

this is done when this mortal puts on immortality. This inspired comment gives us the meaning of the passage; and shews by the deliverance of the one party from death, what will be the state of the other. The former will rise from the dead in victory and triumph, and leave the others in subjection to death and corruption, behind.

Isaiah xxvi, 13, 14. 19—21. "O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise; therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. \* \* \* Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead," &c. &c.

This chapter is closely related to the former, and is a song of thanksgiving for the mercies revealed in it. The passages here set down, place two sorts of characters before us, tyrants who had oppressed the people of God; and those who were the subjects of that oppression. They also shew a difference in the circumstances of the parties. Both were subjected to death; but both were not to be equally held by death. Of the former it was said, *they shall not live; they shall not rise; that is with the people of God.* They continued subject to death. Of the others it is said, *thy dead shall live; my deceased, they shall rise.* (2.) They shall not continue subject to death as the others. Though mortal and entombed in the earth with others, they shall be the subjects of a prior resurrection from the dead, and leave their oppressors behind, as prisoners in the grave. The prophet then adds, "come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain." (3.) The coming of the Lord, the first resurrection, the judgments of the Lord upon the wicked, and the deliverance of the people of God, are distinctly stated. The following chapter continues the same subject, concluding with the restoration and sanctification of the dispersed Israelites.

Ezek. xxxiv. 1—14. In the preceding chapters, the prophet foretells the restoration of the Jews, their conversion from sin to holiness, and their settlement in their own country. These things were to take place on a future and distant day; and the Israelites when living, saw no hope of sharing this happiness. They were now captives in Chaldea: their beloved country was long waste and desolate; and before the period of their captivity ended, in all pro-

bability most of them would be numbered with the dead. Under these circumstances, the promises of restoration to their own country, and of national prosperity, and glory after that restoration, would afford them but little comfort, as individuals. They might rejoice in the prospect of their children being delivered from oppression and being reinstated in the land of their forefathers, and made happy and prosperous under the mild and righteous government of the expected Messiah. They might console themselves with the thought, that, their nation and kingdom would survive its dishonour, its captivity, and again rise to distinction and glory in the earth. But these thoughts would be attended with the painful remembrance that they, themselves, would not live to see that happy time; before its arrival, they would be numbered with the dead. The sun of the morning which would gladden the eyes of those who would then live, could only shine upon their mouldering ashes, now silent in the grave: and the felicity, reserved for the future race, would be no felicity to them. Under these circumstances they mournfully said, "*our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts.*" Whatever good may be in reversion for others, no good remains to us. As far as we are concerned, the covenant made with Abraham, and renewed with Isaac and Jacob, is a dead letter: it is no covenant of mercy and grace with us. To obviate this state of despondency, and to comfort the pious Israelites then living, then mourning in captivity and exile, the circumstances took place, which are narrated in the text.

The prophet, in vision, was taken and placed in a valley full of human bones. He was led to survey them, and to pass from one place to another, to complete the survey. He found the number was great, and the bones dry, very dry; they had long been under the empire of death; no semblance of life remained. A question was now proposed to the prophet, "*can these bones live,*" who answered, "*O Lord God, thou knowest.*" He was then commanded to prophecy, and say, "*thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*" He did as he was commanded; and as he prophesied, there was a noise and a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone; and sinews, and flesh, and skin, came upon them, but there was no breath in them. He was then commanded to say to the wind, "*come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.*" He did so, and the breath came into them, and they

lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

The vision was now explained to the prophet, and he was taught the following facts. 1. The dry bones were typical of the state of the Israelites then in captivity. They were subject to despondency and despair, and mournfully wailed and said, "our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts." They had no more hope of sharing in the felicity of the final restoration of their nation, and the reign of their Messiah, than the dried bones had of being restored to life. The one circumstance was as improbable as the other.

2. The resuscitation of these dry bones, was typical of the resurrection of the pious Israelites from the dead, to share in the happiness of the promised restoration, and in that of the kingdom of the expected Messiah. As certainly as the prophet saw in vision, the dry bones restored to life; so certainly shall they be restored to life, and brought out of their graves, and be endowed with the spirit of God, to prepare them for the future enjoyment of their own country, under the reign of their expected Messiah.

3. That this resurrection should take place before the restoration of the Israelitish nation to the land of their fathers. No matter where the pious Jews are dispersed, where they are living, or where they are mourning in the grave, the Lord will find them; infinite power will raise them up; and infinite goodness and faithfulness will reinstate them in the promised inheritance.

4. This resurrection will be followed by the union of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel. They were divided under the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and continued as two kingdoms until the Israelites were carried away captive by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and since then no union has been possible. It is not known where the ten tribes are; and the descendants of the two remaining tribes, have been, and still are scattered abroad, among the nations of the earth. But both parties will be restored to the land of their fathers; they shall be one nation under one king; and, the resurrection here foretold, is placed anterior to this union, and this kingdom. This chapter is in striking agreement with the prophecy of the first resurrection, and of the saints reigning with Christ. Rev. xx. 4—6.

5. This restoration will be final. They will be divided no more; dispersed no more; but they will be sanctified, made obedient, and happy, and shall enjoy the blessing and presence of God, in the land which He gave to their forefathers, and to them for ever.

I see no possibility of explaining this passage, but by taking it in its obvious and literal meaning. Here are predictions of the restoration and conversion of the Jews;