

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

THE RIGHT PATH.

A Sermon

BY MR. JAMES WELLS,

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, 29TH MAY, 1870.

"When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord."—Psa. cii. 22.

THIS in its primary meaning refers of course to the tribes, here called kingdoms, gathering together at the three great annual festivals of that dispensation to serve the Lord; but of course it has a spiritual and further meaning. Therefore, without any more introductory remarks, I at once proceed to notice the three things brought before us in our text. First, *the people that shall be ingathered*; secondly, *the ingathering itself*; thirdly, *the object of that ingathering*,—to serve the Lord.

First, *the people that shall be ingathered*. There is one thing that must be impressed upon the mind of every one in order to salvation: not only impressed upon the mind, but they must be convinced of the truth of it, and not only of the truth but of the necessity of it,—namely, that "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Therefore the people that shall be ingathered are a people that are regenerated; this mighty change is wrought, and these persons come into certain experiences which we, while in nature, know nothing of. I shall therefore in the first part of my discourse, in describing the people that are to be gathered in (in truth they have already begun to be gathered in), come down into some of their very minute experiences; and I shall try so to hold the glass of truth that if there be any breath in the soul I may catch a little sign thereof. For the people of God themselves who are ingathered get so low sometimes, and every symptom and sign of spiritual life seems so gone, that very few get quite through their pilgrimage without understanding that solemn testimony by the prophet when he saith, "My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord." No one knows what the heart-sinking, the foreboding,

the inward trembling of such experience is but those that are brought into the same. Now in connection with our text the people that shall be gathered in are spoken of as a people that know what is meant by destitution. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generations to come; and the people which shall be created"—that is, created in Jesus Christ, as witnessed by the apostle,—shall praise the Lord." So then all that are born of God are thus spiritually created; they are brought into a consciousness of their utter destitution by nature of anything to recommend them to God except their necessities; there is nothing else to recommend them to God. All of us think we have something wherewith to appear before God until put to the test by the Lord himself; and when his law in its purity enters into the conscience, and brings to light the hidden evils of the heart, what struggles the man then has with his own heart! Now the conflict begins with his own heart; and there is nothing under the heavens that troubles the Christian so much as his own heart. It may well be said, "They shall know every one his own grief and his own sore." Ah, that fallen nature, that wicked heart of ours. We cannot preach but our wicked heart will mingle some of its sinfulness with our sermons; we cannot go to the house of God, and attempt to listen to those pure and eternal truths, but our wicked heart will mingle some of its sinfulness with our services, with our prayers. Ah, how often in reading the Bible, and desiring to read it with a pure mind, and that our pure minds may be stirred up, and we rejoice in our God,—how often in reading that blessed book do our wicked hearts intrude, at least I find it so, and I must speak it out, because the people of God find it so; and you will sometimes meet with one who finds it so to a very great extent, and he thinks to himself, I cannot think there is another Christian like me; in reading the word of God I am beset with such hard and dreadful thoughts of God that I shut up the Bible, and fear to read any longer, for the more I read the worse I seem to think of God. Ah, this wicked, this trying heart! when stirred up by tribulation, and Satan, and temptation, how it brings to light the truth of the testimony of the apostle when he saith, "In my flesh dwelleth no good thing." "He will regard the prayer of the destitute." And thus they find out that their nature is utterly destitute of anything holy, spiritual, just, or good; that they are altogether as an unclean thing; and a withering autumnal leaf might as well undertake to quench the conflagration of the globe as for a sinner thus convinced to attempt to meet God's fiery law, or to do anything towards his own salvation. Oh, how low it brings him down; how base and vile it makes him in his own eyes! Oh, how it makes him prize the fountain that is opened;

how it makes him prize the atonement of Christ! How it makes him prize those eternal mercies that are by Jesus Christ, where the sinner, and only there, can have hope! Yet we ought not to lose sight of it, that these deep necessities do commend us to God; and these necessities must come first, and then the blessings will come afterwards. You must first be poor in spirit, then will come the kingdom; you must first be a mourner, then will come the consolation; you must first be humbled down, then will come the inheritance; you must first hunger and thirst, and then will come the fulness; you must first be made merciful—"Blessed are the merciful;" and when a man is made to feel the mercy that he needs at the hand of his Maker, he will then be merciful to others,—when he is brought to feel that he himself can be saved from first to last only by mercy. So we may see all through the word of God, that a sight and sense of these necessities characterizes the people of God; and these are the persons to whom the promises point, these are the persons for whom the provision is made. "Thou, O God, of thy goodness hast prepared for the poor." It is said, "He will regard the prayer of the destitute," and yet it is no uncommon thing to find that those who are thus convinced of what they are say that they cannot pray. They say, Here I am cast down, shut up, destitute;—if I could pray I wouldn't mind, but I cannot pray. Now, let me remind you that there are prayers which you do not reckon prayers; there are prayers that cannot be prayed; there are prayers that you cannot breathe out, and these are pleasing in the sight of God, noted by him; and the Holy Spirit makes use of prayers that we cannot pray;—mark the language,—"The Holy Spirit helpeth our infirmities," that is, by his word, and I hope he will do so this morning with you, for it is by his words of sympathy, as recorded in this blessed book, that he helps poor sinners in their infirmities, encourages them, enlightens them, and shows them the adaptation of the Mediator of the better covenant to their condition. But now mark,—"he maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered." Every child of God knows what it is to feel he cannot pray. If you kneel down, you find you cannot pray; if you attempt to pour out your soul to God, you cannot; there is no fervour, as it were, felt after God; you are miserable because you are not miserable, and groan because you do not groan, and are alarmed because you are not alarmed; and you cannot bring these things out, and you wander about, sigh and groan, and are unhappy and uncomfortable; and cannot for a moment think that all these secret sighings, feelings, regrettings, and castings down, are nothing else but the strugglings of the newborn soul after eternal things. "Groanings that cannot be uttered;" prayers that

cannot be prayed. Ah, "his ear attends the softest call" of the inward soul. Hence, then, it goes on to say, "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner." I like that description, because I know so much of it. Oh, I have often thought, if I could kneel down and pour out my soul before God, I should thereby in a great measure get rid of my burden and bondage. But I found out that there are prayers that cannot be prayed, groanings that cannot be uttered. And yet the Holy Spirit maketh intercession for us with these prayers that we cannot pray. If I may use the simple simile we sometimes do use of the infant, that it sighs and cries, but cannot describe what it wants—it is for the mother to find out what it means, and what its necessities are. And doth not the Lord say, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem"? And another thing to encourage us in this matter is that this wilderness, this solitary, this desert path, was certainly marked out for us. It is true we cannot always take much comfort from that truth, but still it is a truth that this solitary path was marked out for us. And here again I may digress for one moment just to say that we have some of the sweetest promises to such; for if we are in the wilderness, in a solitary place, and in a desert state, what saith it? "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice,"—when? Why, our text says, "When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord;" when he reacheth out his hand, and gathereth us in, when he bringeth us as there described he will do, "the wilderness shall blossom as the rose: it shall blossom abundantly, even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, and the excellency of Carmel;" and then comes the explanation; "they shall see the glory of the Lord;" what is there called the glory of the Lord is in the New Testament called the salvation of the Lord; "they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God;" and that salvation and that excellency are in Christ. The glory of God is his salvation, and his excellency is nothing else but his loving-kindness. "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God; therefore the children of men," that have nothing else to look to and trust in, "put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." He hears, then, the groanings of the prisoner. The Apostle Paul gives us to understand, what is a self-evident truth, that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Ah, there is no nation of men and women, there is no tribe, there is no family, there is no person since the fall of man, that is not "born to trouble as the sparks fly upward;" and we might have still been destitute of a knowledge of our condition; so then

what have we to mourn over in comparison of those that groan and travail in pain together without any hope beyond the things of this world, and no heart to seek anything else, no desire to look after anything else, no desire to look to God? "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit," simply meaning there the earnest of the Spirit, "even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." We have something to look forward to, something worth mourning after, something worth seeking after, and something worth suffering for. Thus, then, "he will regard the prayer of the destitute."

Now you will observe here are several things—I will name three, one of which I have named already, which these people have to commend them to God. The first is that I have named—their necessities. Nothing avails more with God than the necessities of his people: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things;" therefore, knowing that we should need such a Saviour, he sent such a Saviour; and knowing we should need such a teacher as the Holy Spirit, he hath sent such a teacher; and knowing that we should need such promises, and precepts, and exhortations, and admonitions, and counsels, and instructions as his blessed word contains, he has given us the same; and knowing what we should need to make us happy, and to enable us in what he has done to glorify his name for ever, he hath made provision accordingly. So then nothing avails with our God more than the necessities of his people: their necessities commend them to him. Perhaps I had better here name a scripture or two to illustrate what I mean. Here is a man comes up to the temple of the Lord, but he does not bring any deep necessities with him; he thanks God that he is not as other men, and tells the Lord what he has done one way and the other. Now the publican came with necessity; he brought necessities with him; he felt that he was a poor, destitute, helpless, guilty, ruined sinner, deserving the lowest hell; therefore out of his necessities he cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Here, you see, is the mighty difference. And just so in the Saviour's day, the blind, the leper, the palsied and the afflicted, they had their necessities. "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst open mine eyes;" "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean;" "Lord, have compassion upon me;" and so of the rest. These necessities, then, are one thing that commends them to God. Hence on the day of Pentecost, when the people first began to listen, they had no necessity; they were not conscious of their need, their destitution; they saw no way in which they could admit the Messiah in what he was. But when pricked in the heart, when their eyes were opened, and they were convinced of the condi-

tion they were in, then they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" If I were to occupy all your time this morning upon this one point, I could not say too much upon it, for it is such a solemn and important matter to be convinced of what we are; for none but the poor and the needy can ever appreciate the provision God hath made. And besides, look at that declaration, "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people," which, of course, must be understood not literally but spiritually. It is not needful to my religion that my body should be deformed and afflicted; it is not needful to my religion that I should go into the workhouse, or be a pauper, dreadfully poor; therefore we must understand the words spiritually. "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people," that is, a people that know what soul trouble is; "and they shall trust in the name of the Lord;" and they shall be taught that great truth which shall indeed become acceptable unto them: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." He has taken our poverty, our destitution, all our sorrows, our infirmities,—he has taken them all away. These necessities, then, are one thing that commend the people to God. I cannot sufficiently express the delight I sometimes have in this one aspect of the Scriptures, that salvation is for the lost,—that is, those who are made conscious of their lost condition. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost." The balmy medicine is for the sick; not for the whole, but them that are sick. In a word, the Lord convinces all that he intends to save of their poverty and destitution. These things commend them to God. Is there one instance in the dear Saviour's humiliation of his turning any poor creature away? Not one. He turned the Pharisees away, it is true; but he never turned a poor creature away; if that poor creature had been a harlot, or if that poor creature had been to the day of his death, or nearly so, a thief, as the thief on the cross. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." If the sinner is but conscious of what he is as a sinner, the worse the case is the more it glorifies the Great Physician to manage it; the worse the case the more it glorifies God to take such an one in hand and save him. And such will join in with the apostle that "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom," saith each, "I am the chief;"—that refers not to outward, but to inward experiences,—infidelities and atheisms of the heart. But these people have another thing to commend them to God,—not only their necessities, but also their faith. Faith is wonderfully commending. We should cry to our God to give us

more and more faith in his blessed name and truth. "Did I not tell thee," said the Saviour to Martha, "if thou wouldest believe, that thou shouldst see the glory of God?" And did not the Saviour say to another, "All things are possible to him that believeth"? And did not the man cry out, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief"? Ah, if thou hast a firm persuasion of his truth, and the ability of his Christ, that is the way to win Christ. Your necessities and this faith, these commend you to God; for God never turned away poor little faith yet;—no, little faith as a grain of mustard seed will do wonders. In the book we gave away to our collectors the other night, the writer, when he comes to the sycamore tree, gives a picture of it, and he says, of all the trees in the East there is none whose roots go deeper, spread wider, or are so stubborn; nothing, he says, but a miracle could root up such a tree as that. So, he says, the Saviour chose this firmly, deeply-rooted tree as an illustration of what a grain of faith could do. "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." I was very pleased with the idea; it did me good. I thought, however deeply rooted your sorrows and troubles, however deeply rooted things may be against you, a grain of faith in Jesus shall tear them all up by the roots, and cast them into the sea; and little faith shall go triumphantly on, while the dear Saviour will turn round and smile upon you and say, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" and we are ready to turn round and say, Wherefore indeed, Lord? I don't know how it was; it was mine infirmity; and when thou touchest my soul again with the finger of thy love, I wake up, I am still with thee, and now thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Here are necessities, and here is faith that commends you to God. I will name one more, and that is prayer, even if they are prayers that cannot be prayed. He knows what your desire is better than you do. The Christian sometimes hardly knows what he wants; he is that restless, dissatisfied, uneasy sort of creature; and the Lord seems to say to him, "What aileth thee?" I hardly know, Lord, what it is; I am miserable; I am afraid to live, and afraid to die; and thine holy word is no comfort to me. "What aileth thee?" The Lord knows all about it; and he knows we do desire that he would show us his mercy; he knows that we do desire that he would reveal himself to us with power, and lift us above earthly things, and enable us to realise in our souls that promise, "They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Now, if you have this trinity of evidences,—knowledge of your need, faith in Christ, and a

desire, whether that desire may consist, as I said, or show itself by sighings, groanings, castings down,—in whatever way, no one dead in sin could have such an experience as this. These are they, then, that shall be gathered in; “this shall be written for the generation to come; and the people which shall be created” in Christ “shall praise the Lord.” And you will see how that promise accords entirely with their experience; they are to praise the Lord. Ah, I hear some poor, tried Christian say to himself,—They are to praise the Lord; yes, says the Christian,—

“If I lip a song of praise,
Each note shall echo, Grace, free grace.”

This is what each Christian feels; and if there is one thing more than another upon which the people of God are decided, it is that of giving all the glory to the Lord from first to last. “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory.”

Secondly, *the ingathering*;—that these people shall be gathered in; and of course the Lord Jesus Christ is the centre of unity to which they are to be gathered; and a wonderful centre of unity it is; it is where the honours of the law centre, where all the promises and precepts of the gospel centre, where all the perfections of God centre, and where all the purposes of God centre;—all the fulness of the Godhead hodyly, unitedly, dwelling in Christ. And this unity is an indissoluble unity; once united to him there is no severation from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. Let us hear what the Scriptures say upon this matter of ingathering. There is a beautiful scripture which refers to the Gentiles, in Hosea i. 11:—“Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel.” Don't let us miss one clause here, “They shall be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head.” Now Adam was the natural and the federal head of the whole human race; the Lord Jesus Christ is the spiritual and the covenant head of the whole chosen race: he is the last Adam, he hath no successor; and they all agree upon this. And this would embody all the characters of Christ;—what one Christian saith upon this matter, another Christian saith the same. One Christian saith, “Let that heavenly olive tree, with all the richness of its grace, reign over me: let that heavenly fig tree, with all the sweetness of its fruit, reign over me; let that heavenly vine, that cheereth God and man, reign over me.” They all agree upon this. Let that atoning Priest reign over me; let his atonement prevail for me, and with me, and over me; let his righteousness prevail for me; yea, all the characters he bears,—Priest, Husband, King, Shepherd—whatever it may be, they shall all agree in this. “They shall be gathered together, and

appoint themselves one head;" that is, they shall all receive the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head. And mark the language: that they have in this head, whom they are thus led by the Holy Spirit to choose, a perfection that is always the same, and will bring them at last to eternal glory. "Ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power;"—all led to choose him. So, then, we are gathered in by this perfection that is in Christ—this wonderful, spiritual, and new covenant headship in which the Saviour stands. And then it saith, "great shall be the day of Jezreel." The word Jezreel signifies the seed of God, or the children of God. What shall I say to this part?—the day is to be a great day. I say it with reverence and solemn pleasure, that for God to gather your soul in from sin, from the world, from the law and its curse, from Satan, from hell, from everything that could even hurt you, is the greatest thing he could do for you on earth. There is not a greater thing. Is it not a great thing to be a part of that wheat that shall be gathered ultimately into the heavenly garner, while the chaff shall be burned up with unquenchable fire? Ah, it is a great day. May we never make light of the light that the Lord hath revealed to us. It was a great day when the Lord opened your eyes at the first, and brought you to himself. And when you are thus gathered in, you will say, "Ah, it is a great day, for I am gathered in from great evils; I am gathered in to great good; I am gathered in by great power and by great mercy;"—"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee." Some of you that have been shut out, perhaps, from communion with the Lord for I know not how long, see the way in which that communion is to be renewed; does it not even in the dark encourage our hope? "For a small moment have I forsaken thee," as to communion, "but with great mercies will I gather thee." So that, whatever your infirmities, or faults, or necessities, he will gather you in by his great mercies; and the same thing is meant, though expressed in another form, where it is said of Jesus that he gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom. Here, then, is a great day. Bless the Lord for all his people agreeing concerning Jesus Christ. We may differ as to approving or disapproving of certain ecclesiastical establishments, and we may differ upon some other things; but upon this great matter of salvation by faith in Christ, Christ in his completeness, there we cannot differ. Mr. Hart is not far out when he would set forth Christian unity thus,—

"When is it Christians all agree,
And let distinctions fall?
When nothing in themselves they see,
And Christ is all in all."

Those are times and seasons when his name sheds a sweet

fragrance, and fills the place; it is then we are happy. So then this ingathering to serve the Lord is a great day. "And they shall come up out of the land;"—the next scripture but one will bring us to that. Then in *Hosea* iii. 5 it is said, beautifully descriptive of this ingathering, "Afterward shall the children of Israel"—of course that must be taken spiritually; the true Israelite, in whom there is no guile:—"return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king." David there, of course, means Christ; and he is there called a king to denote that he reigns over everything that stands against you; and so you seek God by Jesus Christ; you cannot call him yours, but he is yours. They shall seek the Lord. What are you seeking, poor sinner? I am seeking God to have mercy upon me. How are you seeking him? By faith in him that came to save sinners. Then if God were not your God, you would not have thus been taught to seek him; for "every one that has learned of the Father," saith the Saviour, "cometh unto me." Is not this ingathering? "And shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." That is a note of time, denoting the latter days of the Jewish dispensation, when the New Testament dispensation should commence. "They shall fear the Lord and his goodness." The fulfilment of that last clause is so striking in the experience of the people of God. There is nothing, next to God himself, that you can name in heaven, in earth, or under the earth, so sacred to the child of God as the free grace gospel of God. If the child of God should in any way treat that lightly, or give up a part of that, he would never forgive himself. Hence the martyrs, when they, through weakness and the fear of man, outwardly renounced the truth, the agonies of their spirits were greater than any torture to which their enemies could subject the body; therefore, when they looked at the two, what was their conclusion? I can bear the flames of martyrdom better than I can bear the lashes of an apostatising conscience; and so they rose again with redoubled force, defied the flames, went triumphantly through. How true the words are, "They shall fear the Lord and his goodness." I look back over now more than forty years, and how gracious the Lord has been to me in this matter. Just where I set out when I stammered forth my first public discourse, without the least idea or desire of ever being a minister,—just where I was then as to God's truth, there I have been ever since; there I am now, there I shall live, there I will die, there will I be buried, there shall I rise, there shall I reign, there shall I rejoice for ever and ever. "This God is our God for ever and ever, and will be our guide even unto death." But mark another scripture, *Micah* ii. 12:—"I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the rem-

nant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah." Cruden tells us that one of the meanings of the word Bozrah is that of tribulation; "I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah,"—tribulation. These are the people that find one another out. The minister that does not know what the afflictions of the righteous are cannot find the righteous out. Hence a mere book-read minister, a mere man-made minister, can never find us out; they never come to where we are. But those that know what sore temptations and tribulations mean, such ministers are like the good Samaritan,—they come to where the man is, they bring the oil and the wine; they bring in the surety; they bring in the real gospel. "I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold; they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men;" which in the apostolic age they did. Ah, the world cannot endure that the people of God should make a noise; they like the ministers and the people to be quiet. We have not half noise enough in our day for the truth. We have hundreds in our land that profess to be free-grace preachers, but take good care to hide the talent of free-grace truth, keep that in the dark, and trade with something else. But they did make a noise in that day, and we hope that the people of God will make a good noise in the world yet, that they may be heard, and that thereby blessings innumerable may be diffused around them. Ah, Cain said, I will silence that Abel. We will silence that Noah. And so they tried to silence the prophets, and to silence the Saviour, and thought they had done it; and they tried again and again to silence the apostles, and thought they had done it; and to silence the people of God from age to age, and Popery a few hundred years ago thought it had done it,—that it had slain every witness. But no, God never left himself without witnesses, and he never will. But now mark, "the breaker is come up before them," before these people that are to be gathered in. That alludes, I think, to two circumstances,—Egypt and Babylon. The Lord broke up their bondage in Egypt and Babylon; and so, whatever may be your bondage, if it be gates of brass and bars of iron, he can and will break in pieces the gates of brass, cut in sunder the bars of iron, and will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, and cause thee to be delighted at the wonder-working movements of the everlasting God. "They have broken up"—of course, but he has broken up for them,—"and have passed through the gate." What was the gate by which the Israelites passed out of Egypt? The Paschal lamb was the gate. And how do we get away from all that is against us? By the Paschal lamb. "And are gone out by it." Have you not noticed that Pharaoh could do nothing to the Israelites except alarm them a little after the Paschal lamb. The Paschal lamb was

a final and an entire separation. Pharaoh followed them after that, but he could not overtake them; for just as he thought he had gained his end, the angel of the Lord came in the rear of the camp of Israel, and stood between Israel and the Egyptians, and the one came not near the other all night. The Paschal lamb! Do you think you will never get out of trouble, and yet you have faith in Christ? Yes, you will; you will break up all this captivity by and by. — And how do you expect to pass out of the world to heaven? Oh, say you, by Jesus Christ. That is right; for “these all died in faith,” and the faith must centre in Christ. So they have broken up, and gone through the gate, passed out by it; but how came that? Because their king passed before them; so he did in the cloud, so he does now in the cloud of truth, and Jehovah at the head of them. Ah, the right-minded Israelite could see how safe he was. He would say, Here is the breaker that has broken up our bondage, here is the gate, the Paschal lamb, we have passed out by it, we are gone; here is our King passing before us; here is Jehovah at the head of us, what have we to fear? Nothing at all. Thus, then, we see the ingathering.

Lastly, *the object of that ingathering—to serve the Lord.* “The people are gathered together, and the kingdoms”—that is, the different tribes of Israel literally, and the kingdoms here, of course, will mean the different churches that make up the one universal empire of the Son of man, that make up the one complete kingdom of the King of Zion. Every little church is a kingdom, and Christ is its King. These kingdoms are to come together by and by, and will form one kingdom; they shall no more be two kingdoms, one king shall be king over them all. The gathering together here you can understand very easily;—the three great annual festivals,—the Paschal lamb we have noticed,—the Passover, that is one. You must serve the Lord by the Paschal lamb. Second, the Feast of Pentecost, or firstfruits. The sheaf was accepted as the firstfruits, a type of Christ; Christ is the firstfruits, and if the firstfruits be holy, the people by him are holy, and thus we serve the Lord by him. Thirdly, the Feast of Tabernacles, when the harvest and the vintage met together, and the people had abundance of all things; they gathered together to serve the Lord, to acknowledge it was the Lord that brought them out of Egypt; so we are to acknowledge it was Christ that redeemed us,—to acknowledge it was the Lord that accepted them; so we are to acknowledge that God has accepted us in Christ; and to acknowledge that the Lord gave them power thus to get wealth; so we must acknowledge not only that he gives us power temporally, but spiritually, to get those true riches which moth cannot corrupt, and of which thieves cannot deprive us.