings again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, and then the earth's blessing, not its destruction. Amos 9 is not said in Acts 15 to have been actually accomplished, but only "to this *agree* the words," etc., *i.e.* to God's recognition of Gentiles called by His name, which, true now, will be verified in the millennium. Verses 13-15 refer not to heaven but to earth, and not to the Church but to Israel, who will then and thus be blessed. So Obadiah 15-21 binds together the day of Jehovah upon all the nations with holy deliverance on Mount Zion.

I do not enter into the moral history of Jonah the prophet, viewed as a type, but would point to the remarkable Micah 4, Micah 5, with the concluding verses of Micah 7. It is a vision of the latter-day glory of Zion yet more exclusively than Isaiah 2, which Micah 4 so strongly resembles. Nahum predicts the fall of Nineveh, the Assyrian holder of which typifies one who will figure largely in the East at the close of this age; but God will make his grave, and publish peace to Judah. If Habakkuk bring out chiefly the exercised hearts of the godly, it is not without anticipations of divine judgment on the enemy of Israel, though holding to the life of faith meanwhile. Zephaniah is distinct as to the judgment of the nations, when there shall be no more haughtiness in God's holy mountain, and the remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity nor speak lies. "The King of Israel, even Jehovah, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more." It is unquestionably future. The post-captivity prophets — Haggai 2: 6-9, 21- 23; Zechariah 2, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14; and Malachi 4 — are explicit as to Israel's hopes. What evidence can be conceived more abundant, uniform, or decisive?

But what, it may be asked, is the practical profit of all this for the Christian? Why do we dwell at such length upon the future restoration of Israel? Were we to examine minutely the prophecies which treat of the subject, it would no doubt detain us long, though it would also add many particulars of interest. Time would fail to go through many on a single occasion. I have, therefore, taken the prophecy of Isaiah, with a mere glance at others, as being quite sufficient for the purpose. But once more, What is the value to the believer now of receiving this truth?

In the first place, it is good to see that our own profit is hardly the right measure in looking at the truth of God. It is never the best side: nor is it, I am persuaded, the straight road to reap the best blessing. The Lord gives His riches where He is confided in most simply. Our place is not to weigh the consequence of what He says, but to believe. Then, indeed, when we do believe on the bare warrant of

His word, the profit is much every way. But I may briefly observe that there is an immediate result of the most important kind in this, that the giving Israel its own distinctive place of future blessing, according to the Old Testament promises and prophecies, is a main safeguard against the Judaizing snare, which is in all ways an instrument of evil, and of the most formidable kind, in the hands of the enemy. Give Israel their earthly distinction according to the prophetic word, and you preserve with simplicity the heavenly place to which the grace of God now calls you. Is anything lost by this? On the contrary, it is pure and heavenly gain; it is a gain that keeps the heart free for Christ above, from the world below, maintaining withal the supremacy, and the plain, literal import of God's word. We suffer in every part of revealed truth, when we swerve from the simple meaning into that mystical jargon to which I have referred more than once. You cannot be false to Israel in the Old Testament, and retain the truth of Christianity unalloyed in the New Testament. You weaken the authority of the entire word of God. Stolen waters are proverbially sweet to those who misappropriate them, but they bring their own penalty. And so it has been with those who rob Israel of their hopes: the real character of the Church, yea, of the Christian standing, is never retained as a consequence.

You cannot with impunity defraud Israel of their portion. You may seek to clutch, and appropriate, and keep it to yourself; but the effect is that you are unjust to them. It is not only that your heart is closed against what God has in His heart towards His ancient people, nor is it only that, by such a style of explanation, you tend to overthrow the faithfulness of God, the unchanged purposes of God, the word that He has passed and pledged to His people. But there is worse. For, instead of gaining more, you lose your own proper and peculiar blessing. With Christ in heaven you have all things — just as the apostle could tell the Corinthians who were setting up one favourite here and another there upon earth; it was truly to cheat themselves, as well as to dishonour the Lord, the giver of all that is good, and of all who are good, to every one of His saints. So it is in another way, not the looking down as from heaven, but the sinking into an earthly place, when you read these prophecies as if it were our loss, because we do not find there our own glory and blessedness, or the Lord's mercy to us in those beautiful visions which He vouchsafed touching the people of His choice. To find our blessing there is both to leave heaven for earth and to restrict ourselves to a mere fragment of the blessing, instead of knowing, in our union with Christ, the bride's share in the Bridegroom's exaltation over all things.

In the New Testament we find the same period is looked at from a heavenly or church point of view. Take Ephesians 1: 9, 10 as an instance. God has "made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself." What is this counsel which He thus puts before Himself? It is His purpose, in view of the dispensation or administration of the fulness of times, to gather together in one all things in Christ, both the things which are in heaven and the things which are in earth; even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance. It is plain that *this* is no mean portion of the blessing which the Lord will shed around Him in that bright day. We have obtained an inheritance, not in Israel, nor in the earth, nor even in the heavens alone; but rather *in Him*. We are by grace heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, who is set Head over all things, the Church being His body, and so united with Him in His supremacy over all things. (Ephesians 1: 22, 23.) Carefully guard against including the Church among the "all things." Not so; the Church is part, yea, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all; the Church is the body of Him who is head over all things. In Him, then, we have obtained an inheritance, who is the Head over all things. These comprehend whatever is in heaven above or in the earth beneath — all which God has put under Him. This exalted position the Church has by association with Him; for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Evidently then the unbelief which endeavours to secure all the blessing on the surface of Scripture defeats itself. The truest and the only full blessing to the saint is found in unqualified subjection to God, who now, as always, honours such as honour Him, and keeps back nothing that is

profitable from those to whom He has revealed His Son in glory. In fact, we shall share with Christ all things. So complete is the inheritance of all, that He only is excepted who has put all things under Him. (1 Cor. 15: 27)

The common error is thus morally deplorable, and in every way destructive of the truth; it loses sight of God's glory in Christ, it is blind to the largeness of the ways of God, it knows not the special heavenly character of the Church's relations, and it sacrifices to self the fidelity of God in His covenant dealings with His ancient people. It is evident, that the person who could break his plighted word with one party cannot be trusted by another without hesitation. It is dreadful to be obliged to reason thus; but I may be pardoned if I endeavour to present the principle in a very plain form so as to prove its unworthiness. The popular error, then, supposes that God may break His promise; for nothing is more certain than that He repeatedly, spontaneously, and unconditionally bound Himself to bless Israel, and in such sort, that, when the blessing comes from Him, it never should pass away. If on the contrary God could change His mind as to His gifts and calling in Israel's case, (may the evil thought and expression be forgiven!) if He be now so disgusted and ashamed of Israel as to turn away from them as His people for ever, where is the security of His truth? where the assurance of His character in revealing Himself to us? Surely it is not for us to deny that never did Israel more fail, if failure account for change; never did Israel more dishonour the revelation which God made of Himself to them, than we, the Church, have failed in bearing an adequate witness to the glory and the grace of Christ made known to us. How plain it is, then, that all the ground of stable peace and confidence is threatened with ruin by this error, which might at first sight seem to be comparatively trivial.

Besides, I may observe, that it is not only to shake the general character of God, but there lurks behind what Satan has more than ever at heart. God in His grace has of late re-awakened His children to look into heavenly things, and to behold Jesus there. He has shown them their portion with Christ above, who is soon coming to take them to be where He is. This has been before us already; I only, therefore, refer to it again to remark how one truth corroborates another, and how all the parts fit together. The heavenly portion remains in its own unmixed character above. The believer, now gathered out from Jew or Gentile, finds his place in Christ there. The earth remains for the earthly people Israel, who will be called in their season. We have seen to-night that it is not merely a question of Christ in the heavens, but that God will assuredly convert, bless, and restore to their land His guilty people. If there is joy over a single soul that is- brought to God, will that joy be less when it is over a nation, and that nation the one which most of all despised, abhorred, and insulted Jesus, ay, His very name? Will it be any loss of blessing to the Church in the heavens to look down and rejoice in the blessed poor of spirit, in the remnant, once so proud yet deceitful, that shall no longer speak lies nor carry itself haughtily? Will it not be joy to see that Abraham will have a seed blessed below as well as above, and all through Christ the Lord? What a joy, when that people, long active and successful in stirring up the Gentiles against the name of Jesus, in perverting the truth of God, in inciting men of intellect and learning throughout the world against the scriptures, in refusing those further and heavenly communications of God's grace, which only draw out the gnashing of their teeth because they were left in utter darkness in regard to them — what a joy when they will be broken down in true repentance, mourning, and self-reproach before their Deliverer, now recognised as the Messiah they crucified! Doubtless their fall has been God's occasion to raise us up to a glory far above their own; yet surely it is not for those called to that surpassing glory to wish for aught not their own, still less to deny to Israel that which God has promised them. Rather let us be the first to proclaim in the ears of Israel, That which the mouth of the Lord has spoken, His hand will surely accomplish, even all that is in His heart, for His beloved people — enemies still as regards the gospel, but beloved for the fathers' sake.

I therefore conclude for the present the subject of the Jew, aware how scantily it has been treated. But enough has been said at any rate to stimulate enquiry, and to encourage the children of God to trust every word He has written, every promise He has given.