

SERMON XII.

According to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself, in the dispensation of the fulness of times to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ; even in him.
—VER. 10.

THESE words, as I have formerly, in opening the coherence of them, shewed, do hold forth the full purpose, the whole birth, that lay hid in God's eternal purposes and decrees. All that God purposed, both concerning Christ and concerning us,—him as a Head, and us as members,—are all gathered into this one expression, 'He purposed to gather all in one in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth.' That by things in heaven are meant angels, I have shewed. That by things on earth are meant men, I have shewed also. There are 'all things in heaven,' for there are several offices of angels at least ; and there are 'all things on earth,' there are several sorts of men. Now, God hath gathered together all things in one. The great thing to be opened, as I promised at first, which containeth in it all that God intended both toward Christ and us, is this word, which is translated *to gather together in one*, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι. It is a teeming word, a pregnant word, that containeth all that God intended toward Christ and us in the womb of it.

At the first, I did give you four approved significations of it, that none that knoweth and studieth the meaning of the word can deny.

The first ; it signifieth a *summing up*, a casting up of several figures into one total sum.

The second is, it is a *gathering together* of several members or parts unto one head.

The third, which is rather an addition unto the second ; it is a *gathering of them again*. There is ἀνὰ, a doing of it the second time.

The fourth is, a reducing things unto their *first principles*, to their first estate, *instaurare*, as I shall shew you anon.

I gave you these, when I made entrance into the words, to be the four several meanings of it. There is a fifth, which I will not stand upon. And these four contain all that God intended both towards Christ and us.

First, as a foundation to the great restoration of all things, the great recapitulation and gathering of all under one head, God layeth this foundation—he summeth up all things in Christ's person. He was to make him a head, and he would make him a head that should partake of all the body ; one that should be a fit and a meet head, fit to be King of both worlds. He casteth up, summeth up in him, into one total, all divisions whatsoever, all things in earth and all things in heaven.

He summeth up in him God and the creature. That was the first great division.

He summeth up in him the nature of man and the condition of angels ; for he is a heavenly man and far above angels. It is his due, and he possesseth it now.

He summeth up, in man's nature assumed, both Jew and Gentile ; for he came of both.

Thus he cast up all sorts of divisions into one total sum in Christ's person first, and made that a foundation unto a second ; and that is this, to gather together all things in earth and in heaven under one head, that is both head of angels and men ; that angels and men do make up one great association under this one Head and Monarch, Christ ; and that of all sorts of angels, and of all sorts of men, make what division you will,—nations, tongues, kindreds, sinners, ranks, whatsoever,—he gathereth together of all such, and makes up a body to Christ. That is the second.

The third was this, which I entered upon in the last discourse, that he hath made a second gathering of all things in one. In Christ there is a second gathering. There is a twofold union of creatures reasonable, with God, and amongst themselves, a first and a second ; ἀνὰ is not to be lost. Yea, and he hath gathered together again the second time after a scattering, when they were dispersed, broken all in pieces ; he makes up all again in Christ, to make his glory so much the more illustrious.

In the first place there was a first gathering of all things unto God, as under a head, which was that gathering of all in heaven and in earth by the law of creation ; which I explained in four things.

First, that both angels and men were, by that law of creation, united to God. It was their due so to be ; a natural due, if he would make them creatures reasonable.

Yet, secondly, so, as they were both united to God, but by the same like common tie, they might both fall in pieces.

Then, thirdly, there was a peace between both these among themselves, if not an association ; which indeed the Scripture holds not forth ; but a peace there was.

And then, fourthly, in some respect this might be said to be in Christ ; not as a head undertaking for both, but by his natural due. It was his right, if he were to be a creature, to be the head of that creation, the 'beginning of the creation of God,' as he is called, Rev. iii. 24.

Now, I shewed there is a second gathering in Christ, as a head undertaking both for men and angels.

First, for the angels' parts, it was the thing I shewed you, the necessity of second union, and that in Christ. I cannot stand to repeat the particulars. They needed both confirming grace, as I shewed out of Job iv. 18, compared with Job xv. 15. They needed elevating grace, to that fulness of the vision of God which is only Christ's natural due, as John i. 18, 'None hath seen the Father,'—it is not only *no man*, but it is οὐδείς, *none*,—but only by way of participation from him who lay in the bosom of the Father. There is a vision of God which the angels were not created unto, which in Christ they are raised up unto.

Then, again, I shewed there was a kind of reconciliation of them, a gathering together in that respect, as the phrase, Col. i. 20, importeth, where all things are said to be reconciled, both in heaven and in earth. It is not a proper reconciliation indeed ; but when God saw that his angels served him so, the most part of them, he chargeth the rest with folly. It was in their nature to do it, he could not trust them ; it might have made him repent that ever he made angels. Christ takes this off, it is not an actual falling, but a possible falling, and fixeth them to God for ever. Thus he gathered all things in heaven to himself by a second gathering ; for that is the point.

Now, that which I am to handle is this, *That there is a second gathering of men, of all things on earth*; and that is clearer than the other.

God doth not preserve men only from a danger of scattering by a second union with himself in and through Christ, but he actually preserveth them. He sheweth not his grace of preservation only; he withdraweth, or he leaveth them unto themselves, suffereth them all to turn head against him, to turn rebels, to the end he might get glory by a further degree of grace toward them, to shew forth the riches of his mercy in their recovery.

And, my brethren, this gathering of all things on earth in Christ, of men to himself, is the great gathering of all the rest. It was the greatest work of Christ. That of angels was but an overflow of it, cast into the bargain, to confirm them; but that which did draw forth all that was in Christ, to satisfy his Father, was to reconcile men unto him. This was the great scattering, for it divided heaven from earth, angels from men, men amongst themselves, as I shall shew you by and by. Therefore, when this cometh to be added unto the other, it makes it an universal gathering: it makes Christ a catholic King, the only catholic King, the only universal Head, to all things in heaven and in earth, when all come in again to him.

I shall explain or present unto you this gathering again in one of all things, all sorts of men on earth, by these four particulars:—

I. I told you, first, it implied a dispersion, a scattering; therefore I will briefly lay forth the desperate, miserable, forlorn, scattered condition of the sons of men, by the sin of Adam; how all in earth and in heaven were fallen in pieces, divided, and at enmity.

II. I shall, secondly, shew you the making up of all this again; what a complete, full, and entire gathering together in one there is of all that were scattered.

III. And then, thirdly, because God's second works always exceed the first, therefore this gathering again is with an addition of a more near, and entire, and more glorious union than at first; a more indissoluble union, never to part again.

IV. And, fourthly, that all this was done in Christ, or by Christ, as you shall hear anon; and by what it was in Christ that all was thus gathered together, when they were all scattered and broken in pieces.

These are the four heads which I shall now insist upon; and all are necessary to open this text.

I. *First, I shall shew you the division, the scattering, that was of things on earth, both from what is in heaven, and from amongst themselves.*

First, What is in heaven? There is God there, he is the chief in heaven. Why, they were all cut off from God. It is called a 'departing' from God, in Jer. xvii. 5, and Heb. iii. 12. It is called a 'going astray, like sheep,' after a thousand vanities, in Isa. liii. 6. 'This people,' saith he, Jer. v. 23, 'hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone;' clean gone from God, and gone for ever, if God take not the care of them: so the phrase is there. And, Col. i. 21, there are three degrees, which indeed comprehend all: 'You were,' saith he, 'alienated and enemies;' once they were friends, God and they were one; now they are strangers; not only so, but 'enemies in their minds;' yea, thirdly, 'in evil works,' all sort of hostility, not only in outward actions, but in inward dispositions; and by means of this, an eternal wall of separation is set up between God and man, Isa. lix. 2.

Here now is one division, all on earth cut off from him, 'without God in the world;' it is the expression the Apostle useth, Eph. ii. 12.

Secondly, What else is there in heaven? There are angels. Men are

scattered utterly from them, because, as I told you, though there were not an association, yet there was a peace; though there were two worlds divided, distinct, though there was no trade, yet there was no enmity. But through man's fall there was; for the angels cannot but hate where God hateth, and they cannot but be angry where God is angry. And therefore you read, Gen. iii. 24, when man by sin was cast out of paradise, then cherubim came, with their swords turned every way to keep man out, with their swords drawn upon him. You never read of angels till then. When Balaam went on in a perverse way, Num. xxii. 22, it is said, 'The angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him.' They are adversaries, they are enemies to men in their evil courses and ways; and howsoever some divines have thought that all executions of judgments here below have been by evil angels, yet the Scripture evidently sheweth that they ordinarily and mostly be good; we have more instances of the one than the other. Those that destroyed Sodom were good angels, and Lot entertained them as such: 'The Lord,' say they, 'hath sent us to destroy Sodom,' Gen. xix. 13. They were angels created; therefore, Heb. xiii. 2, Lot is said to have 'entertained angels.' The like may be said of that, 1 Chron. xxi. 15; of that that struck Herod, Acts xii. 23; and of that smote the camp of the Assyrians, 2 Kings xix. 35. It is evident, for in all those places they are still called the angel of the Lord, which is never spoken of Satan.

There is once, indeed, mention of an 'evil spirit' from the Lord, but it is with an addition of evil; but the angels of the Lord are still good angels. And that angel that destroyed Jerusalem, which David saw with a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over the city, 1 Chron. xxi. 15, was evidently a good angel; for, ver. 18, he directs Gad to tell David where the temple should stand, and biddeth him worship; which an evil angel, God would never have used him to do it.

And, my brethren, if men be enemies to the Church of God, as wicked men by nature are, angels will revenge it. 'Take heed,' saith Christ, Matt. xviii. 10, 'that you offend not one of these little ones;' and he giveth the reason of it; 'for,' saith he, 'their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven:' they have angels that take their part. Thus they are enemies in this life unto wicked men; and at the day of judgment, you shall read in Matt. xiii. 41, 42, 49: 'The angels are the reapers,' saith he, ver. 39; and he sheweth there how they take the bodies and souls of wicked men. The good angels are their gatherers, but it is for hell. They gather all together, and 'cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' It is attributed unto the angels.

Thus you see, I say, that angels and men are at odds, and all by sin; all is broken now. God is gone, angels are divided from us, and at enmity with us. All in heaven and earth is broken to pieces.

Well, come to *things on earth*; nothing but divisions there. There is not a man in the world but by nature is divided from all men. 'We, like sheep, have gone astray, every one after his own way;' so it is Isa. liii. 6. All went one way once, we all cleaved to God; we have left God, and are fallen all in pieces. 'God made man righteous;' there was but one way then, for so the opposition implieth; 'but they have sought out many inventions,' even as many as there are men, Eccles. vii. 29; and, Tit. iii. 3, 'serving divers lusts and pleasures.'

Then again, secondly, men are at enmity one with another, it is certain, more or less, *homo homini lupus*. Tit. iii. 3, 'We,' saith he, describing man's natural condition,—'We ourselves lived in malice and in envy, hateful,

and hating one another.' Hateful every man is to another more or less, he is hated of another, and he hateth another more or less; and if his nature were let out to the full, there is that in him, 'every man is against every man,' as it is said of Ishmael. Self-love, my brethren, that ruleth all the world, is the greatest monopolist that ever was in the world. 'Men shall be lovers of themselves,' as you have it 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3; and what followeth? 'Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, without natural affection, truce-breakers,' &c. Self-love breaks all bonds; all things in earth are scattered.

Go amongst all nations; there is nothing else but a fatal confusion amongst them; the Jew at enmity with the Gentile, and the Gentile with the Jew. All have heard how the Scripture sets it out, they were an abomination and curse each to other; of which I have treated elsewhere.*

And, thirdly, in religions, nothing but divisions, before our Lord and Saviour Christ came in the fulness of time. Look upon all nations, so many nations, so many gods; nay, so many cities, so many gods, as it is Jer. ii. 28; nay, so many families, so many gods; there was not a family but chose a several god to itself; and therefore, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 'there are lords many, and gods many.' Many indeed; for there was as many almost as there were men to worship them; each chose what god he pleased. And the Apostle in that place I last quoted, if you read it, you shall find, instanceth in both things in heaven and things in earth. All things in heaven and in earth, from stars to serpents that creep on the earth, the very onions were made gods amongst them! Thus was all the world divided; this was the shattered condition of all mankind, of all things in earth, when Jesus Christ came.

Nay, my brethren, fourthly, there is another division yet. There was a fatal sentence to scatter men's souls from their bodies, their bodies to go to the grave, and to return to dust, which also is scattered up and down with winds, God knows where, and their souls to hell; called their own place.

And, lastly, to conclude; by all these gatherings, they are gathered to the devil, as their head and prince, though they know not of it; who is the prince of the world, that rules it; and the 'god of this world,' that is worshipped by the 'children of disobedience.' What a miserable shattering is here; all in earth broken in pieces, and all in heaven! And thus have I represented to you the state and condition of man dispersed.

II. *Now I must shew you, secondly, that Jesus Christ hath made all one again; I must go over all these particulars, and make it good; that is the second thing.*

First, as I told you, all things on earth were cut off from God. What doth Christ do first? He makes peace with God, that was the great business of all the rest; make peace with him, and all else will fall in. This Christ did, Col. i. 20, 'Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.' Here you see it: I need name no more scriptures, for I might give you many for it.

In the second place, angels come to be reconciled; you heard before they were enemies. I will shew you it in the general first, and secondly in the particulars.

First, *in the general.* They were enemies before, you heard; you shall see that the angels in Christ are made friends to souls and bodies. Read Luke xv. 8-10: Christ makes there a comparison of a woman that had lost

* *Vide* Sermon of Christ's being the Universal Peacemaker, on Eph. ii. 14.

her groat, and she lights a candle and sweeps her house; and when she had found it, she calls in her friends and neighbours, and, said she, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my groat which was lost.' Who are those friends? the next words shew that they are angels; for it is added in the very next verse, 'There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over a sinner that repenteth.' They are made friends you see, the text is express for it. And in token of it what do they? Look in the second of Luke; they are so far friends, that as soon as they knew the Saviour of the world was born, they came flying down, a whole troop of them,—their hearts were full of it,—to bring men the news of it; and to shew their rejoicing, they sing; they were glad at heart, and sing, 'Peace on earth, good-will towards men.' They are the first messengers of that glad tidings: ver. 10, 'Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will towards men.'

Everywhere you shall find angels described throughout the whole Scripture to be the *heavenly host*, because they are the men of war, they are the militia of heaven, to speak in the language of the age; so they are called in that second of Luke, and they are everywhere else so called: 1 Kings xxii. 19, 2 Kings vi. 17, Matt. xxvi. 53. Christ calls them legions, as the devils are called. Now, my brethren, what do these angels that were soldiers, enemies, warriors against devils and men? They come in all their warlike habit and attire down to earth, and proclaim peace. It became them so to do. 'A multitude of heavenly soldiers,' saith he, 'praising God, and saying, Glory,' &c. What do they say? God is at peace with men, and we are at peace with men; we are in our armour still, but it is to fight for this gospel we preach. As in the Revelation, 'I am thy fellow-servant,' saith he, 'and of thy brethren, that have the testimony of Jesus.' If any man have the testimony of Jesus and hold it forth; if you be for Jesus, we are for Jesus and for you too, saith he. Angels and men are friends: Ps. xxxiv. 7, 'They encamp about the saints.' All that heavenly host turn all their weapons now for Christ, and for the saints. Therefore, when Ahab went to fight, in that 1 Kings xxii. 19, the whole host of heaven appeared; for the whole host of heaven standeth ready to defend the gospel; they are all friends to Christ and the saints; so that you see that all in heaven is for them. See another place, Gen. xxxii. 1, 2. When poor Jacob went out to meet Esau, he went out trembling before; but the angels of God met him, and saith he, 'This is God's host;' there were two hosts of them, *Mahanaim*, two troops, so he calleth them.

Now, what is the cause of this, that angels come thus to be reconciled with us; that they come down upon the earth to serve men, and to be friends with them thus? It is Christ. Gen. xxviii. 12, Jacob saw a ladder that touched heaven and touched earth. Who is that ladder? Christ himself is that ladder, and himself interpreteth it so, John i. 51, 'You shall see the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man,' as they did there ascend and descend upon that ladder that appeared to Jacob. The ladder, it touched heaven, it touched earth, for Jesus Christ hath both in him; he is a heavenly man, and he hath the nature of a man, he hath made up heaven and earth. You heard before how Christ was partaker of both natures, and by the one he hath a foot on earth, whereof the top is in heaven; and it is he that hath made the highway between heaven and earth an open passage. Therefore now angels are reconciled to men, heaven is reconciled to earth, and there is an intercourse, a trade, a highway, they ascend and descend familiarly; it was there to defend Jacob, and for many other ends they do it. Before, you heard, they kept man out of Paradise

with a sword ; but now you read, that they carry into Paradise the souls of men : as of Lazarus, Luke xvi. 22, and at the latter day, as in Matt. xxiv. 31, 'And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.'

This is the general. Now see it in the *particulars*, that angels are, in all the particulars wherein they are at enmity that I instanced in, reconciled to men. In the first place, I told you before that they execute judgments and plagues. It was a good angel that destroyed in Jerusalem with the plague. Now read Ps. xci. 10, 11, it is a pat instance of the contrary : 'There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall the plague come nigh thy dwelling : for he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.' You heard before that when man fell and was cast out of Paradise, angels stood there with a flaming sword to keep him out. Now you shall see the angels stand to let him in. Rev. xxi. 12, describing there the new Jerusalem, he saith there were 'twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels.' It was Paradise, as appears, chap. xxii. 14, because there was the tree of life, for so it is described : 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.' It is an allusion to Paradise ; there angels kept out, here angels carry in. The angels, you know, fetched the soul of Lazarus, and carried it into Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. And so at the latter day, Matt. xxiv. 31, the angels shall take the saints that rise, and bring them all to Christ ; so the text saith there. Here you see it, I say, in all the particulars wherein they are enemies, how they are made friends. Here is then angels and men reconciled after being broken to pieces.

Well, I shewed you in the third place, that all on earth were shattered to pieces, the Jew from the Gentile, one man from another. Now Christ hath made up this division too. Take any man, my brethren, that is the greatest enemy to any ; let them have had the most desperate enmity that ever was between two mortal men ; let these two men be turned to God, let them meet in Christ, they will love one another, it is certain. Take a godly man, set before him the greatest enemy he hath in the earth ; do but put that question to him, What will you say if this man should be turned to God ? Oh, saith he, I could fall down before him ! He would do anything in the world to procure it and bring it about.

My brethren, the Jew and the Gentile were two, so they are called ; it is the very word used, Eph. ii. 15. They were two indeed, saith he, 'He hath made of twain one,' he hath reconciled both. Christ did it ; it was by the blood of his cross he broke down the partition wall. The *μεσότοιχον*, the partition wall, of the ceremonial law is broken down : which is elegantly signified, alluding to the wall in the temple that kept the Gentiles from the Court of the Jews. The Jews were such enemies to the Gentiles, that they could not endure the gospel to be preached to them. They were all 'filled with envy ;' so you read in the Acts the carnal Jews were. Well, but when Peter goeth and preacheth the gospel to the Gentiles, what say the godly Jews ? See what they say, Acts xi. 18, good souls, 'When they heard these things,'—namely, that the Gentiles believed, that is the context,—'they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God given also unto the Gentiles repentance unto life.' They fell down and glorified God. Here Jew and Gentile, that would not eat one with another before, are made friends ; now they eat together at the same table, at the same Lord's Supper.

Now there is one body, one supper, one sacrament, one God, one Lord Jesus Christ, both Jew and Gentile one.

Go over particulars. Amongst the Jews themselves there were great divisions. There was the ten tribes opposite to the two tribes. Ephraim and Judah extremely opposite; you have it, Isa. xi. 13. He speaks there of the envy of Ephraim, and how they were adversaries to Judah; but I will order it so, saith he, that 'the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.' This is in Christ; for if you mark it, he speaks of the 'root of Jesse' in the 10th verse. Here now both these are reconciled. You have the like, Ezek. xxxvii. 19. There are two sticks, the one is Ephraim, and the other is Judah. Take these sticks, saith he, and make them one; for I will make them one nation, and they shall have one king, and they shall be no more divided into two kingdoms. You may read it there at large, ver. 21-24. And you read how these are scattered as dry bones used to be; so as none knows who these Jews of the ten tribes are, as in a charnel-house none knows what bones are of such and such men. 'These bones are the whole house of Israel,' saith God to the prophet, ver. 11. Bones that were dried, their hope lost and cut off, and they scattered one from another.

Well, you heard that the Gentiles were dispersed one amongst another, and had a thousand religions; by the death of Jesus Christ they are all gathered into one. Take one place for it; it is John xi. 50, 51. The high priest there prophesying of Christ's death, and shewing the end of it, saith he, 'It is necessary that Jesus should die for this nation,' (for the Jews.) And what followeth, added by the Evangelist? It may be it was the prophecy of the high priest at that time, but this followeth: 'and not for this nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.' All the Gentiles that were scattered, scattered in place, scattered in religion, thus divided, Christ dieth to gather them together in one, all them that belong to God's election, both in that age, and in all ages to the end of the world. Therefore now, when Christ came into the world you have it fulfilled; in the apostles' time there were as many gods as men, as many gods as cities, as many gods as families,—1 Cor. viii. 5, 'There are lords many, and gods many,'—as many as there were 'things in heaven and things in earth,' as I said before he intimateth it there. Their religion lay in having *lords* that were mediators unto their *gods*. But, saith he now to us, 'There is but one God, and there is but one Lord.' This alteration did God make in the very apostles' times. And, my brethren, let me add this to it. Since the greatest part of the world hath one God, though it have not one Lord; the Turks and we have one God, we have not one Lord indeed; but yet over all Turkey, over all the Roman empire, there is still one God to this day, and those heathen gods are all gone.

Thus he hath gathered together things in earth in one, in Jesus Christ; he hath reconciled the nations; and he will never leave till such time as he hath been the God of the whole earth, of the whole world. He saith, Isa. xi. 9, when both Jew and Gentile shall come in, that 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' Isa. liv. 5, he saith that 'the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, shall be called the God of the whole earth.' Dan. vii. 14, 27, he saith, there shall come a kingdom, after all the kingdoms, after the fourth monarchy, which is now a-destroying, (for the Pope is the last head of it,)—there shall come a kingdom of all nations, and tongues, and languages, and they shall serve him, and he shall possess

all the kingdoms under the whole heavens, (it is not a kingdom in heaven.) He shall gather all in one, and there shall be but one kingdom, and one Lord, through the whole earth. This God will do in the end. Thus you see, I say, that Jesus Christ hath reconciled all on earth, he hath made them up all again; he meaneth to do it by the virtue of his death.

Well, there was one division more that I named; as great a scattering as any of the former is not yet made up: and it is of things that are yet both in heaven and earth, and remain divided one from another; and it is of the saints from the very beginning of the world, and will continue so to the very end. For death and the grave hold and keep the bodies of them, remaining still in the earth, whilst their souls, being 'spirits made perfect,' are lodged together in heaven. Here is a great scattering. All the patriarchs that did die before Christ came, all that have died since, their bodies are in one place, and their souls in another; one is in heaven, and the other is laid in the grave, and there resteth. Death hath scattered all the saints into two worlds, it hath reigned over all; and though he will be the God of all the earth, and join all nations together, yet souls and bodies are still divided of all that are dead, and of all the saints from the beginning of the world, and that shall be to the end. Now, what will Jesus Christ do? He will raise up all, and bring them all together, make up that division too. 1 Thess. iv. 16, compared with Matt. xxiv. 31. He saith there, the angels shall go into all the four corners of the world, when the great sound of the trumpet cometh,—he speaks of the latter day,—'and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.'

My brethren, the bodies of the elect, where are they? Some burnt and turned to ashes, all dispersed into the elements; who knoweth where every man's body is, and all the parts of it? All those atoms, all those bones, will God bring together again, and gather them all in one, and join their souls to them, and, saith he, we shall ever be with the Lord. There will be then a gathering together that shall never be dissolved. Thus, I say, he hath gathered together all in one that were all shattered and fallen to pieces.

III. *The third head, as I told you, was this, That this second gathering shall exceed the first infinitely.* I mentioned four particulars, you know, to explain. First, that all were fallen in pieces; secondly, that all shall be gathered together again; and that this second gathering shall exceed the first. It exceedeth it in two things; I will name no more. It exceedeth, first, in sureness and stability. That same first union with God by creation was upon slippery grounds. 'He putteth,' saith he, 'no trust in his saints,' Job xv. 15. He could trust none of them. He could not send an angel down,—for he speaks of angels there, as I shewed before,—he could not send them on an errand to earth, but they might have fallen and been in hell before they came up again. It was a slippery knot, that of creation. But now they are headed in Christ. God would never trust creature more, he will make sure work; and what doth he? He headeth them all in Christ; and what saith Christ? 'My sheep shall no man take out of my hand.' If angels and men be once bottomed on Christ, they can never be parted again. Who shall separate us, now we are again the second time gathered, from the love of God in Christ? It exceedeth in sureness, you see.

It exceedeth in nearness of the union too. We have a more near union with God, and one with another, than we had. First, a nearer union one with another; for in the first gathering by creation, as I told you at first, men and angels were at peace indeed, but they should have lived in two worlds. Man should have lived upon the earth, and they in heaven. They

should not have come one at another, that is certain ; man was an earthly creature, and he must have continued upon earth, as I have often hinted out of 1 Cor. But when we are gathered together the second time, angels and men live together in one world : men shall be like angels, Matt. xxii. 30 ; they shall 'bear the image of the heavenly man,' 1 Cor. xv. 49 ; and 'we are come to angels,' Heb. xii. 22 ; and we shall have places where they are, as I shewed out of Zech. iii. 7. There is a nearer union now one amongst another than was before. And a nearer union with God too. For, my brethren, let me tell you this, that men that were thus shattered from God and fallen into this great misery, shall be raised up to the nearest union with God that can be ; for aught I know, nearer than the angels. Rev. vii. 11, there is the throne ; the four beasts next that ; the four-and-twenty elders next them ; and the angels round about the throne and the elders. They are more remote from the throne than the beasts are, than the men are. Therefore, as I shewed before, Christ is our brother, which is nowhere said of angels ; they are nowhere called brother ; it is proper unto men, Heb. ii. Christ is our husband. It is not said of any of the angels that Christ is their husband, and that God is a Father to them by adoption through the marriage with Christ ; there is a nearer union that these scattered ones have with God through Christ, upon this second gathering. So there is the third head explained.

IV. There is a fourth head, which shall be, and deserves to be, the *coronis* of this glorious story : *They are said to be gathered together in Christ.*

Well, *in Christ.* What will this hold forth ? It holdeth forth that they are not only all gathered in Christ as unto a Head, but they are gathered by virtue of him. Not only gathered to him, but in him, efficiently, meritoriously, by something he hath done to gather all together again, when they were all shattered in pieces. You heard how all things both in heaven and earth were gathered together and summed up in the person of Christ, who is the founder of this their gathering. We shall now see that ere he himself could effect a gathering together of all in heaven and earth, himself must be made the subject of a fatal scattering ; and as the gathering of all things in his person is the fundamental *medium unionis*, means of union, of all things else that are united to God by him, that so this scattering is the means of all that reconciliation of things scattered, as hath been said. Christ had his *avé* too ; he had his gathering again in his own person ; and therefore a scattering first that befell his own person ; and what is true of us is first true of him. And by virtue of this it was that we were all gathered ; for it is a sure rule, that what is done in us by him, the like was first done for us in Christ himself ; as, if we that are poor be made rich, it is because he that was rich was made poor. So in like manner, if he would gather all things that are out of himself into one in himself, himself must be scattered in himself. As his incarnation was the summing up of all, so his death the scattering of all, and his resurrection is his gathering of all again ; and we had not God's design complete without all these. Now, to shew that he was scattered and shattered in all but the personal union—

First, That his death was a scattering of him ; it was a taking down all, as I may so express it. Indeed, the union could never be taken down ; the union with the Godhead could never be dissolved, but it went as near as possibly could be. You shall see the expression the Scripture hath, John xi. 51, 52. When he speaks of gathering all in one that were dispersed, he saith he must do it by his death. It is necessary, saith he, that Jesus should die for that nation, 'And not for that nation only ; but that also he

should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.' You know that death is a separation of all things, and so it was to Christ. Were we cut off from God? Look to that phrase, Dan. ix. 26, 'Messiah shall be cut off.' There was a division, a separation made. There were these *three* things summed up in him—God, the condition of angels, the nature of man. They are all dissolved, there was a kind of dissolution; it came as nigh as could be, so as he might still hold a personal union, for that was necessary.

First, *God*. God, you know, is called the Head of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 3. Now, when Jesus Christ came to die, as we were cut off by sin from God our Head, so there was as near a cutting off of Christ from God as possibly could be. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' saith he. 'My God, my God,' still; yet he was turned enemy to him. Zech. xiii. 7, 'Awake, thou sword, against the man that is my fellow.' He strikes him, runneth his sword through his soul. Here God was gone, yet God is his God still. You see here was one scattering of that was once summed up in him.

Secondly, all the creatures left him; first his disciples, as it followeth there in Zechariah, 'Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.' When he hung upon the cross, not an angel durst come to comfort him; though whilst in his agony in the garden, when the curse came not on him unto its height, not so until he hung upon the tree; and then when the curse came in its fulness upon him, no angel did or durst appear to comfort him. If the light of the sun would comfort him, God withdrew it; and, in Dan. ix. 26, it is expressly said the Messiah had nothing. So in your margins.

In the third place, he was born, as I said, unto the condition of angels. He was a heavenly man, 'the Lord from heaven,' 1 Cor. xv. ; and it was his due to be advanced, as now he is, 'far above all principality and power;' and therein he hath but his due. This I shewed at first, when I told you there was a summing up of all in him. Now what saith Heb. ii. 9? Saith he there, 'We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour,' &c. To give you the exposition that learned Camero hath given it, and certainly it is the right; the Apostle had shewed in the first chapter that Christ was above the angels, and that both as God and man it was his inheritance, his due, as he saith, ver. 4, 6. And, chap. ii. 5, he sheweth that the 'world to come' is not put into subjection to the angels, but to Christ; 'so that,' saith he, 'he hath that glory and that honour above the angels, as due to him.' What did God make him now? 'He made him,' saith he, 'lower than the angels,' when he came to die. You will say, 'a little lower.' But that same $\beta\epsilon\lambda\lambda\acute{o}\nu\tau\iota$ is but for 'a little time;' *per illud tempus passionis*, for the time of his suffering, that is the meaning of it; for otherwise he was made a great deal lower than the angels. 'I am,' saith he, 'a worm and no man,' Ps. xxii. 6; that is lower than the angels, infinitely lower; but $\beta\epsilon\lambda\lambda\acute{o}\nu\tau\iota$, for 'a little while,' so interpreters many of them carry it. 'A little while,' saith he; that is, while he suffered death, as Camero interpreteth it. That man that had an inheritance above angels, to whom all things should be put in subjection under his feet, angels and all; this man, saith he, was for a little while made lower than the angels, and this while he suffered death. So that now, my brethren, you see that, as God hath forsaken him, so likewise, in the next place, here is the condition of the angels that he was born unto, that is gone too, while he tasteth of death for every man.

Well, but he is man yet? Why, but that is scattered too. What is man? He is the result of soul and body. Take the soul from the body, the humanity ceaseth; there is a body indeed and a soul still, but where is the man? Though he was personally united to the body in the grave, and the soul in Paradise, yet in a proper and strict sense there was a ceasing to be man. You know death is the dissolution of man into his soul and body. Take Christ's own expression, John ii. 19; he calls it an *unbuilding*, or destroying of himself. 'Destroy this temple,' saith he; take it in pieces, fling one stone from another,—for when he died, his soul went one way and his body another,—and, saith he, 'I will build it again.' The stones were pulled down, it was but unbuilt. It is true, it may be said that he is God-man when dead, but it cannot be said he was man when dead. Man he was indeed, in respect that his soul and body must be united again; but yet in a proper and strict sense, man he was not then. Here, I say, all is gone; here is a shattering even in Christ himself, so far as possibly may be. The union could not be dissolved, for then it could not have been said that God died, and that God was buried, and that God was raised, if the Godhead had not been united to the body. The union of the Godhead ceased not; the union of the soul and body, the man, ceased. Though it is true that the Godhead was united personally to his body in the grave, and to his soul in Paradise, and that union was never interrupted; yet our divines, speaking in a strict sense, say *in triduo desiit homo*, he ceased to be man; as man consisted of body and soul united in one together, so he ceased to be man, during the time he lay in the grave. Here, I say, you see all is gone in his death. Here is his manhood scattered too.

Second, But what followeth? In his resurrection all was made up again; he gathereth all together again in one, and by virtue of this we are gathered together in him; for what is done in us is done first in Jesus Christ. To give you an express scripture for it: Acts xiii., when Peter speaks of his rising again, saith he, at the 33d verse, 'God hath raised up Jesus again.' How doth he prove it? 'As it is written,' saith he, 'in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' As if all had been shattered, dissolved, and taken in pieces, and he was, as it were, new born; God never saw his Son look like his Son till now; he begets him anew when he raiseth him, bringeth soul and body, and all is knit and made up again.

1. His body and soul came together again. 'He was declared to be the Son of God,' in that he was raised up by the eternal Spirit,—that is, the Godhead. Rom. i. 4, 'Destroy this temple;' he spake it of his body; and then at his resurrection it was verified that he built it up again; so then he was an entire man again, with soul and body united. 2. He is made now a heavenly man in qualities, not only such as the angels have, but far above the angels, and is become a quickening Spirit. 3. God is come again, and never so near him as now, for he hath admitted him to sit at his right hand. 4. He is advanced above all principalities and powers, 1 Pet. iii. 22; yea, 'far above all principalities and powers,' Eph. i. 21. And let us see the same place that spake of his abasement, that 'he was made a little lower than the angels,' to give testimony of his glory; we see him 'crowned with glory and honour,' Heb. ii. And in heaven he sits as a Head and Redeemer, to draw all men to him in all times and ages to come, until he is complete in respect of his body, which is his fulness.

Thus you see, my brethren, how all is made up, when all was shattered, and all broken to pieces, by the shattering of Christ himself; God, and the condition of angels, and the nature of man, in a sense, all being as it were

dissolved, although the union with the Godhead was kept.—So you see now this third interpretation made good, that there is a gathering together again, when all in earth and all in heaven were shattered, in and through Christ.

There is a fourth interpretation, a fourth signification rather, to make up all complete. I shall give it you in a word; for it is a thing cast in by Christ, and therefore I will not insist upon it. I told you this, that he would restore all things to the first original,—I laid open that, when I expounded the words, I remember, at first. And, therefore, many translators read it *instaurare*, to restore all things, which is reserved, as the complement of all, in the fulness of time; and others, though they do not reject it, yet they say it is not the full meaning of the words, but it falleth short.

Well, my brethren, what doth this hold forth to us? You see all is in Christ's person; here are angels and men made a body to him. Well, take all things in heaven and in earth, all creatures else, and they shall all be restored to him; and when that is done, there is all God's full plot, all that was in his heart toward Christ, and us, and the whole creation. There is a time a-coming wherein the creatures shall be restored, all things in heaven and in earth, to their first original, and a more glorious condition, in and through Christ. It is a thing indeed that cometh in by accident; it was but cast into his bargain: he came to gather together men and angels; but yet this is cast together into the bargain.

To open this unto you a little. Man falleth. With his fall what should have fallen? The world should have fallen about his ears; as traitors' houses, you know, should be pulled down and made a jakes. What doth Jesus Christ? He buyeth the world of his Father. I will pay for it, saith he, and will have it into the bargain. He payeth for wicked men that live in the world; therefore it is said they deny the Lord that bought them: that is the meaning of that, 2 Pet. ii. 1. He buyeth wicked men and all the world, at one lump, of God. In the meantime he upholdeth it. It was said of David, Christ's type, Ps. lxxv. 3, 'The earth is dissolved, and the inhabitants thereof; I bear up the pillars of it:' and Christ 'upholdeth all things,' so saith the text, Heb. i. 3, 'by the word of his power;' it is spoken of Christ. And, my brethren, when he hath governed the world, and made it serve, though indirectly, that all works together for good; though wicked men have it directly, and the devils they carry the world away with them, and have done since the creation, but they shall not do so always; there is a time a-coming wherein all things in heaven and in earth shall be restored to their first condition, to a glorious condition, in and through Christ.

Read but Rom. viii. 19–21. There the Apostle is express for it: 'For the earnest expectation of the creature,' saith he, 'waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.' And delivered, saith he, they shall be, if not before the day of judgment, yet certainly while the day of judgment lasteth, which will be a long day, while Christ will be upon earth and judge angels and men. As the first Adam did bring them all into bondage by reason of sin,—for as all was created for him, so most justly the whole frame and fabric of what was made for him was subjected to bondage by reason of his sin, and would have fallen to nothing had not Christ upheld it,—so the second Adam shall restore all unto

a liberty; and this, in Acts iii. 21, is called 'the restitution of all things,'—not of angels and men only, but of all things.* It was meet that Christ, having taken the nature of man,—that is, the sum of all things,—that therefore all things should have some benefit thereby in their several kinds and capacities, and be in their kind gathered and restored according to their capacity; and when this shall be done, then God's design of *gathering* is fully accomplished. And though the time was full in respect of the centre of it when Christ came; and therefore it is said that in the fulness of time he might gather all, in the text; yet the fulness of time in the circumference is yet to come, and is then when we shall be gathered to Christ, as, in 2 Thess. ii. 1, the time of the resurrection and judgment is called.

And, my brethren, it became Christ thus, into the bargain, to restore all things in heaven and in earth. He created all things, therefore it is fit he should restore all things; they were all created by him and for him. The first Adam lost them, so saith Rom. viii.; but they were subjected under hope of a second Adam, that should come and restore them.

So now I shewed you the splendour of the universal Church out of Rev. v., and we will add the creatures to them, at that general assembly at the last day. I shewed you that all things on earth will meet then, and the angels will meet then; a representation of it you have there, though I will not say it is the full intendment of the place, yet it will hold forth much unto us. Read over Rev. v. 9–13, you shall see all things brought into Christ's presence. First, you have men, 'all things on earth,' ver. 9. 'They sung a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.' Here is all on earth gathered together, as I shewed you before. 'And I beheld,' saith he, ver. 11, 'and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne,' (here angels come in too,) 'saying, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power,' &c. Here you see God hath gathered both angels and men together; they both come in. Well, now there is but the creatures wanting. Read the next verse, 'And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, honour, glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' Because not only angels and men are thus gathered in one unto him, but all the creatures shall be restored; every creature that is in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth, they all afford and administer matter of glory to man to praise God.—My brethren, now you see the sum of *gathering all in Christ*.

A MEDITATION OR TWO.

First, View and contemplate, with admiration and astonishment, the glory and splendour of Christ and his universal Church, to move your hearts to seek to be one thereof, and not left out of this number and gathering up of all things. You have the representation of this Church universal, during this world, in Rev. v. And, chap. vii., you have, first, the Church of men—four beasts, and four-and-twenty elders, next the throne—falling down and worshipping him that is on the throne, and the Lamb. 'Thou hast redeemed us,' say they—there are all things on earth—'out of every kindred, tongue, nation, and people,' chap. v. 9. Secondly, you have a round of all in heaven; they come in too, ver. 11, 12, 'And I beheld, and I heard the

* And unto this doth Bishop Davenant, as divers others, extend this word, because of the word *πάντα*, speaking of things; and not *πάντας*, speaking of persons only.

voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders : and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' You have the like, chap. vii. 9-11. Then, thirdly, you have a ring of all the creatures that are round about both angels and men, that afford matter of praise unto God for his creating them, chap. v. 13, 14. This is the scheme and representations, as in this world. Oh, but what will it be at the great day, when Christ will come in his own and his Father's glory, with all his holy angels,—when Christ, that bath all things in his person, shall appear in his fulness ! And all the holy angels, and saints of the sons of men that have been existent from the beginning of the world to that day, and not one wanting, but that Christ will raise it up at the last day ; and then when all these shall go to heaven, and be ever together, when God shall have all his sons about him, and his eldest Son in the midst of them, then he will bring forth all his treasures of glory, that shall last, and not be spent to all eternity.

Secondly, Make sure to be one of this great assembly ; let men flock unto and get into Christ by clusters ; Gen. xlix. 10, 'To him shall the gathering of the people be.' Jesus Christ setteth up his standard ; come into Jesus Christ, not to be as Judas, who fell short by iniquity from this lot. It is a fatal saying of Peter's to Simon Magus, 'Thou hast no part nor portion in this matter ;' that so innumerable a company should be gathered under this one Head, and that thou shouldest be shut out. I have but further, to move you to it, two things out of the text : you must be gathered one way, either to Christ or Satan ; you must fall either to Christ's or the devil's allotment and share. As Christ is the head of all that shall be saved, Eph. i. 22, so the devil is the head of all the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2. And as Christ is the head of the angels, though he be not of the same nature with them, so is the devil of men ; and at the end of the world, when Christ shall have taken out all these his own, all the rest shall be cast into the fire prepared for the devil and his angels. The old expression in the Old Testament was, that men were gathered to their fathers ; the wicked unto *catus gigantum*—unto the company of the giants, those wicked ones before the flood, from whom hell hath its denomination, as the first inhabitants of it, in Prov. xxi. 16. So the language of the New is, to be gathered to the devil and his angels, to the fire prepared for them.

Obs.—I will give you but one observation, and so I will end. The observation is this,—it is from this same gathering together again,—That God, to shew forth his glory, and his skill, and his grace the more, goeth over his works again the second time, spoils them, shatters them in pieces, and then makes them better than ever. This is his manner. Shattered, you see, are all things in heaven and in earth ; here is his glory now to make them up again. This makes his glory illustrious, and his work illustrious. To give you an instance or two, and then to make a little use of it, and so conclude—

God created man according to his image, you know, at first, (and certainly had you lived with Adam, you would not have known how you could have been happier.) A glorious creature he was ; he had the image of God drawn upon him, he was God's herald, he had his arms upon his breast. On a sudden, after God had drawn this picture, he dasheth it, breaketh it in pieces, strikes out all he had done. What was the reason of this ? He meaneth to make it up better ; he meaneth to frame upon man the image of Christ, and

make him like unto him. 'You bore the image of the earthly, but I will make a better image for you; you shall bear the image of the heavenly, you shall be changed from glory to glory.' Thus he goes over his work again, after he had spoiled the first.

So, likewise, he createth man at first immortal; there was a possibility he should die, but by the providence of God he should not have died. What doth God? He takes and divides soul and body, and flings the body into the grave, there to rot. What is his end in this? He will raise it up a spiritual body, more glorious ten thousand times than it was at first. What saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 46? First, saith he, that which is natural, and then that which is spiritual.

Go, take his chosen people, the Jews; they were the only nation, his darling; theirs were the oracles of God, the promises, the covenant, and they were all in all with him for many thousand years. Why? He scatters them, breaks them all in pieces; the ten tribes he carrieth captive away long before the two tribes, and then the two tribes. And when he had thus scattered them all, what is his promise? Isa. xi. 11, 12, 'It shall come to pass,' saith the text, 'that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people. And he shall gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.' He will gather them together in one again. What saith the Apostle, Rom. xi. 11? 'Have they stumbled,' saith he, 'that they should fall?' Or, as the prophet Jeremiah expresseth it,—we may allude to it, if it be not the meaning of the place,—chap. viii. 4, 'Shall they fall, and not rise?' He compareth the casting off of the Jews but to a stumbling, it was no more; yet it was the greatest stumble that ever was, for they stumbled upon the Rock, Christ: they crucified him, and yet God calls it but a stumbling; but it was a stumbling of a long stride, for it was sixteen hundred years. But, shall they stumble, saith he, that they shall fall? No, he will recover them again. Shall they fall, and not rise? Yes, and their rising shall be 'life from the dead,' as it followeth, ver. 15. In Ezek. xxxvii. 3, God compareth them to dry bones: 'Can these dry bones live?' saith he. Their hope was gone, all was gone. 'Behold,' saith he, ver. 5, 'I will cause breath to enter into these bones, and they shall live.' He comes over them the second time, and makes all these bones come together, and flesh comes upon them, and they shall live, and he will never cast them off again. Compare but Rom. xi. 26, the apostle quoteth but one Scripture to prove the calling of the Jews there; it is out of Isa. lix. 20. Read but that chapter, and you shall find that when they are once called, he will never cast them off again; but their seed's seed shall remain for ever. And, Isa. lxv. 17, he saith that the former heaven and earth shall no more be remembered, nor come into mind.

This, my brethren, is the manner of God. I should give you the reason of it, but I must pass on. I will conclude with a short use. You see here how all mankind ran into a confusion; here is a shattering in pieces of heaven and earth, and God gathered up all again. Fear not God's shattering nor breaking things in pieces. You think our kingdom now is running into confusion—confusion in opinions; the saints are divided, one runs one way, and another runneth another; one holdeth one opinion, and another holdeth another. My brethren, although the revealed will of God is that they should all agree, yet, notwithstanding all this scattering and division, God will in the end bring forth a glorious gathering together in one. If he pull down the tabernacle set up, and the frame and form of it, he will set up a better. If he pull down the temple, it is in three days to build it up again,

and make it better, as Christ's body was when he rose again. Never fear, I say, God's shattering things, God's unbuilding.

To give you an instance. God set up a glorious church in the primitive times, and it was according to the pattern. What doth he do? He sendeth Antichrist into the world, and he pulls it down and defiles all the worship of God; there is a falling away to be, saith he,—so he calls it, 2 Thess. ii. 3,—both in worship and doctrine. And what hath God done? He hath reasonably well built it up again, recovered this temple out of the hands of Antichrist; he had once all nations following him, as you have it, Rev. xiii. 4, 7. Why, ere Christ hath done, all nations shall worship him; he had lost them all, he gathers all again. Fear not his scattering then.

There was a reformation made when first we came out of Popery. My brethren, what is imperfect God will pull down certainly; he will scatter you, he will melt you: and what is his end? To fetch out the dross, and when he hath done, you shall have a purer reformation come out of all. This is his manner. Fear not, I say, therefore, his scattering. And he will never cease till he hath brought the Church, not only to that purity that was in the primitive times, but to a purer. When the whore is burnt and cast off, and the bride cometh to dress herself for the Lamb, as you have it, Rev. xiv. and xviii., the Apostle saith he fell down and worshipped the angel that brought this news. This, saith he, is better than ever I saw, than ever was in his time; he would never have worshipped for it else; nay, he could scarce be brought to believe it, the angel was fain to say, 'These are the true sayings of God.' Thus, when God goeth to break all, he meaneth to mend all, and he will never cease till he hath brought the Church to the full stature of a perfect man in Christ. Fear not confusions, therefore, for the issue of them will be a closing in the end; it will be a gathering together of all again in one.

Again, after the reformation, the Church is to get power against Antichrist, and against all his adherents. The witnesses, saith he, shall have power to do thus and thus, Rev. xi. Yea, but after that power, when they have gotten it and carried it as you think they shall do, there will be an unbuilding, a scattering of the power of the holy people; so it is expressed, Dan. xii. 7. He speaks there of these latter times. Fear it not, for if God pull down one temple, he will set up the Holy of Holiest afterward. And as it followeth in that same 12th of Daniel, 'Blessed are those that come to those days;' and thrice blessed indeed are they, for they shall see better times. Fear not therefore God's scattering. What a miserable confusion was there when man fell! All was scattered; man divided from God, from angels, from himself. Christ came into the world when all nations were divided, men from men, and things on earth from things in heaven. So he will do in the Church; scatter all, that he may make all up again; melt all, that he may mend all. Fear not then his scattering.

I have done, you see, with the design itself which God had. I am now to come to *the time when this great dispensation began*, when God did break up his decrees that had lain hid from everlasting in his breast, and ordered the dispensation and administration of things to his Church; and then I shall have finished the 10th verse.

The text telleth us that he purposed in himself, in or *for* the dispensation of the fulness of time, to gather together all things in him.

Concerning this *time*, first, in general; the meaning is this, that God, that hath made every business under the sun, hath set a time for it. So you have it, Eccles. iii. 1, 'To everything,' saith he, 'there is a season, and a

time to every purpose under the sun.' Here is now a dispensation of the fulness of seasons, (so the word signifieth,) and of the greatest purposes God had, not under the heavens, but before the heavens were, which he purposed in himself from everlasting. 'A time,' saith he, 'there is to be born.' If there be a time to be born, and a time to die, as the second verse saith, there was certainly a fulness of time when Messiah should be born, when all things should be gathered in the person of Christ in one, and when all should be scattered again, and he should die, as I opened before. 'There is a time,' saith he, ver. 3, 'to break down, and a time to build up.' So there is a time when he suffered all the world to lie scattered, and a time when he buildeth them up. The word *dispensation* is a family word, and is taken from rearing or building up a house. 'There is a time,' saith he, ver. 5, 'to cast stones away, and a time to gather stones together.' God let all the stones, both of Jews and Gentiles, lie scattered; but when the set time came he had pity upon those stones, as the expression is, Ps. cii. 14, and gathered them all in one. It was a 'dispensation of the fulness of times.'

I am to open here these three things:—

1. What is meant by *fulness of times*.

2. Why *dispensation of the fulness of times* is added.

3. *In, or for*; for indeed the word rather signifieth *for* the dispensation of times than *in*.

First, For the fulness of times, when this great project of God began to take its birth, as I may so speak. There were some shows of it before, but when the great delivery was, that was when Christ came first into the world, and after his ascension into heaven, then Jews and Gentiles were called, and angels fall down before him and acknowledge him their Head, and all things were gathered together in one. There was, first, a fulness of *times* when this was done; and, secondly, a fulness of *seasons*, for so the word in the original signifieth. It is not only a fulness of time, as you have it, Gal. iv. 4, but it is also a fulness of seasons; for so I say the word signifieth.

First, it was a fulness of *time* for this great work, when Christ came into the world. And why was it a fulness of time? What is meant by fulness of time here?

Then is time said to be full when all ages are run out, that God shall come to turn the glass, and set the lower end upwards, as I may so express it. Or, if you will have it in Gal. iv. 2, 'the time appointed by the Father,' so it is called there; it is called 'the fulness of time' in the fourth verse. There is a time, saith he, that God hath set; so many ages shall run out, and when they are run out, I will turn the glass, and begin a new dispensation and administration of things in the world; I will send my Son. When times appointed by God are run out, then is a fulness of times. I will give you a scripture for that phrase; it is Luke xxi. 24; he saith, 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;' that is, till the times be expired that God hath given to the Gentiles to enjoy the gospel alone; and when that time is expired, he will call the Jews, and till then Jerusalem shall be trodden down. So that this is the first signification of it, it is till all times be run out that God hath appointed. There is, as you know, the first age of the world, and the latter age of the world. You may justly compare it to your hour-glass, when the former age was expired, when all is run out, and the bottom glass is filled, then God cometh and turneth up a new administration, and beginneth another dispensation.

In the second place, it is not only a fulness of times, but it is a fulness of *seasons*; so the text hath it.

Christ came into the world in the centre of seasons, when the world was ripe, when all things called for him, the condition both of Jew and Gentile; the full time was come, the harvest was ripe, as our Saviour Christ doth express it to his apostles. When Christ came into the world to begin a new administration and dispensation of things, it is called a due time, Rom. v. 6, 'In due time,' or in due season, as the word is, 'Christ died for the ungodly.'

Now, why was it a fulness of time first; and, secondly, why was it a fulness of season?

It was a fulness of time—why? For the world had stayed long for it; they had stayed four thousand years before the Messiah of the world came. Great actions have long delays, so God doth order things in his dispensations; great mercies have long delays; the greatest mercy that ever was had four thousand years after it was promised, and then came the fulness of time.

But why a fulness of season? Why, my brethren, it was a fit season for the Jews, and it was a fit season for the Gentiles, that Christ should come into the world when he did, and that he should stay long before he came.

It was a fit season for the *Jews*; for the Church of God, which was only confined to the Jews, was, as a man, to grow up by degrees; to be a child first, and then to grow up to youth; and when a full age was come, then to receive their inheritance. This is the very reason the Apostle giveth, Gal. iv. 2, 3, which respecteth the Jews; he compareth the Jewish church there, God's first church, to a child, though an heir, but an heir under age. 'This heir,' saith he, 'so long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, but he is under tutors and governors.' He is under the government, under the dispensation of what? Under the elements of the world, under his A B C; for so was Moses' law. The Church of God was an infant, and was to grow up by degrees, first to learn its letters, its A B C; for such, I say, was the ceremonial law, the types of it. And then came David and the prophets, and led them up further; but the Church was not grown to man's estate till Christ came. What followeth then? 'When the fulness of time was come,' ver. 4, 'God sent his Son, made of a woman,' &c. It was fit that the Jewish church, or whoever was a church, it was fit they should for a while be under nonage, and have a dispensation, an economy, a dispensation that was fit for a child; but when they were come up unto man's estate, then the great heir of the world, Christ himself, their elder brother, cometh into the world to bestow their inheritance upon them.

In the second place, it was a fit season in regard of the *Gentiles* too. For, you know, I said it was to gather together all things on earth, not Jews only, but Gentiles, as I have expounded. Now God ordered that Christ should not come into the world till about the time he meant to have the Gentiles called; and there was great reason that he should stay the experiment many thousand years before the Gentiles should be called; he would not have Christ come into the world till he should break up his decrees, till there should be the great birth of his everlasting purposes, that both Jew and Gentile should come in.

When Christ was to come into the world, he was not to stay long for his reward. What was his reward that he bargained for? Not for the Jew only, but also for the Gentile. Isa. xlix. 5, 6; it is driven there, by God the Father, bargainwise. When he saw that he was to die only for the Jew, saith he, ver. 4, 'I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought.'

But what saith God in answer to him at the 6th verse, 'Is it a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel? I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth.' Our Saviour Christ would have complained if he had not had the Gentiles brought in after his death; therefore God ordered his coming into the world then, when he meant to have both Jew and Gentile to be brought in; then should the 'desire of all nations come,' as you know he is called.

And there was a great deal of reason that God should suffer the Gentiles and all the world to lie in sin, long before Christ came, that there might be a fulness of season for his coming. Why? I will give you Scripture reason.

First, would have mankind try all the ways they could for to be saved, and when they had tried all in vain, lo! your physician, saith he; there is he that shall help you. You have it, Acts xvii. 26-29. He speaks expressly to the point. To open the text; he telleth the Athenians there, ver. 26, that God had made of one blood all nations of men, and determined their times and the bounds of their habitation; and he was pleased to set such times wherein the Gentiles should walk in their own ways; he would afford them but the help of nature, 'that they should seek the Lord,' ver. 27, 'if haply they might feel after him,'—find him in his works by groping in the dark,—'though,' saith he, 'he be not far from every one of you.' Let them try all their works of nature, whatever might do them any good; when he saw all these would stand you in no stead, then, saith he, he sendeth his Son into the world. When they had tried all in vain, then there was a fulness of season. 'God now,' saith he, ver. 30, 'commandeth all men everywhere to repent.'

I will back this with another scripture; it is 1 Cor. i. 21. He had left the world, the Gentiles, to their philosophy, (the 'wisdom of the world,' he calleth it, ver. 20,) to find out the way to be saved. Where is the wisdom of this world? You philosophers, where are you? 'God,' saith he, 'hath made foolish the wisdom of this world.' All the light that nature hath, how made he it foolish? 'After that,' saith he, ver. 21, 'the world by wisdom knew not God,'—I will try you, whether by that wisdom I gave you by nature you will come to know me, I will turn nature every way. Mark now, 'After that,' saith he, when through their corrupt wisdom they did abuse that light God gave them, and instead of knowing God, worshipped idols, 'it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe' among the Gentiles; to send Christ, and by the preaching of the gospel to save these poor Gentiles, after they had tried all ways. So that it was the fulness of season every way.

I will but add one scripture more, and so I will leave it. It was fit that all men should corrupt their ways to the full before the Messiah came. As they should try all ways how they could grope after God, and pervert all the wisdom and light God gave them, so to be corrupted to the uttermost; for then the physician comes most seasonable to administer physic, when the disease is at the height. Read but the 14th and the 53d Psalms, and read the last verse of both. The Apostle quoteth both those two psalms in Rom. iii. 14, to shew that all mankind was corrupt. 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt they are, and have done abominable iniquity; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doth good, no, not one; their throat is an open sepulchre,' &c. What followeth? 'Oh that the Redeemer would come out of Zion!' That is the last verse of those psalms. When David, by the spirit of prophecy, foresaw that all men should corrupt

their ways, that they were all full of wickedness, and that the world could never be saved of themselves, and that they had tried all sort of ways to help themselves, and all in vain—then, ‘Oh that the Redeemer would come out of Zion!’ Now is the time for the desire of all nations, the Redeemer longed for, to come; he speaks it upon occasion of the universal corruption of all mankind. Here was a fulness of season, when God sent his Son into the world to gather in one both Jew and Gentile.

So now you see what is meant by fulness of time, and by fulness of season. Fulness of time is, when all the times appointed by God were run out, fulfilled. Fulness of season is, when there was the fulness of season for the Jews, that were to be a child grown to age; for the Gentiles, when they had all corrupted their ways, then it was a fit season for the Messiah to come. And that is the *first*.

But, *secondly*, What is meant by *dispensation*; *εἰς οἰκονομίαν*, *in*, or *for*, the dispensation of the fulness of times? The truth is, to read it *for* is more genuine and more natural; and what is the meaning of it? Some interpret it, ‘in the dispensation of times,’—that is, say they, time wisely dispensed. God is the steward of time, and he did wisely dispense it; he gave every age a portion, and in the end brought forth this fulness of time wherein he dispenseth his Son. But I take it, it is not so much meant of the dispensation of times properly taken, of times ordered, although that is a true meaning of it; but it is taken metaphorically—the fulness of time is said to have a dispensation, a new dispensation; which new dispensation is to gather all things in one. The latter days, when Christ came into the world, it should have a new business, a new dispensation; there should be a new administration of those times, to begin from that time and continue to the end of the world.*

We know that *time* is said to do that which is done in time; as, for example, you find in Scripture a day is said to *bring forth*, so here it is said that *time doth dispense*. He compareth it to a steward; as in other places he compareth it to a womb, or a mother, so here to a steward that hath a dispensation. It is not meant of *dispensatio temporis*, so much as *dispensatio rerum*, of things in time. In the 6th verse of the Epistle of Jude, the great day of the Lord is expressed thus—‘The judgment of the great day.’ Why, the great day is not the judge. It is called the judgment of that day because it is done in that day. So here, ‘the dispensation of the fulness of time’ is not the dispensation of time properly taken, the ordering of time, though that is included; but it is meant the *business of time*. So that the scope is this—that God did appoint that the latter days, which is meant the fulness of time, from the time that Christ was born, and so on; he intended this to be the dispensation, the business, the administration of the world from that time, to gather all together in one.

It agreeth with what the Apostle saith, Heb. i. 1. ‘God,’ saith he, did ‘at sundry times, and in divers manners, speak in times past unto our fathers by the prophets; he hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.’ There is a new business, a new dispensation of things belonging to the fulness of time, to the latter days, from the time of Christ. He beginneth to alter the dispensation of himself to his Church; he turneth the Jewish church into Christian, out of one nation to another; he turneth all the types of the law into his Son, for his Son is nothing but the types of the law really expressed. This is now the dispensation of the fulness of time; he makes that the business of the last age, to send his Son into the world, to make

* See Jackson, Book vii. p. 42.

him the head of his Church visible ; whom angels shall acknowledge, whom all things that are in heaven and in earth shall come into, that are his elect, both Jews and Gentiles. This was, saith he, reserved for the fulness of time, to be the business of the latter age. This is the meaning of it.

Obs. 1.—I will come to an observation or two, and so end. You see, my brethren, that there was a fulness of time when Christ came into the world ; the world stayed long first, it stayed four thousand years. Learn this observation from it, *That if you wait for a great mercy, you must have many times and days run out before the fulness of time cometh to have it.* You cannot have a greater instance ; for how long did the world stay for Christ ? Four thousand years, as I said before. Thou art a poor soul that hast waited for Christ long to come into thy heart ; how many years hast thou waited ? The world waited four thousand years to have Christ come into it. It is the greatest mercy thou art capable of to have Christ come into thy heart ; he is well worthy thy waiting for then. It is no argument that he will not come because he stays long ; for should the world have argued, that because he stayed two parts of the three, therefore he would not come at all ? No ; great mercies are long a-coming, for the Messiah was so. The breaking up of God's heart, of the great design, of all the treasures there, you see it was hid in himself from the beginning of the world for so many thousand years. That is the first observation.

Obs. 2.—The second is this, *That God may let men go on in sin long, and give them Christ too, for all that.* You see, God let the world go on in sin, try all ways to help themselves, let all the world corrupt their own ways ; he did it for a long time, and at last in the fulness of time sent his Son. Thou mayest try all ways ; try duties, try what thou canst, how far corrupt nature may go, and God may give thee Christ at last. He did so by the world ; after that by their wisdom they knew not God, he sent his Son, made of a woman. When God hath given thee light, and thou hast tried a thousand ways, thy duties, and this and that, to get Christ, and thou hast set up a ladder to heaven, to get Christ this way and that way,—after thou hast tried all things, he sends Christ into thy heart ; when thy case is desperate, when thy heart is forlorn, then Christ cometh.

Obs. 3.—There is a third observation, that I will but mention ; it is this, *That God is the Lord of all time.* He appointeth the fulness of times.