

ble spiritual teaching, and all its remarkable history and life. And one of the most striking features of this peculiar church and history, is its absolute exclusiveness. In those days we hear of no missionary societies sending pioneers into the outside world, we hear of no great missionary commotions and missionary movements; we do not even find such broad commands as, "Go ye into *all the world* and preach the Gospel to every creature." And I say that in this peculiarity which enabled St. Paul to affirm that to God's peculiar people, and to them alone, were committed the oracles of God, we have something just as puzzling, just as remarkable, just as difficult of understanding and explanation, as the question why did not God send out heavenly armies, marshalled by the Captain of Salvation himself, free from all human imperfections and all human drawbacks, that would at once have subdued the world at the feet of Jesus Christ.

But the most reasonable explanation of all this seems to me to be this. The Jews in the first dispensation monopolized divine truth, and divine blessings, (1) because it was only by thus choosing and thus educating a single nation, that divine truth and divine blessings could be brought within the reach of man, and (2) because man outside of the single people thus chosen and educated was absolutely unable to grasp the divine truth which was in this way entrusted to the Jews.

In short the difficulty is the old old difficulty of predestination, a difficulty which always seems to me to be explained away by the beautiful order of St. Paul, "For whom he did *foreknow*, he also did predestinate." If we see a ship sailing out of our harbour and know that it is going to reach the other side we can easily predestinate its safe arrival there, and so if God knows that a man on the one hand is going to accept Christ or on the other is going to reject him, he predestinates him in the one case to salvation, in the other to destruction. But if he goes to destruction it is not God's predestination that sends him there, but his own will which the Almighty will never force. And so it has been not only in the early dispensation but right down to the present day, that if a man has been allowed by God to die without ever having heard of the Gospel of Christ, we may perhaps conjecture it is because he would not have grasped the Gospel, if it had been sounded in his ears all the days of his life.