

## GOD'S PURPOSE IN ISRAEL

IF the importance of a subject can be measured by the place given to it by God in His Word, then this must be one of the most important that could engage our attention. And if the hearts of God's people were as full of it as His Word is, numbers would flock together to speak often one to another of God's purposes, promises and prophecies concerning Israel.

Of all the lands in the earth there is one which Jehovah has called "Emmanuel's Land".

Of all the cities in the world there is one which Jehovah has called "The City of the Great King", "The City of our God".

Of all the nations on the earth there is one which Jehovah has chosen to be His "own inheritance", and has called "My People".

Of all the books in the world there is one which Jehovah calls "My Word", "The Word of God".

And His Word is filled with a revelation of His purpose concerning this people, this land and this city. This purpose as illustrated in history, type and prophecy, is our present subject. Inasmuch as God's purpose is often expressed in promise, and His promise discloses His purpose, it may not be possible altogether to keep the two branches of our subject distinct; but we will endeavour to do so as far as we can, confining ourselves to history, type and prophecy.

God's purpose in Israel goes further back than that which is made the ordinary starting point, viz. "the call of Abraham". A purpose must have an existence prior to its manifestation or revelation; and we must go back to the beginning to find its first revelation in Genesis iii. 15. Here we are impressed with the fact that it is emphatically and indeed God's own purpose, emanating wholly and only from Himself.

Man, like the material creation, has become a ruin—empty, waste and desolate; and here, as there, the first motion came from God. It was His purpose. In the one case "the Spirit of God moved, and God said. . . ." In the other "they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden. . . ." God was here as ever, the seeker and the finder of lost and hiding

sinners. It is He who first speaks in the first question of the Old Testament, "Where art thou?" that the sinner may discover his lost and ruined condition, and, in the language of the first question in the New Testament, cry out for the Saviour, saying "Where is He?" Where is the promised Deliverer and Saviour provided for lost sinners? Yes, it is God who utters the first word of promise, who gives the first gleam of hope, and who declares His eternal purpose, that the head of the serpent which had wrought all the sin and misery, ruin and death, should be crushed by the coming seed of the woman, not by the woman whose false worship is upborne by the uncrushed head or wisdom of the serpent as seen and represented by the pictures and the scriptures of false religion, but by her "seed"—"the Son of man". In this coming One, and in Him alone, from that moment all hope of future blessing was centred.

But so far the hope was wide. No clue was afforded as to whom the purpose referred, beyond the great fact that He should be a son of Adam, the "Son of man". But the "Son of man" might be of any nation, people, or tongue. Hence the next step was to narrow the limits of this hope, and define the particular nation.

It may be well here just to remind ourselves of the contents of these early chapters of Genesis, that we may see the place occupied by God's purpose concerning Israel.

In Genesis i. and ii. we have the Creation, and the placing of man in the garden. In chapter iii. the fall; the entrance of sin, ruin and death; and the promise of a Saviour. In chapter iv. the way of access back to God, placed here on the forefront of revelation, setting forth in the boldest characters the essence of true and false religion from that day to the present moment. The one is "the way of Cain" that is "works" (Jude 11); and the other is "the way of God", that is "grace" (Acts xviii. 26). In chapter v. we have the perpetuation of sinful birth and sorrowful death. In chapter vi. the working together of sin and Satan and evil angels, leading up to the judgment of the flood in chapters vii., viii., and ix. Then in chapter x. we have "the generations of the sons of Noah" and their divisions into seventy nations according to their "families, tongues, countries and nations": "by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood" (Genesis x. 32). Now we are distinctly told in

Deut. xxxii. 8, that “when the Most High” (and this is always the title given to Jehovah in connection with sovereignty in the earth)—“when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel”. Here then we have Divine purpose. For we have the nations divided in the earth, with special reference to another nation (which at that time had no existence) two hundred years before the birth of Abraham its progenitor. Not till the next, the eleventh chapter, do we come to “the generations of Terah” (xi. 27), and read of “the call of Abraham”. The very chapter which tells us of man’s purpose to keep together in one nation, tells us also of God’s purpose to scatter them, and of His purpose to choose His own nation in Abraham. In chapter xii. He announces this purpose, and its opening words are “I will make of thee a great nation” (xii. 2). The families of the earth lost their blessing by disobedience—refusing to go forth; and they will find it again only through the obedience of Abraham, who came forth and received the promise “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (xii. 3).

Thenceforward the hope of a ruined and groaning creation was bound up in Him who was to be not merely “the Son of Man” but “the Son of Abraham”.

It is important to notice in passing, that the original call of Abraham is in Genesis xi., and not in chapter xii., though it is not formally mentioned. The Holy Spirit by Stephen is clear on this point; and Genesis xv. 7, Neh. ix. 7, Joshua xxiv. 3, and Acts vii. 2, make it plain that it was “the God of Glory” who appeared to Abram and brought him out of “Ur of the Chaldees” and not out of Haran. It is in Genesis xii. 2, however, when he was come out of Haran, after the death of Terah his father, that God unfolded His purpose in that great sevenfold promise which may be summed up in the words “I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing”. Yes, purpose indeed is here. It is “I will” and “Thou shalt”. Here is divine certainty. Here is something we can rest upon. Here is something to occupy our hearts and minds; for “the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations” (Psalm xxxiii. 11); “Every purpose of the Lord shall be performed” (Jer. li. 29).

This purpose was next ratified in Abraham’s “Seed” by

solemn covenant. Now covenants are of two kinds, conditional and unconditional. All conditional covenants are made between two or more parties, and when man has been one of those parties, he has always failed. An unconditional covenant on the contrary, has only one party and here that one is Jehovah Himself: as St. Paul says, speaking of the making of this covenant "God is one" (Gal. iii. 20). God was the "One" and only party that made that covenant with Abraham in Genesis xv., for, to make it unconditional, and the promise sure, God put Abraham to sleep; and in that sleep the symbols of the divine presence passed between the parts of the victims, whose divided pieces formed the covenant sacrifice.

There are three such covenants in the Old Testament history. One to Noah (Genesis ix.) in connection with the EARTH, over which Christ is "the Son of man". Another is this covenant with Abram (Genesis xv.) in connection with the LAND, of which Christ, "the Son of Abraham" is the heir. And the third is to David (2 Sam. vii) in connection with the THRONE, of which Christ is the heir as "the Son of David". So that these covenants must stand. And in spite of all the malice of the enemy, all the failure of Israel and all the neglect of the Church, Jehovah will fulfil all His will. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken and shall He not make it good?" (Numbers xxiii. 19). "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips" (Psalm lxxxix. 34).

Great emphasis is laid on the fact in Genesis xv. 18, that "in the self-same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham". Up to this day it was always "I will" (Genesis xii. 7, xiii. 15), here and afterwards it is "I have". The inheritance was given, and its boundaries were fixed "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Genesis xv. 18); that is, not the brook ("NAHAL") of Egypt, the Wady-el-Arisch, but the river ("NAHAR"), the Nile of Egypt. It is needless to say that the land with these boundaries has never yet been occupied by Abraham's seed, and therefore the fulfilment of this purpose and promise is still in abeyance. The fact that this covenant was without an "if", without any conditions whatsoever, tells us that the day is yet to come when the land thus given shall be occupied in all its length and breadth.

And now we come to the typical illustration of The Furnace and the Lamp, which Abraham saw in his sleep, passing

between the parts of the sacrificial victims when the covenant was made. These were a type of the whole after-history of Israel. The "smoking furnace" told of the furnace of affliction into which they should be cast, but the "burning lamp" told of their certain deliverance. The "burning bush" which Moses afterwards saw, told in like manner of their fiery trials, but assured them that they should never be consumed. The furnace and the lamp were the divine symbols and tokens that God would preserve the nation, and fulfil all His purposes in His people. The furnace was specially typical of the affliction in Egypt, "The Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance" (Deut. iv. 20). Solomon prays "For they be Thy people, and Thine inheritance, which Thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron" (1 Kings viii. 51). Again, the prophet in his warning says "Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant, which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt from the iron furnace" (Jer. xi. 4). So that looking on Israel, His inheritance, Jehovah could say "Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction". But the lamp of deliverance was there, and will never be wanting. In 1 Kings xi. 36 Jehovah says of Solomon, "Unto his son will I give one tribe, that David My servant may have a lamp always before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen". And in 1 Kings xv. 4, speaking of Abijam He says "Nevertheless for David's sake did the Lord God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem".

Thus the history of the nation has ever been illustrated by the furnace and the lamp. The day is coming when the Lord will kindle His "fire in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem" (Isaiah xxxi. 9; see Ezekiel xxii. 18-22). Then He says "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". But the lamp will be there; for "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". (Zech. xiii. 9). Then shall the proclamation go forth, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isaiah lx. 1).

Though the coming "day of Jacob's trouble" will be indeed

an “iron furnace”, yet, mindful of this purpose, Jehovah says, “For Zion’s sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth” (Isaiah lxii. 1). That is the lamp that is ever seen in connection with the furnace, which lightens up the future scene of affliction, and causes His people to hope in Him. A typical prophecy is furnished by Isaiah vi. and vii. It is a solemn prophecy of the blindness which in part should happen to Israel. It was indeed a solemn moment when it was uttered. The very year is given, and it is a remarkable epoch. It is “the year that king Uzziah died”; and historians tell us it was the year that Rome was founded. Uzziah, after a prosperous reign of fifty-two years, apostatised, and died a leper. In like manner had the nation apostatised. All that the outward eye could see was a miserable king, dying, a leper, in “a several house”; but the spiritual eye of the prophet saw “the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up” (Isaiah vi. 1). In the vision which follows Isaiah is commissioned to proclaim the awful sentence:

“Go and tell this people,  
 a | Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed but  
   b | Make the heart of this people fat,      (perceive not.  
     c | and make their ears heavy,  
       d | and shut their eyes;  
       d | lest they see with their eyes,  
     c | and hear with their ears,  
     b | and understand with their heart,  
 a | and convert, and be healed.”

Three times is this solemn prophecy quoted in the New Testament, and each time at an important dispensational epoch.

I. In Matt. xiii. 14 it is quoted by Christ in the midst of the seven parables. What was the occasion? Verse 1 tells us. “The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.” What day? Ah! we are told in chapter xii. 14. It was the day that “the Pharisees held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him”.

II. In John xii. 39, 40 it is quoted by the Holy Spirit through the evangelist. But how is it introduced? “Though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him” (v. 37).

III. In Acts xxviii. 25–27 it is quoted by the same Spirit

through St. Paul. But how is it introduced? "Some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not" (v. 24).

In the Prophets it is Jehovah who utters the prophecy. In the Gospels it is quoted by God the Son. In the Acts it is quoted by God the Holy Ghost. Thus we have a silent testimony to the Three Persons in One God. Isaiah naturally asks, "How long?" How long is this blindness to last? And the answer is vouchsafed, in words which Christ epitomized in the expression, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled". And he answered, "Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, and the Lord have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land. And if there be yet a tenth in it, it shall again be eaten up; as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock (or substance) remaineth when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock (or substance) thereof" (Isaiah vi. 11-13. R.V.).

Yes, there is "the holy seed"; and chapter vii. goes on to announce the promise of His birth. The chapter begins, "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz". Whenever we have that expression it always refers to a time of trouble followed by blessing, as in Genesis xiv. 1, Ruth i. 1, Esther i. 1, etc. So here Isaiah vii. 1-9 tells of the beginning of that desolation which continues still, and will culminate in the great confederacy under the Antichrist, which is foreshadowed in the confederacy in the days of Ahaz. It was indeed a dark and evil day. Ahaz is told to ask for a sign; but he deliberately rejects Jehovah and confederates with the Assyrian, saying to him, "I am thy servant and thy son; come up, and save me" (2 Kings xvi. 7). Even so will Israel make a covenant with Antichrist in the latter day, and vainly look for him to save them. But their only Saviour will be **THE CHRIST**: and here, in this extremity, God's purpose to send Him is revealed. The sign that Ahaz refused to ask is given notwithstanding. The furnace may burn, wickedness may increase, enemies may combine, apostacy may come, but the "sign" is the lamp of promise given seven hundred years before the event. No power can prevent the birth of that "holy seed". "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah vii. 14). A present pledge is given in verse 16, "For before the child", that is, any child, "the child" being used indefinitely, as in Isaiah lxxv. 20,

“for the child shall die an hundred years old”: so here, the pledge of the future birth of the virgin’s Child “the holy seed” is the present fact, that before any one then a child “shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings”. That forsaking, Ahaz and his confederates would themselves see, and would in it have a proof of the truth of the promise of the future birth of that other Child, Who would be “Immanuel, God with us”.

This is why Christ is called so emphatically “the BRANCH”. Israel is a dry stump, like a tree felled to the ground with no sign of life. But there is “the holy seed” remaining. There is a Branch which shall spring out of that apparently lifeless stock.

“Behold the days come saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous BRANCH, and a KING shall reign and prosper” (Jer. xxiii. 5).

“Behold, I will bring forth my SERVANT the BRANCH” (Zech. iii. 8).

“Behold, the MAN whose name is the BRANCH” (Zech. vi. 12).

“In that day shall the BRANCH of JEHOVAH be beautiful and glorious”, that is, gloriously beautiful, or beautifully glorious (Isaiah iv. 2). Thus the secret purpose of God is gradually disclosed. First, that Christ was to be “the Son of Man” (or Adam). Then, that He was to be “the Son of Abraham”. Then, that He was to be the “Son of David”, and finally, “the Son of God”.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a BRANCH shall grow out of his roots”. Thus opens the glorious Millennial prophecy of Isaiah xi. All hope and all blessing is thus wrapped up in this coming “holy seed”, and in Isaiah vii. 14 this holy seed is seen to be not only “the Son of man”, or “the Son of Abraham”, or “the Son of David”, but “the Son of God”—“Immanuel”, “God with us”; “Perfect Man”, eating “butter and honey”; “perfect God” in rejecting all evil, and choosing only the good.

Till He come there can be no blessing for Israel, or for the world; for in Him alone shall all nations of the earth be blessed. In this fact we discern the cause of the “enmity” between the serpent and this “seed of the woman”. That enmity is directed against all the people of God, whether Israel or the Church,



but specially against Jesus, the Head of both. When at length that "holy seed" was born and the Son was given, the enemy opposed Him. He strove to slay Him among the babes at Bethlehem (Matt. ii.); he thought to kill Him when he tempted Him to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple (Matt. iv.); he sought to put Him to death by casting him over the precipice of Nazareth (Luke iv.); he tried to destroy Him in the storms on the lake; and hoped he had succeeded at the Cross! Satan's purpose is ever to destroy "the holy seed", but God's purpose is to preserve it. Satan's enmity ever kindles the furnace, but God's covenant purpose has ever been a light and a defence.

As it was with Christ, so has it been with the nation of Israel. This purpose can be illustrated by three historical types, or typical histories.

I. EGYPT. In Exodus i. we see the attempt of the enemy to destroy the whole nation. Pharaoh's object was merely to retain them in servitude, and prevent their getting up out of the land. "Come on", he said, "let us deal wisely" (Exodus i. 10), and he commanded the male children to be killed, charging "all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive" (Exodus i. 16, 22). But it is written "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness" (Job v. 13). Moses was indeed "cast into the river" and Pharaoh's wisdom ended in his having to bring up, educate, and prepare the very man who should lead Israel "up out of the land". Verily "there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord" (Prov. xxi. 30). "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand" (Prov. xix. 21).

II. ATHALIAH, the mother of Ahaziah, when she "saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal" (2 Kings xi. 1). Here is another illustration of the perpetual enmity between the serpent and the seed. Satan's purpose was to destroy the line of succession, and so prevent the birth of the coming Saviour, and frustrate the purpose of God; Athaliah's purpose was merely to usurp the throne of Judah, and enjoy its possession; but God's purpose was to fulfil His promise, and preserve the seed alive.

What a "furnace" for the faith of those who looked for that coming One! What a blow to all their hopes! All the seed royal slain! The line of succession for ever broken! No son

of Abraham now! No son of David now! All lost! The word of God broken! The promise failed! But no! Jehovah had said, "I have ordained a lamp for Mine anointed: I will make the horn of David to bud" (Psalm cxxxii. 17). He "bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: and maketh the devices of the people of none effect" (Psalm xxxiii. 10). And so when it says that Athaliah "arose and destroyed all the seed royal", it expresses her wishes and her thoughts. She thought she had destroyed them all, "but Jehosheba . . . took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him, even him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain" (2 Kings xi. 2).

Even so it was with David's son and David's Lord. The enemy thought he had destroyed Him on Calvary, "but God raised Him from the dead". He was rescued "from among" the dead, and is hidden in the Father's house on high. Whenever Christ's resurrection or His people's is spoken of it is always "from" or, as in the Greek, "from among" the dead, leaving the other dead ones behind; while the resurrection of the others—the wicked—is always the "resurrection of the dead". All who are Christ's are with Him in the Heavenlies, for their "life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3).

Here also we have an illustration of the church's present position and occupation. Jehosheba and Jehoiada as wife and husband illustrate the twofold attitude of the servants of God. Like Jehosheba, our life is hidden and occupied with Christ; like Jehoiada, our life is occupied for Christ. The affections of the wife were centred in "the king's son", the activities of the husband were going forth for the king's people. While the eye was beholding Him, there was the transformation into His image (2 Cor. iii. 18) on the one hand; and the testimony concerning His coming on the other. Jehosheba could have neither complacency nor complicity with Athaliah or her schemes and plans for governing or improving the kingdom she had usurped, while Jehoiada was busy in detaching her supporters and attaching all loyal hearts to the coming king, assuring them that he was alive, and would speedily be manifested, to the dismay of the enemy and the joy of the faithful. It is interesting to note the burden of his testimony as it is given to us in 2 Chron. xxiii. 3—"Behold, the king's son shall reign,

as the Lord hath said of the sons of David". Yes, the King's Son that was slain shall surely reign, and the word of the Lord endure for ever. And so it was—the six years soon ran their course; so it will be—the seventh year will come. And then "the King's Son" shall be revealed. All who look for Him will indeed rejoice. Many will be ashamed, but those who "love His appearing" will lift up their heads as the day approaches. It will be then as it was when Joash was manifested—"All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet". When? Ah! solemn word for all who now side with the world and labour for its improvement. It was not until "they slew Athaliah with the sword" (2 Kings xi. 20). So, in like manner there will be no peace for the world until the Beast shall be taken, the Antichrist destroyed, and Satan bound; until the prophetic word shall be fulfilled—"Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness" (Isaiah xxxii. 1). "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the Lord hath said of the sons of David".

III. The last illustration is from the "furnace" of PERSIA, where we see again the "lamp" of God's Word lightening the darkness. The enmity here is of a deeper dye. Haman's purpose was more in accord with Satan's than was Pharaoh's or Athaliah's. Five times he is called emphatically "the Jews' enemy" (Esther iii. 11, vii. 6, viii. 1, ix. 10, 24). Jehovah's interminable war with Amalek (Exodus xvii. 16) is still carried on, and in the Book of Esther He is seen waging it. True, He had removed from the earth, He had forsaken His place between the cherubim; and during this period, in the Books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel, He is called by the significant title "the God of Heaven"—just as the parables which refer to the kingdom during this period of rejection call it "the kingdom of heaven". For its King is in heaven, and the kingdom is now removed to a distance. It is now in abeyance and before it is re-established with divine judgment, power, and glory, it is therefore called "the kingdom of heaven". He has removed to and acts from such a distance, that in the Book of Esther He is not named at all. This has been a great cause of stumbling to many. Some have questioned the canonicity of the book because of it; others have doubted its inspiration; others have raised objections, while its defenders have themselves been perplexed. It will be relevant to our subject to state, that not only is Jehovah's "purpose" to preserve His people clearly

seen, and His hand visible on every page of the book, but that His name "Jehovah" has been emblazoned on its pages by the Holy Spirit, in such a way that His enemies will not know how to get it out. In the midst of the furnace this lamp is seen, and the sight is one to gladden our eyes and rejoice our hearts.

Four times the name of Jehovah is given in the Book of Esther in the form of an acrostic! For centuries the Massorah has been calling attention to the fact, while ancient Hebrew manuscripts—copies, doubtless of manuscripts still more ancient—exhibit the acrostic letters written in larger and bolder characters. But all in vain: commentators and Bible students have neither seen nor noticed them. It is, however, impossible to say here all that is to be said on this important and deeply interesting subject. It must suffice to say that the phenomenon is not new to the Bible; the Holy Spirit has written thirteen other scriptures in the acrostic form. Here their character, order, and teaching are alike perfect. If we were asked to put our finger on four sentences each consisting of four Hebrew words, on which the whole history turns, we could not find other four which so exquisitely form its wonderful pivots. Jehovah is seen alternately overruling the wisdom, wrath, and glory of man, and ruling according to His own inscrutable will: making the wrath of man to praise Him, and causing His people to glorify Him: delivering them from their enemies, and preserving them for the accomplishment of all His purposes in them and through them.

The history of the Book of Esther is a historical type, and a typical history. It is also prophetic, for it is being repeated every day. The people are scattered, yet dwelling alone: they are the prey of all their enemies: but Jehovah's eye is upon them: His hand is with them: He remembers His covenant which He made with Abraham. That covenant is the pledge of Israel's blessing.

Well may the Spirit ask by St. Paul, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" and well may He answer, "Much every way: chiefly, because that to them are committed the oracles of God", and that their God is Jehovah. This is the great lesson of Psalm cxliv. 11-15. It is the "strange children whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood" who speak. But what is the vanity which they talk? What is the false speaking of all "strange children"? Why

this, that the happiness of a nation consists in outward prosperity—sons, daughters, garners full of store, sheep and oxen, peace and safety. “Happy are the people that are in such a case” (vv. 12–15). No! No! a thousand times no! “Yea”, or “yea, rather, Happy is that people whose God is Jehovah”. That alone is true happiness, and that is Israel’s portion. The language of all God’s real children is “There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased” (Psalm iv. 6, 7). Yes, that is the only source of happiness and gladness for any people. It is not the store that they put in their garners, but the “gladness” which God puts in our hearts. “What advantage then hath the Jew? Much every way”; for they have the Lord for their God. Hence it is that while the nations that have oppressed them have passed away, Israel is preserved. While Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Rome have gone, and their gods with them, Israel remains to-day a witness of Jehovah’s “purpose”, and we wait for the time when Israel will be God’s witness to the ends of the earth; the great missionary nation, filling the face of the earth with fruit, and flooding the nations with light, and glory, and blessing.

The day is at hand when a glorious answer will be given to the question, “What advantage then hath the Jew?” A wondrous light will be thrown on the words “much every way”. Yes, “every way”; for even now the Church is blessed in the Son of God; and ere long Israel will be blessed in the Son of Abraham, and in the Son of David; while the whole creation shall find its blessing in “the seed of the woman”—“the Son of Man”.