

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

JERUSALEM MY HAPPY HOME.

PREACHED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 2ND, 1861, BY

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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

'These that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country.' Zechariah vi. 8.

'He,' it is written, 'that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;' and one of the consequences is that wherever the Lord cannot rest they who are joined to him cannot rest. And this accounts for a great deal of experience which people of God have. We seek many false resting places, and try to make ourselves contented and comparatively happy and satisfied with many, many things with which the Spirit of the Lord is not satisfied, and in which and by which the Spirit of the Lord will not rest—and where he will not rest, he will not suffer us to rest, but will stir us up and make us restless here, and restless there, and restless everywhere; and will disquiet us in a variety of ways, in order to bring us to rest where he rests, and that that is in eternal things. It is then to this quietude that our text evidently refers; for although circumstantially (and we of course shall avail ourselves this morning of the circumstances as being put upon record for our instruction), the circumstance historically refers to the Israelites in Babylon, or rather to their deliverance from Babylon; and when they were delivered by that agency which the Lord employed, then these words of our text are used expressive of the repose of the Spirit of the Lord, and expressive of the repose of the spirit of the people—that as his Spirit was quieted they also were quieted; and thus the Lord resteth in Zion, for he hath desired it for his habitation, and he hath said, 'This is my rest; here will I dwell for ever;' while he himself is become the habitation, the strength, and the portion of his people, in which they shall rest. Here, and nowhere else, he is determined that his Spirit shall be quieted, that he shall obtain rest; and his people are one with him, obtain rest after the same order of things.

There are three things, if we take what is implied with what is expressed in our text. Here is, in the first place, *disquietude* implied; for if the spirit be quieted, then it implies a previous disquietude; and that shall be the first part of my discourse, to describe that kind of disquietude felt by the regenerated man, and that man that is a stranger to that disquietude of spirit which I have this morning to describe, that man is dead in trespasses and in

sins, is a stranger to his real condition, and is a stranger to God, a stranger to Christ Jesus. And then the second is that of *the repose*; 'These that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country.' Suffice it here just to observe that the Israelites never subdivided the cardinal points. Babylon was the north-east of Judea; but our text speaks of Babylon, as several other scriptures also speak, as being in the north; that is, north from Judea. Strictly speaking it was not so, but what we should call north-east, but they did not subdivide the cardinal points, and therefore called it the north country; we should have called it north-east. I make this remark in order to give the explanation of the circumstance referred to in our text.

The first thing then we have to attend to would be *The Disquietude*; the second would be *The Repose*; and the third would be (though I suppose I shall not reach so far) *The Agency by which that quietude was brought about*, as expressed in the preceding parts of the chapter by the four chariots, the horses, the four winds of heaven, expressive of that agency which the Lord then used, and which he is still using to bring about that repose both to his own Spirit and to his own children that shall remain for ever.

First, then, I notice **THE DISQUIETUDE**. The disquiet of the people literally originated in their being afar off from what they wished to be near to. They were in captivity, and were locally afar from the promised land, afar from the city of God, from the temple of God; all of which they include in the term 'Zion.' And thus their distance from the promised land, and the city, and the temple, and consequently from that localized presence of God with which he favoured them, this became unto them a matter of disquietude and lamentation. You will see here how we have real Christian experience set forth. What was the first discovery made to you, and what was the first discovery, or almost the first discovery, made to me? It was that I was afar off from God, afar from the land of the living; that I was afar off from that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; that I was afar off, and knew not how I could ever come nigh; that I was afar off from the temple of the Lord, from the throne of the Lord, the presence of the Lord, the mercy of the Lord, far off, having no hope, and without God in the world. And their state literally, I say, sets forth very beautifully the experience of the man that is taught of God. By the rivers of Babylon, 'there we sat down.' Let us take these rivers of Babylon as a figure of soul trouble, connected with circumstantial troubles. And observe here that we may take Babylon as a kind of figure of the world; and when the soul is regenerated by the Spirit of God, it ceases then to be one with the world. 'By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down;' there we were in captivity, out of that captivity we could not get; there we were in trouble, out of that trouble we could not get; there we were far off, out of that distance we could not get. Now, my hearer, let me stay here for a moment. What do you and I know in our own souls in the sight of a heart-searching God of being brought into soul trouble, and feeling our need of the interposition of Jesus Christ to turn that captivity of sin under which we are by nature? What do we know of being afar off from God, utterly unable to read our title clear to mansions in the skies; utterly unable to draw near; we feel fixed there, our sin remains, our darkness remains, our bondage remains, our distance from God remains. What do we know of this in our own souls? We live in a day when there is a vast amount of noisy profession; but the Lord looketh on the heart; and if we are strangers to this soul trouble I am sure we are strangers to ourselves, and are not at all yet in that path that shall lead to the saving knowledge of the Lord. But then these people had an intense sympathy with Zion; nothing they could think of with such feeling, and sympathy, and concern, as Zion. Zion—what was Zion? Why, a place beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole land. Why was Zion so beautiful? Because the mercy seat was there, because the sacrifice that took away sin was there, because the high priest was there; because the presence of God

was there with this promise, 'I will commune with thee from off the mercy-seat, and I will come unto thee, and will bless thee!' It was beautiful for situation. Dost thou see this, my hearer, that Zion is thus beautiful for situation? Zion, what is Zion? Why, it is that place where the Lord hath commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Zion—what is Zion? Why it is that establishment of the dear Redeemer's kingdom; in other words it is the kingdom of Jesus Christ immoveably established; 'they that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, that cannot be removed, but abideth for ever;' and 'as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people for ever.' Here is a Zion then, beautiful for situation; here is a Zion where the Lord hath commanded his blessing even life for evermore; here is a Zion, a kingdom immoveably founded. 'We wept when we remembered Zion;' when we thought of Zion. What, again, is Zion? Zion is that place which the eternal God above all other places has chosen as he has chosen no other place: he hath chosen it as his habitation and as his rest. Zion—he hath said of her, 'I will satisfy her poor with bread; I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy; there will I make the horn of David to bud;' namely, there will I make the power of Christ to flourish and to prosper; 'for there shall the word go out that shall not return unto me void, neither shall it fall to the ground; but it shall prosper in that on which I send it, and shall accomplish that which I please.' This is Zion. 'We hanged our harps upon the willows and wept when we remembered Zion.' Ah, if you make this to do about Zion you will be taunted, you will be laughed at, as you were and as I was when we were first brought into soul trouble, and first began to think of Jesus Christ; the ungodly sneered at us, and laughed at us, and mocked us, and said all they could in order to annoy us, and if possible make us forget our souls, and forget that we were sinners, and forget God's mercy; but all they did rather deepened our feelings towards God than otherwise. And so, 'they that carried us away captive required of us a song, and they that wasted us required of us mirth;' now then, if you are one of the elect, if you are the people of God, if you are such favourites of heaven, and you make such a to-do of this Zion, 'sing us one of the songs of Zion.' No; we cannot sing the Lord's song in a strange land; we are not in a singing mood; this is our sighing time, not our singing time; this is our mourning time, not our mirthful time; this is our time of sackcloth and ashes, not our time of festivity: this is our time of casting down, not of lifting up; this is our time of silence, not of speaking; this is our time of bondage, and not of freedom. Here then is that experience that distinguishes the real child of God from all others, this soul trouble through his being so far off from Zion. And then look at the feeling towards Zion: 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,' another term, but means the same thing, the kingdom of Christ, or the city of God; 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.' Ah, Jerusalem, hath foundations; Jerusalem is that in which the Lord delighteth—the new, not the old, but the New Jerusalem, in which there is to be fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore. No; the soul cannot forget it. How expressive it is of the depth of the work of the Blessed Spirit. All this disquietude is nothing else but the disquietude of the Spirit of God.—God himself is not quiet, he is not at rest; and therefore he makes you in a sense like himself; for I am sure those of you that are taught of God, can respond to the Lord's own words, and if you cannot respond to them, then I think you have reason to fear that your religion is a thing of nought—the words to which I refer are these: 'For Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, and for Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness.' A convinced sinner under condemnation has nothing but blackness, but when Christ's justifying righteousness is brought in, and Christ appears the end of the law, and the love of God shed abroad in your heart, and pardoning mercy flows in like a river into

the soul, then you become justified by faith, and have peace with God. Are you seeking this? If you are not, if anything else can brighten up your prospect—if anything else can overcome your darkness but the brightness of Christ's righteousness, then in your faith you stop short of God's religion—and if you stop short of Christ's righteousness let me tell you, you stop short of everything; for be what ever you may, if you have not the righteousness of Jesus Christ, you will be like the man, however well dressed—and I dare to say he was very well dressed in his own eyes, and perhaps in the eyes of others; but still it was not royal array—it was not the robe the king had provided—it was not the wedding garment, therefore he must be cast out. 'And the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth;' light again, you see. And so if you are born of God you can respond to this, and you will say, Lord, I cannot cease to pray till thou, Lord, reveal to me the righteousness of thy dear Son, and bring me into peace with thee; for I know in that way only thou art a God of peace. Lord, I cannot be silent, I cannot cease to pray, I cannot rest, I cannot be contented, until thy salvation appears as a lamp that burneth, to shine all my darkness away. And then I think that salvation there as a lamp that burneth, means something inextinguishable; that it is a lamp that burneth not to be extinguished. All other lamps are to be quenched; the lamp of human life, that burns but dimly at the best, is to be quenched; the lamp of all human hope is to be quenched; the lamp of the hypocrite shall be put out, but if God's free grace, God's inextinguishable, God's eternal salvation become light, then here is a lamp that never will be extinguished; I consequently have a light here that will never be quenched, a light that never can be extinguished. Here my sympathies entwine with this order of mercy; and I say, 'If I forget thee O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.'

There is another thing well worth observing, that the ancients were wont to swear by a variety of things, but when a man was so poor as to have nothing, he would then swear by that that seemed the most useful to him. 'Let my right hand forget her cunning.' The word *cunning* there is an old English word, meaning *skill*; there is no difficulty about the meaning of it, it simply signifies skill. Here I am with a right hand; and if I forget Jerusalem, then let me forget how to get my bread: Lord, let this right arm, with which I attend to my daily calling, and with which I attend to that by which I obtain the bread that perisheth—rather than I should forget Jerusalem, let my right arm be paralysed, let my right hand forget her cunning, let me forget how to use it. Lord, let any calamity overtake me, but do not let me be an apostate, do not let me deceive my soul—do not let me wander down to hell, and think I am going to heaven, Lord do not deceive me, but undeceive me where I am deceived; let anything occur rather than that I should forget Jerusalem. See the intensity of feeling, see the disquietude: most professors in our day, and some of the real people of God, are too quiet by half. 'Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.' When I look at the love of God, and the salvation of God, and the kingdom of God: and when I look at what hell is, and try to imagine for a moment unutterable agony without mitigation throughout the countless ages of eternity, and yet I am that sleepy creature, I treat it as a mere hearsay thing, when I look at the agonies of Christ, and the great salvation he has wrought, and the glory he has gained, and contrast these eternal glories with the nothingness of poor human nature—and yet I am that earthly, hard-hearted, impenitent, poor creature, that I seem to treat these eternal realities as though they were as nothing, and find that I am made, shall I say, of that kind of material that would send me off into the sleep of death; I am sure I have had to pray that prayer many times, 'Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;' again, 'Quicken me, O Lord, after thy lovingkindness;' and again, 'Be not silent unto me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.' Here is dis-

quietude then. Now men that are disquieted for this life are disquieted in vain; but the man that is disquieted for eternal things is not disquieted in vain; the man that is making up his all in earthly achievements walketh in a vain show; but the man that appears in filthy garments standing before the angel of the Lord is not walking in vain show: and I am sure when the Lord commands a change of raiment, and the soul brought into a knowledge of pardoning mercy, and that man walks the golden streets by faith, even while he is in this world, arrayed in garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of righteousness, crowned with the lovingkindness of the living God, and shod with gospel preparation—that man is not walking in a vain show; he is walking in that divine array, in that divine realization of eternal mercy by which he rejoices that the Lord ever disquieted him, and stirred him up, and stirred him up from time to time, so as not to let him settle in his apathy, or deceive his soul. But this depth of feeling towards Jerusalem; ‘If I remember not Jerusalem, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.’ Rather than cease to pray I would cease to be able to speak; rather than be severed from hope in God’s mercy I would lose the power of speech and become dumb, my tongue should cleave to the roof of my mouth. Here is earnestness, how far are we partakers of his spirit of earnestness? Your humble servant is perfectly conscious of his dreadful deficiency in this matter: he hopes he is not altogether destitute of that spirit of earnestness; but he feels he is very deficient in it; and it is only now and then that he makes an approach in his feeling to the possession of it. Well, even that is better than nothing. But we know among men if we see one very earnest in his affections, and the other not, there is great want of correspondence; and I am sure our God is earnest in his love; and when there is a want of that on our part, there is a great want of correspondence, and there is a rod somewhere, there is some brine somewhere, there are some waters somewhere, there are some fiery trials somewhere, there is a furnace somewhere that shall burn us out of this, and bring us to be more earnest with him who is infinitely and eternally earnest with us. I am not finding fault with *you*, I have quite enough to do to find fault with myself.

But again, ‘If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.’ Is there anything extravagant in this? If we should be tempted to think there is, we should have nothing to do but go to the latter part of the Book of Revelation, and there read out a description of Jerusalem, where there is no sorrow, no death, no pain; where God wipes away all tears from off all faces—where they have no temple, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof: where they need not the produce even of creative omnipotence, but God himself and the Lamb are the light thereof; he is the tree of life—and his mercy that river of water of life clear as crystal, flowing from the mediatorial throne, while the people there see his face, and shall reign for ever and ever; neither can they die any more, being the children of the Resurrection, in preferring Jerusalem above our chief joy. Is there anything extravagant? No, there is not. Thus, then, if we are Christians, we know something of this disquietude—something of this intense sympathy towards Christ, towards his kingdom, towards Mount Zion, towards the new Jerusalem. But do you say, Ah, I do not know, I do not mind about it. Well, I must say, as I have said before, there is no middle path; we must be either friends or enemies. And that same 137th Psalm to which I have referred, that records and describes the feelings of the real Christian sets forth at the time the judgments on the opposite character. ‘Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem—who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.’ Ah, how many are there now, that would rase the free grace gospel of God, rase it even to the foundation; yes, they would do away with this truth, and with that truth, and the other truth. I must tell you once more what I have told you lately before, that doctrine is nothing

else but a description of the character of God ; and if you take away any one of the truths of the gospel you misrepresent the character of your Maker ; and of all the characters he bears, there is none so dear to him as his saving character, there all delight centres ; his covenant character, wherein he appeareth in a sworn covenant ; and if what I am now saying be true, what will be the end of those men who live and die in the garb of piety, under the influence of zeal from some quarter which I will not now mention ; but their whole system is nothing else but a misrepresentation of the new covenant, a misrepresentation of the character of the great God. 'O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed ;' and we must belong to Zion mystically, or to Babylon mystically ; 'happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.' These are the judgments that awaited the enemies. And thus then, the Lord's Spirit was disquieted, and so his people were disquieted. The inhabitants of Babylon had disquieted his people, and that disquieted him—for in all their afflictions he is afflicted, and what is done unto them is done unto him ; 'He that toucheth you,' saith God, 'toucheth the apple of his eye.' But if you know the truth, you will advocate it fast enough ; if you know the truth, you will stand out for it fast enough ; if you know the truth rightly, really, you will never give way an inch to that which is contrary to it.

But after these few remarks, now, leaving you to judge what you know of being disquieted in the way I have described, second, what you know of those strong feelings towards Christ, towards Zion, towards his kingdom, what you know of feeling that you would rather lose your life,—grace enabling you,—than you would apostatize from these truths, that you cannot forget Jerusalem ; the people who were the people of God after the flesh, they forgot it, they went away from it ; and so the Lord forgot them, departed from them, left them to their ruin ; there they are, scattered to this day, to be gathered no more for ever. But how did the Lord's spirit become quieted ? Why, by deliverance : by that which will quiet your spirit. The people in their captivity are like bones at the grave's mouth, scattered about, the Holy Spirit comes, organises them, unites them, and unites them to what ? I know what he unites them to, and that shall be my first step in describing this quietude or rest. These scattered bones stood up an exceeding great army ; it is a military idea. And why are they represented as standing as an army ? Because they were united to the victory that God had wrought, or to speak in the more gospel form they were united to what is declared in the 40th of Isaiah ; 'The warfare is accomplished ;' that is it, 'the iniquity is pardoned,' by my covenant head I have received double, grace now, glory hereafter, there it is, there I can stand, now I have the victory, knowing the victory is obtained, and pardon past, present, and to come ; grace now, and glory hereafter ; now I am quiet. Nothing short of this will give us quiet. Bless the Lord, I have been resting there more or less for many years, I feel it a sweet resting place. Oh this dear, this precious Jesus Christ, the victory is complete, there God's spirit rests, there Jesus rests. Jesus himself would not have rested if his victory had not been complete, 'his own holy arm,'—he obtained the victory holily, righteously, entirely, finally—'his own holy arm hath gotten him the victory.' Precious faith laying hold of this, I have nothing to do now but here to stand, and here to eat, and here to drink, and here to live, and here to be held up, and here to die, and here to rise, and here to rejoice, clothed in a white robe, a palm in my hand, and join with the loud voice of, 'Salvation unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever.' That quiets the spirit. I am not now noticing the imagery in the preceding part of the chapter, for I find I shall not be able to bring in all these chariots and horses, which must at another time have a word upon, because they are very instructive, and very interesting, and I think very delightful. Then the second step in repose is that of transplantation from the congregation of the

dead, to the land of the living: I am still referring to the 37th of Ezekiel. 'I will open your graves, and bring you up out of your graves; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and brought you up out of your graves, and brought you into the land of Israel.' Here is a transplanted from the congregation of the dead, into the land of the living. Just so it is now, the man that is brought to stand on this vantage ground, he is no longer at home in the congregation of the dead. And although sometimes your worldly circumstances may be like graves—a circumstance shall occur, and shall kill you to everything spiritual, not vitally so, but as far as your feelings are concerned; down you go, and you are like a man dead and buried. Well, brother, how are you getting on? Getting on? say you, I am dead and buried. You are? Well, dead people cannot talk. Well, I can talk in that respect, but I am dead and buried. By-and-bye the Lord opens this grave,—cannot open it yourself,—brings you up out of the grave, brings you into the land of Israel, and enables you to range over the land, and see the difference between the congregation of the dead, and the land of the living, the difference between the floating clouds of time, and the fixed glories of eternity; see the mighty difference, the clouds are always shifting, and therefore no fixedness as to their locality, their shape, their form, their colour, but sun, moon, and stars move with unalterable regularity; and so do the counsels and promises of our God, the promises of our God go shining on with immovable regularity. When you can get away from the fleeting scenes of time, and the congregation of the dead, and are brought into the land of the living, ah, say you, now I am comfortable, now I have got hold of something that will not pass away. It is a poor thing, to build your hope upon anything that will pass away; the Lord intends the hope of his people, and the affections of his people to rest upon that that will not pass away, his promises will not pass away, his name will not pass away, his goodness, his mercy, and his favour will not pass away; there you will be quiet. There is—and with that I must close this part, after just reminding you of something else:—here is in that same chapter a four-fold representation of eternity, and wherein we have a peaceable habitation, wherein we have sure dwellings, and where we have quiet resting places. The Lord fulfils his promise in the 30th of Jeremiah to Jacob, that Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and shall be quiet. We have then in the 37th of Ezekiel a fourfold representation of eternity. The first is by the incorruptible inheritance, they shall inherit the land for ever. Does not that endear eternity? You have no lot here, nor portion here, you can inherit for ever, and the best portion you have here, has many drawbacks in it, but it is not so here. Hear the description of it; 'an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' That is one representation. Ab, who shall find language to describe the difference between that and the portion that lies below that; the one that entered into this inheritance, and was comforted on every side, and the one that went below that, and lifted up his eyes, and longed even for a drop of water. See then by Jesus Christ, the inheritance we come into. God grant us grace to be content with our lot here, reconcile us to it, and charm us more with that eternal inheritance we have in Jesus. That was the joy set before him, he was reconciled to sorrows you and I never felt; he was reconciled to sufferings we never did, nor can undergo, he was willing to be made a curse here, that he might be a blessing hereafter; he was willing to be made sin here, that he might be salvation hereafter; he was willing to be filled with sorrow here, that he might be filled and fill us with joy hereafter, he was willing to die here, that he might live hereafter, he was willing to undergo anything and everything here, that he might possess everything and bring his brethren to possess everything hereafter. Oh how rightly did Jesus estimate things; he put a light value upon that which was light, and attached an infinite importance to that which was

infinitely important. He knew wherein lay the weighty matters of faith, judgment, and mercy. Thanks to God for such a representative as this. Inheritance, then, they shall inherit the land for ever, there the Spirit is quieted, there the soul rests. The second representation of eternity is the continuation of Christ in that land in his princely character, and that princely character in this eternal inheritance unites two relations, servitude and endearment. 'My servant David,' or as it might be rendered, 'my beloved servant,' shall be their prince for ever.' Mark, 'my servant,' so it is by servitude that he will be our Prince for ever, it is by his servitude that he is loved for ever by the Lord and by his people. 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.' We are to meet him on the ground of the service he has rendered, we are to meet him on the ground of the righteousness he has wrought, on the ground of the warfare he has accomplished, on the ground of the atonement he has made, on the ground of the victory that he has obtained. What a triumphant meeting must that be, truly there the Spirit of the Lord will rest, and the people shall rest also. The third representation given of eternity there is this,—'I will make a covenant of peace with them,' and lest we might think it was a mere temporary covenant the Lord adds in a very emphatic way, 'it shall be an everlasting covenant.' It is a covenant of peace, why then is it everlasting peace, no war can ever arise. A quarrel arose between God and man in the first Adam; but that is settled in the Second Adam never to rise again. He has entered into a covenant, and engaged to make peace, he has made peace, and he brings us into that peace, and in that peace we are to dwell for ever. Then the fourth representation given of eternity, where we have quietness, is the Lord's presence. First there is the land, then there is the Prince of life, and peace, and glory, and then there is the covenant to make it safe, and then there is the Lord's presence to make it happy. 'I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.' Now the word 'sanctuary' signifies 'holy'; that the Lord shall dwell there without sin. Jesus Christ dwelt with us once with sin, and bare our sin upon him, but he shall appear the second time without sin; because he has got rid of that sin, he has put sin away, he shall appear without sin, and his people, washed in atoning blood, conformed to the blessed Redeemer, shall dwell here for evermore. Here then is the rest of the Lord's presence.

Now I must say a word or two more, I could say a great deal more upon this, but I just in conclusion give one hint, and that is this; how came the Jews to return from captivity at all? Had they behaved so well during that 70 years that when the time arrived they were entitled on the ground of their good behaviour to return? Do you say this? If you do, you will run counter to God's own testimony; who hath said, not for your sakes, but for my name's sake do I this.' But even that does not make the secret very obvious; the secret of it all is this, and a beautiful secret it is.—Before the Israelites went into captivity the Holy Ghost placed the birth of the Saviour at Bethlehem in Judea, and Christ must be there, for 'the sceptre shall not depart; the princely sceptre remained in the tribe of Judah all the time of the captivity; the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.' The secret of their return was that Christ still formed a part of the genealogy of that tribe; that tribe could not be broken all the time Christ was there, he was to be born in Bethlehem, was to be called the Nazarene, was to accomplish our salvation at Jerusalem; there the gospel was to begin to be preached. So that Christ after all was at the root of their return. Bless his holy name, I had almost said he is at the root of everything that is vitally good. So the secret of their return laid then in the fact that Jesus Christ was not yet born, that prediction gave him descent or rather gave him birth from that tribe, and gave him birth in Judea, where he was to live and where he was to die, the apostles to be called, and the gospel preaching to commence.