

**OUR DISPENSATION; OR,
THE PLACE WE
OCCUPY IN THE DIVINE
HISTORY OF THE WORLD**

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Our Dispensation; Or, the Place We Occupy in the Divine History of the World by Josiah Miller

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JOSIAH MILLER

**OUR DISPENSATION; OR,
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By the same Author. In Preparation.

SINGERS AND SONGS OF THE CHURCH:

Being Biographical Sketches of the Hymn-writers in all the principal Collections, with Notes on their Psalms and Hymns.

OUR DISPENSATION;

OR,

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OF THE WORLD.

BY

JOSIAH MILLER, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "OUR HYMNS: THEIR AUTHORS AND ORIGIN."



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P R E F A C E .

SOME of the views given in the following treatise were contained in the 'Association Sermon,' preached to the ministers and other members of the Dorset County Association at Bridport, on May 3rd, 1859. They were repeated, with additions, in a sermon delivered to the Lincolnshire Congregational Union, at Spalding, on the 28th of April, 1864. And the preacher, having recently been asked publicly and privately to print his discourse, and the proscribed ninth year having now arrived,

'Nonumque prematur in annum,' (*Hor.*)

he has yielded to the kind request and the too favourable judgment of his friends, and has presented his ideas in this little volume, in a more permanent form, and supported and illustrated by extracts from some of the principal authors who have written upon the subject. To the thoughtful reader it will be a collateral advantage to be thus reminded of the chief writers, not many in number, who have treated this great theme.

Of those quoted, the most valuable contributor to the branch of the subject we are writing of is Archdeacon Hare, in his work, 'The Mission of the Comforter.' In the voluminous notes given in the second edition of that work, published in 1850 (the first edition appeared in 1846), a great amount of testimony is gathered together from various sources; and especially he has given the exegesis by different writers of some of the principal Scripture passages on the subject. Bishop Heber's Bampton Lecture for 1815, on 'The Personality and Office of the Christian Comforter,' is chiefly controversial; it was produced in haste, and cannot be regarded as an important contribution. Dr. Owen's work, *Πνευματολόγια: or, a Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit:* 1674, is like all his other works vast and diffuse; but it has little upon the department of the question we have selected. The latter statement also applies to the treatises of the two eminent fathers who wrote 'De Spiritu Sancto' in the fourth century, the Latin Ambrose and the Greek Basil the Great. They give almost the whole of their space to the proof of the place of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity as equal with the Father and the Son. We wish it to be distinctly understood, that we are not touching the great question of the

nature of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, nor that of the precise nature of His operation in the mind of man, upon both of which so much has been written. We have been glad to quote the sermons of the holy, learned, and loving Rev. John Howe, M.A., delivered in 1678, on 'The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit,' in which he has sometimes crossed the line of our argument.

Other English works upon the parts of the subject we have not included are the following :— the complete, concise, and learned sermons of the Rev. John Hurston; they were delivered in Pinner's Hall, London, in the years 1729–31, and are entitled 'The Scripture Doctrine of the Divinity, etc., of the Holy Spirit.' Dr. John Guyse, the expositor, has brought together in a compendious form what the Scripture teaches of the various beneficial results of the operations of the Holy Spirit, in his work 'The Holy Spirit, a Divine Person; the doctrine of His Godhead, as evident and important: in several practical sermons on '1 Cor. xii. 11,'—published about 1730. Amongst recent works upon the subject are Dr. Daniel Dewar's 'The Holy Spirit, His personality, etc.,' 1847; 'On the Work of the Spirit :' the Congregational Lecture for 1849, by W. H. Stowell, D.D.; and a small work on 'The Witness of the Spirit,' 1867, by the Rev.

Charles Prest, in which the opinions of a large number of writers are given upon the particular point to which the work is devoted.

Dr. Credner, in an article on Biblical Theology in the first edition of Kitto's 'Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature,' 1847, says, 'A work comprehending the results of the historical investigation of the Bible is still a desideratum.' Dr. Kitto adds in a note, 'In the English language there are scarcely any works on Biblical Theology as defined in this article, except one or two which have been translated in America from the German.' It is to be regretted that there are not more works devoted to the study and development of what might be called the sublime procession of the Divine purpose in the history of the dispensations. We wish to call attention to the omission, and to offer this little work as an humble contribution to the treatment of the whole subject. Our object is not to advance anything new or doubtful, but to bring out from the Scriptures the special character of one dispensation,—our own, that under which we live and for which we are responsible—the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. When so much has been ably written on the Person and work of Christ, and we have read 'Ecce Homo' and 'Ecce Deus,' and the Rev. Parry Liddon's

Bampton Lecture on the Person and Character of our Lord, we may profitably turn to this next but not less important subject. The writer commends to the reader this theme as, altogether apart from his success or otherwise in treating it, a practical and pressing one, and most worthy of the thoughtful and devout attention of all.