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Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit.

JEWISH NATIONALITY DISSOLVED FOR EVER.

A SERMON

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, 25TH AUGUST, 1867, BY

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AT THE NEW SURREY TABERNACLE, WANSEY STREET.

“For the vision is touching the whole multitude thereof, which shall not return.”—Ezekiel vii. 13.

THE theme of the first part of this chapter is that of the final dissolution of the Jewish nationality,—that their temple is gone, and gone for ever; that their city, their land, their ceremonial law, their tribal distinction, are gone, and gone for ever. They “shall not return.” From all their former captivities they recovered, but from their present captivity they will never recover; there is no hope whatever in that direction. But there is an infinitely better hope put into the place thereof, and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, for Jew and for Gentile. Hence Daniel, when looking forward to the Saviour’s day, speaks of the judgments that should come upon the Jewish nation—a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation upon the earth; that is, not with the Jews, because they recovered from all their former captivities, and the reason that this one was the greatest trouble was because the desolation was final. That was the time of trouble with them, and it cannot happen again, because they will never, never, no, never be gathered again. My text saith that “the vision is touching the whole multitude thereof, which shall not return.” Our text embodies that which would take a volume of sermons to work out and to do justice to; and therefore all that one sermon can do will just be to indicate the direction in which the river of God’s eternal truth still continues to flow. Now, as I have said, the Jews recovered from all their former captivities; but from this one they never can recover. Where is there tribal register now? As you are aware, more than two thousand years have rolled over since the ten tribes, by the incursions of the kings of Assyria, were carried away into captivity; and there has not been, from that day to this, and there never will be, any sign of their return. And it is going on for two thousand years since the Saviour’s day, since the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were dissolved, and they have never been gathered, and never will be again. My object, therefore, this morning will be to set before you a fourfold contrast between the covenant that is passed away and the covenant that shall not pass away. And I do desire that I may have grace whereby you may be interested in what we are saying as we go along; and I also pray that especially the people here at the Surrey Tabernacle may feel increasingly anxious clearly to understand the Scriptures, and to be settled, and rooted, and grounded increasingly in all the great questions contained in the Scriptures, and especially in the great truth that belongs to your own souls,—“Ye must

be born again." There are great advantages in being so favoured,—“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly;” and “it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.” Those interests that you have in the Bible will never pass away. The interests you have in earth, however much you may feel interested in them, must pass away. They cannot last long. A little longer, and every earthly interest with you will pass away, to return no more. But the things of God are eternal; these are interests that eternity itself cannot terminate; they are interests that are in God, and that include the Lord in all his love and counsels. I will at once, then, proceed to give, as far as time permits, a *fourfold contrast between that which is passed away and that which cannot pass away*. I have taken the text as a kind of motto. I shall not dwell so much upon the words of the text as upon the subject embodied in them.

Now the first contrast I notice is the passing away of the Jewish land, and the sure continuation of a better land in its place. In the second verse of this same chapter where our text is it saith, “An end, the end;”—that is a remarkable form of speech—“An end, *the end*”—the ultimate end, as it means, the final end—“is come upon the four corners of the land.” Here, then, while Jeremiah in his 32nd chapter speaks of the return of the Jews from their Babylonish captivity, that they should again buy and sell in their land, this chapter declares that the buyer shall not rejoice, and that the seller—we shall have to take particular notice presently of that which is implied by the seller,—that “the seller shall not return to that which is sold: for the vision is touching the whole multitude thereof, which shall not return.” Jeremiah, therefore, is speaking of their captivity in Babylon and return therefrom; but Ezekiel, in this chapter, is led on to their ultimate dissolution, and to that final captivity which came to pass in the apostolic age. “An end, the end, is come upon the four corners of the land”—completely swept away. Let us then see what we have to put in the place thereof, after just observing that that land was to pass away by violence, by war, famine, and pestilence, and everything that was awful. Now we go to the 60th of Isaiah, and we get something to put in the place thereof. There is a land of which it is written, “Violence shall no more be heard in thee, wasting nor destruction within thy borders.” And what land is this? Why, the land spoken of in the 1st chapter of the First Epistle of Peter,—“an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” Here, then, by Jesus Christ, we have a land into which no violence can come. No sin can defile the Saviour, and no sin can defile the people as they stand in Christ, and no sin can defile that heavenly land into which he hath entered. There is therefore no violence. “Violence shall no more be heard in thee.” Jesus is not crucified there, but glorified; the people are not persecuted and hated there, but universally loved. The people have no pain, no sorrow, no sigh, no tear there. And this blessedness, in place of the old land, is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And now mark,—“Thou shalt call thy walls salvation;” that is, “salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks;” so that God will take care of you as a citizen by salvation; he is round about you by the perfect work of Jesus Christ. Can you think of a position so lovely as this? If the Lord be round about you by what you are in yourself, he may well hesitate whether he will curse you or bless you, whether he will reject you or accept you, whether he will favour you or destroy you, whether he will receive you or in indignation condemn you. But he is round about you by Jesus Christ. “Thou shalt call thy walls salvation.” Salvation is that by which he is round about you; and he saith, “Thy walls are continually before me.” He doth not behold iniquity in one of the citizens; he doth not see perverseness in one of these happy inhabitants; no, they stand free, because Christ is their representative. So that you may go round about this Zion, count her towers, mark well

her bulwarks, and consider her palaces; and the people can, without a faltering voice, sing, "This God is our God for ever and ever, and will be our guide even unto death." "And thy gates praise." And if the gates mean the truths of the gospel and the ordinances of God's house, how true this is! How the openings up of God's truth cause us to praise his name! and how sometimes in his house, while his servants are, according to the grace and gifts the Lord has given them, proclaiming these things,—how are our souls drawn out in secret praise to the Lord! and we say in our hearts, Bless the Lord for such mercy as this, for such salvation as this. And then, again, to show that that which is put in the place of that which is passed away is spiritual, it saith, "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee." For it says, "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun"—and the 84th Psalm says that God is a sun and a shield, and Christ is called the Sun of righteousness,—“thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself.” Then comes the repetition of the fact that “the Lord”—that is, by Jesus Christ—“shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.” Now there is a point here I wish you particularly to notice. In the 19th verse it says, “The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.” Then in the 20th verse it says, “The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.” So you see that God must become your glory before you are in that path by which the days of your mourning will be ended. How many of us can say this morning with the apostle, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”? Can we say that God, in the love that he has shown us in the gift of his dear Son, can we say that Jesus in his achievement, can we say that God in the immutability of his counsel—can we say that he is our glory, that we do glory therein? If so, then thou art in that path by which the days of thy mourning shall be ended. But the poor Jews, rather than listen to this, would hearken to a fanciful fabulous doctrine of their return to a land to which they will never, never return, not as the people of God. Then, again, after setting forth thus the blessedness of this new covenant land, in contrast to what Ezekiel saith, that “an end, the end, is come upon the four corners of the land”—whereas here is an eternal land, called in the 11th of the Hebrews the heavenly country, which the Old Testament pilgrims sought, and which they all to a man reached, for “these all died in faith,”—Isaiah lingers upon it, and he says, “Thy people also”—the people that are thus brought unto the Lord in this new covenant—“shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever;”—here is no termination, no end;—“the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.” And you will observe that there is a gracious promise of an increase:—“A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation;” that is, by being brought into these things. This, then, is one contrast. While the prophet Ezekiel prophetically sweeps away for ever all hope in the literal Canaan, here is the antitypical Canaan brought in, where the Lord is our light, the Lord our glory, the days of our mourning ended, we righteous, the land possessed for ever, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. But unto the earthly land they shall not return.

The second contrast I give is that in the 11th verse of this 7th of Ezekiel:—“Violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness; none of them shall remain, nor of their multitude, nor of any of theirs.” “None of them shall remain.” Here is a positive declaration, you see. Now go to the Saviour's day, and see how literally this is fulfilled. Was not the government of the Pharisees, as described in the 23rd of Matthew, a sceptre or rod of wickedness? Can you imagine a system more wicked than that there set before us, upon which the Saviour pronounces eight

woes? Now concerning these the prophet Ezekiel saith, "None of them shall remain, not of their multitude, nor any of theirs: nor shall there be wailing for them, nor a nation under heaven sympathized with them in this their final desolation." They must be taken away, and taken away for ever. Now let us look for a moment at the contrast to this. Let us come to the new covenant, and hear what is said there. In the new covenant the Lord speaketh thus:—"For as the new heavens"—meaning the Christian economy of eternal salvation—"and the new earth"—meaning in substance the same thing—"which I will make"—and which were made when Christ was on the earth, for when Christ was on the earth he made, as it were, a new earth; that is, he established a new life, a new inheritance, a new kingdom, a new heaven, old things passed away, all things become new;—"As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." It may seem a little tedious, but there are two things I want to make very clear this morning. The one is that the Jews shall never return to their land; and the other is that the Lord has put a most glorious covenant, a wonderfully blessed state of things, into the place thereof. Now as I have quoted from the last chapter of Isaiah, I had better go a little farther. "So shall your seed and your name remain;" in direct contrast to what Ezekiel here saith, that they shall not remain; because this is the old covenant land; but there, in the last chapter of Isaiah, it is the new covenant land. "So shall your seed and your name remain." What is meant by your name remaining? Why, if you just go to Jeremiah, and from there to the apostle James and other scriptures, you will see what is meant by your name remaining. "This is the name wherewith she shall be called; Jehovah our Righteousness." The church is brought to receive Jesus Christ as her righteousness, and her name is thereby called Jehovah our Righteousness. That is a name that will remain to her—her husband's name, that will be her name, by virtue of oneness with him, and that for ever. Then take the words of James when he saith, "That worthy name by which ye are called;" and another scripture saith, "After whom the whole family in heaven and earth are named," that is, they are identified with Jesus Christ. Whatever name they may have on earth, however many holes they have made in their character and manners upon earth—as was the case with many of the Old Testament saints,—that does not touch them as they stand in eternal oneness with Christ. The name of one Christian is just the same in heaven as another. The state and standing of one Christian, as he stands in Christ, is just the same as another: there is no difference, for there stands the decree that "he hath predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son." "And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another"—that is, from time to time—"shall all flesh," the Lord saith (and I want to be careful in using these words "all flesh," because I shall want them presently to illustrate a point)—"shall all flesh come to worship before me." Has not it been so? Were not both Jews and Gentiles in the apostolic age brought? And were there not both Jews and Gentiles included in the Epistle to the Hebrews? Though that epistle is especially to the Hebrews, Gentiles are included, and he saith, "Ye are come unto mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Now it is said of these "all flesh," "They shall go forth and look upon the carcasses"—not the literally, but the spiritually, the ecclesiastically and nationally dead carcasses—"of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die." The Lord placed a worm at the root of the Jewish nationality, and there stands the testimony of the immutable God that that worm shall not die; that nation can never be a nation again, "neither shall their fire be quenched." And doth not the judgment of God rest to this day upon the land of Canaan? Did not that same judgment that seat-

tered the ten tribes more than two thousand years ago into the Eastern world scatter the other two tribes nearly two thousand years ago into the Western world, so to fulfil the ancient prediction, "Ye shall be scattered among all nations"? "And they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Now try and understand it, even if it give you some trouble. In the preceding verse there is an "all flesh" that should come to worship the Lord. Then in the close of that prophecy of Isaiah it saith of these men that had transgressed thus against God, that they should be 'an abhorring unto all flesh.'" What does this mean? You must take the "all flesh" there to mean all Christians, all that are worshippers of the Lord. And is not this fulfilled? Is there anything that the Christian more detests than those sentiments and doctrines that deny the Messiahship of Christ, which the poor Jew does deny? Is there anything the Christian stands further from than he does that doctrine that denies the Sonship of Christ, the salvation, atonement, righteousness, death, resurrection, glory, and eternal reign of Christ, and that eternal life and blessedness we have by him? Thus, then, the Jews—not in their persons, for we must not hate persons; we may hate principles and practices, but not persons—shall, in their doctrine, in their religion, be an abhorring unto all flesh—all true worshippers of the Lord. Does not the Saviour show the fulness of his abhorrence against the systems of his day, and does he not sum up the whole in the most awful, the most solemn language? Those men had had so much fellowship with Satan, and had got so much of their religion from beneath, that they had rendered themselves so like Satan that the Saviour said, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Thus, then, it appears clear from the closing of the prophetic Book of Isaiah, that the Jews can never return; and it appears clear also from this seventh chapter of Ezekiel. I grieve when I look at many learned men, especially such an industrious and learned and admirable man as Dr. Cumming, that they should be so deluded as to be holding out an everlasting hope that the time is very near when the Jews will return. That is just what the Jew likes. There is too much preaching in our day that confirms people in their delusions. Here is one comes and says, "Now it is your duty to come to Christ, and you can come if you like." That is just what all men like. That is the very thing that they need to have preached out of them in order to be brought out of delusion and brought to know the truth. And so the Jews think there is a fixed time for them to return to Canaan and have their temple and their city and their land and their national distinction; and Gentile ministers, professing to be Christian ministers, confirm them in this delusion. Why, the apostle Paul, when he writes upon the subject, says, "As ye in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy;" that is to say, as you have obtained mercy by Jesus Christ, the Jews must obtain mercy through that same mercy. And besides, in Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all." These distinctions are all swept away. Thus, then, they "shall not return." What a mercy for us that we have an everlasting inheritance in the place of one that is passed away, that we have a name that shall remain when time shall be no more! Let us look at what the word of God says in distinguishing the two; look at the stability of the Christian's standing, "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion,"—not Mount Zion literally, because it is added,—"which cannot be removed." Why, just a few navvies would remove that in a few months. We must therefore not take the Mount Zion there literally, but spiritually; we must take the Mount Zion there to mean the throne of Christ, the reign of Christ, the stability of Christ. We must take the Mount Zion there to mean heaven,

where Jesus Christ is. He is Mount Zion, that cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. Mark that, "They that trust in the Lord," that are brought thus to know him, "shall be as Mount Zion; which cannot be removed." There they are rooted and grounded, and they cannot be removed and carried away into any captivity from which they shall not return. Many captivities they may get into, but from them all they shall return. Never shall it be said of them that they shall not return. The Lord has placed mountains round about the literal Jerusalem; but in the new Jerusalem he takes the place of the mountains,—“As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth, even for ever.” “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them.” He is round about Jerusalem, and that for ever. Let us have another word from the New Testament upon the stability of Mount Zion, the stability of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle handles the subject thus:—He is addressing professed Christians, not carnal men, nor unbelievers, but professed Christians;—as though he should say, You profess the name of the Lord; “see that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven.” He had shown in the previous parts of that epistle very amply what the Lord said to them. Take, for instance, the 1st chapter of the Hebrews, “Christ, being the brightness of his [the Father’s] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.” Dost thou receive that? If thou receivest that, then thou art receiving what the apostle declares so worthy of acceptation when he says, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” It appears he began to doubt whether some of them did receive this or not; for they were for retaining the ceremonial law; and he shows, therefore, that those sacrifices could not do any good, vitally or savingly, but that they were merely a shadow of good things to come. “See, then, that ye refuse not him that speaketh from heaven.” And this is one thing he speaketh from heaven, namely, that this kingdom that is founded by the Saviour is an everlasting kingdom, that cannot be moved. “For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth.” Now comes language by which many have deceived themselves, and you must listen to me very carefully, especially some of you that generally speaking, perhaps, may not feel much interest in these great questions, but you will do, I hope, before you die. The apostle saith, “But now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.” Now you must not understand that the shaking of the heavens there means the starry heavens. It does not mean the sun, or the moon, or the planets; it does not mean those heavenly bodies; it has no reference to them whatever. Many people think it has; that is where they make mistakes; they take that literally that ought to be taken figuratively. The heavens there simply mean the Jewish constitution, the ceremonial law, the Jewish national dispensation. They are called the heavens because they were in a sense their heavens, and typical of heavenly things. So the apostle explains, and he says, “This word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken.” Now I ask, how was the Jewish dispensation shaken? How was it first shaken? It was first shaken, then it was removed. If it had not been shaken it would not have been removed in the way it was, not in the destruction of the people. Now it was shaken by the apostasy of the people. But Jesus Christ himself, by his own personal work, has founded his kingdom, and therefore his kingdom cannot be shaken, because he did no sin; he brought in everlasting righteousness, and put

away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Therefore the apostle says, "This word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken;"—that is, of the Jewish dispensation altogether—"as of things that are made; that those things which cannot be shaken," namely, God's everlasting love, God's choice of his people, Christ's salvation, the work of the Holy Spirit, the standing of the saints, the sworn and immutable covenant,—“that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear; for our God is”—to everything contrary to this sure and eternal order of things—"a consuming fire." Thus, then, their land is gone; a better, by Christ Jesus, is put in the place of it: their name is gone, "they shall not remain, nor any of theirs;" that is, the royalty of David is gone—lives only in Christ; their priesthood is gone—lives only in Christ; their temple is gone—lives only in Christ; their land is gone—lives only in Christ; their harvests and vintages are gone—they live only in Christ. All now is spiritual. "The time is come when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

The third contrast I notice is, I think, a very strong one. "The seller shall not return to that which is sold." Now this seems a simple declaration, but it means a great deal more than may at first sight appear. Under the Old Testament dispensation when a man waxed poor, he sold his inheritance, but he sold it only up to the day of jubilee. Then, when the jubilee came, that man, without money, without price, by virtue of the order of things that God had established, returned to his inheritance. Now this chapter says, "The seller," alluding to that same circumstance, "shall not return to that which is sold." The meaning of it, therefore, is,—there shall never be another jubilee, and there has not been from that day to this, and there never will be down to the end of time. Let our Gentile ministers, then, cease to point the deluded Jews to that that never will exist, and let them set forth Jesus Christ in the place thereof. What was the jubilee? The jubilee was a release from debt, a release from labour, and it gave possession of an inheritance. Where shall I now find the true jubilee? Why, in Christ. He has paid the mighty debt we owed; he has set the prisoners free; he brings his brethren into the inheritance. Here we have that that was never sold. They fatally sold their land by selling themselves to false gods, by selling themselves to doctrines of devils. Ah, saith Satan, if I could but get that Jesus Christ to sell himself to me! I have offered him all the kingdoms of the world—showed them all in a moment of time. Now if thou wilt but sell thyself to me, fall down and worship me, I will give thee all the kingdoms of this world. The very snare into which the Jews fell was laid in vain for the Saviour. No, the Saviour would not sell himself. They tried very often to get him to sell himself. They came and wished to make him king. Now, Master, we will buy thee, and make a king of thee. But Jesus went his way down to the boisterous sea, walked on the boisterous waves, and came to his few poor, distressed disciples on the sea. He left the offers of the multitude, and went to those upon whom his heart was set. They were but few, but they were tossed about; and he found them out. So we bless the Lord our inheritance is neither assignable, nor mortgageable, nor saleable, nor loseable, nor corruptible, nor is there any weakness about it, nor any uncertainty. You sometimes sing those words, and you are downright hypocrites if you do not mean them,—

"All is settled,
And my soul approves it well."

The poor Jew, then, fatally sold himself and his land; he shall not return to that which is sold; there is no more jubilee. But will the time

come when there is no deliverance in Christ? Will the time come when Christ shall cease to be the poor sinner's friend? No. All the jubilee, then, that we have is found in Christ Jesus the Lord. To my mind this is as clear as A B C. I will not trouble you often with these subjects if I can help it; but they will come up sometimes. And besides, we do not know what work we have to do yet. There are many Jews in our country, and who knows but some Jew may read this sermon? and if the Lord is pleased to enlighten his mind, he will see the truth, and come over to the truth; and we cannot tell what the consequence may be. You know very well when a flock of sheep are turned into a pasture which they do not much like, there is sure to be one among them bolder than the rest; and he will find some way to get out of that field into a better one. "Baah, baah," he says, and makes the rest leave off eating, spit out what they had eaten, and run after him to get something better, and get them back again if you can. So with the Jews. If the Lord was pleased to accompany the word with power to one, he would say to the others, Why, these Gentile ministers have been deceiving us. They have told us that we are to return to our own land; they have told us that the navy of England are the ships of Tarshish that are to carry us back. Why, they are all wrong together. Here is a man that has read the prophets better than we have, and he has shown that there is no inheritance but in Christ, no kingdom but in Christ, no jubilee but in Christ; that there is no name under heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus.

As I hinted at the beginning, it would take a volume of sermons to do justice to the subject. I will just give one more hint concerning Jerusalem, and then say no more at present. Is there from the first chapter of Matthew to the last of Revelation a single hint about the restoration of the old Jerusalem? The Saviour says, "Your house is left unto you desolate." Does he say it shall some day be restored? Does he say, "Your house is left unto you desolate till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"? No, he says no such thing. He says, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." If I should get an invitation to preach in some Jewish synagogue, where they wanted to hear the gospel, what would that be but their saying, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"? that is, in the name of Jesus Christ. And if God were to open their eyes, and they should see Jesus, what would they say then? Ah, they would say, let the shadow go; let us have the substance. Let the ceremonial go; let us have the vital, the living, the eternal. They would turn their backs upon the temporal, and look at those things which are eternal. Then, again, does the apostle Paul in the 4th of Galatians give a single hint when he names the old Jerusalem about its being restored? Why, he looks upon it as being incorporated with all the bond children, with all the Gentile nations which are bond children. "Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." Jerusalem went away from the liberty of the gospel, and joined the bondwoman's family. Strange, then, if Jerusalem is to be restored, that the prophets should not know it, and that Jesus Christ himself and the apostles should not know it; or if they did know it, strange they should never preach it. But what does the apostle say? "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." "So then," he says, "we are not children of the bondwoman"—that is, the literal Jerusalem,— "but of the free," as Isaac was; partakers of the yea and amen promises wherein the Lord hath sworn, "In blessing I will bless thee." Then you come to John the divine, the end of the book of Revelation; and he does not give a single hint about the old Jerusalem. He tells us, "The first heaven and the first earth"—meaning the Jewish heaven and earth—"were passed away."