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by Various

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100 Chapters

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Vol 01 - A Song for the Wilderness

A Song for the Wilderness This world is a wilderness wide!

I have nothing to seek or to choose;

I've no thought in the waste to abide;

I've naught to regret nor to lose. The Lord is Himself gone before, He has mark'd out the path that I tread, It's as sure as the love I adore, I have nothing to fear nor to dread.

There is but that one in the waste Which His footsteps have marked as His own, And I follow in diligent haste To the seats where He 's put on His crown. For the path where my Shepherd is gone, Has led up to His Father and God, To the place where He 's now on the throne, And His strength shall be mine on the road. And with Him shall my rest be on high, When in holiness bright I sit down, In the joy of His love ever nigh, In the peace that His presence shall crown.

'Tis the treasure I've found in His love That has made me a pilgrim below, And 'tis there, when I reach Him above, As I'm known all His fullness I'll know.

And, Savior, 'tis Thee from on high I await till the time Thou shalt come, To take him Thou hast led by thine eye To Thyself in thy heavenly home.

Till then 'tis the path Thou hast trod, My delight and my comfort shall be;

I'm content with Thy staff and Thy rod, Till with Thee all Thy glory I see.

J. N. D.

Vol 01 - By Faith Ye Stand

By Faith Ye Stand In the first recorded intercourse between the Lord and Moses, after Moses had pitched the tabernacle outside the camp, when " the Lord spake with him face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend," Moses was emboldened to ask, " Show me now thy way." Surely, as Moses himself afterward testifies, " His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He;" yet His way of dealing with His people after their failure, is strongly contrasted with man's way, and proves that " His way is higher than our way," and blessed in proportion to its highness. This way of God is remarkably carried out by the Apostle Paul in his conduct to the saints of Corinth. The manner in which the Apostle addresses himself to deal with them, distracted as they were by divisions, debating even the fundamental doctrine of the resurrection, and conniving at a gross outrage on moral decency, is replete with instruction. Before he utters one word of direct reproof, he seeks to establish their souls in the faithful grace of God. He thanks God for the grace given to them by Christ Jesus. He acknowledges their many gifts; needed indeed for the time, but not essential; because there would be no need of such gifts at the coming (or, revelation, limy.) of our Lord Jesus Christ. He leads their souls to him to confirm them blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, and reminds them of the faithfulness of God who had called them into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ. Surely this is the divine way. It is ever the way of man to reason from himself Godward, but the way of God is the reverse. He acts from himself and for himself. Christians are very apt to use the way of man, by reasoning from man to God-because the constitutional disease of Christians is unbelief. They are ready enough to doubt their own saintship; and when others would press on them their failures as a proof that they are not saints at all, they are thrown off their stability; and reproof and correction entirely lose their power. In this Epistle, although we find the absence of direct reproof at the outset, it is remarkable, that in the very act of establishing their souls, there is indirect reproof. The Apostle, under the guidance of the Spirit, could at a glance survey their condition, and whilst he thanks God for the grace and gifts bestowed on them-there is a silent rebuke of their short-corning in the grace, and misuse of the gifts. The Apostle could not say to them as to the Philippians; " I thank God for every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now." He found cause indeed for thanksgiving in the grace of God to the Corinthians, but none for their fellowship in the Gospel. They lacked the stability in the grace of the Gospel which characterized the Philippians. Pride of knowledge and pride of gifts, made them forget that knowledge (at best but in part), and gifts of the highest order would cease at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was Christ himself, and not his gifts, which would confirm them blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it was the fidelity of God who had called them to which they had to look, and not to the acquirements of their teachers.

After this (1 Corinthians 1:10) the Apostle plainly tells them of the report which had reached him of the disorder among them but he makes no direct mention of authority-till the end of the fourth chapter. " Now some are puffed up, as though 1 would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod; or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" Instead of using direct Apostolical authority, He addresses himself to their consciences pointedly and yet delicately. Thus, in the case of the incestuous person, he mentions the crime which they were tolerating as unheard of even among the Heathen. They were puffed up instead mourning. He would have them act in concert with him-but he does not disturb them from their standing, as being unleavened. In the matter of going to law before the heathen tribunals, he shames them that 'they could not find a wise man among themselves to settle their disputes, and that they had forgotten their high destiny of judging the world; and then very justly indeed insinuates that there was defect in their apprehension of grace. Wearied almost, at the low tone of their questions, he interrupts his replies in the seventh chapter by the solemn and weighty sentence, ver. 29-32. The liberty resulting from knowledge he denies not, but he contrasts it with the thoughtfulness resulting from love, chap. 8. To the question raised as to his Apostleship, he appeals to their saintship as the seal of it, chap. 9. To guard them against the danger of relying on outward ordinances, chap. 10, he refers to the conduct of Israel, with the delicate introduction.... " I would not have you ignorant, brethren." Again, after the admonition, " Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"-with what address does he allude to their special danger of becoming involved in idolatry by the desire of social intercourse. " I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say." In noticing irregularities in their assemblies for worship, chap. 11, he praises them, first, for their general attention to his directions (ver. 2); and when he has to advert to their gross disorder with respect to the Lord's supper, he commences thus: " Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not." In treating of spiritual gifts, where their very folly had marred their very end and use-he commences, " I would not have you ignorant" (chap. 12); and in correcting their grievous ignorance of the resurrection, he introduces his discourse with the declaration of the Gospel he had preached unto them.

Thus, where there was the fullest consciousness of authority, so that he might have carried it with a high hand, using the rod, there was the patient exercise of grace. His object was not the assertion of his authority, but the awakening of their conscience, and the calling out their faith into exercise. The immediate presence of the apostle at Corinth would doubtless have had the effect of silencing faction. He might have authoritatively ruled the many points in discussion, some bowing through real respect, others through fear; but this would have defeated his object. His authority, and with it himself; would have come in between their consciences and God; and thus he would have habituated them to bow to some present authority, and to feel it as a positive need, so that conscience and faith would never be exercised at all. The apostle, with unquestionable authority, and the full consciousness of the possession of it, saw the danger of this and avoided it. The history of the Church has too plainly proved the reality of the danger, by Christians doing that which the apostle avoided. They have themselves constituted an authority to which they bow, but by the acknowledgment of which they effectually hinder the exercise of faith and conscience. Is there an ordered and regulated society of Christians to be found which has not interposed its own authority, where the apostle would not introduce his, and in which personal influence is not extensively used? If personal influence ever could be safely used, it surely might have been by the apostle; but he acted in a manner even to lose it, because his object was Christ and the real blessing of saints,-not himself and a party of Christians. The presence and influence of the apostle had kept the Galatian Churches from allowing the introduction of the judaizing error. " It is good to be zealously affected, always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you." It was his

presence, and not faith and conscience, which had kept out the evil; so that when he was gone, there was no real barrier against the evil. In the Philippians, we find the happy contrast to this: " Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Here we find faith and conscience in exercise before God. It was not Paul, but God who worked in them. Happy the condition of saints when thus their souls are kept by faith in immediate contact with God. They will then readily own any authority, and profit by any ministry which is of God; but they will not allow either the one or the other to displace God. The delay of the Apostle in carrying into execution his promised visit (1. Cor. 4:18-21), had laid him open to the suspicion of fickleness (2 Corinthians 1:17), of being bold when away, cowardly when present, and of trying to terrify them by letters (2 Corinthians 10:1; 2 Corinthians 10:10-11; 2 Corinthians 12:14; 2 Corinthians 13:1-2). In the second epistle, he explains his conduct; it was regulated "not by fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God." He had to wait upon God and to do the work of God, in God’s way and God’s time. He might indeed apparently compromise his character for steadfastness in his purpose, but the grace of God and the well-being of Saints were more in his estimation than his own character. His intention was to have visited them before this, that they might have "a second benefit "-and what hindered? Nothing positive-as when Satan had hindered his intention of visiting the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 2:17-18); but God " waiteth to be gracious," and he had to wait. Doubtless there was wholesome discipline in all this to the Apostle. His letter appeared to have had no effect in arousing the consciences of the Corinthians. It had been written out of much distress of soul (2 Corinthians 2:4); and as he had received no tidings from Corinth as to how it had been received - this led to deeper anxiety-so as to make the Apostle for a moment to regret that he had written as he had done (2 Corinthians 7:8). It was thus that he who had the fullest confidence, that he was "nothing behind the very chiefest of the Apostles," was made to feel in himself, that he was " nothing." But how amply was his painful experience repaid by proving the God with whom he had to do, to be " the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;" and as the " God who comforteth them that are cast down." Had he either acted at the outset authoritatively, or had his letter produced an immediate effect, the burst of adoring gratitude, in the commencement of the second epistle had never had a place. He must needs learn his own personal unworthiness, and then he would be able to use his authority not only powerfully but also discriminatingly,* " having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

(* "Of some have compassion making a difference." Jude 1:22.)

How admirably does the apostle meet the charge of fickleness by urging that neither with him nor any man was "Yea" and "Nay." That was with God alone-" with Hint there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" -but man is properly dependent-it is his blessing and strength to be so-and for him to arrogate "Yea" and "Nay" to himself, would be mere obstinacy. And how many a man has persisted in his purpose when he has found it wrong, in order that he might appear consistent; but not so the apostle. The Corinthians might think him fickle, but there was no uncertainty in his testimony, in that which he preached to them. " But God is true: our word toward you was not Yea and Nay-for the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you was not Yea and Nay, but in Him was Yea." It was not the authority he had as an apostle which established him, but God; and the same God could alone establish them. He sought to lead their

souls to God, and not to come in between their souls and God. " Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God." How readily will saints rest on derived authority, even when such an authority is only pretended; but it would be dangerous to rest on it, even supposing it to be real. God is a Rock, the only Rock, the only one who can establish. It was to this Rock the apostle would lead the Corinthians. He solemnly calls God to witness that it was to spare them he had not yet come to Corinth. There is patience with God; but there is severity also. What patience had God shown towards Israel during the long period of prophetic ministry, " rising early and sending" to them, " till there was no remedy," and then came "severity"-God showed himself in judgment. The apostle had authority; but once and again he asserts that it was given to him "of God for edification and not for their destruction." It was of God, and therefore not to be questioned. Had he gone immediately to Corinth, he must have silenced every gainsayer by the direct exercise of his power, which would thus have been used for their destruction. On the other hand, the apostle dared not lord it over their faith. Submission to him personally, might have hindered the exercise of faith in God. He would indeed help their joy by leading their souls to God-but he dared not to come in between their souls and God, for " they stood by faith." There is no place for faith in God, where derived authority occupies the supreme place which of right belongs to God alone. In his preaching, the apostle guarded against the danger of the faith of his hearers resting " in the wisdom of man" instead of " in the power of God"-and the like danger he sought to avoid in his conduct. Orthodox confessions of faith, and even valuable ministry have often taken Christians off the ground "of standing by faith"-which can never be ordered or ruled, although it may be greatly helped. An apostle could infallibly denounce error and proclaim truth-he could also authoritatively correct irregularities in the Church-but he could not command faith. In order to lead the disciples to stand by faith, he acts in a parental character by seeking to get their souls into contact with God, and not to be awed into submission by the presence of apostolical authority. It is here we discern the divine way and order. God who alone is Omnipotent, declares his name to be "gracious and long-suffering "-however despised his name so declared might be. The apostle, in the consciousness of power derived from God, could even allow his power to be questioned, and himself to be insulted, rather than use his power "for destruction," when God had entrusted him with it " for edification." Where there is power in the Church pretended to be of God, but really humanly derived, it is ever accompanied with the impatience of personal feeling-so as to require immediate bowing to its authority. Such humanly derived ecclesiastical power has for the most part been exercised against Christ not for him, for destruction and not for edification. Those who claim it take the very place which the apostle dared not take, as lords over the faith of the saints, so as to render it impossible for them to stand by faith, by this interposing their presumed authority. But this does not lessen the great sin of the professing body, in allowing the claims of derived authority to supersede the authority of God himself, over their consciences.

"By faith ye stand." Faith in a present God, able to meet the actual need of the soul, can alone produce healthful action in the saints. The exercise of Apostolical authority to punish the refractory, infallibly to declare the truth, or to correct irregularities, was most legitimate: but if this was all-if contumacy was silenced, truth acknowledged, and decorum restored, by the actual presence of the Apostle, this would afford no ground for their continuance in a healthy condition. When the authority which had produced the reformation ceased to be present, a relapse was almost certain to follow - or else (what has actually taken place in the Church generally) the establishment of an authoritative ministry. Christians have themselves settled that which the

Apostle so anxiously sought to avoid, a formally ordered and recognized ministry, in order to produce the end which faith in God alone could produce. The Apostle used his authority for edification. He had gained his point when he had led their souls up to God, so as to act in the acknowledgment of the rightful supremacy of God over their consciences. Be dared not put his authority in the place of their faith. He dared not transact that for them, which he would gladly do in concert with them. He would gladly "help their joy." Many among the Corinthians would readily allow him "to have dominion over their faith." This is what the saints have in all ages desired. They desire to be led by men, men of God indeed, but they desire to be led*, and this when the higher leading of the Spirit of God is the privilege of each individual saint. There is no faith in attaching oneself to a gifted teacher, but there must be faith in order to be led by the Spirit. The Apostle knew ’full well the readiness with which saints cling to the lesser and forego the higher blessing; and he desired so to use his authority for their edification as to lead them to their higher blessing - to stand by faith in God. He hesitated not to depreciate (if the expression be allowable) ministers; where the Corinthians were so ready to " glory in man." " These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that ye might learn in us not to think above that which is written." Where there was authority unquestionably from God, and service the most devoted to God, the Apostle could see the danger of man displacing God, to the great damage of the souls of saints; "for," says he, "ye stand by faith."

(* Analogously it is a rare thing in the world to meet with a man who dare think for himself.)

"The man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants, and in the sight of the people." It was fitting that it should be so, because it corresponded with his ministry, his glorious ministry. But when the excelling glory of the new ministry was introduced, it was the ministry itself that claimed regard, not the minister. The glory of the ministry was of that order that it could only be in safe keeping in earthy. vessels, " that the excellency of the power may be of God," and not of the vessel. When the ministry exalts the person of the minister, the ground of faith is lost-the man is admired rather than " the righteousness", and "the spirit," of which he is the minister. It is on the ground of that righteousness and that spirit that we have direct intercourse with God, and we " stand by faith." This is the great practical point. No present authority however legitimate, no creed however orthodox, no regulations however wise, can supply the place of standing by faith, which is the ground of all healthy action in the Church. The Apostle gained his object with the Corinthians; he had so used his power that it was for their edification; but it was at the expense of deep exercise of soul, and at the risk of personal character in the very point where a. man is most sensitive, so that nothing short of the consciousness of acting before God could have sustained him. The Corinthians, aroused as to their consciences, were turned to judging themselves before God. Their sorrow was godly, and it wrought so in them (2 Corinthians 7:11ad fin.), that the apostle could write to them on the subject of a contribution for the poor saints (2 Corinthians 8:1-24; 2 Corinthians 9:1-15.). The last four chapters of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians are very peculiar, but still bearing on the apostle’s own conduct, which appeared to some so questionable as to lead them to speak most disrespectfully of him (2 Corinthians 10:1). His weapons were "not carnal," such as human wisdom, eloquence, power, influence, but "mighty through God;" and as he had wielded them effectually to the restoration of many to the simplicity of faith, so, when the time came, these weapons would be found effectual " to revenge all disobedience." In this we discover an important "way" of our God. When faction and dissension

have come in among Christians, accompanied by strife and personalities, they ’often seek redress among themselves-but this is not the way of God. He waits for a while, obedience to Him is thereby proved -and when the soul is brought into its right place before Him, the time is arrived for dealing with refractory or disorderly individuals. We must set ourselves right with God, before God will set us right one with the other. This is the way of God, hard to us, indeed, because of our readiness to view personal offense in a much stronger light, than that of the heart’s departure from God.

Rare are the occasions in which a Christian can venture to answer a fool according to his folly - yet on the fitting occasion the Apostle turned "the carnal weapons"* (for irony the most delicate must so be reckoned) with overwhelming power against those who had assailed him. What strange beings we are, readily succumbing to usurped authority which has no credentials from God, and at the same time questioning or fretting against that power which carries its own credentials as of God with it. -What is it? Man hates to be brought into direct contact with God. This can only be done through faith in Jesus Christ-or else God comes into contact with men in judgment. How readily might the Apostle have vindicated himself from every ground of charge against him. He might have demanded maintenance, but he would not forego his privilege of preaching the Gospel freely. He might have appealed to the fruit of his ministerial labors, but he had rather glory in his infirmities. He might) have broken silence as to the marvelous revelation vouchsafed to him, but he brings into prominence the messenger of Satan to buffet him. He might have gone to Corinth at once, to prove the steadfastness of his purpose; instead of writing. "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you. This is the third time I am coming to you. I told you before and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time." He might have given them sensible proof of his power by its exercise in terrible discipline on themselves, but he had far rather that they should do "that which was honest," so that he needed not to exercise his power, although it left the question of his power unsettled. None but one conscious of divine power could have afforded to act in such a manner. None but one reckless of his own character among men, and yet conscious of acting before God, could have marked out such a way for himself. None but one having as a single and supreme object, the glory of Christ in the saints, in other words their edification, could have been content to leave himself and his authority in so questionable a position.

(* "I speak as a fool," 2 Corinthians 11:23)

It is written of the Lord Jesus himself-" In his humiliation his judgment was taken away." Satan and Pharisees, tempting Him, alike demanded proofs of his Sonship and Christhood, which it was not consistent for Him in having humbled himself, then to afford. "His brethren " also (John 7:1-53) would have him publicly spew himself to the world-little thinking if He had done so, it could only have been in judgment. But Jesus waited-and still waits (and his appeal, with what full credentials! is still to the conscience of sinners), ere he appears in the irresistible glory of his own person in judgment. He, conscious of his own essential glory, did not need external proof for his own satisfaction. He could allow all his pretensions to be questioned by others, because of that which He really was. He left his claims unvindicated, save to faith and conscience, because He knew there was a set time in the counsels of Eternity for the public vindication both of his own essential glory and of every claim which He had preferred. Thus con-scions, " He was crucified through weakness." Faith indeed looks to Him where He now is; Faith now owns the glory of his person, Faith rests on the value of his work-Faith owns his worth as the Lamb slain-Faith owns now that all

power in heaven and earth is given unto Him as the glorified man; Faith bows now in the fullest acknowledgment of the name of Jesus., But Jesus himself is yet long-suffering, even though his long-suffering causes his own name to remain unvindicated, and his saints to continue in sorrow and trial. His long-suffering is to be accounted salvation. How marvelous, yet how gracious is thy way, Lord Jesus! and Thy "chosen vessel" did, according to his measure, follow Thee in this thy way! He was conscious of the authority which the Lord himself had given to him; and on the ground of this consciousness he could allow his authority to be questioned.

He too was " weak" with his Master, leaving the demonstration of his power to the fitting time and season. He, too, knew of a demonstration to the soul far beyond that produced by the mightiest external proofs. " He that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself;" and the apostle could appeal to such a kind of testimony. " Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you*....examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates;" without proof answering to their seeking " a proof." The apostle appeals to their own consciences, if his authority was not commended there, the only resource must be in judgment. Were they in the faith? Was Jesus Christ in them, by revelation of the Holy Ghost? Then their own faith; the very consciousness of Christ in their souls, was the irrefragable proof of his apostleship-as he had before said. " The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." It was by the manifestation of the truth that he had commended himself to their consciences; and he could do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. God had once dealt with men by signs and wonders, with the most marked demonstration of his power; but conviction resulting from such evidence (such is man), lasted only so long as the demonstration itself of the power of God was before their eyes. " He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy; and the waters covered their enemies, there was not one of them left. Then believed they his words - they sang his praise. They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel." So again, he visited them in after-time, and with the like result. The Israel at the time the Day-spring from on high visited them, Jehovah Jesus, proved themselves to be the like faithless and perverse generation as their fathers in the wilderness. To this He speedily testified. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them; " for he knew all men and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." He left them indeed without excuse, because they rejected Him, coining as he did with all the credentials of Messiah. But there was deeper condemnation than this, " they had seem Him and believed not." " They had both seen and hated both Him and his Father." God has left man without excuse-He has appealed to their senses-He has appealed to their understanding. He now makes his last appeal in the Gospel of his grace to the consciences and affections of men-and if this is rejected, one solemn fact alone solves the phenomenon. " The God of this world hath blinded the minds of those who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them." Jesus, knowing His own essential glory, and the fullness that was in Himself, desired to be received on His own testimony rather than on the demonstration of His miracles. " Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very work’s sake." Jesus presents himself and is presented in the gospel to our conscience and affections, and this on the ground of his own essential being. If this claim does not commend Him to us; in vain would be the outward attestation of his works. So his servant, Paul, conscious of the power given to him of the Lord, not anxious to

prove it by judgment on others, sought to rouse the conscience of the Corinthian saints; and this being effected, he was content to leave his own pretensions in question, save that he was ready, in obedience to the Lord, to " use sharpness" when the time came. In this we find the real value of ministerial authority, it appeals to the conscience: the outward demonstration by the most convincing signs was quite a secondary thought in the mind of the apostle. When the conscience of the most disorderly saint is reached, what happy and gracious results follow; and when the consciences of many are so exercised as to prove them " clear in any matter," the weight of their sentences, apart from outward demonstration of power, will be felt by the disobedient and refractory-for it is sanctioned by the Lord himself.

(* Is not verse 4 parenthetical?)

There are two great hindrances to healthful action in the Church of God-assumption of authority, and leaning on authority. These are connected; but, whether united or separate, effectually hinder "standing by faith." Pretension to authority in the Church is generally found great, in proportion as it is lacking in divine credentials to the conscience. It never appeals to the conscience; it aims at domination over faith-it is used not for edification, but for destruction. Of this character is the authority claimed by Romanists and Anglicans for a presumed sacerdotal standing. It professes to be of God -it boasts of wonders-it is loud, authoritative, terrifying. It appeals to itself, not to conscience. That they are of God is the point of faith, and not faith recognizing divine power, commending itself to the conscience by manifestation of the truth. But there is a charm in this usurped authority-men, and men of superior mind and of high moral worth, will " suffer if a man thus exalt himself." Whence this phenomenon! It tends to lull all exercise of conscience towards God. It keeps man in his natural element of distance from God, while persuading him that he is honoring God. We have seen, at Corinth, authority most unquestionably of God refused, and usurped power acknowledged. The one appealed to the conscience to lead it into exercise before God; the other claimed subjection to itself and prevailed; and thus interposed itself between God and the conscience. Such usurped authority carries with it a strong conventional claim. Deference to it was early inculcated, and has grown with our growth, so as to become a settled habit. What if the holder of this presumed authority did not commend himself to our moral judgment? still there was a sacredness attached to his office. In many instances men who have had discernment to see through the hollowness of the claim, have been too impatient to satisfy themselves as to the truth, too busily occupied with the world to step out of their vocation to investigate, as they judge, a mere matter of opinion, dreading the alternative of infidelity if they rejected such venerable authority, and have tacitly allowed the claim on the ground of decent usage and legal acknowledgment, which they thoroughly despised in their hearts. " They put away a good conscience and make shipwreck of the faith "-for such is the force of educational prejudice, that, in the minds of the majority, the claims of the authorized minister and the claims of Scripture rest on the same basis; so that to undermine the one would be to jeopardize the authority of the other. And when from time to time an independent mind, disgusted by assumption of authority, has carried out its own thoughts, it has only found in skepticism relief from domination over faith. Alas-that it should be so, but of whom shall the blood of such be demanded? They, indeed, are in awful condemnation; for God holds every one responsible to himself to hear what He says. But God will not hold those guiltless who have, by means of their system, hindered the direct exercise of conscience before God. It was a serious charge the Lord had to make against Judah. " In thy skirts is found the blood

of the souls of the poor innocents. I have not found it by secret search, hut by all these." And it is a very solemn thought, that the great professing body has used authority so effectually to hinder the exercise of faith and conscience, as to leave apparently no alternative between submission to its authority and skepticism. However definite may be the interpretation, the principle applies to the great professing body -" In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

Real Christians need serious warning as to the danger of allowing their faith to rest in the wisdom of man, instead of in the power of God. There may be large dominion over the faith tacitly allowed by Christians, even when such dominion is neither sought nor asserted by their teachers. Man is impatient under the sense of responsibility. He would persuade himself that he can do things by proxy, and thus relieve himself from care. The Solicitor cares for his worldly interests; the Physician for his health; and the Minister takes charge of his spiritual concerns. The Lord, in his ministry, and his servant subsequently warned against this tendency. We have the double warning-" Be not ye called Rabbi." "Call no man your father on earth "-and the direct acknowledgment of Christ Himself as Master of all, both of teachers and of taught, and confidential intercourse with the Father is the alone preservative. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." "One is your Father, which is in heaven." "By faith ye stand." Relinquishing traditional authority, need not land us in skepticism. We assert the authority of God with whom we have to do; and if we claim independence from human authority, it is in order to be dependent on God. This is the point. On the one side, we find all that is merely conventional tottering; on the other, men promising themselves great things from the emancipation of man’s will from the tradition of ages. The very shaking of conventional authority has given occasion for the assertion of authority (as of God) over the consciences of men in a more undisguised manner in this land, than at any period since the Reformation; and the very fact of its not being politically asserted, gives more validity to its pretensions. On the other hand, a philanthropical theory is attempting, vainly attempting, to control the emancipated will of man, in order to produce "peace on earth," and "good-will among men," but entirely disregarding the essentials of Christianity. Between these two sections-the "little flock" of God, to whom it is His good pleasure to give the kingdom, will be lost sight of: Happy for them, if, in the midst of the disruption of everything, they seek not unto visible authority, as the basis of their faith, but " build themselves up on their most holy faith." Happy for them, if when the mind of man, emancipated from traditional authority, is running again its wayward course to folly, in the vain profession of wisdom, they be found with their consciences exercised before God, standing by faith in Him, and holding to the unshaken, eternal, and invisible realities, which the Holy Ghost Himself reveals to them. PRESBUTES.

Vol 01 - Comparison of Epistles

Comparison of Epistles The comparison of certain epistles illustrates with much interest and instruction, the path of the Christian. I send you the thoughts which have suggested the remark. I refer particularly to the Epistles of Peter, Colossians, and Ephesians. In Peter we have Christ risen, having accomplished redemption; then his own actings, in that resurrection, of that power of life which is the spring of all our hope, and sets it in lively exercise towards its end, which is in heaven, and hence makes a man, and even a Jew (who once had other thoughts), a stranger and a pilgrim here. We will examine this in the statements of the Epistles. But to make my meaning more clear, I will first refer to the Ephesians. There the saints are seen sitting in heaven; there already-not on the way there: their conflicts and position in general flow from this. Hence they are seen risen with Christ, seated in heavenly places in Him; and this, through union with their Head, by the Holy Ghost sent down; on which last great fact their earthly position also depends. The Epistle to the Colossians is based indeed on the same principle; but there they were in danger of not holding the Head. Hence they are addressed on somewhat lower ground, and urged up to the point which should have been the spring from which their thoughts and feelings flowed. To turn now to the Epistles themselves. Remark, in Peter, the ground on which the Spirit of God places the saints, the sojourners of the dispersion, that is, the believing Jews scattered through the provinces. They are " begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." It is not that they are not risen with Him. Of course they were; but they are not viewed under this aspect; but as redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot; traveling through the wilderness towards Canaan-not seated in the land eating of the old corn of it (whatever conflicts were before them there)-but through the efficacy of redemption made strangers and pilgrims in the desert. It is the Christian’s place here below-not the privilege and joy of faith, but the life of faith; and hence, all through which he passes here become not distractions for his heart, whether painful or pleasant, but trials of his faith. This is exceedingly gracious and loving of our God (and what is not?), and the consequences, in many respects, exceedingly precious. In the Ephesians, we have, however, the Christian in another point of view. Heaven is not presented as a hope the Christian is there. It is not that the resurrection of Christ has begotten him to such a hope; the same power which raised Christ, and set him at the right hand of God, far above all principality and power, has wrought in him; and he is raised up together with him, quickened together, and sitting in heavenly places in Him. Thus he is viewed as in heaven, in Christ the head; not as hoping to arrive there. Peter views him as toiling along the road, being redeemed by the precious blood of Christ-as Israel in the desert, with Canaan before them: the Ephesians, as sitting there in his head, Christ. Hence neither is the coming of Christ presented as a hope in the Ephesians. What is set before us in the way of hope in the form of intelligence communicated of God, is the gathering together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth-in Him in whom we have received an inheritance. The power which has wrought in Christ, has wrought in the believer, God having given Christ to be "the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." God of His great love wherewith He has loved us, has, when we were all together children of wrath,

quickened us together with Him, and made us sit, raised up together, in heavenly places in Him. In Colossians, at first sight, we seem to have lost this position. But the epistle does, but serve to bring out more distinctly the great and precious truth. The Apostle is obliged to bring out heaven prominently before them. They needed this; and we have, as in Peter, " the hope which is laid* up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before." Why this difference where, nevertheless, Christ is put forward as the head of the body? They were beginning, alas, to be beguiled, and to be subject to ordinances, not holding the Head. But the Apostle urges them, as it were, back to the point from which they were slipping away. He presses on them their resurrection with Christ; once dead in trespasses and sins, but buried in baptism with him; and raised through faith in the operation of God who hath raised Him. If dead with Christ, how could they, as, alive, be subject to what related to flesh and perished with it? And then he draws the conclusion, which associates the two practically: "If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." This was their real position. They were indeed in danger of slipping away from it; but he urges them upward to their privilege and place in Christ. As regards the coming of the Lord,-this is also introduced in a way which remarkably confirms this character of instruction. They were not taught to wait for Him as if they were on earth, and he to appear. Nor is it omitted in order to contemplate their association with Him in heaven. His appearance is spoken of, but then their association with Him in a life which is with Him now hidden in God, is pressed upon them, by this remarkable truth, that when He appears, so identified were they with Him, that they would appear with Him. Their hearts and affections, then are urged upwards, but it was to lay hold on the consciousness that they were one with Him that was there. Their life was hid with Him there, but they were not holding the Head as they ought. I do not go further here; perhaps I may, at another time, notice the different way the Lord’s coming is spoken of connected with this.

(* The word is different from the one Peter uses.)

Vol 01 - Connection by the Spirit

Connection by the Spirit The rent veil of the flesh of Jesus (Hebrews 10:20), is the way opened of God to man, and for man to God. God, and all that He is, is free in this way to meet the sinner, and the sinner (without a veil on his heart) is free to meet God. This way of access (and this way only) measures perfectly what sin, in God's sight, is.... while it proclaims peace to the sinner, upon the ground of the penalty having been met. Grace reigns through righteousness; and we know it. But our connection with the Blessed One, who, once dead, now lives, is solely through faith and by the Spirit. And thus God's estimate of sin and righteousness are made our own; and then vital union with the Head leads, by the Holy Ghost, to self judgment: the divine nature given to us leads to the same thing, and the church-habitation of God, through the Spirit, enforces the same. If we fail to walk in the Spirit, and get into the flesh, the moral government of God, in his family, conies in to prevent our sinking down into the world's judgment: and we are judged of the Lord, and chastened, that we may not be condemned with the world. G. W.

Vol 01 - Divine Titles and Their Meanings

Divine Titles and Their Meanings

It has pleased God to instruct man concerning Himself, by the record put into man's hand of things done, or being done, or to be done by God. God thus presents Himself, as it were, in action before man-that man, standing in the position of subjection and dependence, may learn and know the God that made, upholds, blesses, and redeems. The way, I am persuaded, in which we ought to study the Divine titles, is by studying the Scriptures of truth, which present God in the various actings and glories proper to those titles. The simplest saint might thus learn to profit, and learn with certainty. The wisest would learn with humility and deference, for God would be his study. Man likes not a way so open to all, so calculated to humble and abase himself. We accordingly find, that most works on the Divine names and titles are founded upon the etymological meanings of these titles and names; the learned -differ upon these; the mass make no pretension to the learning which can enable them to tread that field, or form a judgment even upon the gleanings of their more erudite brethren. I propose, God willing, to say a little upon this most interesting subject, and would speak first on the title, Elohim-God.

Y.

Vol 01 - Fragment: Burdens

Fragment: Burdens 'Tis a very great privilege to have burdens to bear while here; so thought our Lord.

Trouble and distress sometimes make a blaze of prayer COME out of two or three little coals of faith. The light that came out of the cloud to Israel, must have had something of a very rich and soft character to a believing Israelite. How gentle was its touch to those whose fears and anxieties were healed by it!

Vol 01 - Gather Up the Fragments

Gather Up the Fragments My Dear Brother.-When our Master had fed the multitudes, He said to His disciples, " Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost" (John 6:12). And they gathered together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto the five thousand that had eaten!

I think I have the mind of the Lord, both in endeavoring to gather up the waste scraps of present teachings by the Spirit, whether in conversations, readings, musings, etc., and in offering them, under the above title, to you. The fragmentary character of the offering may encourage some to cast in their widow's mite to the general stock, and help others to remember, that "he that gathered much had nothing over, as he that gathered little had no lack." When God orders the measure, or gives the increase, the results proclaim His praise, as well as refresh the people of His choice.-Yours. G. W.

Vol 01 - Inquiry as to the Antichrist of Prophecy

Inquiry as to the Antichrist of Prophecy My Dear Brother:-I beg to send you a series of remarks, which have gradually been assuming importance in my mind for now three or four years, though I still present them only in the shape of inquiry, and shall be glad and thankful to receive the communication of any remarks, or the suggestion of any difficulties-many having, presented themselves to myself in the period I speak of. All who look for a personal Anti-Christ have been accustomed to assume that He is the head of the Roman empire, in whose hand imperial power will be and the throne of the world. Of this I much doubt. I have no doubt that there will be this blasphemous power, the object of universal admiration. The Scriptures seem to me to contain a plain revelation of this. The belief of it, therefore, remains of course unshaken in my mind. The question is: Is this power the Anti-Christ? The outline of the state of things, I would remark, therefore remains unaltered; and I am glad to add this, because it is important that while open to correction on account of our imperfection, ascertained truth should maintain its weight and authority: as a moral state of the soul this is important. I have often seen " the putting, always, everything in question", presented as sincerity and the love of truth. -Whereas it is merely the haughtiest pretension of the human mind, which would hold its unshackled despotism to displace everything at pleasure, and make its own thoughts creatures of its will; whereas love of truth is seen in holding and being subject to known truth in which we are taught of God, and, as subject to it, not departing from it. But, of course, even where known, we may be imperfect in our apprehension of it. I repeat, then, I see nothing to change in general, though, doubtless, much to learn in the belief of this blasphemous imperial power which will act under or have the throne of Satan in the last days. The question with me is, if the saints have not lost sight of another power, of which the Scriptures speak more even than of the great public blasphemous government; and that the consideration of this power is necessary to the filling up of the scene according to Scripture: and I further question, whether this power be not properly the Anti-Christ, though there may have been many morally.

I proceed to consider the passages, and present the thoughts which have occurred to me. Anti-Christ is not spoken of nominally, that I am aware of, elsewhere than in the Epistle of John. There, it is needless to say, his character is wholly religious,-an heretical and apostate activity against the person and glory of Christ and the essential doctrines of truth as connected with Him, and of which Christianity is formed. " They went out from us," thus manifested " that they were not all of us." The apostle then directed the attention of the younger saints who had heard that there would be an Anti-Christ to this, as giving his character and marking the last times. Further, he denies the Father and the Son-the revelation proper to and constituting Christianity. He does not confess Jesus Christ come in flesh -the other great cardinal basis of the truth. We may add, not as in contrast with Christianity, but as generally characteristic," Who is a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ?" This would be the first point to which godly Jews would be brought, without speaking of the doctrines of Christianity. When this was really owned, a man could be recognized as born of God. When the Christ formed the subject of religious belief and expectation, to own

Jesus to be it, implied a proper work of God. An apostate and heretical character is given then as the mark of Anti-Christ, and further, as of Satan (" who is a liar?"). He does not own (which seems to me more Jewish in its connection and evil) Jesus to be the Christ. Who was the Christ, not what He was, is the subject of interest, and that is an answer to Jewish expectation, and the test of Jewish incredulity-(" If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins"); and he who is a liar denies that the blessed Jesus is.

It is evident that the presenting Himself as the Son made the Jews reject Him as the Christ-because thus, they were-man was-morally put to the test; and it must have been so to be according to truth, and also in order not to present an object to human passions in a religious form, but the truth and glory and Son of God -God himself morally, and the manifestations of the Father in grace, to the heart and conscience of men (see John 8:14-24). Still the two things are distinct, though impossible to separate, as both are united in His person. I may add here, that the translation, " this is that [spirit] of Anti-Christ," is hardly warranted, that is, the insertion of the word " spirit"; but I do not feel need to say more. In general it is evident, that what the Spirit of God designates as characterizing this Anti-Christ are religious qualities or energies of evil. He is occupied with religious subjects, and characterized by that occupation, and in connection with Christianity- and Judaism. This is not, perhaps, all his character; but it is characteristic: this is the το του Αντιχριστου. This is evidently of great importance. There is an energizing spirit of this character. We have then the fact, as to the history of the latter day, that there are two beasts or manifestations of power united in their operations, but at the same time very distinct; each of them amazingly important in the place it holds, though one be distinctively on the throne of the prince of this world, the other not. Whatever title they may hold, those are the two. I speak of this, because, in some passages, and in our minds in reflecting on the spirit of the age, the general character may be presented, and we readily forget that there are certainly historically two vessels of evil power; one having the public authority and a certain character; the other, in whom is the energy which acts and produces the effect on men, in subservience to that throne and public power. I shall consider first this second beast in whom the energy of seduction is found. It will hardly be questioned that the Anti-Christ, whatever system of interpretation is adopted, is found in one or other of these two vessels of evil power. First, then, the second is a beast. That is, there is an analogy in the nature of their existence.

Now beasts are a well-known figure; and I am not aware of any case in which they are not a temporal power; so that we have here a temporal power subsisting along with the great general power who had Satan’s throne. This is nothing surprising, as we know horns or kings will so subsist who give their power to the beast. This is different, it is true, but it is a temporal power. It had two horns lamb-like. The Lamb is not Christianity but Christ. This beast, then, in the form of its power resembled Christ, but its language was the full character and pretension of Satan: its speech dragon-like. This is evidently a remarkable character, a form of power like Christ, a language like Satan, not in deceit merely, but in public pretension. It is not as a serpent but a dragon -a royal Christ-like power with Satan-like language. But the power of this beast is exceeding great, though that of Satan: he exercises all the power of the first beast before him; he does not take it away at all from the former, far from it; but he exercises it all-the essential energy of evil is in him, though the other may be clothed with it. He makes the earth and its inhabitants worship him who was publicly on Satan’s throne, whose deadly wound was healed. But his energy

of evil was not only in the exercise or administration of another's power: he acts in intrinsic power as a prophet. We shall see another character of this power in a moment; but I confine myself to this passage now. The character of the display of this power is frightful. What the prophets of Baal could not do, and what Elias did, as a contrasting proof that Jehovah alone was the true God, this beast does, at least in the eyes of men, besides other great signs. He seduces and deceives the inhabitants of the earth through the signs he was given to do before the beast. The beast would be content enough to have such an energy to sustain and support his throne, and exalt and adorn his authority in the eyes of men-authority which rested only in deceit and delusion of mind or persecution. This seducing prophet and power leads them on to idolatry also, and gives breath to the image of the beast so as to speak, and have those killed who did not worship it. Thus, while sustaining the throne of Satan in the world, this second beast, while Satanic in his language, speaking like the dragon, has the form of royalty and prophecy established by signs, and such signs to the eyes of men as had erst sufficed to establish Jehovah's sole name and authority in the mind of Israel to the destruction of an incapable Baal. The aim, however, of all is the recognition of Satan's authority in him whom he has placed on his throne; but the energy which produces the effect in the minds of men is in the second beast.

While exercising power and bearing its form, a beast with horns, still religious seduction, and properly such as connects itself with ancient Jehovah-testimony, is what characterizes this second beast: he is spoken of (Revelation 19:1-21) as the false prophet. The first beast is evidently the great imperial Gentile power, to whom the empire is given in the accustomed terms of Scripture; but with its healed head, in its last blasphemous state, admired and owned by all not kept of God in sovereign grace, and hating and blaspheming them who had their tabernacle in heaven. His rise, as that of other beasts had been, is out of the general mass of men-the Gentile world at large-out of the sea, as it is expressed. Besides this, we have inhabiters of heaven. What, then, is Earth out of which the second beast rises? There is no longer any pretension to heavenly association: all that is blasphemed. This religio-prophetic influence will have its character and origin within the system and order of what subsists where Satan is and yet rules, this earth-but such position and relationship, when assuming a religious character, however blasphemous or seditious, is Jewish. It is the religion of the earth, and, viewed as rejecting Christ, must be false. Such, I apprehend, is the character of the seduction of the second beast-heavenly neither in reality nor pretension, but an exhibition of present power, here in the sphere to which Satan is now limited. He is the proper present energy of Satan, to lead the world to recognize the throne which he has been able to set up here in the first beast, which had its origin providentially in the world like other previous beasts. The second beast is earthy and Jewish in its character. But it is by present power, signs, and delusions (not, as is evident, by the law and the testimony) that he acts. I would now turn to another passage, where the last form of evil is spoken of, and see what is its character there (2 Thessalonians 2:1-17). Here we can hardly doubt, on reading the 9th verse, that there is a connection with the false prophet. But the question may arise, if it is not merely to characterize the time and reign of the beast, or if " whose coming " means that he himself is known by these signs. That is, is it generally characteristic, the first beast or the second? But let us examine the passage. There is a falling away down here, as there is a gathering together in heaven, on the other hand, to Christ of the Saints. The heavenly Church takes its own place as gathered up to its Head; and the falling away or apostasy takes place upon earth. The result is the manifestation of the man of sin, the son of perdition. The removal of the Church and the Apostasy

give room to this. In this chapter it cannot be questioned, that a religious character also is displayed, however wicked and audacious. Secular power is not spoken of, but first its impious and then its seductive character. He is characterized as the Man of Sin, and the Wicked One whom a mystery of iniquity has preceded. It does not appear to me that verse 4 gives another idea, or that of secular power; it is moral opposition to God and insult to him. It is true that the beast of Revelation 17:1-18 goes into perdition; but this does not alter the character here given: the two (Revelation 19:1-21) perish together. The falling away, it is evident, refers to that which had the name of Christianity, though it goes much further than its mere rejection. There is an active energizing personage bearing the title of Judas, who resists, opposes, and exalts himself against all called God or which is an object of veneration. He is an ardent antagonist of Divine authority, and sets up as Adam to be God, and more, he wills our ruin.

I think I see, then, in the third and fourth verses, the moral character of this wicked power acting upon others, and showing the energy of his will in hostility, and setting aside of God, rather than the object of deference or honor on the throne. He is what fills the scene morally when the apostasy takes place - the active energy which works in man. It is the Man of Sin-man against God, and pretending to be, or showing himself as though he were God upon earth: the contrast of Christ, who was so, but was the man of obedience, righteousness, and humiliation, submitting to everything when it was not disobedience to God His Father. This man was a thing to be revealed. Meanwhile a certain mystery of iniquity was at work-the principles of lawlessness-of the independence of man, and the acting of his will, but in mystery only; there was a restrainer until it should be taken out of the way, and then the lawless one would be revealed. But if he were the lawless self-exaltation of man’s will, that was not all. His presence or coming was according to the energy of Satan; and if we have found in the second beast the terrible analogy with the case of Elias in deception, here we have perhaps the yet more frightful one with Christ. The terms by which are expressed what he does in falsehood, are the same as those by which, in the Acts, Christ has been shown a man approved of God (Acts 2:22); and as Christ was in truth of righteousness, he in deceit of unrighteousness to the ■πολλυμ■νοις who were given up to be lost, as Christ was to the σωζομ■νοις, to such as should be saved, The true Christ will come from heaven, a heavenly man: this an earthly man, with all the pretensions which could belong to, and the proofs, to those given up to judgment, which would demonstrate his title to glory, but in an entirely earthly way and self-exaltation. God sends an energy of error that they should believe a lie. It is evident that the point of departure is Christendom naturally as writing to Christians, but the manifestation not connected with it, because, though no date be given for that, the saints are viewed as gathered up, the rest as apostate. This, though the character be blasphemous, man, would throw it, in its deceptions most especially, among the Jews, though it is here as man, and as to men who have not received the love of the truth when it was there, but have had pleasure in iniquity;-whatever partial moral accomplishment (for there were even early many Anti-Christs) this may have had in Christendom, taking the apostasy in its full sense, the temple of God acquires a character quite evident.

We may now turn to other passages. Let us consider Daniel 11:1-45 : " The king shall do according to his will." We find a king in the land (uninformed whence he came, for though it is a continuation of the history of the king of the North as being found in that territory, yet the previous verses had carried us on to the time of the end), lawless, self-exalting, magnifying himself above

every god; yet this (which might seem to have put a contrast between the characters of 2 Thess. and the second beast) does not hinder, after all, his setting up idolatry-that unclean spirit now gone out of the Jews, but to enter in with seven others worse. " The God of his fathers," as strong a claim on nature as we know, and owned in Judaism" nor the desire of women," that posterity naturally wished for, but of which Christ was the center of hope among the Jews, for in this verse it evidently refers to religio-traditional objects and influence-none of these things have any influence over him; he uses idolatry only for his convenience, and divides the land as recompence, causing them (his followers I suppose) to rule over the mass of the Jewish people. Here we have, then, a royal power in Palestine doing as he pleases there, having, as to self-exaltation and blasphemy, fully the character of 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, and disposing of the Jewish people, while rejecting his traditional God, and blaspheming the God of gods-the dragon-voice and character,-I judge. I may say here, that the anti-Christian power will not be imitation of Christ, save as being king and prophet, but opposition to Christ; for to a Jew, having form of Jewish holiness, blasphemies could not recommend: but they are given up to delusion, and the dragon-language is taken with the rest, as is idolatry, which will clearly take place. The Lord characterizes it as one coming in his own name. This is the Jewish part of his history in connection with the territorial limits of the Grecian empire. You may find "the king" again Isaiah 57:9; Isaiah 30:33, where read " for the king also it is prepared."

I now turn to another passage where we have a power clearly distinguished from the beast, and which nevertheless stamps it with his character, and is peculiarly connected at the same time at the end with the Jewish people, though hating what was heavenly. I refer to Daniel 7:1-28, where a distinct horn rises after all the others, different from them, subduing three-a horn always as such distinct from the beast, but which brings judgment on it, and whose actings at the end make it morally the grand affair. Here we have many characteristics of the first beast's actings, attributed to him in Revelation 13:1-18 We see the horn to be the active agent here, for the horn is looked at as part of the beast here, his general secular or Gentile totality being the point of view in which it is considered. Still the little horn is evidently a distinct agent. If it be thought that the horn is really, though locally only, possessing the territory of three, the virtual head of the whole empire as a chief, besides his own territory, and hence that he would correspond rather to the first beast of Revelation 13:1-18, where the general character of the beast itself only is given, I should have nothing that I am aware of to object. The other point would remain untouched. The moral points of union are evident: the two beasts play into each other's hands; one, as we have seen, holding the public authority and throne, the other exercising the energy of Satan. It had even occurred to me that 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:8, might distinctively denote them; but I pursue the study of the passage. This horn had the intelligence and foresight of thought and purpose, which was more than power and conquest, design and consideration, place and haughty pretensions avowed: he brings judgment on the beast. Three things are attributed to him, " speaking great words against the Most High",-this is more than the Ancient of days; it is the supremacy of God as above all; he wears out the saints of the high places, and he thinks to change times and laws, Jewish order and ordinances, and they are delivered into his hand: so that we find atheistical pretensions, a persecution of any saints who are connected with heaven, and a perversion of the order of Jewish polity as outward ordinances. This lasts for three years and a half; he is directly, therefore, in connection with the Jewish order of things. If there are saints who look to higher blessings, he wears them out. That there will be those there who shall have a heavenly position in

the reign, Revelation 15:1-8; Revelation 20:1-15 assure us: his dominion is taken away in connection with the final judgment on earth. It is the horn who is here considered, who wields it in Palestine (though the beast be destroyed, as is noted in the general history before the explanations). Here then is a distinct power acting in Palestine and subverting Jewish order and ordinances, the beast being distinct, yet judged because of what this power spoke. The pretensions of Isaiah 14:12-14. have this same character. Reigning in Zion is here one of his pretensions.

I would now turn to the first beast. The first thing I would remark is, that it is characterized by the royalty of the ten horns; they are crowned. This is characteristic historically: three fall, but it is, as far as unity subsists, a federate power. The beast implies corporate unity in some measure, as the Roman empire was (whatever its state) a certain known thing, whatever its head, heads, or form of government; and this corporate existence is the meaning of a beast, -a bond which enables it to be spoken of as one in relation to those outside it. There is a wounded and healed head, but it is not in any prominence here, save that it is after this that the wondering takes place. It is the beast which is in prominence, and in its general corporate state is characterized by its blasphemy and war with the saints. It is well to remember that the, devil is cast out of heaven, and that the heavens and the dwellers there now rejoice; and the dwellers upon earth, and earth itself, are the scene of his power. The healing of the head is all that is noticed; it is the beast itself which is in scene. Satan, as god of this world, gives him his throne and his power; and its man is thus set up, while he turns to act, as we have seen, in sustaining it in the second beast. A woman may ride this beast; but it is the kings who commit fornication with her: but, I suppose, whether from 13 or 17, there will be some uniting form of government; but it is the corporate or common existence which gives its life and character to the beast. The kings make war; the kings hate the whore and the beast, not any head. If the comparison of Daniel 7:1-28, and the light thrown on that passage show that the little horn is the same as the head, of which I should feel doubtful, I have nothing to object. It is not my subject at this moment; what I question is, the civil head of empire being the Anti-Christ, which seems to me to have a much more religious character-a consideration which has much importance in the study of scripture. There are several difficulties and questions which present themselves in connection with this; as, for example, the placing or displacing of the influence of Babylon, in 17:, and the second beast of 13:, which I leave for further inquiry. But I cannot doubt that there will be a civil-religious power in Palestine having the energy of Satan, and exercising the power of the beast, to whom Satan has given his authority; and this, I much suspect, is much more properly the Anti-Christ, though there be many. But 1 present this, specifically and avowedly as a subject of inquiry for the saints, and those content to learn and follow any increasing light our God in His goodness may see good to give; and certainly He will give all that may be truly profitable to His church. D.

Vol 01 - Jacob's Recall to Bethel

Jacob’s Recall to Bethel In the four chief biographies of Genesis, we have unfolded and illustrated four great principles of God’s dealing with His people in grace; besides the individuals themselves being in many instances distinct types. In Abram is presented God’s principle of election and grace-" I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," -the foundation of everything in His ways to poor sinners. In Isaac, Sonship and Heirship,-" if Children then Heirs." In Jacob, discipline,-" What Son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" In Joseph, suffering and glory,- " if we suffer we shall also reign with Him." Other truths have their place in each; but this is the leading thought. It is interesting to look at Bethel in connection both with Abraham and Jacob, the man of faith, and the man of experience. Bethel, and the God of Bethel, are the same; but there is an aspect peculiar to each. Bethel was Abram’s meeting-place with God, as well as Jacob’s, and the place of his altar too (Genesis 12:7-8)-but he had known him as the "God of glory" before this in Ur of the Chaldees; and this was the foundation of the call which the man of faith had obeyed. Faith had brought Abram as a stranger and a pilgrim to Bethel: circumstances first brought Jacob there; and accordingly, after declension in Abram as the man of faith, there is a much speedier restoration to Bethel than Jacob found (Genesis 13:3-4). But Jacob is our subject. In Genesis 28:10; Genesis 28:22, we learn the circumstances in which Jacob first became acquainted with Bethel. His subtlety in seeking to obtain the blessing which was his, according to the sure promise of God, " the elder shall serve the younger " (Genesis 25:23), but which his natural character, could not leave in the hands of the Lord to accomplish, had now made him an exile from his father’s house, and a fugitive from an injured brother’s rage. He was a supplanter; and the natural character in Jacob presented no traits of loveliness, while in Esau there were the characteristics of a generous spirit. But Jacob, with all his obliquities and feebleness of character, was connected with God, while Esau was " a profane man who despised his birthright;" and with every trait of generous frankness, was but the man of sense, and seeking nothing beyond this world.

It was to this " worm Jacob," when he was a homeless pilgrim, a wandering forlorn man, with the heavens only for his canopy, and a staff for his companion, and the stone for his pillow, that the God of Bethel appeared.; and there, from the top of the "ladder that reached to heavers," and on which the " angels of God were ascending and descending," He reveals Himself as the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and enters into an unchangeable relationship and connection with Jacob.

Jacob never had a fuller revelation of God as the God of promise and grace, nor blessings larger and fuller sealed to him, nor a surer pledge of God’s watchful care over him, than Bethel presented, and that too when every external circumstance was most contrary. Grace penetrates his heart, while the vision of it is fresh before him, and he " vowed a vow saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come to my father’s house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God’s house." But this is not the strong grasp of faith-staggering not at the promise through unbelief, but the feeble hesitancy of the soul, that must, through many

sorrows, learn its own weakness, before it will take God only for its strength. But God is the God of Bethel; and under the power of this revelation of himself to Jacob, did he call upon him to walk and act in the scenes that lay before him. His subsequent history, before we hear again of Bethel, is marked by the unprincipled retributive conduct of Laban, and by the hard and unrewarded service with which he made him serve. And it seems that Jacob's bearing under this rigorous service, and changing of wages, was but little in accordance with the suited character of one who had known the revelations and the sure presence with Him, and help of the God of Bethel. But in the midst of this scene of trial, God recalls his mind to Bethel, and the vow he had made there in other days. If Jacob, in the midst of worldly scenes, had forgotten his purpose of faithful profession of Jehovah for his God, and the service he had vowed to render, God had not forgotten the promise of His grace, " Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou guest, and will briny thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." And now He says (Chapter 31:13) "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out of this land and return unto thy kindred." This fresh call of " the God of Bethel " breaks the link of Jacob's bondage in Padan Aram, and puts the "Syrian [that was], ready to perish," again with his "staff" to recross the Jordan with his " two bands." But, pilgrim as he is again, and on his journey back under the hand of God, there is many an exercise of heart in the presence of God yet lies between him and Bethel. There are the seven days' hot pursuit of Laban, after the man that had " stolen away unawares," though he left at the bidding, and under the protection, of the God of Bethel! But there is God's pillar between Jacob and Laban, as there was afterward between the trembling Israelites and Pharaoh's pursuing hosts. But another trial awaits him, which brings to remembrance the sins of other days, and leads to deeper exercises before the God of Bethel still. "Deliver me" (says the trembling man) " from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, and the mother with the children, And Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good [this was the remembrance of Bethel], and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitudes." And now comes the last effort of his wisdom in his arrangements to meet the trying hour; and then he is "left alone" with God! Apart from every circumstance, and every tie, he [is " left alone" with God. But it is not in the calm worship by the altar of Bethel, but to know a night of wrestling with Him, who, because He meant to bless, must needs resist the ways and cripple the energy that had neither been subdued by the presence of grace, nor subjected to God by the power of faith! " There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint." His flesh was touched 1 [I speak only morally of this scene, and not of its typical bearing on Israel's history in a future day]. " He had power over the angel and prevailed;" but it was with the distress of the wrestler-dreading lest the blessing should escape-" that he wept and made supplication to Him." He had found God and obtained the blessing; but "Peniel" is not " Bethel." The poor crippled man lets us into the secret of his thoughts through that night of weeping and wrestling, when he calls " the " name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved 1" But this is not worshipping by the anointed pillar, under the opened heavens, with the bright visions of glory, and in the sweet confidence of an eternal connection with the God of Bethel. It is God at Peniel; and, in the strength that was given there, he meets his brother Esau, and he finds how God, to whom he cried, had bowed his brother's heart, without the presents that were meant by poor Jacob to bribe his love! " Esau said, I have enough, my brother, keep that thou hast unto thyself." " And Jacob

came to Shalem (Genesis 33:18), a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan... And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Timor Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money. And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel." He is now a worshipper of " God the God of Israel;" his " altar," with its inscription, tells whose worshipper lie is. But God in " Shechem " is not God at " Bethel," as Jacob has to learn. Why does he linger here, and purchase the piece of ground, as if he would have a possession among the Canaanites, when God had called him to Bethel, and showed him there his title to all the land as his inheritance? Alas! this fresh attempt of the pilgrim-man to stop a little short. of the place to which God had called him, ministers still further to his experience. But experience is a sad teacher, unless it be when faith points her lessons, and God is the subject of her study. If her father has purchased a possession here, why may not Dinah his daughter " go out to see the daughters of the land?" Alas, her corruption follows, as the fruit of this; and Simeon and Levi's treachery and terrible revenge, soon destroy the poor pilgrim's " green spot in the desert;" and all that he can say in the bitterness of his heart is, " Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land.... and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, and my house. And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?" Small comfort to allay his agony and distress! But God appears (what grace I) -to call him forth again, that from the midst of these circumstances, he should know him fully as the God of Bethel. " And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and DWELL there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. And Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away th strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and f will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hands, and all their ear-rings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob." God made them feel in all the wretched circumstances of this man and his family-though their hatred burned against him-and his own fears could picture nothing but destruction, until God had reminded him again of Beth-el,-that they must not intermeddle with them, because God was in a living connection with them! But what had Jacob's experience, in all his vicissitudes, taught him of God, beyond what was revealed to his faith-if he had had the faith to receive it-in the very outset of his course at Bethel? It is no fresh revelation of God that now puts him upon seeking a moral conformity to the character and relationship in which he stands toward him. The answer of his heart, when he first met " the God of Beth-el," was, " Jehovah shall be my God; and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house." But there had been little remembrance of this "vow" at a distance from the scenes in which the wondrous revelations of grace and glory first drew it forth. But God remembered His part, and was with him in all places whither he went (though little regarded), for he had said I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of "! But when Bethel is again reached or journeyed toward under God's last call, after all this trial, then suddenly and for the first time, breaks upon Jacob's thought, that the things of idolatry, and the ornaments of the flesh, that had gathered around him in Padan Aram, must not be associated with a return to Bethel, where as a houseless pilgrim, with nothing but a staff in his hand, " a Syrian ready to perish "-he first found the God of Bethel, in all His grace, and took Him in

the gladness of His heart, and in the solemn vow of His lips, to be his God-his full, his blessed, his only portion! The false gods, and the ear-rings, and the filthy garments may remain without rebuke in Syria under Laban’s hard service; nay, they may still be untouched, when God at Peniel is striving with us and when we have seen Him face to face and our life has been preserved; nay, they may be connected with the altar at Shechem; and all the terror of the presence of an adversary that none but God can deliver us from, may fail to lead us to an inquisition for what so divides the confidence of the heart with God, and is so unfit for His presence! But when the God of Bethel-the God of the poor pilgrim-recalls us to the brightness of His grace, and the unchangeable connection in which that grace has set us with Himself, then the " false gods," the gods of the heart, can no longer be retained; " the ear-rings," the ornaments of the flesh which go along with a divided heart, must be put away; and the stained garments of the world can no longer be borne. In the thought of "Bethel," the gods and the earrings must find their place under the oak at Shechem. Perhaps the "purchased field," which promised a little rest and enjoyment at a distance from Bethel, is only used as furnishing a hole of burial for the things that cannot remain a moment in the presence of the grace and the God of Bethel. But Jacob at length is back again in blessed fellowship with Bethel and the God of Bethel; and how freely does the fountain of grace, and love, and faithfulness, pour forth its streams to refresh his weary heart! It is the God of Bethel still, in spite of all his forgetfulness and wanderings. " And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Beth-el."

Such, and so different, is the effect of the truth of God, known and believed, it may be, as a revelation; and the same truth held in living fellowship with God and in moral conformity to him whose revelation it is!

How shall JACOB supplant and become ISRAEL, a Prince with God? With Saint-for what can human means avail? His God unowned, resources always fail:

Dependent supplicants alone prevail.-Ed.

Vol 01 - Jeroboam: a Kingdom Gained and a Kingdom Lost

Jeroboam: a Kingdom Gained and a Kingdom Lost THE Word of God deals in facts, not theories. Man has been put upon trial in every possible way. The result of these trials has been constant failure. " Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning." The scriptures are the testimony of God as to what is in man, and His testimony to what He is in Himself. Scripture is also given for our admonition. Paul writing to the Corinthians, 1st Epistle, chap. 10, so uses the Old Testament,-drawing examples and warning from the records of the past, as also instruction and stimulus for faith to day. The actions of men, and the state of the Heart which led to them, is put prominently before us. Sometimes we glean from the actions themselves, the whereabouts of a man’s thoughts; at other times the Holy Ghost more explicitly declares the condition of soul. Thus we have a "sure word of prophecy, unto which we do well to take heed." " By the word of thy lips, I have kept me from the path of the destroyer." " Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path." We need faith, not experience. The latter is imperatively given to us in Scripture-God’s testimony of what was in man, brought out in given circumstances, but existing in man before its development. It is also God’s testimony of what is in us. Circumstances may develop this also. But where Faith is in exercise and the scriptures accredited, we do not require to be put upon trial, or to learn by our failure the knowledge of our weakness. Faith accredits God’s testimony. We have in the Bible the record of our weakness. Every failure in man related there confirms it. We have also the source of strength in dependance or faith in God. The knowledge of the former works humility and trembling, and in a healthy state of soul knits us closer to God; and, conscious of our weakness, we roll ourselves upon Him.

" His soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: hut the just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4).

Thus facts, not theories, are revealed in the word of God. Now the subject before us is pregnant with meaning. A kingdom was given to Jeroboam by the appointment and power of God, and was lost by his own efforts to retain it. The call to the kingdom was of God, and the power to sustain in it, His also. God in His gifts has calculated for circumstances. He may use them to prove whether man will confide in Him; but to be swayed in our judgment by them, is to put circumstances above God, and thus to forget that He is Almighty. Unbelief in his power and Godhead does not end in departure from Him only, but to follow another; as in the case of Israel, " Up, make us gods to go before us." So in the case of Jeroboam, " he set up calves in Dan and Bethel." But let us look to the narrative. The chapter opens with the account of Solomon’s idolatry: "For it came to pass when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For. Solomon went after Ashtaroth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcolm the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, etc. etc." (ver. 9.) " The Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice." In ver. 14, we read, "the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king’s seed in Edom." In ver. 23, we read, " God stirred up another adversary, Rezon, the son of Eliadah," etc. And again, in ver. 26-40:-

"And Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon’s servant, whose mother’s name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king. And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father. And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: and Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: and \he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel. Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: (but he shall have one tribe for my servant David’s sake, and for Jerusalem’s sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is as right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant’s sake, whom [chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: but, I will take the kingdom out of his son’s hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have alight alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not forever. Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. An absolute promise of God is given to Jeroboam in the 31st verse, " I will give ten tribes to thee." The ground of God’s judgment upon Solomon in the 33rd verse, viz., his idolatry, the condition of blessing to Jeroboam in the 38th verse, viz., God acknowledged in the kingdom. For God to promise and to perform is one. "Hath he said, and shall he not do it?"

Rehoboam, left to the unrestrained exercise of his own will, provokes the people to rebellion. In chapter 12, verse 15, we read, " The king hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was from the Lord, that He might perform the saying which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat" verses 16, 17, 18, 19. In verse 20, " It came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel." " There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only."

Thus the word of the Lord was fulfilled. Jeroboam reigned over the ten tribes of Israel. They unanimously elect him. God forbids the king of Judah to fight against him, commands every man to return to his house, saying, " For this thing is from me." If Jeroboam reflected on his elevation and the manner of it, nothing could be more manifestly of God, and, because of God, the maintenance of his position secured. What cause for gratitude and thanksgiving, what ground of confidence! Yet it is exactly when in the most favorable position, when there is no excuse for

unbelief, that which is in the heart of man is betrayed. Happy for us that, in Christ, " God can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly."

" Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim and dwelt therein; and went out from thence and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David; if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah." Now this reasoning of Jeroboam would have been consistent in a man, whose advancement had been the result of his own wisdom and strength. Forethought is eminently useful in worldly matters. What a man can attain unto, he may be deprived of; and he is justified in weighing his affairs well over. When we say "justified," we mean there is consistency in such conduct, with the avowed principles of the carnal heart. But it was otherwise with Jeroboam, he owed his kingdom to God. He was chosen of God, called of God, and set up in it by the mighty power of God, and the absolute possession of the throne secured to him, and his seed after him, so long as he walked in the fear of God. But what manifest unbelief we have in verses 26 and 27,-" And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall this kingdom return to the house of David. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord," etc. Circumstances touching his security harass his mind. The thoughts of his heart take the place of the testimony of God by the prophet. He reasons about matters which were only intelligible to faith, and the result is blind infidelity. When he said, "Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David," he boldly impugns God’s faithfulness; in fact, what was it but to say incredulously, " Doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" His place and his throne were from God, and the security depended upon God also. Circumstances, propitious or otherwise, had nothing to do with God’s promise. The gift was absolute, conditional only as to Jeroboam’s conduct when in possession. God had said, in verse 38 of the 11th chapter, "I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee." Jeroboam sees the kingdom in danger, then his life also-" They shall kill me;" his eye looking at circumstances, and his heart overwhelmed. Neglecting God, he takes counsel of others "and made two calves of gold." His ruin is accomplished by the very means he took to secure his safety. Lacking faith in God for the present, leads to the denial of his power in the past. Momentous warning! "Behold thy gods, 0 Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt; and he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin." But his iniquity does not end here. He imitates the order of worship as practiced in Judah, observing feasts and ordaining priests of the lowest of the people. And he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel, the 15th day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart. What a terrible picture is this of the baseness of man: Jeroboam disowns God’s care and perverts His worship. The prophet, in the 13th chapter, denounces judgment on the altar, and that by a branch of the house of David. This works no repentance in Jeroboam. In verses 33 and 34, we have presented to us his downward career in sin and apostasy. Chapter 14 verses 1 to 16, open out the domestic judgment upon him in the death of his child (yet removed in the grace of God, "because in him there was found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam"), and closes with the awful threatenings of the dispersion of Israel for the sin of Jeroboam; " And he shall give Israel up, because of the sin of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin."

" The word of God is quick and powerful." The lapse of ages does not impair its efficacy, nor the force of circumstances obscure its adaptation. The living God by His Spirit applies it in power to the hearts of his children to-day, and when reading the records of the past, we seem but to deal with the present. They that worship God now, must worship Him in spirit and in truth-the worshippers, poor sinners in themselves, yet in Christ kings and priests unto God and His Father and our Father, because His. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Thus, believers in Jesus are called to a kingdom, as in Hebrews 12:28, "Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." The position of God's people on earth must needs answer to their destinies in heaven. Fellowship with God the Father, and the Lord Jesus, sustained by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost in their midst, " a peculiar people, a chosen generation, to show forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:10).

There is no other access to God but through Jesus. No medium of intercourse but by the Holy Ghost. Wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, the Lord is there. His Spirit remaineth with us always. Nothing more monstrous than in the face of such direct testimony to introduce man's will into the scene; no greater delusion than human arrangements. To restrain the outbreaks of the flesh by order in the flesh, is but to restrain one sin by setting up another. And strange it is that man dare to " intrude into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." The efficacy of ordinances does not consist in themselves, but in that they are given of God. The virtue of them arises from their being His. He meets his people in his own appointed way; and faith apprehends his presence. When saints are gathered together in the name of Jesus, and in dependence upon the Holy Ghost, they are in the way of God's appointment and consequently of blessing. To the eye of the carnal reasoner, such an assembly, without ostensible bonds of union or outward guarantees for order and decorum, is held together by a rope of sand. Their work is regarded as fugitive and ephemeral. The most favorable opinion is, that it may continue for a generation, but die out with it. But such arguments surely avail nothing. It is our duty to serve God to-day. The generation to come is safe in his hands. But we find it easier to affect care for the future, than to do right in the present, and to satisfy conscience by trusting God afar off, than when he is nigh.

Now, ostensibly, the position we are called to occupy, answers to the kingdom given to Jeroboam-the title to it similar-chosen of God, and called and exhorted to have faith in Him. The danger we have to guard against answers also to the one Jeroboam fell into-looking into circumstances apart from God, and striving by our own devices to maintain our standing-we say ostensibly: for the object of God in having a people in the world was to show forth his praise "that hath called us to glory and virtue." The weakness of man and the subtlety of Satan might hinder the manifestation of this; but the gifts and calling of God being without repentance, nothing can separate us from His love in Christ. But this very security brings corresponding responsibilities. We are saved to glorify God. The knowledge of our salvation is given to us, that whilst here we may act to His Glory, and testify to His Grace; we own doctrinally it is of Him, and by Him, and through Him are all things, yet practically we engage to do much for ourselves. We are in danger also of confining the sense of our privileges to individual blessing, instead of seeing them also in their corporate character. The safety of the individual believer, is based on God's covenant with Christ,

upon which he relies: but the blessing of the saints assembled together, is equally so. Believers "are builded together for a habitation of God, through the Spirit; " " one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all." No promises are more secure for the individual believer, than those for the blessing of saints assembled together in the name of Jesus. As in the individual there are many changes, so also in the gatherings of the saints. There needs daily purging of heart, and application of the promises to the soul of the individual: there may be more difficulty, but there is equal occasion for soul-discipline in the assembly. We are not wearied so readily in looking to ourselves, we break down in the care of others; and unless our souls are fortified by the word of God and prayer, we sink from the pressure of trial, into indifference; or, wearied with combating the wills of others, determine on the unrestrained exercise of our own. But God has written confusion on man's efforts. And even men of God have wandered furthest from his thoughts, when they have sought to provide for emergencies in the church before they have appeared, or to obviate their manifestation by discipline of their own. The chaos around us in the Religious World, the very vanity and vexation of all things, are God's warnings to us, to "cease from man;" man would not trust God for His Church, and has sought to restrain disorder by bonds of his own. How utterly has this exercise of will proved abortive, and brought in confusion which nothing can remedy, the end of which is revealed to be judgment.

" Separation from evil is God's principle of unity." Such a step taken, necessarily isolates from systems around, and throws the soul upon God. The subtlety of Satan has acted upon man, to develop arrangements prohibiting blessing to the saints. The eyes of His people are opening to this, and the question is forced -upon us, Whither shall we go for aid? Blessed be God fp'. His Grace! His Spirit remaineth with us always. Jesus is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, his presence is vouchsafed. Manifest blessing has resulted from restored confidence in the basis of the Church, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. Believers have been blessed, and made a blessing to others-the realized presence of God;-giving fullness of joy. The inheritance is discovered-the position taken-Almighty God pledged to sustain us in the blessing He Himself has provided. The times are at hand when the elect shall scarcely be saved. That they may be secured, God, by His Spirit, is opening their eyes to the danger; and, conscious of weakness, they are thrown necessarily upon him. Blessed necessity! The abounding evil around giving occasion for the super abounding grace of God. Let us beware that the thoughts of our heart do not take the place of the testimony of God. Appearances may be against us-circumstances daily arise to embarrass us-but they are permitted of God for the development of faith in Himself to the praise of his glory. " No weapon formed against thee shall prosper." Our manifold failures are so palpable, that our enemies already rejoice in our discomfiture, and account that the revival of truth which has blessed us was but a delusion: yet even this shall but serve to increase our dependance upon God. We have the elements of destruction in ourselves, but the energy of life in God. He identifies Himself with His people. He has raised the desire in our hearts to be identified with Him. When Pharaoh purposed the destruction of the children of Israel, God ordered them to encamp between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon. The enemy found them-God's eye was there too, and their deliverance is accomplished. So now the enemy is triumphing in our weakness, and purposing the injury of the body of Christ. But God orders us into the citadel, " the name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and are safe." There is danger! let us flee unto God to hide us. Let us not lean to devices of our own, nor write in our folly the sentence of death on our position and privilege

instead of upon ourselves. " For we have the sentence of Death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead." What may we not expect from his mercy? The Body, The Church.

Jesus had shed his blood, was risen, and by the right hand of God exalted. If God had been glorified in him, He also glorified Him in Himself, and that straightway. The Son of Man ascended up where He was before. He was glorified with the Father's own self, with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. Nor was his glorification without result to others. If on earth the Son of David could not disown the higher glories of his person, but rather led on the faith of a poor woman of Canaan to that infinite source of grace beyond, which, while it brought down to a real sense of the depth of degradation and woe, abounded but the more in streams of healing mercy: if on earth, "lie could not be hid," what was the suited blessing that flowed down from the God-exalted Man, crowned with glory and honor in heaven? Were those He loved to taste no savor of His joy above? Was there to be no peculiar, no present power of fellowship with Him, and worthy of Him, who was set at God's right hand " in the heavenly places far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come. On the contrary, it is precisely in this interval between his session on his Father's throne, and his coming to take his seat on his own throne, that the great mystery of Christ and the Church finds its place, development, and revelation. God, whose earthly purposes had been seemingly frustrated but really secured, though for a time in abeyance, uses the cross meanwhile as the basis of other and higher counsels (settled in His mind before the world was, but until now hidden in Himself), and thereupon exalts the crucified Lord of Glory, and sends down the Holy Ghost, not only as the one and Divine witness of what and where Christ was, but as the gatherer, by his own presence here below, of an assembly from among Jews and Gentiles, brought into the participation of the heavenly glory of Christ-in a word, as the formative agent of the Church, which is Christ's body, "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."

Beyond just question, it is in reference to this new and heavenly assembly that scripture speaks of the closest identification with Christ, of oneness with him as his body. By such a oneness, it is not merely meant that persons here and there, few or many, had been and are objects of the love and quickening power of the Son of God. Life is not, nor does it produce this oneness; abstractedly, it finds and leaves the recipients of it individuals still. Life did not set aside for this world, for those who possessed it, the remarkable characteristic and divinely sanctioned separation of Jews from Gentiles: much less did it sever externally believing Jews from their unbelieving kinsmen according to the flesh, whatever the mutual sympathies, hopes and conferences one with another, of them that feared the Lord. If there were devout Gentiles, and there is little reason to doubt that God in his mercy raised up such (witness Cornelius), before the gospel of His grace could righteously be preached, they served Him, worshipped Him, but as Gentiles nevertheless. There was no fusion of these with the godly Jews. The faith of one might be admirable in the eyes of the blessed Lord himself-"so great faith he had not found, no, not in Israel." Still it did not hinder his remaining a Gentile. Faith in itself did not, and could not, alter that, as regards this life. It was reserved not for the gift but for the Giver of faith to work a strange, unlooked-for and total reversal of the ancient order. So as to the Jews, though they had the gifts and calling of God, if any believed, the faith of individuals wrought without doubt a moral separation, and sufferings were the consequences; and the new life has affections as proper to it as are depraved lusts to the old life;

yet were not the faithful Jews formed into a manifested holy company here below, they lived as Jews, they died as Jews. It would have been sin in them to have relinquished their prerogatives and standing as Jews. Even in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus, the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, was not abolished. It existed still-nay, had his sanction, when he forbade those commissioned in the days of his flesh to go into the way of the Gentiles, or to enter into any city of the Samaritans.

Now the doctrine of the epistle to the Ephesians, chaps. 2, 3, is that consequent upon the cross, an entirely novel and different work of God commenced: a work which, belonging to, and awaiting its perfect display in the heavenly places, has an actual existence on earth, and most momentous effects in this present time. The point is not Christ dying for the Jewish nation, nor God thereby reconciling all things to himself. It is not His death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, nor for the blessing of any Gentiles who may be saved during His future reign; none of which things perhaps would be questioned by a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven. But the doctrine there enforced is that God founded upon the cross and accomplished by the Holy Ghost thereon given, a platform and structure wholly without parallel in the millennial age, when the old outstanding differences will be resumed, as abundantly appears from the Psalms and Prophets. Ephesians, chap. 2:11-18 thus contrasts it with their previously existing relations, the one dispensationally nigh, and the other afar off.

" Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." That is, in and for the Church, such fleshly distinctions are done away. Beyond a doubt, in the Church’s glory accomplished on high, they will be unknown. But the Apostle goes further, and particularly insists that they are, and ought to be, unknown now. No man, not even Christ known after the flesh, is the key-note of the Church: " yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." The Church can rest on nothing short of death and resurrection. She rejoices in her head glorified in heaven, and knows herself even now one with him there. Consequently she is raised alike above the high estate of the Jew, as above the low estate of the Gentile. " For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." If the mass of those gathered into the Church were dark, outcast Gentiles: if they could not say, We are " Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever"-they received a better adoption and a more surpassing glory; not merely covenants connected with earthly things and presented by a Messiah (whatever His own personal dignity), as minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, but

the unsearchable riches of Christ freely given, which it was meet for the God of grace and glory to bestow upon the far-off penury and wretchedness of those who possessed nothing! This was "the mystery" which was specially entrusted to the Apostle Paul, made known unto him by revelation, " as I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ; which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel." In previous ages the Spirit had quickened souls: there was nothing strange in that. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said the Son of God, not yet lifted up. The extraordinary thing was, that, when the Jews perverted their singular endowments to sin and insult the most aggravated against God, not aiding only, but provoking and inciting the Gentiles to, the crucifixion of their own Messiah, occasion was taken of the breach thus of necessity made between God and a guilty world, to introduce a secret hitherto undisclosed, but now unveiled. The elect nation had consummated their corruption and violence. God’s name was blasphemed among the heathen through those who were separated to be the grand depositary of His oracles and the witness of His character on earth. What remained, if thus the earth and its choicest people were in rebellion? HEAVEN; and so, in the depths of divine compassion, and wisdom, and love, God began to assemble a body neither Jewish nor gentile properly, though chosen out of either, both made one, both reconciled in one body, destined for a sphere as alien from the most exalted as from the most debased of earth.

" God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us," say the Jewish saints in Psalms 67:1-7, " that thy way may be made known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." Such is the order of blessing in the world to come: the Jews in the inner circle, and in the outer the Gentiles through them glad and singing for joy, for God governs in righteousness. The blessing of the nations was an ancient and reiterated truth; proclaimed to Abraham (Genesis 12:3), renewed to the seed (22:18), repeated to Isaac (26:4), and to Jacob (28:14). It was bound up in terms with the promises so well known and cherished, which guaranteed the highest seat on earth to the seed of Abraham. Is a most certain and familiar pledge of Gentile blessing in the promised seed-is this, so often and not obscurely referred to in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, the mystery which has been " hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to the saints"? Can that with propriety be said specially and absolutely to be hid, which was among the simplest and most frequently recurring household-words of the people of God, from the time of the first promise to the patriarchs? There is no secret nor silence about that which was published from are to age, and declared from generation to generation. What was made known to the fathers, and indeed to all Israel, cannot be, for this very reason, the mystery of Christ - that peculiar mystery, " which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit."

Some, I am aware, through unbelief and a consequent lack of spiritual intelligence and heed to human tradition, have unwittingly sought to neutralize the specialty, and thereby the nature and being of " the mystery," by the assumption that it had been revealed from the beginning, and that it was always, though dimly, understood by the Old Testament saints. The answer is plain and direct: the Apostle Paul says positively that "it is now revealed." From the beginning of the world it was hid in God (Ephesians 3:9). To the apostles and prophets it was now revealed, and to none

previously- ■ς ν■ν ■πεκαλ■φθη το■ς ■γ■οις ■ποστ■λοις α■το■ κα■ προφ■ταις ■ν πνε■ματι. Certainly it is not to the apostles at the present and to the prophets at a former time. It is now revealed, and that to persons joined together as a common class to which the revelation was then made;-as the structure of the words necessarily implies to any competent to judge of such a question, shutting out, therefore, the idea of any prophets being referred to before the Pentecostal mission of the Spirit. The prophets alluded to in the text, were of the present economy as much as the apostles were; and therefore the words, far from weakening, tend directly to strengthen the distinctive character of " the mystery," as a thing wholly unrevealed in former times. The character, also, of the Abrahamic blessing of the Gentiles, is totally different from that of " the mystery." "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," etc. (Genesis 22:1-24). All the nations are to be blessed in the seed; but they are, and are here regarded as being, distinct from it. They are no more to be confounded with the seed, so as to form one common body, than are the enemies whose gate is to be the possession of the seed. It and the nations are assuredly to inherit a blessing. But if it be the same blessing, will. any one maintain that it is after the same mode or in the same measure? If it be so-if the seed and all the nations of the earth are blessed indiscriminately and alike, where is the marked and characteristic prerogative of the seed of Abraham? Or is there, in truth, no peculiar privilege for his seed after all? If, on the other hand, it be not so, and the seed is to have its own proper promised place by divine favor, higher than all the nations who are blessed in it, then is the oath to Abraham most clearly distinguished from " the mystery " wherein no such differences exist, but the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and joint-partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.

Let it be repeated, that Ephesians 2:1-22; Ephesians 3:1-21 do not teach the permanent and illimited setting aside of Jewish exaltation above the Gentile. To such a superiority in this world the Jews had a lawful title, until Christ, rejected, ascended into heaven; and such a superiority will be theirs when He returns again. But there is the abolition of everything of the sort for that which spans the interim; in other words, for the intermediate calling of the church; because the church is not a mere aggregate of units-of believing persons throughout all ages, but a special body gathered, by virtue of the Holy Ghost actually present and dwelling in them as a temple, for association with the heavenly glory of Christ, as the redeemed Jews in the millennium will be the nearest and most favored objects of his earthly rule.

It was, then, the personal presence of the Holy Ghost, descended from heaven, which was the power of the unity established here below in the church; a unity not merely of life-of doctrine-of services, but of the Spirit; the unity formed and perpetuated by the Holy Ghost Himself (Ephesians 4:3). The disciples, like saints before them, were believers before Pentecost; but they were then, and not before, united to Christ in heavenly places as His body. That which unites to Christ, constituting us members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, is not the faith which the Spirit communicates as He has ever done, but the Spirit Himself personally given, as was the case at Pentecost.

Observe, it is not " unity of spirit." That is the theme pressed upon the Philippians (1:27): " Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together

for the faith of the gospel;" and compare chap. 3:16. Nor has the apostle forgotten elsewhere to pray for the saints at Rome, that the God of patience and consolation would grant them to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus, that they might with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Grace as this is, the exhortation in Ephesians 4:1-32 is of a higher order. It is not so much the spirit of themselves, or of one another that they were to think of, but the Spirit of God, the unity of the Spirit. Moreover, the apostle does not tell them to form a society by community of object, agreement of opinion, or likeness of manners. Certainly it was not an optional alliance which they were called upon to frame. The Spirit of God makes the unity. Their business is, "endeavoring to keep it (or, observe, τηρε■ν) in the bond of peace." How humbling to man and exalting to God: how encouraging, wholesome, and strengthening to His saints! To one who has entered, howsoever little, into the divine estimate of what the church is, and will be, in the counsels of God, or even of what the church originally was when, gazing into the heavenly face of Him who loved her, she reflected by the Spirit somewhat of the light of God’s glory which she had seen there; to the heart of such a one, grieving over the wreck of the deposit that was committed to the frail and treacherous hands of man, and humbled at his puny and ineffectual and proud efforts to repair the ruin which he can no longer disguise-to such, I say, O what a relief to know and feel that even here in the desert it is not "my flock," nor "our church," but the church of God, the body of Christ, the unity of the Spirit! These are the living realities with which we have to do; and at all cost to repudiate in ourselves, or in others, corporately and individually, all that denies them. That single-eyed unflinching allegiance to the wideness of God’s heart about His people must, in a time of general departure from Him, lead into an isolated path, I do not doubt, however paradoxical it may seem. That it may appear to be a severe exclusive narrowness to those who are not weaned from the worldliness and unbelief of essays on a grand scale, is possible; but for the faithful there is no choice. "Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."

None of course would deny that, as men, as sinners, as Jews and Gentiles, there are certain things possessed in common with others. There is a unity of mankind, as such or fallen, as under law and without law. There is a continuity in the administration of the promises, dispensationally, on earth, according to which Romans 11:1-36 views, first, the Jews as the natural branches of the olive-tree; then, some of them broken off because of unbelief, and the Gentiles, or wild olive-tree, graffed among them; and afterward, upon the Gentiles not continuing in the goodness of God, the Jews graffed again into their own olive-tree.* Again, there is a unity which dates higher up than the olive-tree of earthly witness-that of all the faithful, who, in the acknowledgment of common sin, look to a common Savior, as there will be a blessed and holy communion of such as have part in the first resurrection. But all these unities are demonstrably distinct from "the unity of the Spirit." With the redeemed, it is true, the Spirit had to do, inasmuch as He it is who had given souls to believe God’s salvation in Christ. That, therefore, was not, whereas the unity of the Spirit is, a new thing; for never before had He come to abide in redeemed sinners, and thus to make them one with Christ glorified on high and one with each other here below. Satan had his union of Jews and Gentiles in the cross of the Son of God; and in that cross the foundation was laid for God’s union, effected by the presence and indwelling of the Spirit in those who enjoy the exceeding riches of the grace of Gad in his kindness towards them through Christ Jesus. "There is one body and one Spirit."

(* In Romans 11:1-36 there is a cutting-off as to the branches: in Ephesians there is nothing of the sort; it would be a dismembering of Christ, which is impossible. In Romans 11:1-36 the Jews were the natural branches, and the blessings were the blessings of their own olive-tree, into which, contrary to nature, the Gentiles are temporarily graffed.. But in Ephesians, those who were near and those who were afar off in the world were alike treated as lost sinners. The only character which either possessed by nature is that of "children of wrath" (such the favored Jew was), " even as others.")

Another remark, connecting itself with the foregoing, needs to be made. Those who form the Church, whatever may be their distinctive endowments, share many blessings with all saints who ever have been and ever may be. Election, redemption, faith, saintship and heirship in the kingdom are doubtless our privileges, but they are not the exclusive property of the Church. They are common to all believers. So true is this, that they may be traced in the spared and blessed Gentiles, in the striking scene described in Matthew 25:31-46. There the Son of man is supposed to be already come and seated upon the throne of his glory, and he separates, among all the Gentiles (π■ντα τ■ ■θνη) gathered before him, the sheep from the goats. The gospel of the kingdom had been preached, it may be observed, for a witness to all those Gentiles (π■σι το■ς ■θνεσι) before the end came; and the ground of the sentence is laid in the reception or rejection of those whom Jesus, as the. King, (for his royal rights are now enforced, displayed and acknowledged), designates as his brethren, a class evidently distinct from, though coming in contact with the sheep and goats. To the sheep, set at his right hand, the King says, " Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world." That these are believing saints, redeemed by the blood of Christ, none perhaps would dispute; and the passage affirms that the kingdom which they inherit was prepared for them from the foundation of the world: terms, which differ indeed from those in Ephesians 1:1-23 (which show how the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ chose us in him before the foundation of the world) but sufficiently decisive of the fact that God prepared a special inheritance for these living Gentiles, whatever might be the small amount of their spiritual intelligence. But if there are blessings common to all believers of every age, the Holy Ghost, on the other hand, could not personally come down, and abide in men on earth, according to the scriptural figure springing up in them as well as flowing out, until Jesus was glorified in heaven. But when he took his seat there as the exalted head, the Holy Ghost was sent down for the purpose of gathering a body for Christ. This and this only is called in Scripture "the Church of God," and its unity hinging upon the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is, as we have seen " the unity of the Spirit." Matthew 16:18, is the first occurrence of the word " Church " 1:e. assembly, in the New Testament. It is important to observe that there it is spoken of as a thing not merely unmanifested, and unordered, but as not yet existing. It- was not built, nor building yet: " upon this rock I will build my Church." Secondly, the promise that the gates of Fades shall not prevail against it, cannot allude to the indefectibility, much less to the infallibility of the Church on earth. Thirdly, Christ’s Church is mentioned as altogether distinct from the kingdom of heaven, the keys of which (not of his Church) the Lord promises to give to Peter. The unity of the Church as Christ’s body will surely be displayed perfectly in the dispensation of the fullness of times, when God will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth. But does not this Scripture teach, that the Church, if for the time on earth, to itself as the heavenly witness of the grace of God, will then form part of a common system? I answer, that the passage seems, on the contrary, to keep distinct the Church in her own

peculiar and pre-eminent seat of the affection and glory of Christ. For, first, the apostle speaks of the heavenly things and the earthly things being headed up in Christ, which is deduced in Colossians 1:15-16, from His claims as Creator, though asserted by Him as the firstborn of every creature; in which latter text we have affirmed his supremacy by right of creation over all things that are in heaven and that are in earth. Next, it is added,-" In whom [Christ] also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; that we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ: in whom ye also," etc. Just so, after the statement of His headship over all things, the Epistle to the Colossians turns to another headship,-" And He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." Neither heavenly things nor earthly things are the Church, though they may be the inheritance of her who is co-heir with Christ. God " hath put all things under His feet, and given him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body." Instead of being included in " all things under His feet," she enjoys and participates in His supremacy over all, in virtue of being one with Him. Sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, she looks for an inheritance such as becomes Him who has purchased it, and Him who is its earnest; such as becomes, may we not add, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, " to whom be glory in the Church throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." But although it is in " the dispensation of the fullness of times" that the glory of Christ, shared by the Church as His bride, will be revealed, so that the world itself shall know it, yet was there a testimony to it, produced and manifested by the power of the Holy Ghost in the one body on earth. When the apostle spoke of the saints being "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit," was this unity a thing ideal, future, and only to be achieved in heaven? Or was it not an actual, present fact, made good here below by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven? Is it not true that "now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God? " And the unity of the Spirit, which the saints should endeavor to keep, where was it if not on earth? Will the saints in heaven be endeavoring to keep it there? And the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers given of Christ, Himself ascended up far above all heavens,-where were they, and where still are the gifts of Christ? Where and to what end is exercised the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ? Does the perfecting (καταρτισμ■ς) of the saints, does the work of the ministry, does the edifying of the body of Christ find their sphere in heaven? Is it there that we are in danger of being tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine? Or is it on earth that we meet with " sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive "? and there that we "grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase of the body into the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:1-32)? It was here, in the Church, that each joint of supply wrought, contributing nourishment to the whsle: it was here, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, that the body made increase. It is in this world, and in this world only, that " all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment administered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God," as it is assuredly here that the Spirit would have the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts, to the which also we are called in one body (Colossians 2:1-23; Colossians 3:1-25). In writing to the saints at Rome (ch. 12), hitherto never seen by the apostle, and therefore in man’s judgment at least, connected in no peculiar way with him, as was the case with regard to the Colossians, it is just the same: " As we have many

members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Evidently, it is not a tie which was going to be established, but a relationship then and really existent. Membership is not with a local church, but with the body of Christ; though, on the other hand, if one be not in fellowship with the assembly of the members of Christ where one resides, there can be for such no fellowship with them anywhere else. Nor can language be more explicit than that of 1 Corinthians 12:1-31,-" But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." The composition of that one body depends upon the baptism of the Holy Ghost. By Him are baptized into the body of Christ, Jews, Gentiles, bond or free; it matters not. The great fact is, that Jesus exercises His heavenly rights. He baptizes with the Holy Ghost; and they who are thus baptized become the immediate and the especial field of His presence and operations, the body of Christ,-the body subsisting on earth, and acted on by the Spirit when the apostle wrote. The diversities of gifts, of administrations and of operations, will not be in heaven. Their province is the Church on earth. It is here that the manifestation is given to every man (1:e., in the Church) to profit withal. If any reasonable doubt could be harbored about the word of wisdom to one, the word of knowledge to another, and faith to a third, there can be no question in the believer’s mind, that the gifts of healing, the working of miracles, divers kinds of tongues, and their interpretation, are not prospectively for heaven, but for earth now. It is the one and self-same Spirit who energized all these, distributing to each. For the many members constitute but one body-" by one spirit are we all baptized into one body." The importance of these last words will be better estimated, on comparing with them Acts 1:4-5; and particularly the clause, " Ye shalt be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." At the time the disciples were believers. They had life, and life more abundantly, we may say. Jesus, the quickening Spirit, had breathed upon them, and said, " Receive ye the Holy Ghost," etc. He had also opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. But none of these things is the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Pentecost first beheld the accomplishment of the promise of the Father. Then, and not before, were believers baptized with the Spirit. But it is this baptism which introduces into, and forms, the one body-it is the Spirit, thus present and baptizing, who began, organizes, and recruits the body of Christ. Hence is it, that coincident with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, we first hear, in the Word of God, of this new body, and of membership therein. Whatever the privileges (and there were many) which existed before, that which is distinctively called in the Bible the church of God, appeared here below, as the consequence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, dwelling in the disciples, and baptizing them, Jews or Gentiles, into one body.

" But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary; and those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism in the body; but that the

members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." 1 Corinthians 12:18-27. When the members are together in heaven-when our vile body is changed, fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself, will any " seem to be more feeble?" Shall we think any to be" less honorable" there, and "upon these bestow more abundant honor?" That this is a present care flowing out of the sense God gives us of the exigencies and of the preciousness of Christ's body here below, is exactly what I am contending for. Does any one believe that such will be our employment when Christ presents us to himself a. glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing? But if not, these members are members of the body then on earth, for God hath tempered the body together, " having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body (in heaven there is no danger of schism); but that the members should have the same care one for another." "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it," clearly not in heaven, but on earth. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular:" where and when is this?

"And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps in governments, diversities of tongues." Manifestly, these are gifts in the Church, the whole Church on earth. The apostle addresses, no doubt, the Church of God that was at Corinth; and it is very clear that the New Testament frequently speaks of assemblies in this or that locality: that is, Churches (compare Romans 15:1; Romans 15:5; Galatians 1:2; Galatians 1:22; Colossians 4:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:14, etc. But, besides this, which is not disputed, as well as the application of the term in Hebrews 12:23, to the congregation of the firstborn which are written in heaven, viewed as a completed thing, however anticipative Faith might say, " Ye are come" to it, even as to the other components of the glory; besides, in short, the local and future senses, 1 Corinthians 12:28 is an instance of another sense of the most important bearing, as may be seen in the Epistles of Paul; the Church, as a body here below, in a breadth as extensive as the baptism of the Spirit. That entire society, or corporation, wherein He dwelt and wrought, was the Church in which God set apostles, prophets, teachers, etc. Certainly it was impossible to say that He had set all these in the Corinthian assembly, nor will it be maintained that He is to set them in the Church universal gathered on high. There is, then, a third and large sense of "the Church," in which unity is predicated of all the members of Christ existing at one time in the world, whatever might be the distance separating their bodies; and that in virtue of one Spirit baptizing them into one body. The body of Christ, like the natural, is susceptible of increase, as Scripture plainly indicates; but, as in the natural body, the identity subsists when the old particles have given place to new, so the body of Christ is the body still, whatever the changes in the members in particular. He who, by His presence, imparted unity at its beginning, conserves unity by His own faithful presence. He was given to abide with the disciples forever. In fine, by " the Church " is meant not a junction of various co-ordinate, much less conflicting societies, but a body, the one body of Christ, possessing the same privileges, and calling and responsibility on earth, and looking for the same glory in heaven as the Bride of Christ. If a man was baptized by the Spirit, he was thereby constituted a member of the Church; if he had a gift, it was to be exercised according to the proportion of faith for the good of the whole; not ministry, not membership pertaining to a Church, but to the Church; each joint belonging to the

entire body, and the entire body to each joint (Romans 12:1-21; 1 Corinthians 3:1-23; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 1 Corinthians 14:1-40; Ephesians 1:1-23; Ephesians 2:1-22; Ephesians 3:1-21; Ephesians 4:1-32; Colossians 2:1-23; 1 Timothy 3:15; Revelation 22:17).

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On Principles and Practice in Gathering

"The questions are: 1st, Can the renewed soul, led by the Spirit, be satisfied with any turning point of conduct for itself in which it does not find the presence of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who quickened it; and, 2dly, Was it gathered (by the Holy Ghost) according to what He is, as Father gathering the adopted in the name of Christ for his own house in heaven, or merely to a corruptible testimony entrusted to man's hand." The descent of Noah's Ark upon Mount Ararat is a remarkable fact. In such a deluge it might have floated, sport of the elements, any where. Faith, most surely, would have recognized the place of its descent, wheresoever that had been, as the right place, because it was the choice of Him without whom not one sparrow falleth to the ground; but they whose faith is accompanied with intelligence, from the word, as to the divine counsel and plans concerning the earth, can see something of the reason of the place which was selected. Again, no one, I think, that has passed any time by the sea-shore, and beheld " also the ships, which though so great, and driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth,"- and, amid them, observed one vessel continuously maintaining one and the same position, spite of various currents and the veering of the wind round and round the compass,-but what must have felt that there was a cause why such vessel drifted not, neither changed its place. Its carrying lights, to warn of reefs, etc., might, indeed, proclaim the object of its being there, but there are also PRINCIPLES by which its position is maintained.

Surely the so easily led human mind will never be able to maintain any definite, much less a God-honoring, position, amid circumstances in which God shakes around us all that can be shaken-that is, if it is left to itself. In speaking of shaking now, I do not advert to the mere mutability and versatile wantonness of human will-or to the quicksand character of everything in man's day- or even to those awful periods in the human history, as the great French revolution, which (through the mercy of God) are more rare than are the phenomena of the earthquake, hurricane and volcanic eruption in nature; occurrences, in which (the usual restraints imposed by God on the injurious elements being for a time suspended) man is allowed to witness what bearing the world of his pride would have upon himself, if it were left of God in the hand of the usurping adversary (whether that world be in nature or society.) But besides versatility and changeableness being stamped on man, on the world (set up in Cain's family, Genesis 3:1-24 as a place for the flesh to be happy in, out of God's presence), and on scenes subject to Satan,-there is altogether another element of change, when God speaks of His judging, trying, changing or shaking, etc. And this is the grand leading feature of the scenes on which my mind was resting, when I asked, " How shall a definite position be maintained?"

Turn for a moment to the deluge and its attendant circumstances; to the Exodus and its scenes; to the history of the transit of the apostles from Judaism to Christianity; and say, " Who led and kept, save He that formed the people of His choice?" I ask not about the state of feeling, intelligence, or hope of the saved, but, Who kept themselves? God, and God alone, was their keeper. Stability is

not a creature-quality; there is but One that changes not - that knows not the shadow of a turn-and He will have mercy* on whom He will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion. It is meet that He should; it becomes Him: higher we cannot go in accounting for why He acts as He does. As to the saved-they " found grace in His sight"; He " remembered his covenant" with Abraham and with Isaac and with Jacob; and the songs of Mary, of Zacharias and of Simeon-all ascribe the mercy found unto His grace and to that alone.

(* As a creature, man is clearly responsible to be subject to His Creator; if he is subject, it is, he being a sinner, only through faith in Christ; Wile does not through grace believe-he is not independent, though his pride may love to think that he is-he falls necessarily into the hand of Satan and becomes a mere tool of his.) But the saved people had also the Lord's marks upon them;-the word of the Lord (though known to them as being above them, " magnified above all His name") was precious in their sight; and they were desirous to be implicitly subject to it and to His Spirit. I am persuaded that amid the tryings, judgings, changings and shakings by the Lord of all things-none will stand save those that find grace in His sight: the rest will be found self-sold and self-bound, by the folly of their own hearts, to Satan; though it may be, that many a soul which should have been, as it were, improved by the trial, will be only re-made in it. If a haughty or self-confident, or self-complacent, or even an unbroken spirit is in us,-or if policy and expediency have been our strength,-I am persuaded that, saints though we be, the presence of the Lord will show concerning us, both to ourselves and to others perhaps, around us, that in His presence "all flesh is grass; the grass withereth, the flower thereof fadeth away, be- cause the Spirit of the Lord bloweth thereon." Job's history is a solemn one. The very nearness of the Lord is the abasement of the pride of the flesh. While at the same we shall prove that policy and expediency (vain against Satan and even man), will never stand in the presence of God, or be owned by the Lord. He could not own them:-they came in at the fall, when man learned to blend his own circumstances, and used them as the cover wherewith to deceive a guilty conscience as to God's all-seeing eye; they had their allowed field marked out for them in the family of Cain, the murderer of his brother,-driven out from the presence of the Lord; they were the ruin of Saul, etc.; and are utterly incompatible with faith. For they are always the expression of present subjection to a power which seeks its own because it loves not and owns not dependance upon God, as being the alone fountain of every good gift. The door open for self is open for Satan too. Policy and expediency and human plannings will, in God's presence, I am persuaded, be found to be inconsistent with present obedience and dependance-and to be practical independence (compare Isaiah 2:10-22). Jacob's experience when his name was changed illustrates this.

They cannot stop Satan, silence conscience, or meet necessity: to subject self to the counsels of God about Christ is never really their aim. The grand principle of faith is, that we trust in God that raiseth the dead-having the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves. This surely is a GREAT principle; not as some speak of principles, as though principles could accomplish themselves; or as though they that have the principles, could act them out in their own energy, or use God's energy to do so. To trust in God that raiseth the dead-gives no room for my energy or plannings-. any more than does the having the sentence of death in myself, that I should not trust in myself. It is not that there will not be action, or that I shall not act,-but it is this: my own will and objects being crossed and judged, I have to wait on God, subjecting myself to His will, and taking up His objects--to suffer His will and receive blessing.* And again: Faith, though it has a

large stock to draw from in God, has nopurse or scrip in man wherein to carry about the expenses of the journey. " Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Faith is present dependance upon a present God-it cannot live out of his presence; for it is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; -in his presence God and Christ alone are exalted. He wakeneth morning by morning, " He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned"; " the Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back"; and " now the just shall live by faith." If the Lord is our portion we must go out of His presence, ere we can say, " I lack."

(* When the blessed Lord had done all that was well-pleasing to God in his life here below, it was that the depths of his perfectness appeared in his suffering on the cross. Our deepest and fullest subjection to God as saints often comes out more in what we have to suffer than to do-and hence our fullest joy is more in the suffering than in doing.) And since some confound principles with power; let me just recall the oft-repeated truth-" A law cannot enforce itself." Every successive government, for the last sixty years, in Paris, has stamped paper notes,-but they cannot pay themselves or their holders. Those of preceding governments are now on sale as waste paper. The laws for Ireland cannot execute themselves: and if the government has power to enforce any act, and sends thither those who shall do so,-such bring not their own power, or will, or objects, but that of another; and are thus dependent upon those that sent them, for the means to accomplish their will. Still, the commissioned officer has the government behind him:-else his acts would constitute him a rebel and a traitor. But no act can enforce itself.

I wish attention could be roused to this question" Have you any principles? and if you have, are they Divine, and such as will make good for you, if you are consistent with them, a steady position when all things are shaking round you." Clearly they who are walking with God, as did Enoch, can say, " Through grace I have such; for the great leading circumstance to me is God, who, nearer to me than my own self, never changes, and if I am kept true to Him, when He has overruled things for Himself, the same grace which keeps me now by steady adherence to Him, who is the same yesterday, to day, and forever, will cause it to appear before all in His own day to the praise of His own grace. God keeps His saints; and when He displays His glory He will not forget His keeping of the saints, or the saints of His keeping. The poor broken sinner’s rest is habitually here, " God cannot deny Himself." This is the obedient soul’s shelter-He cannot deny Himself. I may be ignorant-misinformed and everything else; but humbleness of heart which seeks to leave all and sacrifice self to God can say, He will not deny Himself-" for if any man will do His will, he shall know", and " I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

God the Holy Ghost, as the Quickener, Expositor, and Applier: the written word of God’s grace-mirror, in which the beauty of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus is presented to faith; exposition, too, as it is at once of the riches in wisdom and grace of God and the Father, and of the poverty of what we are in ourselves: and an obedient frame of heart and mind; these are our great securities here below.

" My principles, then [mine, inasmuch as God keeps me by making faith in them to be indwelling in me], are, if I speak for eternity, IN HEAVEN - God, even the Father, with the Son of Man returned from the works He did on earth, resting in the glory which He had with Him before the world was, until the children of the Father’s love are made ready for the House of the Father; and the

counsels about Him: and ON EARTH God the Holy Ghost, and the Word of Its grace."* The presence of God with the church is the alone dwelling of God on earth now since Jerusalem was broken up; and if the Holy Ghost is not here, though there may be the actings of Providence over the earth from the throne above (as surely there are), direct personal connection or intercourse between God and earth there is none: for the throne of the Providence of the Creator is in Heaven, and is served by ministering spirits. But the Holy Ghost is here, and He Himself, because He is God, is the connecting link between those that know Him, and the present display in Heaven of the Father and the Son, as well as the earnest of what is to come. On the other hand, our nothingness in ourselves, and the sufficiency of God, notwithstanding all, is shown in that the mode of His dealing is simply the Word....of faith; for " the Word of the Lord endureth forever."

(* One has remarked, how, down here, " the Holy Ghost and the Word are, somehow or another, the real objects of assault of Satan in every controversy." question - What are the distinctive peculiarities of this period, from Pentecost to the rapture; and in what peculiar part of this period are we-? Whether in the subdivision of its standing-or that of its failing-or that of its being failed? But here, too, again, the question is more about God and the recognition of Him, than about aught else.)

If I come to speak as to my principles FOR TIME-it is not that they are, therefore, human, or that they cease (because for time) to be divine: quite the contrary, but necessarily then, as so connected (viz. with time), the character and mode of God's actings in time then become a question, and a very important question; and so dispensational truth has to be considered: and this is one of the very solemn evils connected with despising dispensational truth,…which is not (as some think), mere notions of the human mind-fancies of the imagination -but that truth of God's sober, solemn word, which describes God's present path and conduct. Without dispensational truth, there can, in detail, be no consistent intelligent walk with God now in time. Here arises the

It is not my thought to enter here either into truth as universally true (by which I mean that, inasmuch as wherever God acts, He must act worthily of Himself, and because of His being one God, there are certain grand leading truths which will be found wherever he is found, characteristics of Himself), or into truth as dispensationally given. By truth as dispensationally given, I mean the varieties of expressions God may have been pleased to make of Himself in various scenes: as, for instance, in forming one scene, in which He would make a display suited to the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;' and another scene suited to the display of Jehovah as involving (I judge) the titles Lord God, Messiah, and the Spirit, etc. etc. etc. If people think they can cramp up infinite glory, or infinite grace, which has stooped to make various finite circles for itself in connection with man, to one place or to a given limit, they are mistaken, and only show us their own folly and short-sightedness.

I shall take it for granted that my reader understands what is distinctively peculiar to the church, or, at least, has some idea thereof; for who of us has more? And that the Heavenly Calling, the mystery (or vital union of the members in one body,-of which Christ is head,-which is His bride,-the vessel of glory in which He will be admired), the baptism of the Holy Ghost, etc., are, in measure, known and admitted as distinctively peculiar: I shall suppose this is granted. This conceded, I ask, as to my principles for time, so far as they are connected with congregationalism of the members of that body (and beyond this, I shall not here essay to go) What are they?

I have been asked whether " gathering to good", or "gathering from evil" is the principle to act on. I understand what ought to be meant when the two propositions are thus put antithetically, as characteristic of two opposite principles of gathering; though I judge the statement is defective, if not erroneous. I say so, because clearly, they whose ensign now is " gathering to good", would not deny, but insist upon it, that they gather from evil also. And on the other hand, they who profess to " gather from evil" admit that in one sense they " gather to good". Also, on the other hand, what is meant, and its force is plain enough, because each term is put distinctively, and that makes it clear; as if when one said, " my salvation is due to the mercy of God"; and another said, " and mine to the righteousness of God",-the propositions taken separately, as each distinctively characteristic of the state of a soul would be quite intelligible. One would be the language of a poor sinner saved by grace; the other of one who thanked God that He was not as other men! but if joined together as the expression of one and the same person, the one would so far modify the other as that both of them might be true. For he whom mercy found as a sinner and adopted into the family, righteousness preserves for the sake of Him whose is the family. But when it is asked whether " gathering to good" or " gathering from evil" is the proper principle, clearly there are two modes of gathering supposed; two characteristic features in the modes pursued by two parties; and they are contrasted the one with the other, so that you may take your choice of which of them you will adopt; and this shows that they are contrasted, for if you take one you leave the other. The question is deeply interesting if fairly considered. " He that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad", was the word of One who spake as never man spake. His mode of gathering was as God’s. If ours is as was His, how blessed! If otherwise, we scatter abroad. But I believe a deeper question even than any of these is involved; for the mode of God’s conduct always flows out of the Who and What He Himself is; and this makes the question of the very deepest possible moment to the true worshipper.

I doubt whether any will see their way through this subject, unless they have a somewhat simple faith as to God, and some measure of clearness as to redemption, and also can keep " the church triumphant" (as yet to be displayed as a whole in the glory of God) distinct from, and yet in connection of thought with, the discovery of the various members of that whole in the progressive history of " the church militant "; and they also should see the standing, falling and fallen subdivisions of that history.

And, first, I may remark, that to those who have intelligence exercised in Divine things-I doubt not-holiness is more distinctively characteristic of God, than is aught else. Holy, Holy, Holy! is the cry distinctive to His presence: and if one enters in thought upon what He is in Himself, which is clearly deeper and fuller than that which may shine forth from Him, -He is that He is: His essential character, and the indescribable peculiarity in the very thought of supreme Deity, plainly put Him, apart from all else - in Himself, - and as the origin, center and end of everything, and so as to us. And this is just the separativeness of Divine holiness.*

(* Though I speak here only of Divine holiness as now manifestatively displayed - it is, of course, also as essential to God as mercy or compassion, etc.)

There is no contradiction in God most surely; and yet there may be, and there are different characteristics, and some may be higher than others. To one party He may be merciful in goodness, to another righteous in wrath-in both cases He is holy.

Another has remarked, in commenting on the evils of the day, that people talk of charity and love; and when they think this or that action is inconsistent with either of them, say it must be inconsistent also with God's pleasure, for " God is love"; entirely forgetting that it is said, " GOD is love", 1:e. the characteristic of love does not set aside Himself, or what He is.

I have spoken above of holiness as more characteristic of God than is aught else. It is peculiarly so. LOVE may be of various kinds; damnation in John 3:1-36 is the reward of loving darkness more than light; so may LIGHT, 2 Corinthians 11:14, Satan is an angel of light, and Matthew 6:23, " if the light that is in thee be darkness," etc.; so may LIFE, as may be seen by the foolishness of those who argue against eternal misery, because eternal life is promised only to the believer.* If Love, Light, and Life are used characteristically at times of God, they are not GOD himself. But as proceeding from God, have to be thought of as connected with God, and what He is, and His holiness.

(* The "forever" which follows the judgment of the great white throne is of persons clearly raised, many of them, from the dead-therefore not in the simple power of the life of mere fallen humanity; they are judged according to works, on which ground none could be saved, unless Christ died in vain, and the " forever " of their torment is past all dispensations, in God forever-where their worm dieth not, and where their fire is not quenched. The same is of course true of wisdom, power, etc.) And it must not be forgotten that Redemption is distinct from Creation. Redemption is the bringing back from out of the hand of the adversary by purchase and power. There could be no Redemption where there was no fall- no people redeemed save those who were under the power, through the fall, of the adversary. The power was of God, and the ransom was of God; but it was in behalf of a people from under the adversary's hand. By creation they were God's-in their actual state, through the fall, they were sold under sin, and though still in many cases partakers now of the goodness of God's providence in time, they had nothing but participation m Hell in prospect from themselves. Redemption brings them back to God-to God in the portion he may assign them, and that we know now is one marvelously connected with His own self, children in the Father's House. In the church, triumphant in glory, all that the power or wisdom of God in His beneficence can put forth in display as the token of His delight in the Man Christ Jesus will, I cannot doubt, be displayed; and. no good thing will He withhold. In the church militant, as first set up, there was a foreshadowing of the good which is to come in the day of glory, so far as the circumstances would admit of it. Thus it will be the scene of the display of the glory of God and the Lamb (Revelation 21:1-27; Revelation 22:1-21); and will be dedicated to Divine and Heavenly purposes, the court of all earthly plans and glory; will have special connections with the Son, and be the vessel in which He will be glorified by the then unrestrained power of the Spirit. All these things and others had their commencement in display at Pentecost; hereafter it will be in the heavenlies literally, in the glory of God and the Lamb; it was in time the place on which, when Heaven was opened, the rays of the light of the Son upon the Father's throne, and of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ were known, by faith, to play. It will be the place of display of the Spirit in unrestricted power; it was the place of His residence, but self-restrictively (John 16:13-15), amid earthen vessels, acting through faith chiefly, acting as a means to an end. There were the powers of the world to come, shown too, in man, and a sort of first-fruits of the blessing man will have hereafter: the confusion of tongues remedied by the gift of tongues; sickness, by gifts of healing, etc.; and the impress of a moral character of unselfish love put upon the company gathered, which was beautiful and

excellent.

While, from what I have said as to our adorable God and redemption, it will be seen I have precluded myself from the possibility of admitting, that " gathering to good" was ever the distinctive mark of gathering, yet in the subordinate and second sense (the one from which one is precluded by the contrast supposed between the two principles stated), I of course own that there was a manifested good to which, in apostolic days men knew believers were gathered. For there was once a God-honoring, undefiled temple habitation of God through the Spirit, with the company who (because true to God and the trust committed to them) had, as the church, the tokens of gracious power and moral character which spake among men for God; "great grace was upon them all, and they had favor with all the people" (see Acts 2:1-47 and iv). But this I should press, that in those days, and never indeed while the church stood, did believers in it look upon it as other than as means to an end. To the mind of the Spirit, it might be the fold, for the time being, of those with whom he was dealing for eternity; and the great practical point of the believer that he was there as one separated as a living member of Christ's body from all around it incompatible with His glory and its life; but the deposit was in man's hand, and therefore there was the need of watching, for the place had no fixity of goodness attached to it, but was open to every inroad of the adversary.

And, further, while responsibility rested on man, that no evil should be allowed or sanctioned there, for the place was holy, -the epistles, if compared one with another, show, as to the peculiarities of the place, that if the light of Heaven shined on the church below, and if all that God and Christ have done were proclaimed to faith as somehow or other its portion, that the enjoyment of these things now is in various measures and degrees, and is affected by state and circumstances; and so also the enjoyment of the blessed Spirit, for he may be honored, or grieved, and quenched, or perhaps even resisted. And it must never be forgotten, that being committed in dispensation to man, failure was sure and prophesied of too, failure of a worse kind than ever had preceded. And as to the people in the scene who had found an eternal portion there, they surely could not - we surely cannot-but mark as to the Spirit's own self the peculiarities of His presence. The Ruler and Comforter, as God personally, the good One in all perfectness of Divine goodness, yet the abiding of His presence hung, and hangs in his gracious condescension toward us, upon His understanding of the intrinsic worth of the counsels of God, and of the worthiness of the Lamb. On the ground of this, he tarries in long-suffering heedful of the new nature given, amid the poor earthen, and soft sin-stained, and alas! sometimes sin-sanctioning people. Though the sin-sanctioning saint's portion is " a wounded conscience, who can bear," for the grieved Spirit is a griever; and the quenched Spirit can quench all joy; and the resisted Spirit is a resister.

Compassion, and mercy, and long-suffering, are learned by us to be in God, in means to an end, whether as characterizing his taking hold of brands in the burning, and translating them from the hearth to His temple; or as marking him while not only in Egypt, but while speeding through the wilderness, amid the poor failing ones. But in His own Canaan - in the end, whether we look to the Father's house on high, or to the wide spread fields of glory and blessedness below.... will there be a need in us to which compassion, and mercy, and long-suffering can then still flow? I judge not. But the lesson as well learned then, as well taught now, of mercy, compassion, and long-suffering in God shall be known in the fixedness and fullness and power worthy of the Spirit in the presence of the glory of God and the Lamb. Feeble quivering lips, in the earthly house of this tabernacle, shall no longer lisp these sounds, in uncertain continuity, with many an interval and pause

between; but he who groaned and sighed here below, once, as never mere mortal did, shall then, anointed with the oil of joy and gladness above his fellows, in the midst of the church sing praise to GOD. And who will refuse to join in that song-song of praise for the deliverance which Jehovah's Prophet, Priest, and King found, when as a poor and needy one, forsaken as a worm, and no man, he cried unto God, and was heard, Psalms 22:1-31.

Unselfish, then, without one sorrow left, the God of mercy and compassion will be our glory. There are two things one has to remember as a learner in the school of God. One is, that God, the Holy Ghost, never unteaches what Himself has taught; the other is, that by our misapprehensions of, or additions to, what He has taught, our minds are often hindered from further progress. I would avoid by any question shaking any mind as to any truth He has taught it; but I would not desire to avoid, even by questions, raising reverently in His presence the inquiry, " How far have I really apprehended in its full scope His thought upon this or that topic, the which I am persuaded He Himself has taught me?" The difference between these two things is immense. If Hezekiah had not assumed that himself had learned the lessons God was teaching, in Isaiah 38:1-22, he would not have failed as he did, in chapter 39: Now when I get to the point of the failing subdivision in the church's history, or the history of its failing as on earth, I confess a crowd of thoughts come before my own mind; index surely of my unfitness to pretend to teach, but not with my brethren to inquire. My remarks may be desultory, but let them be weighed, and received or rejected as they are found when placed in the balance of the sanctuary. And, first, it seems to me, that judging by the end many minds have overlooked the differences of things which are found in the church. For instance;-if I compare Revelation 19:1-9, with chapter 20:1-6, I find in the one place the marriage of the Lamb, and His bride; and in the other place I find thrones and a kingdom. So in chapter 21 and 22, there is what the city is in itself; the new Jerusalem, city of our God, bride adorned for her husband, and there is the use made of it in a dispensational display from chapter 21:9, onward over the earth. Now the kingdom and the display (1:e. the second subject in both cases), is dispensational, it lasts for a thousand years, when Christ gives up the kingdom "to God, even the Father (1 Corinthians 15:24), having put all enemies under his feet... that God may be all in all." The kingdom clearly is over the earth, and as clearly God was all in all in the court of it, the new Jerusalem, at the beginning as at the end. For there the Son. has said to his Father, "Behold me and the children committed to me"-they have been in the Father's house, and heard and joined their elder brother in His song of praise in their midst: and as to the displayed glory of the city of their abode, there was no temple there (no stringent restriction on adoration), for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb (whose glory was all pervading without a veil) was the temple: the medium through which all was seen, how blessed 1 The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof: the Lamb's book of life, the enrollment of its citizens, and the throne of God and the Lamb there. Not so on earth -the millennial display there had only showed the competency of the Son of man to wield power, as everything else, for God even in a scene still open to inroads of the adversary, still having unreconciled inhabitants. God could not come in there apart from offices and works, sustained still in the person of the mediator as such, and there a temple was blessing; for, if restrictive as to worship, it proclaimed the presence there of the Lord. Now I would suggest, whether at the beginning (in the Acts, say) 'there is not a double testimony of a kingdom and of truth, about a bride with a most striking difference too flowing, perhaps, out of the difference I have referred to-that the kingdom is held dispensationally only by the blessed Lord, as many other things, by which God had tried man, and found man fail in, will then be seen to be held by the

Lord, and God honored by him; but that at the commencement of that kingdom in its court above, another state of things is found standing in the full fruition of redemption, and God there already all in all. The difference I suggest, further I go not, is that there was a kingdom formed among men, but that there was only the testimony of the bride delivered (by Paul). There was no bride committed to man's hand, neither was the thing put forth into man's hand; it hung on Christ as the head above. Separate members there might be, and were, but the thing itself' never was in dispensation at all, only the doctrine about it--of nothing on earth could it be said, " The bride of the Lord," as it could be said, " The kingdom." I write freely, because I write suggestively, and desire that what I write may be judged, and rejected if not sustained by Scripture. And I would just observe that there is no question, to me at least, whether the same persons may be in both-or whether the principle of faith might, of God, be placed as the spring in the heart of fellowship with both."

One more point I would advert to as being connected with what is inside of this subject; and that is, as to the ministrations of the Spirit. How far did our blessed God, in forming and recording them, so order them, as that He, in reformation or renewal of blessing, could act within the precincts of those ministrations as of Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, or not?*

(* I put this question, without any doubt that " He did so entirely " is the proper answer; but I put it because I find that the definitions given by some who are very jealous against the thought of acting beyond Scripture, make it needful to suppose that, after failure took place, there could be no fresh display by God for Himself without something or other, which certainly did not exist at the beginning, being introduced. The error lies in their own wrong definitions, which are then pleaded as an excuse for seeking precedents out of the Old Testament; and so I judge, setting aside the obedience of faith in the believer, and setting up a new thing not ordained by God, and therefore the expression of human will and folly.) As to that which lies connected with what is on the outside, I still feel that (though this more properly comes under the question of the closing in of judgment) all the things which were found at the beginning in the scene-Jews, Gentiles, and the church of God-have to be kept before the mind as three co-existing separate bodies, while the present period lasts. And it is the losing sight (as I judge) of the divine dealings with the Jews, with the image of Daniel, and with the extern nations, as such, which has tended to confuse the minds of many as to the church. They have made separate threads of each of the three first named, so far as it got blessing from the church, and somehow or the other, dropped all the distinctively peculiar characteristics of the church, and made an anomalous fourfold cord, which has no existence in Scripture. As to the fact of the failing, my own mind has no doubt whatever, and I am only astounded to find people deny that man has forfeited altogether everything under this disposition which God had put into his band. I have sometimes feared whether some (who speak boldly enough about man's entire failure in everything always, and yet seem inclined to cavil at testimony to man's failure since Pentecost) really know what they themselves have taught, and the uncompromising holiness of God which cannot pass by sin, though he can lift the sinner above the place on which judgment is coming. I only add, that the question is not at all as to whether the obedience of faith may not realize greater blessedness, or more beauty, or more power of testimony: be it that it may, this would not undo the failure of the dispensation as such.

I have noticed these things, because they seem to me elements involved in the question, if it is fully entered into, " What constituted the forfeiture by many, of the divinely made deposit at the

commencement of this period we live under?" The question clearly is not of individual salvation, but of the witness, as a whole, which God raised for Himself on earth, when Judaism ceased to be a witness. No witness which He ever set in the world was ever removed by outside adversaries, or by Himself, until it was self-betrayed. When self-betrayed, mercy might long wait ere judgment came in; but judgment in the end always came, and when the witness, or its wreck, was removed, the faithfulness of God to Himself, in his own in it, was only made the more manifest, because of the judgment of the outside-failed witness. The witness self-betrayed, and the forfeiture of blessing apparent, not only might the obedience of faith still be acted upon by the faithful toward God, and the whole of His word of grace, but He may be found manifesting His own faithfulness amid the failure, and vindicating His name and His grace by a preserved and chosen people. Such, 1 suppose, we own and acknowledge to be the case-the door of our present mercy. The apostasy, or ruin, when perfected, is not simply the corruption of one thing. In it, I judge, will be found the ripened fruits of many evils among the Jews, Gentiles, and nominal church. I press this, because the magnitude of the common ending in wickedness (the anomalous fourfold cord referred to), if seen, will humble the heart to seek the Lord’s guidance and light as to varieties of evils now present at work among us. To what good visible thing could Luther, or did we (when we began to gather) gather. I am sure I know not. "Cease to do evil, learn to do well:" "herein do I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offense both toward God and man." These and such like words: as " to keep one’s self unspotted from the world", and " Come out of her, my people, and be not partaker of her sins"; " Come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing." Such words, I say, plowed up my soul twenty-one years ago, and forced me out I knew not whither; and the only bright thing I knew before me, was to meet the Lord. God and his holiness brake in upon my soul as the sun rising in a clear morn. It was God, though it might be God for me; and Christ in God, one whom the world, as being under Satan, had allowed no place to upon earth -that perfect One, in the presence of whose perfectness, the contrast of all that I was to Him, made me loathe myself: it was the solemnizing presence of God, though that perfectness of His Christ might have been the ground of His work on the cross for me; and though it might speak liberty of approach as being ever before God, and be the pattern to which I was predestinated to be conformed;-yet this Christ and I, how unlike now! and thus every act of real separation from, and renunciation of the world, the flesh, or Satan, became an act really of self-abasement, and of honoring of God, and the expression of personal attachment to the Lord. Abba’s love and the unchanging presence of the Holy Ghost, and the sweetness of communion of saints may, since, have been tasted,-good things to which God, who knew what he was doing, knew were in store for us; blessed things though tasted in the wilderness; but so far as what one knew, in one’s own mind, when one came forth, they had no place in my mind. And if we talk of gathering now, let your faith be a thousand times brighter and clearer than mine as to What and how precious God’s estimate of His people is (and may it be so!); see and glory too in God in our midst; and sing, amid failure and crash around, the triumphant song of all things working together for good to them that love God; yet let me put it to your conscience, whether of a truth, as in His Presence to whom every heart is bare, you can turn your back on Egypt and your face to Canaan-the waste-howling wilderness around-God trying our hearts and teaching us to know what we are as well as who He is-the people murmuring-His presence questioned-the dance and idol-worship, and merriment presaging judgment-heresy within the camp -outside all, amid the crash and confusion of the day: and then, I say, (if indeed you realize what is due to Christ), I thank God that you can find that God’(and not yourself) "

gathering to good" is the principle acted upon. To faith it surely is true; but not, as was said before, as by contrast with gathering from evil.

If these are my principles, and if, by acting upon them they once made a serene calm around, because they brought God into the scene, and if worship was then and there tasted, which man could enjoy, they are not that serene calm itself. Cause and effect are separable, as root and fruit. If my own folly, or the uninstructedness of those who owned the blessedness of the effects, without a due knowledge of the cause, or if the malice of Satan's snares to us has led God to allow my heart to be challenged as to whether I will cleave to him and give up the quietness of fellowship and worship which yesterday's honoring Him produced, I have no difficulty in seeing what is the right answer. To honor God and retain an unspotted conscience are of more worth than intercourse with good men-communion of saints I will not say, for that can never be found apart from his honor and a pure conscience, without which being maintained in the conscience of the individuals, it is mere intercourse of good men, if not confederacy; but is never to be called communion of saints. God is a better portion than any present effects which honoring Him may produce. Moreover, the calm is broken*, the serenity is of yesterday; to turn back to where it is not will only be weakness. He, if honored, can, and in His own time, will return, the blessing, and greater still. Arise, this is not your rest; it is polluted.

(* Look from Rome outwards, and find a calm, serene, ecclesiastical circle, if you can, among men, save where death reigns. Holy, happy hearts, and a two or three happy enough, if God is honored, you may find: and do you want a settled calm, until Christ comes? or du you want God to cease from making the church militant the school for his saints? To lively faith-the presence of God with us, and the prospect of glory to come makes us pilgrims and strangers in a stranger land, whether we be in Egypt or the wilderness. God present and glory before its suffice for faith in the wilderness. If our jo,y, in that Presence or Prospect is very great, it may break and mar-the vessel and produce even bodily sickness upon the bed, as with one of old, for many days (Daniel 8:27; Daniel 10:8), and John fell at his feet as one that was dead); if the flesh would take occasion to exalt itself, God in mercy may send a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet; but if our foolish worldly hearts confound the blessing and the place we are in, and think Egypt or the wilderness to be lovely, God can make, and will make their really proper characteristics to be seen and felt. Israel went out of Egypt led by the Lord, and thrust forth by the spears of Pharaoh's horsemen. So God, Heaven and faith on the one hand, and Satan, the world, and bitter experience on the other, teach the same lessons, according as we walk, after the Spirit, in the renewed nature, and it finds development, or, after the flesh in the old, and it gets breaking.

How can the fruits of the Spirit's presence with the church militant ever become a safe rest any more than the fruits of that presence with the individual soul? For the presence of the Spirit is not known so much by results wrought in and from us as by the sense of the presence of God, and of Christ., and the influential energy which the faith of these things gives. The Spirit presents to us (not Himself, though present and known to faith to be so) but God and Christ; and certain results follow, which, however, never, I think, can safely become a ground of rest or complacency as to the church or the soul. He is a jealous God, and loves not to see a soul rest in aught which is short of that in which He rests.) In Israel the pillar of fire and cloud was the central point till Israel made the calf-but when Moses had pitched the tabernacle outside the camp-thither moved the pillar, and there the people who were called and obeyed the call to separate themselves unto the Lord went

forth, and there they found the Lord and the mediator in converse together. Gilgal was but a repetition of this in principle; for there they had to separate themselves afresh from their own evil to the Lord by circumcision. And when in Judges, chapter 2, the angel of the Lord went up from Gilgal to Bocchim, His first word was one of rebuke, that they had lost their practical separateness from the evil of the world around them.

It may be, that while the church stood in the integrity of its primitive state, there was no such observable separableness to the individual soul of his principles as for eternity and as for time; for the God of eternity was honored by man in the position He in time had taken up; and while failure was going on, the distinction adverted to might not be so felt as it ought to be, now that the failure has been made fully manifest. And here I would observe what the Book of Judges fully establishes, that help from the Lord to a failed people always comes in a way to rebuke the failure, and make it to be seen by all, that though gracious amid failure, God is no sanctioner of the failure. Yea, the aid so comes, that you cannot get it without the admission of failure. I doubt not, that the preserved in Jesus Christ and called, of Jude's epistle, are as well the token of the failure of the whole from which they are separated, and of those that need " compassion" (verse 22); and of those that are pulled " out of the fire," as of God's faithfulness; and is not their very work one which avows failure. To those who look for numbers to their party with something that can be seen, and of weight in it, I say I would rather be among the 300 who, unlike men, lapped of the water with the tongue as a dog lappeth.... chosen of the Lord in their unconsciousness, as the deliverers of Israel, than of the 22,000, or the 9,700, who, like worshippers and men, bowed down on the knee to drink, whom the Lord sent away. To attempt to make good, in display, the unity of the body on earth, when God has been dishonored, is really to turn back from the tabernacle of testimony outside the camp (where is the Lord, and the mediator and the avenger of his dishonor), to honor the place out of which he has been driven by the golden calf and its worship.

God is God*, and will be God alone, even unto the end. Christ is the one, who in His presence is the all-governing and first object. If you have found Him, or been found of Him, abide near Him, and then the church will ever be in your sight in its right place too as dear to Him, and subject here below to the Holy Ghost.** The notion of the church out of the presence of God and of Christ is Romanism; and that is not the care, or subject of care, of the Holy Ghost at all.

(* The passage in Romans 11:36, ■ξ α■το■ κα■ δ■ α■το■ κα■ ε■ς α■τ■ν τ■ π■ντα α■τ■ ■ δ■ξα ε■ς το■ α■■ναϛ.■μ■ν. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, [are] all things: to whom [be] glory forever. Amen "-is heart-searching to nature, soul-comforting to faith.

Since there is One to whom all things are, in some sense or other, ■κ,δια and ε■ς' of-through-and to-there clearly are roots of responsibility from which none of us can possibly free ourselves. He who originated all things, upholds all things, and can and will cause each and everything to subserve his own glory-and make its subserviency to appear before all. This flows from what He is, and what our connection with Him must be. But His grace has introduced into the scene now, and into our hearts too, testimony as to who He is, in grace and mercy, so that we can rejoice in the thought that He cannot deny Himself-and He will not give his glory to another.)

(** On the second subject of this paper see a Tract entitled "Separation from Evil, God's Principle of Unity."-Ed.) " Thou shalt call his name JESUS for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:1.

"Thy name is as ointment poured forth, etc." Song of Solomon 1:3..

Thy name we love, Lord Jesus! And lowly how before Thee; And while we live, To Thee we'll give, All blessing, worship, glory;

We'll sing aloud thy praises, Thy beauty 's all transcending, For thou alone,

We worthy own, Our hearts and voices blending.

Thy name we love, Lord Jesus;

It tells thy love unbounded, To ruined man,

Ere time began, Or heaven and earth were founded;

Thine was a love eternal, That found in us a pleasure, That brought Thee low, To bear our woe, And make us thine own treasure.

Thy name we love, Lord Jesus; It tells thy birth so lowly, Thy patience, grace,

Thy gentleness, Thy lonely path, so holy;

Thou wast the " man of sorrows," Our grief, too, Thou did'st bear it, The bitter cup, Thou drankest up; The thorny crown,-did'st wear it.

Thy name we love, Lord Jesus;

God's Lamb-Thou wast ordained, To bear our sin, (Thyself so clean), And Nast our guilt sustained;

We see Thee crowned in glory, Above the heavens now seated, The victory won, Thy work well done, Our righteousness completed.

Thy name we love, Lord Jesus; For though thy travail's ended, Thy tender heart Still feels the smart, Of those thy grace befriended.

Thy sympathy how precious!

Thou succourest in sorrow, And bid'st us cheer, While pilgrims here, And haste the hopeful morrow.

Thy name we love, Lord Jesus;

* For service unremitting, Within the veil, To countervail, And us for worship fitting;

Encompassed here, with failure, Each earthly refuge fails us;

Without, within,

Beset with sin- Thy name alone avails us.

Thy name we love, Lord Jesus; And wait thy revelation, In sweeter song To join the throng, Of the redeemed creation;

Soon shall the bright archangel Call forth thy saints to meet thee; Our only Lord

Alone adored, Well then with gladness greet thee.

Thy name we love, Lord Jesus;

We long to see Thy glory, To know as known And fully own Thy graces, all before Thee;

We plead thy parting promise, " Come quickly" to release us, And endless praise Our souls shall raise, For love like thine, Lord Jesus.

(* Or, query, Each soul for worship fitting,

Within the veil Thou dost prevail, In service unremitting.)

Anonymous.

Vol 01 - On the Heavenly Calling and the Mystery

On the Heavenly Calling and the Mystery

1. What is meant by "The Heavenly Calling;" and what is its practical bearing upon the Walk and Worship of Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ?

2. What is meant by "The Mystery;" and what connection is there between it and "The Heavenly Calling?" The knowledge of that infinite grace which has brought us, as redeemed sinners, nigh to God, through the precious blood of Christ, is the strongest appeal to our souls to render obedience unto Him who has shown such wonderful love to us. And in proportion as our hearts are touched with a sense of this love, shall we love in return; "We love Him because He first loved us."

Love will ever produce a fervent desire to please and meet the mind of the object of its affections.

" If ye love me, keep my commandments," said our blessed Lord. But however true and sincere the heart may be, yet if there be ignorance as to the commands of the Lord, there must be failure in obedience. Love is not sufficient to enable us to walk so as to glorify God. A true heart and right desires are not enough. A true heart is of vital importance; but an instructed mind as to what the will of God is, is needed to regulate and guide the warmest heart: the want of this often leaves the Lord’s people open to much sorrow, when really seeking to serve Him.

Mary’s heart was true and warm enough-but she passed through much sorrow, because she " knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9).

We are not only called into fellowship with the Father and the Son, in the joy and peace of the Holy Ghost, but also to " be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" (Colossians 1:9); and that " love may abound more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment" (Php 1:9).

Knowledge without charity, we are taught, "puffeth up"; but knowledge and love must be combined and work together, or we shall fail in rendering real service unto God.

It may be said, that God often leads His children far beyond their spiritual intelligence. This is true (and happy for us that He does so) but are we to make this an excuse for our foolishness and ignorance, because His grace and goodness abound? It is not what we have any right to expect or reckon upon; for this reason, that He has given a full revelation of His mind and will, and His Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, that we might know His will. The word is the instrument by which He accomplishes His gracious purposes in us.

We are begotten by the word of truth (James 1:18). We are born of the word (1 Peter 1:23). By the word we grow (1 Peter 2:2). By the word we are cleansed (John 15:3 -Ephesians 5:26). By the word we are kept undefiled in the way, and from the paths of the destroyer (Psalms 17:4-15; Psalms 18:1-50; Psalms 19:1-14; Psalms 20:1-9; Psalms 21:1-13; Psalms 22:1-31; Psalms 23:1-6; Psalms 24:1-10; Psalms 25:1-22; Psalms 26:1-12; Psalms 27:1-14; Psalms 28:1-9;

Psalms 29:1-11; Psalms 30:1-12; Psalms 31:1-24; Psalms 32:1-11; Psalms 33:1-22; Psalms 34:1-22; Psalms 35:1-28; Psalms 36:1-12; Psalms 37:1-40; Psalms 38:1-22; Psalms 39:1-13; Psalms 40:1-17; Psalms 41:1-13; Psalms 42:1-11; Psalms 43:1-5; Psalms 44:1-26; Psalms 45:1-17; Psalms 46:1-11; Psalms 47:1-9; Psalms 48:1-14; Psalms 49:1-20; Psalms 50:1-23; Psalms 51:1-19; Psalms 52:1-9; Psalms 53:1-6; Psalms 54:1-7; Psalms 55:1-23; Psalms 56:1-13; Psalms 57:1-11; Psalms 58:1-11; Psalms 59:1-17; Psalms 60:1-12; Psalms 61:1-8; Psalms 62:1-12; Psalms 63:1-11; Psalms 64:1-10; Psalms 65:1-13; Psalms 66:1-20; Psalms 67:1-7; Psalms 68:1-35; Psalms 69:1-36; Psalms 70:1-5; Psalms 71:1-24; Psalms 72:1-20; Psalms 73:1-28; Psalms 74:1-23; Psalms 75:1-10; Psalms 76:1-12; Psalms 77:1-20; Psalms 78:1-72; Psalms 79:1-13; Psalms 80:1-19; Psalms 81:1-16; Psalms 82:1-8; Psalms 83:1-18; Psalms 84:1-12; Psalms 85:1-13; Psalms 86:1-17; Psalms 87:1-7; Psalms 88:1-18; Psalms 89:1-52; Psalms 90:1-17; Psalms 91:1-16; Psalms 92:1-15; Psalms 93:1-5; Psalms 94:1-23; Psalms 95:1-11; Psalms 96:1-13; Psalms 97:1-12; Psalms 98:1-9; Psalms 99:1-9; Psalms 100:1-5; Psalms 101:1-8; Psalms 102:1-28; Psalms 103:1-22; Psalms 104:1-35; Psalms 105:1-45; Psalms 106:1-48; Psalms 107:1-43; Psalms 108:1-13; Psalms 109:1-31; Psalms 110:1-7; Psalms 111:1-10; Psalms 112:1-10; Psalms 113:1-9; Psalms 114:1-8; Psalms 115:1-18; Psalms 116:1-19; Psalms 117:1-2; Psalms 118:1-29; Psalms 119:1-9). By the word-" the sword of the Spirit"-we are able to stand against the wiles of Satan (Ephesians 6:17).

It is by the word, known in the power of the Spirit, that our practical sanctification is carried on. " Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth," was the prayer of Jesus for His disciples (John 17:17). The written word, then, contains full and ample instruction whereby we may, in all things, have a sure guide, and learn from it how to glorify God-how greatly we need rightly to divide it, and understand what the will of the Lord is; not merely with reference to our personal walk, as individuals, but according to the design of God concerning the Church, and the character of its testimony, as well as position in the world.

There are certain characteristics of God’s people, common to them in all ages, and under all dispensations; such as Faith, Hope, Love, Obedience. But the form and manner in which obedience is to be manifested vary, according to the character of the calling, at different periods.

" Be ye holy, for I am holy," is a word of universal application, addressed alike to the Jew and to the Christian; for " without holiness no man shall see the Lord." But a Christian would walk very far below his vocation, if he were to walk like a Jew, however great his attainments in holiness and godliness.

What would be obedience in one, would be ignorance, and oft disobedience in the other, and for this reason:-God has been displaying his own character and ways at different times, and in different manners. His dealings with His people have varied according to his design and purpose respecting them. The Israelites were called to serve God in the enjoyment and abundance of all earthly blessings; Christians are called to be content with food and raiment, to be poor and despised, but blessed with all spiritual blessings:-the one was set in a dispensation of righteous government, the other in a dispensation of grace.

Hence, it is evident, that the saints need the clearest understanding as to the purpose of God concerning them (the grace in which they are set), and as to the character of their blessings and promises, or they will be unable to walk so as to meet the mind of God. Ignorance of those

principles which correspond to the character of their calling will lead them to confound God's arrangements; and, mistaking His mind, they will be found acting upon principles, which at one time and under different circumstances were lawful, but are now condemned: a simple illustration of this is presented in Matthew 5:21, etc.

How often this is the case with dear children of God! Many who have great peace, zeal, and devotedness, and who are indeed a sweet savor of Jesus, are yet so ignorant of the character of their calling, that they are systematically found in fellowship with an evil world, drawn into its course, acting upon its principles, seeking its patronage, and helping on its delusions and false expectations: thus marring their testimony, while they bring weakness, sorrow, perplexity, and disappointment upon their own souls. The Lord has of late years taught many of His saints to see this, and has opened from His own blessed word much truth concerning " the Heavenly Calling" of the Church; and while there is doubtless much more to be learned, the practical power and blessing from that which has been seen have been extensively felt. In considering the subject of the Heavenly Calling,* I have felt the need there is to keep before the mind, not only its prominent truths and varied features in detail, but also its scope and character as a whole.

(* At a meeting of brethren in the Lord, at Liverpool, in November, 1843, much light appears to me to have been given upon this subject, which I have ever since found to be most profitable, and a cause for much thankfulness. The distinguishing features between " the Heavenly Calling" treated of in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and "the Mystery" unfolded in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, were very definitely brought out.) A partial view of "the Heavenly Calling', will lead only to partial results, and, it may be, to an opposite line of conduct in two saints. For instance, one person sees that the Church is called to a heavenly hope, and consequently. that earthly rest and establishment are not now to be desired, but stranger-ship and separation from the course of this world.

Another sees how all the types and shadows of the law, ordinances of divine service, priestly services, and formal ceremonies, have been fulfilled and taken up in Christ; and this delivers him from confounding law and gospel, and from all formal worship. But while the walk of one and the worship of the other have been set right, the limited view each has of "the Heavenly Calling," may leave both to pursue a line of conduct altogether at variance with it, and yet each suppose that his ways are regulated by its principles. Hence the importance of understanding what the scope of the truth is, and what it really embraces.

I will endeavor to point out the form which this truth assumes in my own mind. Further I cannot go.

●1. What is meant by " the Heavenly Calling"; and what is its practical bearing upon the Walk and Worship of Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ?

"The Heavenly Calling" of the Church will be better understood as it is compared with the earthly calling of Israel;-the contrast between the two, and the distinguishing character of the blessings, promises, and worship, each serves to mark more definitely what is involved in this truth.

Converts from among the Hebrews were the most suitable persons to address upon the subject. Their history, and all the appointments under the old Covenant, furnish so many materials for explaining their new position. The scriptures, at once, could be referred to; which could not be the case when addressing Gentiles, who might not though converted, be so familiar with the scriptures

as to make that mode of conveying instruction the most expressive to them. The expression, " the Heavenly Calling," occurs only once in scripture (in Hebrews 3:1); but the whole argument of that Epistle refers to it. The subject appears to me to bear practically upon two positions of believers.

1st. That which refers to their Walk, in the world. 2ndly. That which refers to their Worship before God.

1st. Our Walk.--A brief consideration of Israel's history, keeping before the mind the calling, hopes, habits, and associations of that people, from whom the parties addressed were converted, will enable us to perceive the force of the arguments of this Epistle, and the light which the Heavenly Calling casts upon our walk.

Passing over the call of Abraham, and their bondage in Egypt, it will suffice to take them up at Mount Sinai. They were there acknowledged by God, as His peculiar people--a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation (Exodus 19:5-6).

He promised to bring them into a place which he had prepared for them, and to bless them there with everything that gives delight and happiness to the natural desires and affections of the heart of man (Exodus 23:20-26, etc.; Deuteronomy 28:1-13).

He sought for rest and refreshment in them, of which the Sabbath was the sign (Exodus 31:17). His rest in Creation had been broken by the sin of man; it was proved a second time, by Noah's failure, that there was no rest yet for God in the earth; but, again seeking it in Israel, the renewal of the Sabbath was appropriate and expressive of the earthly character of their dispensation.

They were then a redeemed people journeying through the wilderness, but with every provision made by God for them by the way-the visible token of His presence, and the most complete directions relative to His will and worship given to them. They had, too, the promise of a rich inheritance and rest, to animate and cheer their hearts amidst the weariness, conflicts, and perils of the wilderness. The faithful, full of confidence and rejoicing in hope, spurned the thought of rest in the desert, and were content to be pilgrims and strangers till they possessed the land. The unbelieving and distrustful became fearful of heart, and were ready to return to Egypt, despising the glorious prospects God had set before them.

Israel's position in the wilderness then answers to the position of Christianity in the world. Redeemed to God, called to count the world in which they are as a wilderness, and to be strangers and pilgrims in it, but with a blessed and glorious hope before them. The difference is this-that Israel was called to earthly blessings and an earthly hope; Christians are called to spiritual blessings and a heavenly hope. But the Hope separated their hearts from all around-gave the character to their walk and position in the wilderness; and thus, where faith was in exercise, they serve as a pattern and example to the saints now; or their unbelief serves as a warning lest any should fall, and so come short of God's rest.

Seeing then, as believers in the Lord Jesus, as "partakers of the heavenly calling," what kind of hope is given 'to us, we are taught that our place is "without the camp bearing His reproach" (13: 13). The principles of our calling will surely lead to separation from this evil world, not merely from its ungodliness, excess, and folly, but from its 'whole course and current, its schemes, politics, and glory, knowing that all is soon to be dissolved, and that our kingdom is one that cannot be moved.

We learn from this Epistle what power this heavenly hope had over the lives and conversation of these early Christians; they " endured a great fight of afflictions… were made a gazing-stock, both by reproaches and afflictions... took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing" that they had "in heaven a better and an enduring substance" (10:32-34.)* (* The statements made concerning "the rest" in chapters 3 and 4 and in chapter 11 are well worthy of notice. The Lord brought Israel into the Promised Land, and blessed them in it, notwithstanding their forfeiture of every blessing by making the calf, and their subsequent rebellions; but for all that, it was not "His rest," nor Could it be upon the terms and covenant they agreed to take it, conditional upon their obedience; for He can find rest alone in the provisions of His own grace. This rest of God in them and the Land is yet future, and cannot be till Israel is restored, and all the promises made to Abraham are fulfilled, through the blood of the Mediator of the New Covenant. This is yet future, as well as the heavenly inheritance of Christians, so that it can be said to us, " There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." But of Israel it might be asked, Had they not rest when brought into Canaan. They had in measure; but it was not God's rest; "For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he [David] not have spoken of another day" 4: 8; and this was spoken by David at least four hundred years after Joshua had brought them into the Land, proving that God looked upon the rest as yet future. So David himself felt at the close of his career:-" For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding" (1 Chronicles 29:15). And the faith of many of the saints from Abraham onwards seemed to have looked beyond the dispensational and national promises to Israel to a heavenly hope, " a better country, that is, a heavenly"-" a city which hash foundations"-" a better resurrection," and so walked individually as pilgrims and strangers, suffering from the world, despising its pleasures and glory, and thus become a more direct example to us; but if these are not enough, let us "consider Him," even Jesus, the Prince of faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We have then to bear in mind, " that this is not our rest, it is polluted," and Walk accordingly, not in self-enjoyment and establishment, but basting through the world, thankful for the rest our souls have now by faith in Christ, but still waiting for the rest of God.)

2ndly. Our Worship.- The second division of the subject leads to the consideration of the bearing which the truth of " the Heavenly Calling" has upon our Worship..

Here again we must remember the prominent features of Israel's worships and the very strong hold which all the offices and ordinances connected with it had over their minds and affections. We can well understand this:-- First. Because they were of Divine appointment, and so sacred in their eyes.

Secondly. They were the tokens of God's special favor to them as His nation and people.

Thirdly. They were associated with every domestic and social thought and feeling from infancy.

Fourthly. From the strong hold which outward ordinances have over the natural mind-the tendency of the human heart, when at all exercised in conscience, to seek satisfaction and relief in that which is obvious to sense. And this is often the case, even after the soul has been long exercised, and found, through bitter experience, that it is not by works of righteousness that man can be made meet for the presence of a Just and Holy God; yet the poor heart, clinging to everything but

simple faith, will turn and seek to find its rest and meetness for God in ordinances. Such was the case in the early Church. Circumcision was maintained by some to be necessary to salvation; and in our day Baptism and the Lord's Supper are declared to be as necessary-the mind of the Lord in these institutions being mistaken altogether.

Remembering, then, this tendency of the flesh, and the former habits and associations, of these Hebrews, at once we see the danger they were in, if faith declined, to turn again to those shadows and beggarly elements as they are called, and to forget how they were fulfilled and taken up by Christ in His Person, Sacrifice, and Offices. That there were symptoms of this declension is very evident from the whole character of the Epistle, and from the solemn warnings and searching exhortations given unto them; but the Apostle does more; he takes the greatest pains to enlighten their understanding, and to give a right direction to their deep-rooted associations in all those points connected with their consciences and service.

It will be well to notice what these points were, which were so essential and absolutely necessary for conducting the worship according to the order of the tabernacle established by God.

They Were as follows, though the first and indeed the last were not immediately requisite in the routine of the worship, part of the Priest's service being to inquire of the Lord.

1. A Prophet who communicated the word of the Lord to them.

2. A High Priest who appeared before the Lord for them-the priests who ministered subordinately.

3. A Tabernacle wherein the priests ministered and wherein the Lord appeared.

4. The Sacrifice and Blood, the ground of the priest's appearing before God for them.

5. The Altar which sanctified every sacrifice and gift.

6. A Mediator, the Securer of all their hopes and blessings.

Now the Apostle does not weaken one of these associations in connection with the worship and service of God-all would be lifeless and powerless without them;-but he explains and points out to them how the sacrifice had been met by Christ, that He had become their Great High Priest, and that the place of his ministration for them was' not in the earthly tabernacle, but in heaven where they must now by faith draw nigh and worship God through Him. This will be more clearly seen by following the argument of the Apostle upon each of these points.

1. Prophet or Apostle. God had in times past spoken by the Prophets: in these last days He had spoken by His Son.

He, who was the brightness of God's glory, the Creator, Sustainer and Heir of all things, came from Heaven to declare the "great salvation." He was God's Apostle: hence the increased responsibility believers are under 'to give heed to what is spoken, and the force of the exhortation, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the Heavenly Calling," consider the Apostle... of our profession Christ Jesus."

God had communicated His Will from the Earth, but now from Heaven; so much sorer the punishment shall those be thought worthy of who turn away from such grace and condescension.

" See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on Earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven" (Hebrews 12:25). God speaking from Heaven by His Son as Apostle, is the first truth of " the Heavenly Calling."

He may still be considered as speaking from Heaven; for that which He first spoke by the Lord was confirmed by those who heard Him, "God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost" (Hebrews 2:3-4).

2. High Priest. A clear understanding of what Priesthood really is, is deeply necessary for our souls' daily experience. The communication of the word of the Lord by a Prophet or Apostle is one thing; but the worship and intercourse between the people and the Lord is another: this was effected through the Priest. The Prophet speaks to man from God -the Priest speaks to God for man-the Prophet had oft to plead for God with man; but the Priest had to plead for man with God. But the most simple definition of Priesthood is given in Hebrews 5:1-2. A Priest is one " taken from among men and ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." A few more passages cast additional light upon this office:-

" Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to me in the Priest's office.... And they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons"

(Exodus 28:1; Exodus 28:4). " Aaron shall bear their [the children of Israel's] names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial" (ver. 12) also he " shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart when he goeth in to the Holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually"(ver. 29). The plate of gold upon the miter " shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the Holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord (ver. 38). And the Lord said unto Aaron, " Thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the Tabernacle of Witness" (Numbers 18:2).

" Thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for everything of the altar, and within the vail; and ye shall serve:... and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death" (ver. 7).

Those only "whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him" (Numbers 16:5). "No stranger which is not of the seed of Aaron [shall] come near to offer incense before the Lord" (ver. 40). "Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation" (Numbers 18:22).

While all the priests had constant access into the Tabernacle, the High Priest alone entered within the vail where the Lord appeared in the cloud upon the mercy-seat; and that only once every year, when reconciliation was made, "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel" (Leviticus 16:1-34).

These will suffice to show us that the priests were a favored class of the people; they had nearer access to God, than the people; they made reconciliation for them, presented their gifts. The High

Priest bore their burdens, carried them on his heart before the Lord, hallowed their holy gifts; that they might be accepted-decided who were clean (Leviticus 13:1-59; Leviticus 14:1-57); pronounced the blessing upon them (Leviticus 9:22, and Numbers 6:22-27); in fact, was the one through whom their worship and service were presented to God, and who stood as their representative before God. No wonder, then, that an Israelite should so look for and lean upon the service of the Priest. The Apostle would not weaken this dependance; but leads their minds to Christ their High Priest in the Heavens; and shows them how it is no earthly priesthood now they have to do with, " For if he were on earth he should not be a Priest." The believer, delivered now from the law, knows of no priest or order of men between him and God; or that he stands in need of any one service being performed for him.

How forcible then the exhortation, " Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly Calling, consider the... High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." A few words as to his qualifications for this office: they are well calculated to meet the feelings, and to give confidence and comfort to the souls of believers; especially to Hebrew converts. The Son laid aside his Glory and became a man to be an Apostle. This was also needful to fit him to be a Priest; for a priest is one "taken from among men." He has gone back into Glory, still a man, to be a Priest.

Having passed through all the circumstances of suffering which sin had entailed upon man, " made flesh and blood," " encompassed with infirmity" and weakness; " tempted though without sin," " tasted death," "having learned obedience by the things which he suffered," known what it was to " offer up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears"; he is in every respect personally qualified for his office, for "he can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way"; and thus in all things " made like unto his brethren", can be reckoned on as a merciful and faithful High Priest. An Israelite could have had no confidence in a priest not "called of God." "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest."…but was "called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 5:10). There was much in this high order of Priesthood to give more confidence and security to the believer than in Aaron’s. In the first place, it was of higher order; for Melchizedec was greater than Abraham. He was both King and Priest-it was an unchangeable Priesthood-therefore able to save to the end, "ever living to make intercession":-made "after the power of an endless life" by the Oath of God (7)-the surety also of a better covenant than that of the Law. The poor weak failing or defiled Israelite had oft to turn to the Priest, to be cleansed and fitted to resume his place in the camp, or his service before the Tabernacle; and oft indeed has the believer in Jesus to turn to him, his High Priest in the heavens, for sympathy and grace to help, for healing and restoration of soul, and renewed communion with God. The heavenly Priesthood of Christ is the second prominent truth of "the Heavenly Calling."

Tabernacle.-But where does Jesus exercise this service of Priesthood? Not upon earth: " for if he were on earth he should not be a Priest" (8:4); but " on the right hand of the throne of’ the Majesty in the Heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (8:1,2); " he is passed into the heavens" (4: 14).,The Lord no longer appears in the cloud in the earthly tabernacle (Exodus 25:22; Exodus 29:43-45; Exodus 40:34-38; Leviticus 16:2). His Glory has been withdrawn from thence, where he was wont to meet his people (Ezekiel 1:1-28; Ezekiel 10:1-22 :); and now the only meeting-place is in heaven, where in Faith the worshipper through Jesus must draw nigh. The Sacrifice and Blood.-But there is now an essential point to be considered in connection with this office. What was his title to stand in the presence of God for

others? The proof that their sin was put away. The 16th of Lev. explains all this in type; and the 9th of Heb. is the application of that chapter to Christ and his work. The High Priest under the Law had every year to make atonement for the sins of the people; and he could only appear within the vail before the Lord with blood, which he sprinkled upon the Mercy-seat: but Christ entered in once by his own blood, having obtained redemption, not for a year, but eternal redemption for us.

" Once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Jesus the Son of God, in virtue of his own righteousness, had ever free access into Heaven and the throne of God; but if he is to appear there as the representative of others, he must produce the proof of their sins being put away, that the sacred Holiness of God may be maintained while he thus deals in mercy with the sinner. Hence the need of atonement and the accomplished redemption of the people, before the priest could appear in the presence of God for them.

Jesus' own blood is his full and perfect title to exercise this position and service for his people before God; and by it He will also reconcile the heavens and the earth (Hebrews 9:23; Colossians 1:20).

There is still another point that the soul of the worshipper needs to be set at rest about. He may be satisfied as to the perfect qualifications of Christ for the office-that he was duly " called of God" to it-of its high order, dignity, and peculiar power-of his full title to execute it; but what is all this to one who is in any uncertainty about his own personal condition before God. This was felt under the law: the conscience had not rest, neither of priest nor people, "it could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience" (Hebrews 9:9). They never made "the corners thereunto perfect, because, if once purged, [they] should have had no more conscience of sin" (Hebrews 10:1-2).

Now, how is, this met? We learn from Acts 26:1-32 who the sanctified are, " sanctified by faith that is in me." Whenever there is faith in Jesus, that person is sanctified. By the will of God " we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all," and forever. " For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:10; Hebrews 10:14).

Here we learn who are sanctified-those who believe in Jesus; through what means they are sanctified-the offering of His body; and then, lest a fear might arise as to the loss of this blessing, it is written, "perfected forever." The conscience purged, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Then these two things are provided for the worshipper. The blood of Jesus as his personal confidence to enter; and Jesus Himself, with all the proof that He has put away sin, standing there ready to receive him. Oh then the force of the word, "Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed in pure water." Let us as duly consecrated priests, enter even within the veil, and, through our great High Priest, worship our God with reverence and godly fear. The Altar.--Every sacrifice and gift, under the law, was brought to the altar. It was there the blood was shed, and from thence the sweet savor ascended. It sanctified every gift-Whatsoever toucheth it shall be holy (Exodus 29:37; Matthew 23:1-39).

Now the Apostle skews, that those who serve the Tabernacle have no right to the Altar, which the believer in Jesus has communion with. That He might sanctify the people by His own blood, He suffered without the gate. Jesus Himself is the altar now; and He it is that sanctifies us, and every gift that is presented to God. No worship or service of any amount is accepted but through Him and His work. His is the true altar: " By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name; but to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:10-16).

Mediator.--A few brief remarks before closings upon the Mediatorship of Christ.

We read that a change in the order of the priesthood necessarily made a change of the law; that there was a disannulling of it, because it made nothing perfect; but then there was the bringing-in of a better hope (Hebrews 7:12; Hebrews 7:18-19). This is secured in Jesus-a Priest after the order of Melchisedec-who has entered within the veil, and is made the surety of a better covenant. The Jews ought to have been expecting this new covenant: for, if a new was spoken of, they should have been prepared for the passing away of the old (Hebrews 8:6). This covenant was strictly made with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah (Hebrews 8:8); and in whatever measure Christians may share some of its blessings, it applies to Israel, and will be confirmed to them upon their restoration, " when the Redeemer shall come to Zion." The Apostle appears to refer to it here to draw the minds of the Jewish converts away from the old covenant and its ordinances, and to lead them to see that Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant; " and that, by means of death [His death] for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they who are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

I have now gone through what appears to me to be the prominent characteristics of " the heavenly calling," and have endeavored to show its practical bearing both upon the walk and worship of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

How entirely this truth grounds our souls in grace! We are exhorted to hold fast grace, and encouraged to put confidence in God as the God of grace, under all afflictions, contradiction of sinners, and chastenings of his loving hand; and to remember that we are not come unto the mount where He was displaying Himself as a consuming fire, and in all the tokens of terrible majesty; but that we are come "unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," etc.

It gives, then, the character to our supports and consolations under affliction and suffering-furnishes us with clear principles to regulate our walk; and while it forbids us to think of rest or settlement in the world, and points out our path as pilgrims and strangers in it, without the camp, bearing Christ’s reproach, it presents to us, as our hope, a kingdom which cannot be moved-a heavenly inheritance.

We are called, then, to walk by faith, and to worship God in faith. When this is understood, there will be no attempt to frame the worship after the pattern of Jewish observances.

Those who minister the word, will neither wish to take, or be forced into the position of the priests of old, and form a distinct class, or order of men between the congregation and God; but all worship together in the privilege of that universal priesthood and liberty, alike common to all believers. The feeling of veneration towards the building which affords convenience to the

assembly, will vanish along with its usual appellation, " the house of God;" and the thoughts will be carried upward, within the veil, to the building not made with hands-even heaven itself, the throne of the Majesty on high. No visible altar will be needed. Christ within the veil hallows the worship; and by Him we offer praise and thanksgiving and good works, the only sacrifices which we know are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Many of the Lord’s people do not see the injurious tendency of these external things; but I am satisfied they tend to weaken faith in invisible objects. They may assist the imagination, and produce feelings of veneration, but will not quicken the conscience in the presence of God. Without them, the worship will doubtless be less imposing and attractive to the natural mind, but will be more " in spirit and in truth." The Heavenly Calling overturns them all, by presenting to our faith the Object to which they point.

If this blessed truth is clearly understood, the perfect acceptance and everlasting security of the believer are known, for the priesthood of Christ involves them; also, full deliverance from the law, whether as to justification, or as a rule of life-Christ being, not only our Savior, but perfect pattern and example. May we know more of him, and what it is to be " partakers of the Heavenly Calling!"

●2. What is meant by " the Mystery"; and what connection is there between it and " the Heavenly Calling"? From the remarks which have already been made, it, has been shown that the calling of God’s people derives its character from the nature of their blessings, and from the nature of the hope set before them. The earthly blessings and promises given to the Israelites, made theirs an earthly calling. The spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and the heavenly hope of believers in the Lord Jesus, make theirs a heavenly calling. But there is a truth relating to the Church, and its relationship with Christ, and standing before God in Him, of a very special character, opening out privileges and blessings of even a higher order than are spoken of in the Epistle to the Hebrews. These also necessarily make the calling of the Church heavenly, though that precise term is not found in those scriptures which refer to it.

It is called " the Mystery"; and I am perfectly satisfied that the true character of the Church cannot be known if there be not a clear perception of the distinctive truths involved in this term.

I will endeavor briefly to point out, under different heads, what appears to me of deep, practical importance to observe relative to " the Mystery.’

1st. The character and high standing of the Church are involved in it.

2ndly. The highest motives to a holy and spiritual walk are drawn from it.

3rdly. Worship and Ministry are set in their true light by it.

4thly. The interpretation, and right application of scripture, depend upon attention to its distinct features. The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians contain the fullest and most direct statements concerning the mystery, though it is also referred to in other scriptures. The truths embraced by it I would now consider. In Ephesians 1:8, etc., we read that God " hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will."

What this is, is explained in the tenth verse, viz.: " That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in

earth; even in him.

Thus, "the mystery of his will" embraces God’s complete purpose of blessing in both of these spheres. But the apostle speaks, after this, of Christ and the Church, and says "this is a great mystery" (Ephesians 5:32); and throughout these Epistles, and other scriptures where he uses this term, it is with reference to those truths immediately connected with the Church. Let us examine this:- 1st. The character and high standing of the Church are involved in it.

These Epistles declare, in common with other scriptures, the redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness of sins through the blood of the cross, and heavenly hope of believers in Christ, but upon peculiar and distinct ground-not merely that Christ died for us, but that we died with him, and are risen with him.

" Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are also risen with him (Colossians 2:12).

" If ye then be risen with Christ…For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear" (Colossians 3:1; Colossians 3:3-4).

God " hath quickened us together with Christ;… and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:5-6; see also Colossians 2:13; Colossians 2:20).

We learn from these scriptures, that the Church is spoken of as having died with Christ, risen with him, and made to sit in heavenly places in him-made alive with him, yea, that he is our life. This is the essential and prominent feature of the mystery. Life in Christ-one with our risen Lord.

" We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones... They two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Ephesians 5:30-32).

"He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit"(1 Corinthians 6:17). The blessings of the Church are spiritual, her portion is in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

She is a witness of the manifold wisdom of God, to principalities and powers in heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:10). Her spiritual conflicts are with wicked spirits in heavenly places (see margin Ephesians 6:12). These mark her heavenly character; but there are other privileges to notice:- The church was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world-before time commenced its course (Ephesians 1:4; see also 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2): not merely an elect body, but her election traced to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 3:11).

" Predestinated unto the adoption of children" (Ephesians 1:6). Before God in all the perfectness and love of Christ. " Complete in him" (Colossians 2:10). " Accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

" Sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, unto the day redemption" (Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 4:30).

" Builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22).

These are the wonderful privileges of the Church, opened to us by the revelation of the mystery. Christ is presented in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as having been partaker with us, his brethren, in

all our circumstances of weakness and sorrow down here; or ministering for us in heaven above, while we are passing through the wilderness; but, by the revelation of the mystery, we learn we are one with Christ in life and blessing, and set in him in heaven above; this, while a fact, is known to us by -faith.

Paul was the chosen instrument to make known this "Mystery" to the Church. To him was committed this dispensation of the grace of God, as the following passages declare:-

" Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word- of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints" (Colossians 1:25-26).

Again, (Ephesians 3:2-5) " If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery... which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

He was to make all men see what was the " fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." But there is another feature of the mystery, which the apostle takes special pains to make clear, and which, if overlooked, would leave us with a defective apprehension of the character of the Church, and of the scope of the mystery.

It is this:-Who are the parties which constitute this body, brought into union with the Lord Jesus Christ? And to answer this satisfactorily, we must consider the past and future purposes of God with reference to Israel; for it is by the strong contrast between Israel’s order of blessing and the Church’s, that the distinct character of the latter stands out in its prominence before the mind.

It was clearly revealed, that Israel was to be the center of all God’s dealings and arrangements with the Earth, (Deuteronomy 32:8). We have seen how they were acknowledged by God as His peculiar people (Exodus 19:5-6);- of the dominion promised them over other nations, and the earthly character of their blessings (Deuteronomy 28:1-13). And though now they are " Lo Ammi," and scattered over the world, it is distinctly revealed they shall be restored, forgiven, and every promise made to them fulfilled. " The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Isaiah 59:20-21). Israel shall then stand in pre-eminence of glory as a nation, the Gentiles shall bow down before them, and serve them, and the nation that will not serve them shall perish" (60: 12). Jerusalem shall also be the center of true worship. " And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3). My tabernacle also shall be with them, yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall ’know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore" (Ezekiel 37:27-28). Pre-eminent in national greatness and glory, pre-eminent in religious privileges, they will still remain a distinct people, while the truth and blessing flows from Jerusalem, and " the Earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea,"-" And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11:10).

I need not multiply passages, as this is a truth extensively acknowledged. Christ is the source of all this blessing both to Israel and the Gentiles. " He is the Redeemer of Israel," the Mediator of the New Covenant to them; but He is also given to be " a light to the Gentiles," and God’s salvation to the ends of the Earth (Isaiah 49:6-7). The Prophets of old speak expressly upon these two points. This is the order of the future blessing-the distinction still existing amidst the universal blessing, and ever maintained between Jew and Gentile.

Now the peculiar character of " the Mystery" sets all this aside during the dispensation of the Mystery.

Israel, having rejected Christ, is cast down from her high privilege for a season, and stands upon the common level of all sinners. The Preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the Mystery" addresses all, Jew and Gentile, as lost sinners; and gathers from both parties a body of believers, who are brought into the same privileges, partakers of the same Life, of the same promises in Christ, of the same body, and are all alike fellow-heirs. Those who were afar off [Gentiles], and those who were. near [Jews], have now equal access through Christ " by one Spirit unto the Father": He "hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition... for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace: and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them which were nigh," etc. (Ephesians 2:14-17). " Now therefore ye [Gentiles] are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Not brought into Jewish privileges, but both now fellow-citizens in those new blessings just before described.

All this was strange to the ears of the Jewish believers, ah, even at first to the Apostles; it was so contrary to the order of blessing they looked for.

They were slow to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles at all. Peter was led to do it by the vision of the sheet and his interview with Cornelius, and was afterward called to an account for it by the Church at Jerusalem, though subsequently they rejoiced "that God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). This makes it additionally clear that the Mystery was not known to the early pentecostal Church. The Gospel declaring the death and resurrection of Jesus, and His exaltation as Lord and Christ, salvation through His name, forgiveness of sins, and the promise of the Holy. Ghost to all who believed, was preached; but it was reserved for Paul, after Jerusalem had rejected the testimony presented to her, to unfold the high and peculiar privileges into which believers were now brought. The prominent features of the Mystery, then, which constitute the real character of the Church are:-Partakers of the Resurrection-life of Christ, risen with Him, seated in heavenly places in Him, blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him, witness to those in heavenly places; conflict with wicked spirits in heavenly places; the Hope of heavenly Glory; the distinction between Jew and Gentile gone, both of one body, and that body the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost.

These are points which cannot be neglected without impairing the integrity of " the Mystery."

Most blessed is the truth taught us in the Epistle to the Hebrews; in many respects more necessary for our daily experience than any other part of Scripture, yet the full privileges and peculiar character of the church are not taught there: for instance, while it treats so largely of " the

Heavenly Calling," not one principle or truth connected with it would be affected or weakened, had no Gentile been brought into its blessings. But the Gentiles form one of the constituent parts of " the Mystery," and the place they occupy in it must be marked, to enter into its character.

2ndly. The higher motives to a holy and spiritual walk are drawn from it.

Because we learn by it, that we are dead and risen men, -that we are one with Christ-" blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"; that we possess a life, a new nature, which can find fellowship alone with him " who is our life." We are called then to walk as heavenly men, yet upon earth. How forcible is the Scripture upon this point.

" If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, set your affections upon things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God... Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Colossians 3:1-5; see also Romans 6:1-23).

If the apostle exhorts us not to lie one to another, it is upon the ground of the nature of the new life and of the oneness of the body-" seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Colossians 3:9-10).... "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore put away lying for we are members one of another". (Ephesians 4:24-25).

Again, Christ's love to the church and his oneness with it as his body, is the blessed motive urged upon the husband to love and cherish his wife as his own flesh. The submission of the church to Christ, is the pattern presented to the wife of subjection to her husband (Ephesians 5:22, etc.) The church being the habitation of God through the Spirit and our bodies the temple of the Holy. Ghost, what a motive to glorify God in our body and spirit, and with what care and godly fear should we walk lest we grieve the Holy Spirit whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption (1 Corinthians 6:18-19; Ephesians 4:30).

We learn specially by "the Mystery" the sovereign grace of our God. We are brought into its blessings " to the praise of the glory of his grace.... according to the riches of his grace... By grace ye are saved." Consequently the principles of grace are to regulate our walk here--praying for our enemies, doing good to them who hate us, resisting not evil, forgiving injuries, "even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven" us. From what has been advanced, it will be seen how this truth bears. upon our walk in every respect. What a separative power there is in it, if we have learned by the principles of " the Heavenly Calling," that our path in the world is that of pilgrims and strangers, that we can take no part in its politics and schemes, how much more when we learn we are dead to the world and are heavenly men though in it.

It does not take us out of the relationship in which God has set us, or teach us to be recluses and not perform the duties assigned us, but to act upon God's principles in doing them. It is true that we shall not be able to carry his principles into fellowship with the world; the men of this world will not care for us if we were to attempt it: we could not unite with them without lowering the holy standard given to us; but, standing apart from its course and energy and baseless expectations, our minds will be kept free from its confusion and distractions, and be better able to express Christ in all our ways, Christ being ours in " the High Calling of God," therefore condemns earthly-mindedness, sensual enjoyments, and teaches us to have our conversation in heaven; from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Php 3:14).

It is "a Holy Calling" (2 Timothy 1:9). God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (1 Thessalonians 4:7).

It is a calling to glory -" whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:14).-" Walk worthy of God who has called you into his kingdom and glory" (1 Thessalonians 2:12).

3rdly. Worship and Ministry are set in their true light by it. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the worshippers arc called to draw nigh to the Living God, as purged from in, having boldness through the blood of Jesus, the One who has made reconciliation for them, and is not ashamed to call them brethren, standing in the presence of God for them as their High Priest.

Wonderful and blessed is this, the creature brought nigh to the Living God, his Maker. But we draw nigh in a still more blessed character and relationship as taught by "the Mystery"; as children we have access to God as our Father. " Accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6), "in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (3:12). " What manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). Thus, while we should draw nigh in the spirit of adoption in child-like confidence, our hearts alive to all the happy affections and thoughts associated in that relationship, yet with reverence and awe, never forgetting that while sons we are still creatures in the presence of Him who is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises-the Eternal God! The Holy Ghost is the power of our worship. " For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:18). " Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (6:18).

Praying in the Holy Ghost (Jude 1:19). We can discern now, by the light of the Mystery, the drift of the Lord’s conversation to the woman of Samaria, when he was speaking of the true character of worship and the gift of the Spirit. But the basis of all worship is reconciliation and peace with God. How fully this is established by " the Mystery." If one with Christ, quickened and risen with him, then the question about acceptance is forever settled. When faith has not apprehended this, and the finished work of Christ is not seen, the flesh will work and seek to find something else to rest in.

It would appear the Colossians needed to be warned against any who might beguile them with enticing words; and he shows how the truth of "the Mystery" overthrows all their reasoning.

He had great conflict for them, that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ."

" Beware lest any man’ spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:2; Colossians 2:8).

We may consider this warning under four distinct heads.

1. Philosophy, or human wisdom and reasoning.

2. Vain deceit-Superstition.

3. Tradition, or the commandments of men.

4. Rudiments of the world-Ordinances.

1. Philosophy would determine what is or is not pleasing to God by human reasoning, instead of receiving in humble faith what God has revealed. It seeks to exalt the powers of man’s mind, and in pride of heart would hide from itself the corruption of human nature and the miserable ruined condition into which sin has plunged him.

2. Vain deceit. Superstition admits perhaps the ruin; but devises a way of its own to remedy the evil. Philosophy tends to infidelity, though it may end in superstition, if conscience becomes alarmed.

" Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." This is the way superstition works-great apparent humility-veneration for angels. God says, He is the only One to be worshipped. Christ is the only Mediator; and of Him it was said, " Let all the angels of God worship him;" but superstition, vainly puffed up by its fleshly mind, turns to worship and seek the aid of those who are said to be "ministering spirits"; and in worshipping them would fain persuade itself it is exhibiting humility-but Christ is slighted in ’it all. Another form superstition assumes, neglecting or punishing the body; but enough has been said to mark its character and workings; it is altogether intruding into things not seen-it has a show of wisdom in will-worship, but springs from the depraved heart " to the satisfying of the flesh" (Colossians 2:18-23). The advocates of such a system may appear to be of deep sanctity, and the severity of their discipline and self-denial, and their solemn and imposing worship, calculated to produce an effect and excite the veneration of the natural mind; but the spiritual man discerns its true character " the flesh," and knows that it is all in ’the place of Christ and His work, and the absence of simple faith in Him and His precious blood.

3. Tradition, or the " commandments of men," may either enforce what God once appointed, the ordinances of the Law; or seek to make that binding for which there is no authority in Scripture. The Lord gives its character and results in Mark 7:1-37.

Let anything of man become authority, and binding upon the conscience; however simple and harmless it may appear, that moment it takes the place God and His Word should have in the soul, and becomes vain worship, weakens the authority of God’s Word, and prepares the mind for laying it aside, and for formality (Mark 7:1-8). But mark the next stage that tradition leads to. Having put the commands of men upon a level with the commands of God, it soon lays aside the latter, and ends in establishing something which is in direct contradiction to God’s Word, making it of none effect, and rejecting the commandment of God, that the commandments of man may be observed. The two come into collision. God commands children to honor their father and mother: tradition says, " No, we are free to help them or not" (Mark 7:1-13).

4. Rudiments of the world, ordinances.-Enough has been said before to show the strong tendency of the heart, and the reason it so cleaves to ordinances. The Apostle appears to have before his mind a statement very prevalent in those days:-" Unless ye be circumcised and keep the Law ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). Mark how the truth of the Mystery at once delivers the soul from such teaching. Why, "Ye are circumcised…by the circumcision of Christ.. buried with Him... risen with Him.. quickened together with Him, having forgiven, you all trespasses. Blotting out the

handwriting of ordinances... and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross" (Colossians 2:11-14). 'What a triumphant answer to such teachers! Meats, drinks, holy-days, new moon, or sabbaths, all disposed of by the same truth; they are the shadows of things to come; but the body is of Christ. " Ye are complete in Him," He is the great ordinance, and " If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances" (Colossians 2:20)? In considering the light which the Mystery casts upon Ministry, there are two things to be borne in mind. The fullness of Christ, the Head of the body the Church. And that the Church is the habitation of God through the Spirit.

Christ is not only Head of the Church, but Head over all things to the Church. Having triumphed over all powers, He is the Head of all principality and power, and " in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Ephesians 1:21-22; Colossians 2:9-10).

" When He ascended up on high He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." He " ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things, and He gave... Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints," etc., for their preservation from seducers, and for their growth up to Him in all things, who is the Head. " From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which. every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:8-16). The same in Colossians 2:19, we see how everything for the nourishment and unity of the body and for its increase with the increase of God, flows from Christ the Head. When this is not known, or as soon as faith becomes weak, human power, wisdom, and qualifications are exalted; and instead of faith in the fullness of the Head, men lean upon them.

There is one body and one Spirit.-The Holy Ghost dwells in the body; and it is from His energy and operations, " dividing to every man severally as he will," by His immediate and direct action, that all ministries flow. The operations of the Spirit are more fully taught in 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; while in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians we are led to see more of the fullness of the Head. The basis of all ministry then, is: the fullness of the Head, and the development of the operations of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the body.

There is such an intimate connection between the real character of the Church and Ministry, that defective views of the one would be very likely to lead to imperfect views of the other.

4thly. The interpretation and right application of Scripture depend upon attention to its distinct features.

It cannot be denied, that the Scriptures give us the history of a holy faithful people, suffering for righteousness' sake, who cannot be standing in the privileges of the Church. If it were said, These Scriptures refer to the exercise of some of God's people previous to Christ; well, mark their distinct character:-They feel God's hand is heavy upon them, that they are suffering for their iniquities (though now most true in heart to. God); they call upon Him not to cast them off forever, no longer to hide his face, but to purge them from their sins; clearly they are not standing in the position or knowledge of reconciliation and acceptance. At once, then, we see..how unsuitable such language would be in the lips of those who stand in union with Christ, and in all the favor and acceptance which the Mystery teaches us we are set in. While we may derive much instruction and profit, and learn much of God and his ways in them, if our experience answered to theirs, we should have got

off the ground of grace altogether. Hence the necessity of holding fast the principles of our calling, that we do not misapply such scriptures to the injury of souls.

Further:-They pray for vengeance upon their enemies -call down God’s righteous judgment upon them. All this is the very opposite to the state of heart of those who know God’s grace, and are commanded even to act in grace to all, and to pray for their enemies. Their hopes are earthly-the fulfillment of God’s promises made to the Fathers. These are not what sustain our souls in affliction, but the Heavenly Hope set before us. We see what the expectations of a godly Jew were in Zechariah’s praise, and what he looked for by the truth of Christ (Luke 1:68-79). We look for his coming again to receive us’ unto himself, to enter the Father’s mansions.. While he tarries, ’tis the time of tribulation: it may vary as to intensity; but the characteristic portion of the Church as to earth is tribulation. " In the world ye shall have tribulation."

Now if what I have said concerning certain Scriptures in their application to saints of old, if they describe the experience of saints who are yet to use them previous to the appearing in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who find deliverance and acceptance at his coming-how careful we must be not to confound them with the Church, nor conclude because of their faith and devotedness that they are one with the Church. I allude specially to the Prophets and Psalms, though there are other scriptures that these remarks apply to, which will be readily discerned by those exercised upon these points. I have now gone through what appears to me to be necessary to note and keep before our minds in relation to the Heavenly Calling and the Mystery. By the light of the latter, we see what was in the Lord’s mind in his conversation with his disciples, as recorded by John, and the additional instruction, specially chapters 14-16 concerning the presence and office of the Holy Ghost in the Church, which we need well to consider in connection with worship and ministry. The first epistle of John is all in harmony with this subject, leading us to the spring of all our blessings, God’s Love; and the knowledge of it, and our oneness in Christ, the power and spring of the new commandment in us. The Lord guide us into all truth, and make our love abound one to another!

See how within the holiest The blessed Savior stands;

There He prepares for us a place, With incense from His hands.

Brethren! His glory all is ours, His fellowship with God, Yes, there we sit in Christ the Lord, Fruit of His precious blood.

(Hymn, 368.-Poor of the Flock)

Vol 01 - Outline of the Epistle to the Romans

Outline of the Epistle to the Romans

Rome was the center of the universal empire of the world, the Gentile. metropolis, and Paul had not been there; but God had made him apostle and teacher of the Gentiles (2 Timothy 1:11.) In fulfilling his apostolic functions, his heart was naturally drawn toward that seat of the empire and the Christians living there, or who flocked thither from all sides, to confirm them in the faith, and to establish the Church forming in that important locality on the foundations of divine truth. This is what the epistle to the Romans presents us with. It is a summary of the great truths which form the groundwork of the Gospel of Christ.

(* That from which this paper is taken has been by me since the Autumn of 1848. It was written in French, but was never published, except it were in Italian, as was then proposed. It is a mere sketch, but hav- i 4: been asked for by some who have found blessing from. the writer’s 0013r works, I give the translation of it.-[Ed.])

Let us consider a little the position of man, and of the world, before God. Christianity, it is evident, was not introduced at the beginning of the history of the human race.

Already nearly 4000 years had elapsed before the Son of God appeared among men. How many things had taken place under the eye of God during that long period!

Let us examine the grand traits of this history. God had created man innocent, and had placed him in a state of happiness in a terrestrial paradise. He, following the sad example of his wife, who had listened to the seductive words of the tempter, disobeyed God, and lost at once his innocence and his happiness. He dares not present himself before God. A bad conscience leads him to avoid His presence, even before the just judgment of God drives him from the garden, and from Himself, source alone of true happiness: man-ungrateful, disobedient man, who had taken for his friend and his counselor, in preference to God, Satan, had believed him rather than God Himself-the slave of Satan and his own will, was lost. Being driven from the garden was but a natural consequence of his fall. The way to the tree of life was closed to him. He stays in the world outside, the slave of sin and death. But God, in driving man out from His presence, had not forgotten to be gracious; and in pronouncing sentence on the serpent, he speaks of a Redeemer who should destroy the power of the enemy of man. It was pure grace; and testimony was given of it in the very title of the Deliverer, " the Seed of the woman," of her who by listening to Satan had plunged man into ruin; but before sending the Redeemer for the accomplishment of the work of redemption, man must be tried, and in every way, to see whether, such as he is, he could attain to the power of life eternal, or secure himself in a state of happiness. God knew well what he was. Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. But we are prone enough to entertain a good opinion of ourselves for it to be salutary for us to make trial of what we are, that the conscience, convinced of sin, may be willing to profit by pure grace and the goodness of God. So, during centuries, God left man without checks to the inclinations of his own heart. The Savior

had been announced, it is true, and a living testimony had been given on the part of God. The names of Abel, Enoch, and Noah, shine in the pages of the Holy Scriptures, like lights in those remote ages. But the light itself shone in vain. Man corrupted himself more and more, so that after long patience, God was led to wash corrupted humanity in the terrible scourge of the deluge. But he who is ever remembering His mercy in the midst of his judgments, pointed out a means of salvation to those who alone had listened to His Word; and Noah, with his family, becomes the parent stock of a new world. But the terrible lesson of a world destroyed was lost upon man; chastisements do not change nature. We soon find that idolatry is introduced and propagated in all quarters of the world. That is to say, to avail ourselves of the words of the Apostle Paul, " the heathen sacrificed to devils and not to God." God called Abraham in order to preserve in the midst of the world the knowledge of the true God, and that he might be the depositary of the promises of God, and that the promised seed should rise from his family. And Abraham, as well as Isaac and Jacob, his son and grandson, were strangers and pilgrims on the earth through faith. Of his posterity the Lord raised up an earthly people (called Israel, known generally, in the present day, under the name of Jew), that it might be a witness and preserver of the doctrine of the unity of the true God, against the errors of the heathen. In Abraham the call of grace from out of the world, and free salvation through faith, had been signally shown in the ways of God. Now, a striking testimony as to the deliverance by the blood of a victim, substituted for the sinner whose penalty it bore, was presented in a figure; and this thought, this answerer to the needs of conscience harassed by the conviction of sin, was spread through all nations; disfigured, doubtless, by the gross and abominable ideas of idolaters, who falsified the character of God in worshipping demons; but, in its first principle, as in its origin, a divine provision for the necessity of the sinner before a just God. When God called Israel to Himself that they might be his people, He put ransom as the ground of their deliverance. The blood guarded them from the just judgment of God,-guarded them perfectly. The people, come out of Egypt, is led through the desert to be tried, and at last is brought to Sinai. And now a principle quite new is presented to them. The covenant of the law is offered to the people, that is to say, the blessing and the enjoyment of promises under condition of obedience to the law of God. " If ye obey my voice," said the Lord to the people, " thou shalt be a peculiar treasure unto me." "Do this, and thou shalt live." This is then the principle of the law of God, a principle perfectly just, like the law, which was the rule of conduct which God proposed, and which the Lord Jesus summed up in those Holy Words:-" Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." It was a perfect and admirable rule of what man ought to be, and which would secure happiness to the creatures living according to its requirements. The Lord therefore proclaimed the law, under the form of Ten Commandments, with His own mouth to the people, at Sinai. If they kept it they should be blessed, if not, they would be condemned and cursed.

Now the law, as it ought, proposed to them a perfect obedience, even (what is in fact alone such) the perfect obedience of the heart. " Thou shalt not covet." It is evident, that if God was entering into relationship with man, He must look to the heart. "Thou shalt not covet." To act otherwise would be to justify the hypocrite. The law was thus given. It was a holy, just, and perfect law, which declared what man ought to be, in order to please God, and to have life eternal. If God was pure, holy, and just, man must be so to be happy. But mark here, if the law described what man ought to be, it did not at all declare what God was, except that He was just, and would punish the sinner. It is the Gospel which shining, while it recognizes fully this justice, and the perfection of the law,

reveals what God in grace is to him who transgresses it. We shall speak of it presently. Here let us follow our subject. The law, which required perfect righteousness and obedience in man, had been given-to whom? To man already a sinner? What can a perfect law do (and the law of God must be such) for a sinner? Condemn him in convincing him of his sin. Was it the law which was in fault? Quite the contrary: it was its holiness and righteousness which did thus. It was the necessary result of a perfect law given to a sinner. A rule gives neither life nor strength-it require certain things-it gives nothing. There is another result of the law. There is a will of his own in man. One knows it, one feels it, one sees it. The law forbids the gratification of our will.

It is the expression of the will of God which we ought to obey. Our will kicks against the will of God We always desire to do that which is forbidden. Forbid a child to look into a basket to see what is therein, and longing will begin to stir at once in its heart. It would not have thought of it had it not been told not to look into the basket; but now it wishes to examine it. Sin finds an occasion in the law. The unbeliever will say, perhaps, " How unjust to give us a law which can only condemn us!" One might say so indeed, however useless it would be to contend against God, if it were true that God had given it in order that we might be saved through its means, but this is what He has not done. God gave the law that sin might be made manifest, and that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.. To show not only that man had committed sins, but that his will. was wicked and corrupt, and so audacious, that he would commit them in spite of God’s prohibition; and so wicked, as a will, that a prohibition was only an occasion for this will to wish to leap clean over the barrier which might oppose itself to it. It is Christ who saves, not the law. Israel, to whom God committed the care of this law, had trangressed it in making a golden calf even before Moses had come down from the mount with the tables upon which God had engraved it. The patience of God, however, still showed itself in sending prophets to put Israel in remembrance of the requirements of the law, and of the goodness of God, proclaiming with increasing light the accomplishment of the promise of the Messiah. Israel despised their warnings and their testimony. At last John the Baptist, herald of the King of Israel, of the Christ of God, arrives, and soon after the Lord Himself appeared on the scene. "I have yet my Son, my only Son," said God, proclaiming Himself under the figure of a parable,-" they will reverence my Son."

We all know what happened to the man of sorrows. "Behold," said the husbandmen (to use still the words of the Parable), "Behold the heir! come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours." The Son of God appeared,-they spat in His face, and crucified Him. Such is the history of the world: is man wicked or not? And consider what the Son of man was-it was no more the law; for although the Son was born, in His grace, under the law, He was the manifestation of the love and of the goodness of God, even towards those who had transgressed it. He did them good-He did not impute their sins to them. It was God in the midst of men and their misery- God delivering them from it without imputing to them the sin that had brought them there..Re required nothing, bore everything, and healed their sick. He gave to eat to those that were hungry-He raised their dead. It was power and divine love; BUT it watt the light, it was God Himself, and whatever His goodness might be, man would not have Him. The Jew, alas! hated Him-the Gentile, despising Rim, rid himself of Him, to avoid the tumult raised by the jealousy of the Jews; all, unknown to themselves, accomplished the will and the counsels of God. The crime, without parallel, which the sin of man committed, was the testimony and the accomplishment or the perfect love of God. The victim of propitiation was sacrificed. The blood which redeemed, which accomplished our salvation, was

spilled. Man had been left without law-corruption and violence had characterized the world. Man had been put under the law, with all the privileges of the presence of God in His temple, with the testimony of the prophets, the ordinances and the direct government of God; had transgressed the law, despised the prophets, and forsaken God for idols of his own choice. The Son of God Himself, God manifested in the flesh, had appeared on the scene of misery which man had created for himself by his own sin, the testimony of the infinite goodness of God. Man knew Him not-the Jews would not have Him-they all united together in rising against the Lord and His Anointed. They spat in His face and crucified Him; they hated Him without a cause. Sad picture.: We prefer our own way to everything. Thus man has been tested in every way-the tree was bad. Now comes the question. What will God be with regard to man, wicked man? A just Judge doubtless, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, to look at sin. Grace and love will He be before He begins with judgment.

It is here that the epistle to the Romans begins its instruction, addressing the Gentiles on the one hand, and the Jews on the other. Let us sum up in a few words the thread of thoughts which the Holy Spirit presents us with in this important part of the Word of God. In the first chapter, after having announced Christ as the Son of David, heir of the promises made to Israel and Son of God-in power-addressing himself affectionately to the Christians at Rome, he proclaims at once the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation,, to the Jew first; and also to the Gentile, because a righteousness of God is revealed therein-man had none for God.-God has one in His grace for man, sinful and wretched man.

Now, if God has revealed it as a righteousness which is His own, and which He has made available for man;- If God, I say, has revealed it as a righteousness perfect and accomplished on His part, it is through faith that we must receive it. It is faith which receives a revelation; -it is faith which lays hold of and trusts to an accomplished fact. The Apostle Paul asserts that the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness. What was there else amongst the Heathen? Against all ungodliness in men who held the truth in ungodliness. Had not such been the case with the Jews up to that day? Alas, and may we not add now, with many of the most orthodox persons who call themselves Christians. The patience of God had lasted long, but He has fully revealed Himself in Christ, and every sin whatsoever; put into the light, is unbearable. In the course of the first and second chapters, the Apostle shows the horrible iniquity which characterized the state of the Heathen, and the culpability of the Jews. Noah’s family had known God; his descendants would not retain this knowledge. Proofs also of Scripture, and of the power of the only true God, surrounded them everywhere! They were inexcusable. They had degraded the very idea of God. They were left to degrade themselves.

Philosophers and moralists judged well of this state of things. Were they changed themselves? By no means. Could God accept of such things? Surely not. And the Jews who boasted of the law, and wished to be the instructors of the ignorant? They transgressed the law of which they boasted and the name of God was blasphemed among the Heathen through their means.

It was not the outward appearance of man that was of any value in the eyes of God. He looks at the heart. Did the Apostle deny then the privileges the Jews had above the heathen? By no means. But the possession of religious privileges renders those who do not profit thereby more guilty; so likewise the doctrine of Christ renders more culpable those who possess it, if they are not real and living Christians. Now the Apostle shows to the Jews, by passages taken from their own

Scriptures, that they were condemned, so that, he says, "every mouth is stopped, and the whole world stands guilty before God. By the works of the law shall no man be justified before God, for those who had the privilege of that law were so much the more guilty in that they had transgressed it. Who can stand before the law of God? Who can say, ’ I have not transgressed it.’ How can one justify oneself by a law one has transgressed? By the law is the knowledge of sin. What is to be done? Hear what the Apostle says: " But now the righteousness of God without the law is made manifest, being witnessed to by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood."

It is the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, which is the only answer (which God Himself has furnished to us) to the demand of the justice which condemns the sinner. It is the righteousness of God by Jesus that makes righteous the man who has no righteousness to present to God, so that God is just in justifying him that has faith in Jesus.

What Grace! What a blessing for the poor sinner who has a heart broken enough and cleansed, sufficiently true for him to condemn himself! Boasting is excluded through faith in Jesus. We have now summed up the great principles of the three first chapters. In chap. 4 the Apostle, in reasoning with the Jew, presents to us other considerations in support of the divine thesis which he treats of. What shall we say of Abraham, the honored and recognized chief of Israel, and the Father of the faithful? He was justified by faith before the law was given, before even he himself was circumcised. But this is not all. On what did he himself rest? On the power of God who raises the dead. For there he was, as to the promise that was made to him; and this was imputed to him for righteousness-" if’ we believe in Him who has raised Jesus from among the dead"-that is to say, faith is in Him who, not only by the blood of the precious Savior has satisfied the demands of the justice of God; but (when Jesus has borne in our place the punishment due to sin, has borne our sins in His own body on the tree, has been delivered for our offenses and died for us) God, in His mighty power; raised Him, and has there done with our sins once for all, and has placed us, who believe in Jesus, in Him, in His presence, fully justified by means of what Jesus has done, since He has done it for those who believe. In believing, therefore, in this work of Jesus, we know that He has taken away our sins, and has placed us in the actual enjoyment of the favor and of the grace of God, before whom we find ourselves according to the efficacy of the work of Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. This is what the fifth chapter reveals to us. There also we find two principles of infinite importance. The love of God does not find any motive in us, but in Himself, in His nature, all the while that it finds the occasion of displaying itself in our misery. The Gospel is the glad tidings, that the love of God has made provision of a perfect righteousness in Christ Jesus for poor sinners had none. A righteousness which we enjoy through faith in Jesus, so that all is a gift-all is gratuitous-to Jesus belongs all the glory-He alone is worthy. We are made partakers of it through grace. Perhaps a man would die for a good man.- It was when we were yet without strength that Christ died for the ungodly. We may reckon on that love. If God has reconciled us by the death of Jesus when we were enemies, lie will save us to the end through His life. The second principle in this chapter is, that the question is not only concerning the law, we must go back as far as Adam, the head of the human race. All fell and were ruined in him, having superadded, at the

same time, their own sins-" the law entered to make the offense abound." Sin was already known as a principle-the law in forbidding it, made of it an offense, a positive and formal transgression, of every act which sin has produced in Us. But God be blessed! where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded. But as by the disobedience of one (that is to say Adam) many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one "we are justified through the obedience of Jesus" many shall be justified; so that as sin has reigned unto death, grace has reigned through righteousness unto life eternal by Jesus Christ our Lord. Now the unbeliever, man's wicked heart may be ready to say here-Ah since it is through the obedience of one that we are constituted righteous from being unrighteous, which I am; and since where sin abounded grace has much more abounded, let us sin that grace may abound. Doubtless that is what the flesh likes. Here is the answer of the apostle; -How are you made a partaker of this divine righteousness in Christ? It is because he is dead to sin-that He has done with sin in His death (He, who always was without sin), and that He is risen, and that you have been baptized into his death, in order that you might thus have part in His resurrection. Now if you are dead by faith in Him to sin (and that is what faith would say, that is the meaning of your baptism), how live in sin? You have no part in the death of Christ if you still live in the flesh. If you are made partaker of justification, it is in Christ, by the power of the life in which He is risen. To have part in Christ as being dead and risen, is not to live in sin, but quite the contrary. So that to enjoy this perfect justification in the soul, implies necessarily the death to sin and the life of God in the soul, because we possess this justification in Him alone, who, for us, has died to sin once, and liveth to God always. But what is to be done with the law? Here is the answer.-We have shown that the true Christian is dead in Christ, being made a partaker with Him who died on the cross. Now, the law knows not how to accuse a dead man; so that instead of being condemned by the law as sinners, we live (as of a new life) unto God, in order to glorify Him by good fruits, which we bear by His grace, being already fully justified by the work of Christ Himself. At the end of the seventh chapter, the Apostle pictures the inward conflict which is found in a soul which, being renewed, loves the righteousness of the law; and in its desire to fulfill it, makes experience of its own weakness and want of capacity, and which has not yet learned, notwithstanding its sincerity, to submit itself to the righteousness of God-a righteousness already accomplished through grace. The moment it submits and seeks (not to do something to make itself better, but) the Deliverer, it is made free. The soul is made free-fruit of grace-when, instead of looking to itself, it looks to Jesus and to His work.. It will never be satisfied with itself if it is -sincere, and if it recognizes what it ought to be before God.. But God himself is satisfied with Jesus, and with the work He has done for that poor soul. He has been fully glorified as to His love, as to His righteousness, as to His majesty and His claims for the obedience of man; as to His truth, in every way. God has been glorified in the work of Christ on the cross, and the soul can trust itself to it fully before God.

There is, therefore, no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

Now if they are in Jesus Christ, what belongs to them? what characterizes them?

" No CONDEMNATION."-Then they are made free from the law of sin and of death. Sin as a principle of their nature, is no more a law to them. The conflict still continues; but sin is no more a law to us, because. the power of the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus has made them free, which the law could not do because of the flesh. God has made for us, by the coming of Jesus, sacrifice for sin. He has condemned sin in the flesh-that is to say, the law could not get to the end in

condemning this criminal, this rebel; he always justified himself in the flesh which nourished him, and which the law could not change. Now Christ, sacrifice for sin, in delivering us from the imputation of sin, having taken it upon Himself, succeeded in condemning sin in our nature, while making us ourselves free from the condemnation.

Having life in Him, sin is no more really as it was before; the believer, born of God, and quickened by the Spirit of life, loves the things which are of the Spirit; as those who are of the flesh love and seek after the things which- are of the flesh.

Now we thus make this solemn discovery, that the affection of the flesh (that is to say our whole nature before we were renewed) was enmity against God, and thus it was impossible that we should please God. Now it is evident that a real change of heart is necessary when the question is about enmity against God. For what art thou that provest that we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit? It is not something of man, it is that the Spirit of God dwelleth in us. But if it be thus, the body is not the source and the motive power of our life. It is considered dead, for it produces nothing but sin. It is the Spirit who is life, for He produces righteousness.

Now we have this precious confidence, that if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus dwells in us, this same power operates likewise in us, and God will raise up again our mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwells in us.

It is those that are led by the Spirit who are real children of God. And what a blessing? Children of God! This is no vain title. It is to enjoy the love of the Father-it is to be assured of His favor. It is to be accepted in the Beloved. It is to be able to trust ourselves (without the thought that He is imputing to us our sins from which Christ has washed us) to the goodness, to the fatherly affection of God. The Holy Spirit dwells in the children. He can do so since they are washed in the blood of Christ. He gives them the full assurance that they are the children of God. This is then Christian life. Washed from our sins in the blood of Jesus, the Spirit that dwells in us leads us by spiritual affections, and at the same time gives us the perfect assurance that we are children of God. Now see the beautiful reasoning of the Spirit of God. If I am a child, then am I an heir-heir of God-joint-heir with Christ. What titles to the glory! Then the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Afterward the creation itself, not only the soul, at the time of the glorification of the children, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Grace delivers the soul from it now: Glory is about to deliver even creation itself. We have salvation. We are waiting for the redemption of the body. While waiting we have the earnest of the Spirit which dwells in us, and He groans in us, according to God, and gives a voice to the actual sufferings of the creation, although often we ourselves know not what we should pray for,- to help us in our infirmities. Now God who searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit when He intercedes thus in us. Thus, in the real believer, who has submitted to the righteousness of God accomplished in Christ, the Holy Spirit dwells, as the spring of a faith holy and infinite, while giving me the consciousness of being a child of God and heir of the glory, and as Comforter amid the sufferings of the present time, urging the soul to seek relief in God, with groanings that cannot be uttered.

Now in all this, that happy soul is the object of the-thoughts and of the counsels of God. It is not of our own will that this has happened; neither the Gentile nor the Jew sought Jesus according to the Spirit. It is of grace. It is the counsels of the God of love. He makes all things work together for

good-for the very best-to those who love Him, whom He has called according to his purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also could predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. What grace! that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren. Those whom he did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified them He also glorified.

What precious links in God's ways to assure our blessing. So that as there is no condemnation for those that are in Jesus Christ, there is no separation from the love which has placed them there.-Never.

Behold where grace, where the love of God puts us. Through him we are more than conquerors in all the difficulties and sufferings which happen to us on the road.

Here terminates the doctrine of the Epistle properly so called. In the three 'chapters which follow, viz., 9, 10 and 11, the Apostle answers an objection which an unbelieving Jew might very well make to trouble a sincere believer of his own nation.-" If you say that there is no difference; that Jew and Gentile are equally sinners and that we must submit, as being in- the same abyss of condemnation to God's righteousness-what do you do with the promise made to Israel? How reconcile the privileges of that people, as descendants of Abraham, with this complete leveling of everything, in order to make of all men, without distinction, a race of sinners in Adam?" In chapter 9 the Apostle' answers-" You cannot support your own thesis. If you trust to your descent from Abraham, without having respect to the sovereignty of God, you must admit Ishmael to the privileges of Israel; moreover you must admit the Edomites as the posterity of Esau.

" God has been sovereign to your profit, and it is well He is so, Now, He will exercise this sovereignty in favor of some poor Gentile sinners, in calling some to participate in the salvation by Christ. But if you will have righteousness, you have made the golden calf. God did spare you on the principle of His sovereignty-(the passage is quoted from Exodus, and it is what God told Moses on the occasion of the idolatry of Israel at Sinai)-'Twill have compassion on whom I will have compassion; and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.' Now, if He spared you on this principle, He will do likewise towards some poor Gentile sinners."

Afterward, lie proves by the prophecies, how God had foretold that there would be only a little remnant that would be saved from among the Jews; that the nation would stumble upon the stumbling-stone, that is to say, upon Christ (He being the end of the law for righteousness to every believer), and that God had declared at the same time, that whosoever should call on the name of the Lord should be saved. Precious promise! Thereupon he shows that consequently the Gospel was to be preached to all, that they might all call on the name of the Savior. And he quotes the testimonies of the Prophets against Israel as a proof of their rebellion against the Gospel of Christ. In the eleventh chapter, He asks, " Will the promises of God fail towards this people?" By no means. "Already," says he, "there is a residue according to the election of grace. 2ndly, God called the Gentiles to provoke the Jews unto a holy jealousy, therefore it was not to reject them. 3rdly, In the latter days they will certainly be brought back to the enjoyment of their privileges according to the promises and the testimony of God. But that according had shut them up in unbelief, as were the Gentiles by nature, in order that it might be pure grace on His part towards all, whether Jew or Gentile." In the chapters following, the Apostle rests on these principles (mercy in God)-exhortations to a walk that responded to this goodness, and that sought only His perfect will

with the intelligence of a renewed mind. He exhorts them to moderation, to meekness, to use their spiritual gifts, whatever that might be, with diligence, confining themselves to what God had communicated to each of them, to the spirit of grace, of kindness towards the saints that were in want-to patience when they suffered wrong ("vengeance belongeth to God")-to submission under the authorities as being ordained of God. In short, to imitate Christ in their walk, and not to seek to satisfy the flesh.

He sums up his doctrine in the fifteenth chapter, and confirms it by quotations taken from the Old Testament, and sends affectionate salutations to the Christians whom he personally knew at Rome.

J. N. D. The "Orphan" Psalms (see p. 50). In Psalms 111:1-10; Psalms 112:1-10 the first word " Hallelujah" is (I would suggest) clearly a Title; because, though each of these Psalms has but ten verses, they are both of them Acrostic. Two clauses in the first eight verses in each, and three clauses in the last two verses, begin with a letter of the Alphabet as found in the Alphabetical order. ED. The Jewish Remnant In The Latter Day. My desire is to present (according to the measure of the ability which God Himself may be pleased to supply) the instruction afforded in Scripture on the above subject. May He by His Spirit make the truth efficacious to our souls, in engaging and interesting us with those things which He has revealed as objects of interest to His own heart of grace and love; and may we thus be separated more and more from all those lower, groveling, creature-thoughts which would detain us here. At the close of the sevenfold terrible denunciations of Leviticus 26:1-46 we read (vet 38, etc.) "And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them. If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me, • and that I also have walked contrary to them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies: if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the land." There are two points here. First, there is an unconditional covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which is the basis of all true blessing to Israel. Second, the bringing in of that blessing is to succeed the heart: humbling of those who are left in the enemies' lands, and their accepting the punishment of their iniquity. Then will God remember His covenant, and remember the land. But in this passage it is put conditionally; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled; it is not a positive prediction that this shall take place.. But this we have in Deuteronomy 30:1, etc. " And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey His voice.... that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. The fourth verse and the sixth are both very emphatic; and the latter taken in connection with the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34, shows it to be entirely a work of grace in the hearts of those referred to: the passage in Jeremiah 31:1-40 is so quoted in Hebrews 8:1-13, and is, in a general sense, the covenant under which believers are placed now, as well as that under which repentant Israel will be placed by and bye. The two

passages in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, take as the basis of all further instruction in Scripture as to the Remnant; and one thing is obvious from those passages, that it is before their restoration to the land that their hearts begin to break down before God. It is while they are yet in the countries to which they have been driven in their dispersion, that God begins to work this gracious change in their hearts. From many other passages it is quite clear, however, that this broken-hearted remnant are not the only Israelites who, in the first instance, return to their own land. Many of the Jews return thither unconverted, and perish in their sins. "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third part shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zechariah 13:8-9). The next chapter describes the deliverance of this third part by the coming of the Lord, with all His saints, at the season of their utmost extremity. Ezekiel 9:1-11, while doubtless referring to the judgment then about to fall on Jerusalem, and the preservation of the remnant of that day, may surely be viewed as a foreshadowing, at least, of the like circumstances in the latter day. How solemn in this view is the description there given of the matured evil which inevitably brings on judgment-" The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness; for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not." And how seasonable at all times the delineation of those who at such a period are marked for preservation from the destroyer. " Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." Such, on the one hand, will be the character of the unbelieving mass of the nation; and such, on the other hand, the spirit of the chosen remnant in the latter day. The one will be in league with the Gentile adversaries of God, jest as Herod and Pontius Pilate and the chief priests joined together to mock and crucify our Lord. Isaiah 28:14-22 informs us of their covenant with death and agreement with hell, and of its utter overthrow by the overflowing scourge. But the fullest instruction on the subject is in Isaiah 63:1-19; Isaiah 64:1-12; Isaiah 65:1-25. In chapter 63:15, the sighing, crying, mourning remnant, identifying themselves before God with the whole nation of that and former generations, confessing the sins of their fathers as well as their own sins, begin their strain of solemn lamentation and confession, which is continued through chapter 64. "Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste..Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord? Wilt thou hold thy peace and afflict us very sore?" Such is their importunate appeal. The answer of God is in chapter 65. He answers roughly first-as Joseph did his brethren-He takes them at their word, and answers as though they were the nation, and thus vindicates his dealings with the nation. Then He distinguishes between the remnant and the nation, and opens to the remnant His purpose of grace concerning them. The first sort of answer closes with verse 7. Then we have, in verse 8, and afterward, " Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants' sakes that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains; and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor [where the accursed thing and the hider of it were got rid of in righteous judgment], a place for the herds to lie down in-for my people that have sought me. But ye [the nation] are they

that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop [of Antichrist, I suppose], and that furnish a drink-offering unto that number, Therefore will I number you [the nation] to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called ye did not answer; when I spake ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold my servants shall drink, but ye shall, be thirsty;- behold my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; behold my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen; for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name; that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes."

I have little doubt that the hundred and forty and four thousand sealed ones in Revelation 7:1-17 represent this Jewish remnant in the latter day. But their preservation is not, as I judge, from persecution (even to death in many instances), but from the judgments on the wicked which come direct from God's hand, or are inflicted by the executioners of His wrath. The remnant will, I believe, suffer great persecution, not only from the Gentile oppressors, but also from their own countrymen. " Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word; your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." As is somewhere expressed in substance by another, the sufferings of these devoted servants of the Most High God are the subject of numerous predictions, and have often been foreshadowed in the history of the nation. Such foreshadowings we have in Joseph cast out by his brethren, and oppressed by Potiphar; Moses rejected by his brethren and forced to flee before the wrath of the King; David rejected by Saul who sought his life, and was aided in his murderous design by Doeg, the Edomite; and above all, our blessed Lord and His disciples, who were the Jewish remnant of their day, until the final rejection of the Gospel by their nation made way for the development of God's deeper purpose in the present calling of the church to a higher glory than any that is Jewish and earthly. But just as the Jewish remnant before Pentecost became then the beginning of God's building-the Church, so, I doubt not, the Jewish saints converted and martyred after the taking away of the church, will yet be incorporated with it in its governmental glory as reigning with Christ over the millennial earth.* Revelation 20:1-15, shows most clearly that they who are beheaded for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus, and they who had not worshipped the beast, live and reign with Christ through the thousand years. And if the difficulty should occur that in this view there be more than one catching away of the saints, Revelation 11:12 would quite prepare one for that. It would appear that besides the taking up of the church, which will be, I believe, before any of those dealings of God with the Jews,- and which will moreover, I believe, be a secret thing, there will be a going up of individual faithful sufferers to heaven in a cloud in the sight of their enemies. I say not that the Two Witnesses are the martyrs of the remnant; I can quite allow that Revelation 11:1-19 is occupied primarily with the ministry of two individuals, men of whom God speaks as His two witnesses; but one could hardly confine the statements of that chapter to them. It seems to me that the fruits of their testimony are included with them. And I think that while Revelation 14:6-7, describes an extraordinary testimony to all nations after the taking away of the church, so the Two Witnesses are a new and extraordinary testimony among the Jews during the earlier part of the same period.

But these are subjects on which one needs (while expressing in the confidence of brotherly love what commends itself to one's own soul as true). to hold oneself very open to further light from any quarter in which God may please to send it.

(* It is not meant by this that they will share in all the blessedness of the Church. To be members of Christ's body, of His flesh and of His bones; to have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us, is a deeper and more wondrous blessing than any governmental glory.)

Among others,* Psalms 74:1-23; Psalms 79:1-13 are very full of instruction as to the Jewish remnant; and so are four chapters in Isaiah, viz., 24-27: But before noticing them I would first remark, that while some of those forming that remnant are martyred for their faithful adherence to the name and worship of God, and the coming of the once rejected Jesus as the hope of their nation., others will be miraculously preserved through the whole period, which is thus spoken of (Jeremiah 30:7)-"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." The entire remnant are preserved from the judgments which come upon the enemies.. Some of them are slain indeed by the sword of persecution, while others escape that sword, and are preserved by the power of God throughout the fires of that great and terrible day of the Lord, when the sun shall be darkened, and the moon withhold her shining, to enjoy the fullness of earthly blessing in the millennial kingdom. Isaiah 24:1-23 is one of the most solemn descriptions we have of that great and terrible day. In the midst of it (ver. 13-15) we have a delightful view of the security and solemn joy of the preserved remnant. The next chapter gives us a sweet prospect of the glorious period which succeeds; when, " the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." Verse 9 shows us what had been the sustaining hope of the remnant throughout the period of their sorrows; and the triumphant song of chapter xxvi„ still further unfolds this. Verses 3 and 4 are very precious. -They seem like a. voice to us from the future, laden with the precious fruits of the experience of those who have found God a sufficient stay and refuge amid scenes of horror and desolation, such as earth has never witnessed yet. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.

Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." The song finished, in verse 20 and 21, God Himself speaks in anticipation of all this, inviting His favored remnant to the place of safety while the storm of judgment passes over. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation he 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 shall no more cover her slain." Then chapter 27 is like a summing up of the Whole. Carefully compared with Duet. 32, it shows the end which God has in view in all these dealings of His, both in judgment and in grace. The whole of the two chapters will amply repay the labor of diligently perusing and collating them. Some verses may be particularly noticed; as Deuteronomy 32:36, compared with Isaiah 27:7-9. Deuteronomy 32:27-28, compared with Isaiah 27:11. Yes, Israel, that people wonderful from the beginning hitherto, who have been at school all these thousands of years, to learn the lesson they never have learned yet, to cease from themselves and from man and stay only upon God, will learn it effectually amid the scenes we have glanced at. And when this lesson is once really learned, when the Lord sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left, then will he

take the cup of trembling out of their hands, and put it into the hands of those strange nations which have been His rod for the chastening of His own beloved people; and after that there is nothing but healing and victory and peace and prosperity for Israel.

(*As to these and other Psalms, see "Short Meditations on the Psalms, chiefly in their prophetic character." Nisbet and Co., London.)

It may lead me rather beyond the precise subject of this paper; and yet it is so intimately connected with it, that I will not withhold one more remark. There will doubtless be many, many Israelites scattered among the nations during the period in which all these events are transpiring in the Holy Land. Isaiah 66:1-24 and Ezekiel 20:1-49 both describe a bringing again of the children of Israel, distinct from that return of the Jews which precedes the coming of the Lord. Ezekiel 20:1-49, I believe, refers to the restoration of the Ten Tribes, and in their case the rebels are purged out from among them before they enter the land, not in it.Isaiah 66:1-24 may include the Ten Tribes, but also, I believe (and whether it does include the Ten Tribes or not) refers to the gathering, after the Lord’s coming, of those Jews who had not returned to the land previously. Isaiah 49:21 shows the surprise of those already in the land, when they see the multitudes of their brethren thus brought back, laden, as we may see in Isaiah 60:1-22, with wealth and treasure, and brought as a clean offering to the Lord. Most of the passages which speak of the Lord restoring His people to their own land refer, I suppose, to these peaceful, triumphant restorations of them after the coming of the Lord; not to the return of those who pass through the ordeal of all the troubles in the land -which precede the Lord’s coming. By this last phrase in such a connection is meant the coming of the Lord with all His saints, not that previous stage in His return in which He takes up His saints to meet Him in the air to be forever with Him where He is.

T.

●HEBREW PROPER NAMES.

" Pharaoh" means Prince or Leader 111D from which it is derived, is to be or make free. Note, here, two things. First,-The play on the word in Exodus 5:4, Pharaoh says, "Why do ye, Moses and Aaron, let [Pharaoh it over] the people "; Secondly,-The name, in the bad sense of free, lawless, or self-willed, as was Pharaoh in the history of the Exodus, strongly points, as that whole history does, to the coming Apostate Infidel King. G.

Vol 01 - Outline of the Revelation

Outline of the Revelation

IT is important to remark, first of al], that The Revelation is a book of judgment: judgment on the earth-(in the interval between the church and an owned state on earth, the secret springs are shown in heaven, where alone the earthly acts could be understood)-first, of the professing church as a system on the earth, where it is responsible to maintain the truth and testimony of God- and then, of the world. In the latter case, the Church is no longer at all in question; the only places in which the Church is seen in its Christian affections and position, is in the beginning and at the end of the book, before the subject of it is opened and after it is closed: in the first case it is seen in its members, in the last as a whole. (I refer to 1: 6, and 22: 17.) Further, it is important to remark, that the character in which Christ reveals Himself in the opening of the book is wholly earthly-heaven is excluded. He is the faithful Witness, the First-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. The Church knows him in all these characters, and is associated with the two last. She ought to have replaced the first; but she is never seen here in that position. John does not even set himself on the ground of the Church’s witness and heavenly place; he is in the tribulation, kingdom and patient expectation of Christ. The first time the Church is addressed, it is with warnings and threatenings, as being already fallen. If seen in her own character, it is only to look for Jesus. Christ judges divinely, though, as Son of man (a name of judgment and government), also in the midst of the Church seen on earth and responsible to bear light there. He is eternal, searching in judgment and consuming, in firmness of power, having in His own hand the symbolical representatives of the Churches or states of the professing Church which he addresses. The word of sharp judgment proceeded out of His mouth. Sovereign authority shone in His visage.

However, He had the power of life (and that out of death) to him that bowed to Him: and John therefore was to write what he saw; not merely to be confounded by it, but to make known this character of judgment to the Churches-" the things that are," for that was now the real relationship of Christ to the body here below standing in the position of testimony-and the things that were to happen after them; for only after these Christ and the Church would take their place in manifestation of glory and testimony. Hence the rapture of the Church, unless it be in mystery, is not known here, because this is testimony on the earth, or that which governs the earth both secretly and publicly; and so judgments there: and the Church’s taking up to heaven form no part of this. That is its portion in its own relationship to Christ of privilege and affection. We see testimony looked for in its earthly state at the beginning, and what is needed for its public manifestation at the end. In the first it had already failed; but the second (blessed be God!) cannot; for it is accomplished by divine power. The former first presents itself-there is no promise of inward grace, no supply of strength. Motives, promises, encouragements, warnings, threatenings and judgments announced all these the Son of Man holds out, but never an inward supply of grace, never one word such as-" my grace is sufficient for thee"- " my strength is made perfect in weakness." He was dealing with the responsibility of the Church as a profession in the earth-as a

position to be maintained, not in His affections for his beloved saints, nor for His bride the Church. This, it is evident, gives a very important character to these addresses, and is easily verified by the reader; we are on earth with a Judge, not in heaven, nor in communion with a Savior. Not a mere judge-that is for the world-but One who rebukes and chastens because He loves, still that is in a certain sense judicial-one who is patient, gracious, painstaking, vigilant to warn and show the failure and the path to follow the sentiments that become the state which those He addresses Himself to are in, but who can spew out of his mouth that which, after all the pains taken, does not answer what he has a right to, and must expect and require. This is not the church of His elect, though they may be there. It is the body which has a public responsibility to maintain its testimony in the earth. The Churches then present Christ's judgment on and. dealings with the professing body, or at least those who have ears to hear when their first decay attracts His vigilant and bounden care, till they are utterly rejected as a witness on the earth.

Patient but judicial in its character, and failing in no one warning which if listened to might have led to the avoidance of the judgment, and adding every promise which could encourage and sustain faith. It is not the Spirit in the Church acting for the preservation of the body, by maintaining in the conscience and in the heart the testimony of, and dependance on, Christ; putting away the evil and drawing down the good, but the Spirit from without addressing itself to the Churches or professing body in its various states, and informing it of Christ's judgment of that state-an entirely different thing. To the world, as we shall see, all is simple judgment; till the time of glory, graduated judgment, but only judgment, though a remnant may be preserved through it. What we have previously enlarged upon, constitute "the things that are." The characteristic state of the church, with Christ's judgment upon it while it continues a public, the public, witness on Christ's behalf in the world. Various and even contemporaneous elements may enter into this; but together they prove the judicial history of what the Church has been as a professing witness from beginning to end. I may perhaps enter into some details further on. These " things which are " close, however. God no longer recognizes the professing Church as a public witness, even a blamable one; the moment is not stated nor the manner. He ceases to speak (for his words are the warning of, not the execution of, judgment), when he has said, " I am about (μελλω) to spue thee out of my mouth." It may continue to the eyes of man, when every saint of the true Church being gone, it is no longer in any way the object of Christ's care, even judicial, and may be left to Satan to make any use he pleases of it. Perhaps some awhile drag on in self-delusion their association with its existence.

I say this is not to lead to speculation on what may be, but to arrest conclusions as to what is not; 1:e. the accomplishment of the act of cutting off; there is no candlestick which God owns, nor light at all. The carcass may be there which hindered and corrupted: the soul is fled. After these things another order of events begins. There is nothing which God owns in the earth as a corporate testimony. God, dealing with the earth itself, begins His government of it. And the prophet sees a door open above; and the voice like a trumpet which had previously led him to turn round and see the candlesticks on the earth, now calls him up to heaven, where he sees the scene and throne of power which is to begin to act on the earth-a God manifested as Jehovah the Creator on the throne, in the characteristics in general in which he had carried on the government of the earth, and more particularly among the Jews upon the earth: the covenant with them, which, if it had failed on earth on their part, was maintained intact in nature and purpose in heaven, was not yet

referred to, but would be further on; but the sovereign pledge which secured the blessings of creation till the earth should be no more, was plainly seen; of this the rainbow was the sign: and, further on, the cherubic throne, the temple, and the ark of the covenant were the expressions of the one; and the well-known rainbow was the assurance of the infallibility of the other. But the features with which John saw the throne surrounded require more special mention; for none of those attached to the covenant with the Jews (unless we consider the cherubim such) were the first associations of it. It is only at the close of chap. 11 (1:e. of the whole of the first series of visions, and of the succession of events to the end, viewed in their general history), or more properly at the beginning of chap. 12:, that the temple and the ark of the covenant are introduced. We find typical parts of the temple used as being in heaven with the scene suitably attached to them, and the multitude worship in this temple; but the temple itself is not brought into view. The idea is a throne in heaven, center and source of the government of the world, and One who was there, whatever man might think, to exercise it. There was a Sitter on it: that is we have:-First, the state of the professing church, or what God noticed as the specially' responsible and characterizing part of it. Secondly, after that, when that was out of view; God having no longer anything to say to it on earth, we have the throne of government in heaven, and God declaring or recalling His pledge of the blessing and security of creation, whatever chasten- lugs and judgments there might be. It was still a mystery of God; for to none but faith was it known that all the terrible things which were coming in were the direct and detailed effect of a government of God, which was not yet manifested, though it acted on the earth. This continues to the end of chapter 11:, except the little open book. Thirdly, we have then the sign of the covenant and government of Israel on earth again brought to view, not in public acknowledged result, but that God held it good in heaven, though he could not yet publicly give its place on earth, but there was with Him an object of covenant on earth, an object on earth in respect of which, not merely on which, He acted.

What were the features which characterized the throne? First, divine glory-the manifestation of the divine character.* After this (which was His intrinsic character and manifestation), we have the bright and early sign of his covenant with creation;** but the Lord' had associated other thrones with His: this was the third feature. I say associated thrones, for there was nothing which entered into connection with the first throne itself: but it was equally remarkable that there were other thrones besides the central one. They have a position given to them apart from, though associated with, the throne of the Lord, endowed with wisdom from, and experience of, the ways of God, for government according to their knowledge of Christ and God's thoughts and ways in Him. They were clothed in the raiment of righteousness as personally worthy; or clothed. with Christ in their knowledge of righteousness; and the crown of righteousness made good through conflict was upon their head-God had placed them there. Such was their character, intelligent, holy-confided authority: but the manifestation of the terror of God's power, flowed forth from the throne itself. In presence of it was the manifestation of the various and searching, yea, consuming perfections of the Eternal Spirit, through which it could be reached, if man could. And who could abide them?, The established purity, unalterable in character, was there. It was not that which washed filth, but which implied its absence; and the standing there was where there was none. This was what characterized the throne in the way up to it; in fine, we have this heavenly throne thus doubly characterized. It was a manifestation of the invisible God-there was a Sitter on it-God in manifestation and government; next it was in the manifestation of that glory which though fully

divine, is communicable-the city had the glory of God, as we rejoice in hope of the glory of God; but this was in its light, its wall, its first foundations, jasper: that is what He who here sat on the throne was in manifestation, together with the last of the foundations, as we have seen, completing what the city was founded on.

It was the millennial glory: the manifestation of God in power, evil being put away, or in that moral character which resulted from, or was displayed in, its being put away, after all manner of moral exercise displayed while it existed, whether in the patience of power, or the forming a character intelligent of God, thus displayed. Next it was the security of the blessing of creation on that day. And further, there were the associated thrones of conferred power in the maturity of intelligence, and an administration, not of mere sovereign royalty, though thrones they were, but of interest, intelligent interest, and care over, as associated with, on God's behalf, those whom the Lord would bless. But then, besides this, the present character of the throne, not as connected with the elders, was Sinai-terror and power. The consuming power of the perfections of the Spirit, and the immitigable requirement of unchangeable purity. This is not a throne of grace. And connected with this were four living creatures, not on conferred thrones; but entering, so to speak, into the composition of the throne itself, the power, firmness, intelligent nature, and rapidity of action necessary • in the judgments of Him who governed in a world which had ceased to heed Him, and where what He could recognize in testimony, in grace, so as to deal with in patient moral display of what He was, subsisted no longer. These ways of God in judgment were swift and rapid in their power, and saw, not in outward appearance, but with the perfections of internal discernment; and glorify not as Jesus, the Father, but the Lord God Almighty, Jehovah Elohim Shaddai. When the Eternal God is thus glorified, the four-and-twenty elders worship Him they know on the throne; and recognize the Eternal in Him, the God of Providence and Creation; for they have understanding in the character and reasons why glory can be given to God, and to suit their praises to the character in which He is manifested. The others manifest His attributes. These knew Him that has them, what His rights and worthiness are-His sovereign title to dispose of the creation, the creature of His will. There is intelligent adoring of Him who has associated them with His glory. Such is the power in exercise here; we have now the knowledge of that in which it was to be exercised. The book fully written out, but as yet absolutely sealed; God's ways with the Church are ways of revelation, full, gracious, holy communications to act morally on those intelligent by the new Mature and the Spirit. Now we have the unrolling, as an. object of intelligence, of His judicial dealings with that with which He was not in this- relationship, communicated to the Church prophetically, not in communion about itself. Who could do this? Of these purposes of God there was no moral intelligence founded on principle merely. He who could wield the title and power of judgment-who, having suffered perfectly for God's glory, and gained the title to the inheritance, when tried to the uttermost, God's power in holiness and judgment being in exercise.... He could-and this the elders understood; for intelligence is theirs. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, had prevailed to open the book;- He who was to wield divine power in the house chosen of God on earth, to sit on the throne of the Lord, as is said of Solomon; He who was even the source of all this power and promise-He had prevailed to open it; but it was by perfectly glorifying God in suffering-it was redemption-glory. Also, He has hence much wider glory then Judaic or David even, as the strength and source of it.; for there is a double character of the Lamb, as there was of the throne. The millennial glory on earth should be His in the title of His person; but, having His place in the power of divine government, encircled by the glory, invested with the

power, and characterized by it, which belonged to the present power of the throne and the intelligence of God’s ways in conferred glory-the result of the moral ways and dealings of God in the midst of the throne, the beasts and the elders-a lamb standing as slain, with full perfect power and intelligence in all their forms, and that in the exercise of them in God’s ways*** upon earth in government. "And He came and took the book." So that we have the twofold character of the Lamb also, what He will be in the millennium, what He is in the present character of His power-this last connected with His sufferings and death. On His taking the book, a new song begins; joy belongs to the whole, beasts and elders, and another element discloses itself. There are yet saints on the earth in whom heaven is interested; a new song is sung in heaven, based on redemption-not merely power and holy title to glory, but all the dealings of God in power, in creation, as well as the joint heirs of glory, are interested in this; all things in heaven and earth are the subjects of reconciliation, as well as the Church. Hence, though I doubt not that the. elders are particularly in question here, still all could sing "us." The difference of us and them is not a difficulty here, because, as the singers recognize their being subjects of redemption as all the rest, so the assurance that the suffering saints whose prayers they presented would reign and be a kingdom of kings and priests was of the highest interest and utmost propriety. Just what was important to be brought out here, the grand point to result, after Christ’s glory, from all the scenes of this book, for the church scene we have seen closed; but there were saints in connection with the government and providence of God, with the eyes of the Lamb running through the earth, in the scene of the judgments on a heedless world, which this book was to unfold, whose lot it was all-important to point out. Round the throne and the beasts and elders, who gave it its character, the heavenly host praise Him that sits on the throne and the Lamb, and all creation echoes it, with the "Amen" of the living creatures. This embraces the subjects of the first two chapters; and the four-and-twenty elders worship. The living creatures do not worship. They render testimony to the glory of Him on the throne, and to the redemption by the Lamb, but they do not worship. This belongs to the elders-precious privilege! We now enter on the scene in which those saints are placed who had learned to look up to heaven, according to the character of God here displayed; not the Church, as we have seen, but yet heavenly in the source of their hopes.

It is precious to know that whatever may be the terrible progress of the divine judgments, not only are we of the Church hid in the hollow of His hand, and, if we keep the word of His patience, kept from the hour of temptation, and an open door, meanwhile (what grace for such!) set before us; but it is the Lamb who opens the course of judgments to which men themselves are exposed; so that for the saints found there, there is a sure warrant of guardian care through the trial. I do not enter into details of the four first seals; they are the historic progress of God’s dealings with the world which has not known Him in grace. Favor shown to the wicked has been of no avail. Will the lifting up of God’s hand produce any effect? But all this seems nothing more than the ordinary course of events, only that the hand of God waxes heavier and heavier in judgment; war of conquest, mutual destruction, famine, and sword famine and pestilence and the beasts of the earth, God’s four sore providential plagues. (See Ezekiel 16:21.) Hence we find that the four living creatures with the voice of God’s power call the prophet to come and see. These temporal providential judgments are thus complete. And this is the subject of the book; but we have seen suggested the existence of recognized saints, but in no formally recognized place as regards the Church, because the known things were the saints reigning in heaven-the world judged on earth, because we have left the Church as a witness on earth; and here we find there have been some of

them put to death**** offered up as burnt offerings to God: and the cry proceeds from under the altar, which demands the execution of the judgment directly on the inhabitants of the earth. This is not the Church's cry, but of those that are in relationship with judgment and the throne, and have their thoughts associated with it-a necessary consequence of their position; for it is their only refuge. "Despot Master, holy and true," is the title they appeal to. They are clothed with the fruits of their sorrow and faithfulness; but for judgment they must wait, till another body of sufferers have filled up the number which requires the judgment of God. But this forms a moral epoch, and the demand is followed by an utter convulsion of all existing institutions and ordinances, so that the kings of the earth, rich and poor, great and small, think that the day of judgment is come, though it be not really so. And thus things were ripened up for what was more truly final; for the previous judgments had been but a beginning of throes. Hitherto it was more like the ordinary circumstances of trial, though with increasing aggravation, and till the cry for judgment arose against a persecuting and unrepenting world; but the more direct judgments of God were soon now to begin to blow upon the earth, and those owned of God must be sealed. And immediately on this, Israel reappears on the scene as the object of God's sure and unceasing care. "Say that they are Jews, and are not," is all that could be said of Judaism while the Church was on the scene: now they are noted and numbered, as the people of God, not delivered indeed, but marked. He who saw from heaven could see it as the mission of the four horses, though in earth nothing of it appeared. This closed this portion of the vision. But a new scene bursts on the prophet's sight-a vast multitude in a position as yet unseen. This crowd had no place in the scene in the beginning. It is now first, and in special manner, introduced in the scene; but the chapter itself, it is to be remarked, is not the course of historical events, but an interruption, to let us into certain purposes of the divine counsel. The former part seals in the earth the election of the earthly people. In this we have a present assemblage of a multitude from among the Gentiles who stand before the throne and the Lamb as the victors brought into the fruits of their toil. The God that they knew of, to whom they ascribe salvation along with the Lamb, is God, as we see Him displayed in this book, not as He was known to the church, the Father and the Son in communion by the Spirit, but One who, on the throne, had been their Savior. Historically the Church had only seen Him exercising His righteous judgments in the earth, because He could own nothing at this period in the earth: still here there is found a vast multitude who had been saved through and out of all this, and who were found and owned before the throne that had saved them. They were not indeed in such a position as sitting on thrones crowned, nor did they celebrate the merits and title to glory of the Lamb that they knew, but they could speak of a salvation which had been granted them, ascribing it to God and the Lamb, accomplished in the midst of the fire. Note the beasts and elders are excluded here: these saved ones could not stand around them and ascribe salvation. Though the angels may be in this position, when it is only a question of place and honor. But the Elder interests himself in them, and would have John to know, and draws his attention to them. John refers back to him, for the elders are ever they that have understanding. These are they who have come out of the great***** tribulation. Now I do not believe that it is the time of trouble of Matthew 24:1-51 which applies more particularly to Judea and the Jews, the time of Jacob's trouble. This is far more extensive in its sphere, and precedes it in time; for that takes place on the setting up the abomination of desolation in the holy place, that is the last three years and a half. But there is a time of temptation which is to come upon all the world to try them which dwell on earth, from which the true Church had been preserved, but from which these had not. This is, I apprehend, " the

great tribulation," from the midst of which these have been saved. Thyatira had been threatened that Jezebel should be cast into great tribulation. It is very likely this also is the same. I judge that it refers rather to what follows than to what precedes, up to the time of the rising of the Beast out of the bottomless pit when the scene changes; and we have another set of subjects. They have profited fully by the purifying efficacy of the blood of Christ, so as to stand before God. They ey worship in His temple. They are relieved by His presence from every sorrow and sufferance, but they are not with Him and the Lamb in intelligent glory as the crowned elders on the thrones. They are the subject of their interest, and their explanations-touching witnesses of His tenderness and patience, but not of intelligent association in His glory, as far as that may be to creatures. These once set in their place as manifesting the securing power Of God's love, the history is resumed. This will not require here much detail. The last seal is opened; and after a short delay in the action of heaven, the seven angels prepare to sound. The first four give rise to the smiting the earth in the four great sources of its riches. The earth (properly speaking), the sea, the rivers, and the sun, moon and stars. This was not by apparently natural causes, as the famines and the wars of the earliest judgments, but by what made them evidently. judgments or plagues, only we have to remark here that these judgments broke forth as the result of offering up the prayers of saints. The censer which the great High Priest had offered up his incense in, was filled with fire from the altar--God's consuming judgment-and then cast on the earth. But these plagues in the earth cease, only to give way to bitterer woes on the inhabitants of this hardened world. The first is the letting loose the locusts which came out of the smoke of the bottomless pit, a Satanic darkening of human understanding, the taking away the light of the natural path of man, the shutting out divine and heavenly influence.

Out of this darkness go forth those whose business and power is to pass through, pervade, and destroy, not now mere prosperity, but all peace and rest of spirit-to torment men, so that they should desire death. It is not an outward plague which touches prosperity, the means of enjoyment-nor life, the loss of which, if it closes pleasure, makes pain cease as to this world. The springs of joy were poisoned in the heart, in the life left there, by this Satanic mischief; but it was the portion of those only not marked by God. The next plague is more outward chastisement-the killing by the power of the Euphratean horsemen. Still Satanic power goes forth out of their mouth, and in their tails lies and poison were found. But men repented not, neither of their sins nor of their idolatry; such, thus far, were the effects of the sounding these terrible trumpets. Diabolical principles and human energy, imbued however with what was Satanic, succeed each other in the desolation of those who have chosen this earth. as their portion. But now a new publication of the last importance comes forth from Heaven. The messenger of God's power-clothed with a cloud, the sign of His presence of old among His people, the rainbow (pledge to the creation) on His head and His feet-in consuming judgment, having an open book in his hand, puts his feet, one on the sea the other on the land, thus claiming all the earth in judgment. When He cried, the whole utterance of divine power gave forth its voice; but the details were not revealed.. However, there was to be no longer any delay but in the days of the seventh trumpet, when it should just now sound, the mystery of God would be complete; afterward it would be open manifest government or revealed glory. The prophecy was to re-commence. The book here is open, it was the dealing and ways of God Himself with a known object, and on known and revealed principles for a short period also, and on a confined scale. Accordingly we find ourselves evidently at once on Jewish ground, and direct reference to the historical records of their conduct, another immense difference

appears, too-here, the whole character of the scene changes.

It is no longer mysterious agents inflicting on carnal men the judgments of God, the question of witness in the world being entirely withdrawn.: on the contrary, we are on the earth with witnesses to the God of the earth; and, on the other hand, plain definitely characterized wickedness, rising up to destroy the true witnesses whom God avowedly owns, and up to a certain time maintains untouched by their enemies. The nature of the scene is thus wholly changed, the book is effectually an open one. First, we had the Church on earth; then, dealing in judgment by providential power, and nothing measured by God; now we have renewed objects of his dealings on earth. He resumes His ways with the Jews****** during forty-two months; then the city and outward court of the temple are given up to the Gentiles, but there are true worshippers in the temple and at the altar of God-worshippers on a Jewish ground of hope by faith, not, I judge, marked merely literally by the temple and altar, but those who really understood approach to God, as priests might who were within, while the general mass were given up to be trodden down with everything holy in the nation by the Gentiles. But, besides the priests' reserved worship, there was the power of prophecy, guarded by such power as had Moses and Elias; and with reason, for they had the difficulties of both-the hostility of Gentiles to whom the people were captive, and the apostasy of the people given up to idolatry who had sold themselves to them; but with the forty-two months, the time of their mission closed; and the beast, ascending out of the bottomless pit, kills them, and their bodies remain unburied in the great street of the city called Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord was crucified-in principle, and probably in physical reality, Jerusalem-but, revived by the spirit of life from God, they stand up and go up in a cloud in the sight of their enemies. Judgment and convulsion accompanied this; and a full class of men were killed; for 7000 is a complete set destined to that. The city may be still naturally supposed Jerusalem; but if taken in a wider sense I do not object, as "the city" is so used. This part gives a definite place to these prophecies. have no doubt this was the first half week. This is necessarily introduced to give it its place in the general history, and connects the two. We have then the second woe closing with the closing of the first half week. It would appear probable, I am inclined to suppose, beginning also within it, but this I leave. The seventh trumpet is the signal of closing all, as had been said, but the events are not related under it, no more than on the opening of the seventh seal; all, in which God would, on to the end, display His power, is celebrated as now to take place. And now, before the history is continued, the thoughts of God in the denouement of it all, and Satan's opposition, are brought into view, and then the history as the way towards it. Still all flows now on intelligible Jewish ground of interpretation. The blessing is not yet manifested on earth, but it is secured in heaven. Hence the temple is opened in heaven; and the prophet sees the ark of the covenant, God's sign of unchangeable purpose of blessing, and the voice of His power in judgment accompanies the vision. The counsels of God then appear themselves in connection with the Jewish people. They are to be clothed with supreme glory to bring forth Messiah to reign over the nations in power. In God's view, the old covenant-glory, or mere Mosaic estate, is to be under their feet; and, clothed with the supreme authority, the perfection of human administrative authority crowns their head. But in the bringing forth of the reigning strong man, there was (if not as to the fact, at least as to the accomplishments of the purpose) an interruption.

Satan in direct hostile power (his form the Roman government) seeks to destroy this Jewish king of iron scepter. He is caught up to God and his throne, hidden for the time, and Israel's place is of

God in the desert, seen and acted on in the remnant according to God in the latter day; meanwhile, as I doubt not, the church is associated with the male child. (Compare the promise to Thyatira.) There is war in heaven, Satan is cast out, and then persecutes the Jews as objects of promise, and the woman flees into the desert where God takes care of her. This casting out of Satan is the beginning of the active energy of Christ's kingdom, and God's power in it. Heaven was forever freed from the accuser, to the joy of those who dwelt there, and rejoiced in the deliverance thus accomplished of their brethren who had been in conflict. Their combat is now closed-they have overcome. Blessed those who dwell in heaven! but woe to earth and sea, because of the wrath of him who knows that his remaining time is short! This important event, the casting down forever of Satan from heaven, where he shall no longer be the adversary of the Saints, introduces the last three years and. a half, the peculiar character of which is his power, and working, and rage upon earth in consequence. The Saints not merely of the church long since out of view, hut the Saints in conflict in the immediately preceding epoch, are out of his reach. They have overcome, suffered, and their victory is celebrated; but if God had not shortened the days, no flesh would be saved of those subject to his violence on earth. The woman (the Jews as objects of God's purpose) and her seed are the great objects of his malice; but the woman is secured, and he makes war with the remnant of her seed, characterized as having the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus, that is, as being faithful in obedience, of which the commandment of God, the law, was the measure, and walking by the light and spirit of prophecy; for the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

(* The jasper is used, in the city which had the glory of God, as light, strength, and security. Sardius was the last, the Ω of the foundations, as the jasper was the first.) (** It also had the precious stone character.)

(*** In general, the eyes are seen in providential government (2 Chronicles 16:9), subsequently established in the foundation of the Lord's seat in the temple at Jerusalem in the Millennium (Zechariah 3:9; Zechariah 4:10), and here exercised by the Lamb, as having the fullness of the Spirit in this character.)

(**** Compare Matthew 24:1-51 Though it is probable that part of' it may be more general, at any rate it is the same thing.)

(***** Some persons lay great stress on the adjectives coming after the substantives, "the tribulation, the great," without reason," I judge. The adjective is more emphatic, in my judgment, when it comes before than when it follows, which is very natural, the strong expression coming first; still, I judge, it is the great.)

(****** The Jews are not necessarily a publicly redeemed people, because God deals with them emphatically. They may be in captivity as in Egypt, and in apostasy with a remnant as in Elias' case, and yet God, in a certain sense, own and deal with them: and this is just the case here; still it is an immense change to begin thus again with the Jews. It is just introduced to connect it with its place in the general history before the final actings of the seventh trumpet; in what follows it is the grand scene and subject of these latter.)

Satan's plans in that terrible time are then unfolded; a beast rises, as to its providential existence, out of the mass and confusion of the nations; its form was that of ten kingdoms, distinct

governments, yet. a corporate body which had had itself seven forms of government, and embraced the qualities of power of all the previous empires, and to which Satan gives his throne and power. He blasphemes against God, his tabernacle (I suppose his heavenly one in the church), and against those that dwell in heaven. It is an essentially earthly beast exalting man and what is seen, and filled with hatred of all that was above him and that was heaven. Save the elect, he has empire given him; and those who have their portion on earth worship him. He had one of his forms of existence wounded to death, but this was healed; it was a Satanic imperial power and body, formed however of the union of several kingdoms. But there was yet another instrument of the enemy's, if he set up the first beast on the throne in power as an object, he wrought in another as an agent. The second beast arises out of the earth, it is in the already formed and ordered system; he is a power, and the form of his power is Christ's (not Christianity but Christ's); but his voice was Satan's. He does ample signs also, to prove himself the prophet sent of God, doing that which Elijah did as the test between Jehovah and Baal. He has the claims in form of Christ's royalty, and works peculiar signs as a prophet; but all this in the service of the beast, all whose power he exercises in its presence, and causes man to make an image to it, and forces his adoration, or at least submission to it. It is Satan's power in full energy, in the form of a false Christ and prophet, but who maintains the authority of the throne Satan has set up. I do not doubt the center of the false prophet's work is in Judah. I *do not say exclusively.

Such are the formal instruments of evil. Next, we have God's workings in the midst of all this. First, the faithful remnant of Judah, who have known how to suffer like the Lamb during the power of him who had His appearance. It is not yet Solomon-glory, but David on Zion between Shiloh and the temple, as in Chronicles, and those who have suffered with him there. Hence they have not their name, as children, but His Father's name who had been faithful to Him in His life, so suffering; and counted on His name in their measure as Christ had. These were not in heaven, but associated as an anticipative remnant with all Christ's glory when He takes it, like David's worthies, not entering into it when it is taken, but with Him into it in its fullest display on earth, with Him the Lamb in his earthly royal state wherever he goes; and this being sovereign grace they can catch the heavenly air they are so near to, though they are not in heaven. These first secured in their place as ever, the gospel of God's creation-glory and swift-coming judgment is sent forth, a last message, that man may escape, as Psalms 96:1-13. Then the fall of Babylon is announced-then the final solemn warning against the beast: and then it is announced that it is closed; and the dying in the Lord are thenceforth happy. None are now to be thus put to death, for all is now turned; and the harvest, or distinctive judgment, where the good are spared-and the vintage, where it is all destruction of the apostate Judaism-take place. Much of this last may have even had the form of Christianity: for aught I know it is probable; but it is now idolatrous apostate Judaism. This wholly closes this part of the scene. The proper judgments of God in the earth, which fill up His wrath, are given as a description apart. Chaps. 11: to the end of 12:, 13:, 14:, were all in connection with Jerusalem and the Jews, though there were agents whose actings perhaps extended beyond it; but the subject of the chapters, the guiding key of intelligence, is their connection with God's purposes as to the Jews and Jerusalem.

These chapters are not so. We return to the present judgments of' God in the earth on the general state of an apostate world, with its particular results and features. Hence we have no longer the ark of the covenant, but the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony. The throne exercises its

power according to the righteous testimony of God; but there is no question of covenant: the typical features are used of the temple. Those who would not worship the beast are seen on a sea of glass mingled with fire. They had been purified with the moral power of the word, but accompanied by tribulations-they had passed through the fire. Now they were seen triumphant on unchangeable purity before God. It is well to remark, that chapter 15 is in no way the historic continuance of chapter 14, which had closed with the wine-press judgment. It returns back to recount the judgments that fall on the Gentile part of the wickedness, beginning as ever by setting the saints in resulting triumph, so as to assure their hearts through it all. They sing somewhat as Israel at the Red Sea. The judgment is made manifest; but also how true these ways of judgment are of Him whom they characteristically own here as King of nations. It will be found, as before in the trumpets, that the four great symbols of, and indeed real sources of, prosperity, are smitten, only in a much severer way, and with especial application to the kingdom of the beast, the earth, sea, rivers, and sun. It was the wrath and vengeance of God Almighty. The fifth comes closer. The vial is poured on the throne of the beast; and darkness and anguish seize on his kingdom, but without repentance; and final judgment is prepared. On the sixth vial being poured out, the Euphrates is dried up. The barrier of the beast's empire is destroyed; but I am not prepared to say who the kings, from the rising of the sun, are, if it be more than laying open the empire to the inroads of the powers beyond. After this, three unclean spirits, Satan's direct blasphemous rebellious power, that of the empire raised up in the latter day, and the false prophet of Judaism, assemble the kings of the prophetic world to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Armageddon alludes, I suppose, to Judges 5:19-20. The Lord now, too, as a warning, recalls to those that have ears to hear his thief-like coming on the world. The seventh angel pours out his vial in the air-the universally pervading influence that men inhale and live by-the signs of God's terrible power break forth, and such convulsion of all established on earth as never had been known. The great Gentile city is divided into three parts. The city embraces, I apprehend, the whole organized civil relationship of the western Gentile world. Elsewhere this, as independently constituted, came to nothing; and Babylon, the Roman system, and influences and order, came up before God for wrath-for hitherto it had subsisted. Judgment severe and terrible fell on men from God, but they only blasphemed the more. Thereupon, we have the description and judgment of Babylon. All' this is the judgment of God, not of the Lamb, and precedes His manifestation on earth.

Rome had long carried on her idolatrous intercourse on earth, and exercised her influence over the nations, and had her dalliance with the kings of the earth; every adulterous departure from God, in associating the Church with the world, was her daughter; her system had been sustained by, and ministered to every luxury, and the sale of everything: but what characterized her was spiritual fornication and idolatry. The beast which was and is not, I take to be a characteristic name, not designating any given epoch. The beast that was, is not, and is present-the revived Roman empire-but in this last character it is entirely from beneath; and we recognize the one that slew the witnesses at the beginning of the three years and a half, the same as the first beast of chap. 13:, but then as the established power of Satan on the earth here, in association with corrupt Babylon. Thus, here accordingly we have the ten kingdoms who received their power during the same period with the beast, as then they were crowned during his existence; but at last they all hate Babylon, and burn her with fire; the corrupt idolatrous system is insupportable. Note, the false prophet subsists in the same period with Babylon-a remarkable fact as to the state of things at that

time. But the false prophet subsists after Babylon is totally destroyed-a strong evidence, be it said, in passing, that it is a different order of things. The city is, I doubt not, Rome. All the rest now flows easily on. After the judgment of the great whore, long falsely calling herself the Church, left to the rage of those she had long imposed on, room was made for the manifestation of the true. The marriage of the Lamb takes place, not the rapture but the full union of Christ and the Church, at the same time that the reign of the Lord God Almighty is celebrated.

Those called to assist at the festival of the Lamb's marriage-supper are noted as blessed. I suppose rather a different class from the wife; what, I am not prepared to say; but it is a time of blessedness, and blesses all who are near it, or under its influence. Subsequently to this heaven is opened; for the Church's place with Christ was within; and the Lord comes forth on the white horse of victory, and the saints with Him, and the judgment is executed on the beast, and the false prophet, and on their armies. The two are cast alive into the lake of fire-terrible counterpart of the Enochs' and Elijahs' of old, and plainer even in its result. The next step is the binding of Satan in the bottomless pit; that closes all that part of judgment. Verse 4 begins that of another character, and not following in order of time-the judgment of the throne, not as making war, but as ruling. In principle this continues till the great white throne has pronounced its fiat. But here, on these millennial thrones, the saints are associated. It is not the royal priests precisely here surrounding the throne, and worshipping, but thrones of judgment, such as Daniel 7:1-28 alludes to. We have, in general, the thrones, and as it might have been supposed that the beheaded, whom we have seen under the altar, and the persecuted of the beast, had lost their share • they are specifically named as found alive, though the body might have been killed; and they live and reign with Christ. Satan is let loose, that the inhabitants of the millennial earth may be put to the test, and, alas! found to be men; and then the close in Christ's final judgment of the dead, and all things new. From verse 9, we have the connection of the heavenly Jerusalem with the earth during the millennium,including its own blessedness, from which the blessing flowed; and the book is closed by warnings of Christ's coming to those concerned in the prophecy, " to every man," and then the revelation of Himself to the Church, which awakens her desire that He come, with her possession of the living water of grace meanwhile; to which He answers with the assurance, that He comes quickly, and the " Amen " of the prophet.

J. N. D.

Vol 01 - Proper Names in Hebrew

Proper Names in Hebrew

It is hard to read, in Hebrew, some passages in which a series of proper names occurs, without being struck with the sense produced, if the words are looked at, not as proper names, but expressive of meanings, and then strung together.

Thus, 1 Chronicles 1:1-4. The ten first names- ■■■

Vol 01 - Reflections on Ministry in Connection With the Legation of Moses

Reflections on Ministry in Connection With the Legation of Moses To those who, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have, attained peace for their consciences; and, further, have been gathered in the power and energy of the Spirit into a position of fellowship one with another, no question can possess more commanding interest than that of ministry; at least, so far as their well-being as in association here is concerned. My reason for considering this important subject in connection with the history of that honored instrument whose name stands at the head of this paper is, that I find in that history many principles calculated to give us a more enlarged view of the subject of ministry generally.

Before, however, proceeding to the detailed exposition of the Scriptures which shall come under our notice, I would offer a few remarks on ministry in a general way.

There is considerable comfort for the Christian in the remembrance that ministry is a settled institution in the Church of God, which the Great Head of the Church has pledged Himself to maintain "until we all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ " (Ephesians 4:13).

Here we get the true source of ministry in the Church of God, the power by which it is to be maintained, and the end for which it is designed; and, of course, we are perfectly safe in asserting that, " until" that great end be accomplished, the resurrection-gifts of the Head of the Church will remain with us.*

(* In order to meet any difficulty that may arise in the mind of the Christian reader as to the continuance of ministerial gifts with us, as put forward in the text, it may be needful to inquire what those gifts are, and how they continue with us. And first, I say, as to what those gifts are-they are, in a word, such as were needful " for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." It will, however, be observed that the Spirit is very concise in His enumeration of gifts in this important passage. For example, He omits the "gifts of tongues" and "gifts of healing" (χαριστματα ιαματων). He merely mentions "Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers," thus omitting several of the gifts which characterized, the Pentecostal times.

It will, of course, be admitted that we see not now Apostles in the Church; and this may awaken in the minds of some the inquiry, "How, then, can the gifts be said to continue with us?" I reply, the Divine purpose in giving Apostles was answered in what was effected through the instrumentality of those vessels ’during their stay upon earth, and also by their writings, as handed down to us (see 2 Peter 1:12-15). It is not necessary, in order to maintain the idea of the continuance of gift, that the Apostles should remain with us "until " etc. When it is said "He gave some Apostles, etc., for the perfecting of the saints, until," etc., it matters not whether those Apostles were designed to act by their personal presence or by their writings. Then, again, as regards prophets, evangelists,

etc., taking the former to mean, not merely persons who could predict future events, but those who could unfold the mind of God as contained in Scriptures not previously opened out, I see no difficulty in recognizing such at present in the Church. Thus, we have " some Apostles "-in their writings-" some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers," actually and personally present with us; and, moreover, we may count upon having such "until we all come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The gifts of healing and tongues were more designed as a testimony to Israel, as it is written, " With men of other tongues will I speak unto this people." They cannot, therefore, be looked at as bearing exactly on "the edifying of the body of Christ." And ' indeed, in the 68th Psalm, to which the Apostle refers in Ephesians 4:1-32, there seems to be a manifest distinction set forth as regards gifts: " Thou hast ascended on high, thou hest led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men-yea, for the rebellious also" (απειθουντες). From this passage, there would seem to be a distinction between the gifts, some being designed "for men," and some " for the rebellious also;" at least, they were designed to act upon the rebellious, meaning thereby Israel Now, the Apostle does not allude to the gifts as bearing upon "the rebellious;" he merely looks at those which were designed for the edifying of the body of Christ, and, as such, to continue " until we all come," etc. And now, one word upon the question as to how the gifts remain with us. The answer is-they are treasured up in Christ. He, as another has well observed, is the great reservoir of spiritual gift for His body the Church; from Him she must draw them; and it is in proportion as the Church walks in communion with and in faithfulness to Him, that she will abound in gift, which, by the way, proves that we are not by any means to judge of the question of the continuance of gift by the fact of its not being developed, for the question may still be asked, Why is it not developed?" Because the Church is not faithful. But shall the unfaithfulness of the Church hinder the Lord Jesus from being the grand depository of gift? Surely not. He holds the gifts, let the Church be ever so unfaithful. If the Church will not make use of them, that does not affect the principle in the least. Why does she not? Where is the hindrance? The church was not constituted the depository of gift, but Christ, her Head, was, for to Him it was said, "Thou hast received gifts" (ελαβες δοματα). He, therefore, is the receiver and the holder of gifts, and it may he safely asserted that whatever the Head holds is available for the body.

Hence, we see the absolute necessity of avoiding every barrier to the outflow of ministerial gift or grace, for the Lord Jesus will shed it forth according to his own sovereign will.

I would the rather press this point, seeing it has been asserted by some that we have not those gifts; and if we have them not, it is only folly to calculate upon them; yea, to do so, is but to leave an opening for the very worst confusion, even the exhibition of the lawless spirit of the flesh under the most solemn circumstances. If this be a correct view of the matter, I see not how we can stop short of the imposing doctrine of Apostolical succession, in which, if it be but folly to count upon the Spirit’s presence in the Church, it would be well at once to take refuge. However, I doubt not that the statement above referred to will be found to have originated in a habit of judging of things as they are, rather than of things as they should be: in other words, that the doctrine of the Spirit’s presence in the Church for ministerial gifts and every other necessity, has been tested rather by the actings of those who maintain it, than by the simple standard of the Word; and, if this be the case, we need not wonder that the blessed doctrine has been pronounced a mere delusion; for, by a similar mode of reasoning, the great doctrine of justification by faith might be pronounced a delusion also.

We need not stop to point out the manifest unsoundness of such a mode of trying the genuineness of any principle. No reasonable man would hold a principle upon the grounds of other men's conduct, neither would he reject it upon the grounds of their misconduct; his reason for' holding or rejecting it would be its being established or rejected by the Word. If this be not our habit of deciding questions involving principle, there will be no safeguard, no criterion, no unerring standard to which to appeal; and, truly, it would be most unsatisfactory to depend, in such things, upon the ever-varying conduct of persons holding principles ever so sound. As well might the children of Israel of old have depended for guidance upon the footmarks in the sand, which might be filled up or altered by every breath of wind. No: the only guide for them was the cloud or pillar above, which moved on in all that unerring steadiness which resulted from entire independence upon things beneath; and the only guide for us is the Word of our God, in which alone we can find pure truth.

Now, it is well worthy of remark, that in the memorable passage above quoted, it is not stated that " He gave some apostles, etc., etc., until the Church fail," and that then they should cease. Had this been stated, it would have established beyond a doubt the statement, that we have no right to expect the fulfillment of the Divine purpose in ministry now; at least, as we have it put forward in the passage immediately before us. But, seeing that no such thing is stated, but the very reverse, namely, that it is "until we all come.... to a perfect man," we are constrained to infer that " until " we do come, we shall possess those gifts that are needful for " perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ;" and further, that we cannot refuse to acknowledge the permanency of those gifts without, at the same time, denying the plain and simple testimony of the Word of God.

Now, if those gifts remain with us we must look for their manifestation according to divine appointment; which appointment we find, by reference to another passage of Scripture, to be as follows; "Now, there are diversities of gifts but the same spirit. And there are differences of administrations but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He (1 Corinthians 12:4-11.)

Here then is God's own order in ministry, as gathered from these two important passages. The Lord Jesus, having been raised from the dead, sent down the Holy Ghost to make ample provision for, ministry in the Church of God, nor can we set up any order or arrangement of our own without interfering with God's order, and thus, in place of "feeding the Church of God," we must seriously injure her, and, so far as we are concerned, hinder her progress toward " the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." And do we not see in this divine order of ministry the expression of God's gracious character? Is it not in keeping with all the divine actings to allow His varied grace to flow through the varied channels which the passage just quoted presents to us? Yes; it is in keeping with all the divine actings; it is like God thus to order the ministry of His Church. To send his manifold grace through various channels, is just as expressive of the grace of God, as to confine it to one or any limited number is of the selfishness of man. And, indeed, the striking figure

by which this important subject is illustrated in the New Testament would most fully exhibit the same gracious principle, as also the sad results of the opposite system. Read, for example, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. " The body is not one member, but many" (verse 14). Here the ’ one" and the " many" are put in contrast. God would have the growth and progress of the body effected by the vigorous and healthy action of every member in its proper place, and according to its proper measure, or, as we have it in the epistle to the Ephesians, " according to the effectual working in the measure of every part" (chap. 4:16). Now, there are two things which would entirely hinder this happy result from being realized, viz. an inordinate use of any one member to the exclusion of another, for example, use one hand or one foot to the exclusion of the other and see the result, and the same may be said of any other member of the body. The effect, as we -very well know, would be most pernicious, and we therefore, while in possession of our reasoning powers, never attempt such an experiment. Again, the imposition of any unnatural bandage or article of dress by which the members of the body would be hindered in their healthy action would lead to the same painful and unhappy result, a strained or deformed appearance of the body which all are naturally anxious to avoid as much as possible.

But, while men would be quick in observing the evils of such experiments with reference to the natural body, they have not hesitated to attempt them in the church of God-the body- of Christ; and, as might be expected, the necessary results have followed. The ministerial grace-designed to flow down from the Head through all the members has been hindered-the members of the body have ceased to realize in power their mutual relationship and dependence-division has taken place-different members have been led to gather round and depend upon one member, whereas all should gather round and depend upon the Head, who alone should occupy the pre-eminent place in the hearts of all the members. These and numerous other evil results have followed. So that, as far as man was able to do anything in the matter, he has hindered the body from attaining its due and proper progress. I say, as far as man was able; for we know to our comfort that the body of Christ-His church, which He has purchased with His own blood-shall surely come " to a perfect man" notwithstanding all man’s efforts to hinder it. The above reflections, however, should lead us to recognize the evil of all human interference in the divine ordinance of ministry in the church of God. Anything that would oppose a barrier to the Spirit’s " dividing to every man severally as he will," and further, to the outflow of that which He has so distributed, must be carnal, must be evil-must be avoided, if we would be obedient to Christ our Lord the Head of the Church.

We shall now proceed to view this great question in connection with some leading points in the history of Moses, the minister of God. I felt it needful to say thus much by way of introduction, in order that we may the more clearly understand the ground upon which we tread. The first Scripture to which I would refer is Exod. where we have an account of the birth and wonderful preservation of this honored instrument. " And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and bare a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein, and she hid it in the flags by the river’s brink" (5: 1-3).

We need not marvel to find Satan always on the alert in endeavoring to frustrate the gracious purposes of God. It has ever been his object so to do; and as one of these objects is very apparent in the birth of Moses, so we find the enemy at work to put this " vessel," which " the Master" was

about to use largely, out of the way. However, I do not stop to dwell upon this particular point, a point so largely developed in Scripture, but would direct the attention of the reader to the extraordinary circumstances in which we here find one who afterward occupied a position of more than ordinary elevation. We find Moses, in the above passage, in type, laid in circumstances of death, and this, moreover, as the grand preliminary to his after-course of ministry.

God's principle, since the day that Adam forfeited his title to life, has been DEATH AND RESURRECTION. Nor could it be otherwise; for man's natural energies had been brought under the power of death, and " God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." He could not use anything over which death had any claim and, consequently, if the ever Blessed One had no life to impart beyond the life imparted in creation, there was an end of all human instrumentality.

Now, we shall find this principle carried out in every instance in which the Lord has taken up any special vessel for his use. Every such vessel has been made to enter experimentally into the meaning of death and resurrection. Thus, to take a remarkable example from the New Testament, in the case of Paul, the Apostle, whose experience on this point we get in these words, " We had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead" (2 Corinthians 1:9). If it be asked, when did Paul the Apostle commence his course?-the ninth of Acts furnishes the answer. There it is, that, down in the very dust of the earth, we get at once the shattered fragments of Saul the persecutor, and the elements of the future laborious and honored Apostle. " And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly there shined round about him a light from Heaven, and he fell to the earth" (Acts 9:3-4). Here we find "the light from Heaven" which alone can reveal the true character of things of earth (22:6-9)-the appearance of the surpassing moral glory of the risen and glorified Son of Man, at once withering up all the natural powers of Saul - those powers by which he had hitherto acted in mad hostility to Christ and His saints; and bestowing upon the future Apostle those wondrous spiritual powers by which he so largely contributed to the building up of that Church which he had before labored to pull down. I feel that it is by no means easy to conceive the depth and power of those words, " he fell to the earth." There is a depth and power in them amounting to the very highest degree of intensity. How wonderful! How real! To see this great man-this previous zealot-this man who was " profiting in the Jews' religion" above many of his own equals-the Pharisee, the Hebrew, the learned religionist;-in a word, all the attractions of "the flesh and of the mind" personified, in one moment leveled to the ground, a striking commentary upon the prophetic announcement that " all flesh is grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field." In Moses we observe the same thing. If we want to find the elements of the great deliverer of Israel, we must repair to " the flags by the river's brink," and there hearken to the cries of the helpless babe, lying in circumstances of death through the power of the enemy. However, Moses was " drawn out " of this place of death, for God is the Quickener of the dead; and what is remarkable is, that the instrument made use of to draw him out is one of Pharaoh's own household. The Lord can cause Satan to be divided against himself, in order that his kingdom may not stand. So was it exactly with the Church's great deliverer, " which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power (αν δυναμιν) according to the Spirit of Holiness BY THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD " (Romans 1:3-4).

Upon all this we are incited to found the following important principle, namely, that, short of resurrection there can be no ministry in the Church of God. Any ministry which, in the principles on

which it is based, and in the elements of its constitution stops short of this great point, leaves us dependent upon " the flesh" which is but as grass " in God's view. Indeed, when we remember that it is written, " the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God; and again, " the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God • for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned " (1 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Corinthians 2:14), It should set the matter at rest as regards man's competency to minister in the Church of God; for what does the term " natural man" imply? Simply man in his natural state-man as born of Adam-man without divine life in his soul; nor is it to be lost sight of here that the incompetency upon man's part " to know or receive the things of the Spirit of God is not attributed, in the above passage, to any grossly evil propensities-no-the Apostle does not require to enter any further into the question than merely to determine the fact of his being a natural man; and on this fact he founds the inference that he cannot know or receive the things of the Spirit of God. From this it follows, that if a natural man attempts to minister in the Church of God he cannot, by any possibility, be giving out the things of the Spirit of God, for he himself, by reason of his actual condition, is unable to receive them or know them; so that let him be ever so eloquent-ever so learned-ever so moral and amiable in private life, in a word, let his talents and acquirements be what they may, yet is the solemn fact demonstrated that he cannot be ministering the things of the Spirit of God; for how could he minister what he himself has neither received nor known. A man may speak a great deal of truth-Balaam or Judas might have done that-but he cannot speak " the things of the Spirit of God."

But, although Moses, in his circumstances " at the river's brink," was made to illustrate, as has been observed, the principle of death, and afterward, in being " drawn out," that of resurrection, yet had he much to learn ere he could enter upon the work designed for him. He had to learn that " it is not by might nor by power but by my Spirit "-a lesson always most difficult indeed to learn, but one which fully rewards all the trouble encountered in learning it. " And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens; and he spied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand " (Exodus 2:11-12).

There can be no more certain evidence of haste and untimeliness in a man's service than his being occupied about human thoughts as to the rightness of his acting in any particular thing. Whenever a man acts without the assurance that the Lord would have him to do that special act, he is sure to be embarrassed-he will exhibit no calmness-no self-possession-he will be open to the assaults of the enemy in the matter of his service every time he enters upon it; and thus there will be no result save the confusion and uncertainty of his own mind. Moses seems to have suffered not a little of all this embarrassment and uncertainty, and that too both before and after his service. " He looked this way and that way." No words could more aptly convey the idea of uncertainty. Why did he "look this way and that way?" Because he was not sure of what he was doing-he lacked the comfortable assurance and confidence of soul which can only spring from faith in the great and important fact that " the Lord hath sent me." When this is realized we shall not " look this way and that way," but, in obedience to the Spirit's precept, we shall " let our eyes look right on, and let our eyelids look straight before us " (Proverbs 4:25).

Then again, after he had done the deed, how was he terrified at the result of his acting. " Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known." Had he felt persuaded in his own mind that God had been with him in what he had done, there would have been none of this fear at all. He would have felt the sweet assurance that he had not acted of himself in the matter. Thus was it at all times with the great model of a minister, the Lord Jesus Christ. He never had occasion to look this way and that way" in anything He did. He spake and acted at all times "as one having authority:" and why? Because He was ever ready to say " My doctrine is not mine but His that sent me "-" The works that the Father hath given me to do they bear witness of me "-" I am not come in mine own name "-" I am come in my Father's name." In all this, we have at once the secret of His calmness and power through all the scenes of His ministry as Son of Man. He acted not in the mere energy of nature-He put not forth the resources of man in anything; and, although He too was " grown," being "thirty years of age," yet went he not forth to his work until, anointed from above, He could go and return " in the power of the Spirit" (comp. Luke 3:23; Luke 4:13-14).*

(* With reference to the acting of Moses, upon which I have been dwelling, I am aware that some will differ from the view I have put forward in the text; and I do not refuse to canvass the merits of the most valid objection that I have heard brought forward on the subject. It is drawn from analogy. It is urged that the Lord Jesus himself was rejected in a similar manner by Israel, and that the rejection was made the occasion, in the wisdom of God, of bringing out fresh revelations with reference to the Gentiles.) But there is another lesson to be learned from this circumstance in the life of Moses. We learn that nature, even in its full-grown energy and vigor, will not suit for the Lord's work, be that work what it may. "Moses was grown," 1:e. he had attained his maturity in natural strength and energy, and, therefore, if nature could at all be made available for the divine purpose in ministry, Moses might have counted upon success in his mission; but no; God cannot make use of nature, be it ever so strong-ever so highly cultivated. " A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." It is not within the compass of earth to prepare an instrument for heavenly work. Moses forms a striking exemplification of this. He was not only " grown," but he was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts 7:22).

All this is of course admitted, nor can any one be more disposed than I am to give full weight to an argument drawn from analogy; nevertheless, I cannot admit that the above argument possesses any force in directing whether Moses was right or wrong in slaying the Egyptian. I think it seems plain that he was premature in the matter, and that he began to act ere he had received his commission to do so. God had not sent him at all as yet-he went himself, and although the Spirit in Stephen tells us that "he supposed" his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them, yet he tells us nothing as to the time at which God would deliver them, nor whether Moses had not gone before that, time, which is the very thing I contend for.

Furthermore, a little attention to the special object which the Spirit had in view, when delivering the address in which He alludes to this subject, will show us that it would have been quite out of place to have entered upon the question of the rightness of the conduct of Moses. The purpose of the Holy Ghost was to bring the whole history of the Jewish nation to bear upon the conscience of the council at Jerusalem, and he therefore charges them with having rejected Moses, although he was the one by whose hand God delivered them ultimately. But can we have any difficulty in reconciling their responsibility with the fact of Moses being premature in his acting 4 Not the least.

Do we not see the same thing every day How many are at this moment lying under the heavy responsibility of rejecting God’s message heard from the lips of men perhaps not sent at all, or, at all events, not in right circumstances. Thus, while the instrument • may have "to look this way and that way," those who were the objects of his ministrations may be held responsible.

What a combination of advantages! Grown-learned powerful in word and deed-and yet, notwithstanding all these, "he looked this way and that way," and "feared" when he thought that people knew what he had done.

Now, in all this confusion, uncertainty, and disappointment under which Moses suffered, we observe the Lord graciously conducting him on to a most important stage in his education. It was observed above, that although Moses, when at "the river’s brink," shadowed forth those circumstances of death through which every one must pass ere he begins to live or act for God, yet he needed to be led into an experimental’ knowledge of it in his own person-he needed to be ’taught, by painful experience, that " all flesh is grass," and that it " profiteth nothing; " and this was the very thing which he was now about to learn. God was about to teach Moses a deep and wondrous lesson about flesh and its worthlessness; and, in order to do this, He must have him alone in the desert. " Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian" (Acts 7:29). The Lord would thus lead Moses apart from every one and everything that would act as an obstacle to him in learning the divine lesson about flesh. He would have him away from the excitement of intercourse with his brethren-He would, for a time, turn his eyes from their burdens and the cruelty of Pharaoh and his task-masters, in order to show him "a great sight," which would make him tremble and bring him to the ground in self-abasement. And surely we can say, there is no more valuable moment in our entire history than that in which we find ourselves alone with God. Then it is that we can view everything in its true and proper light-our works-our words-our thoughts-ourselves-all that we are-all that we have and all that we do stand before us weighed in the unerring balance of the sanctuary. No one that has moved much in intercourse with others can possibly fail to see how much ’he is in danger of forming a false estimate of himself and his services. The excitement of constant engagements - constant preaching-constant visiting-constant talking -all this tends, in an eminent degree, to raise a kind of unhealthy mist around our soul’s vision, which is sure to hinder a calm and sober view of our real condition as before God. There is considerable power in the following words of a recent writer: "’Lord, I will preach, run, visit, wrestle,’ said I. No; thou shalt lie in thy bed and suffer,’ said the Lord." How often may it be said of us, "he supposed" that sinners would have been converted by his ministry-" he supposed " that Christians would have been greatly edified and comforted by his means, when, at the same time, we had learned comparatively nothing of the very first lesson which the Lord would teach us, namely, our own utter nothingness and weakness. And where is this to be learned? Surely not in the bustle of constant engagements-not in the public assembly, although we get at times a humbling view of ourselves even there-not in running from house to house, or from city to city. No; if we would learn what we really are, and not only learn it, but walk in the abiding remembrance of it, we must be much "at the backside of the desert." There it is that, " alone with God," we learn to " put off our shoes" in self-renunciation, and cry out without effort or affectation "Woe is me! " Go and ask Moses, at the foot of Horeb ,why his brethren had rejected him. What is his answer? Losing sight for the moment of their responsibility-" How could they hearken unto me who am of uncircumcised lips? " 0 for more of the holy solitude of the desert, where the presence of God is

realized by the soul Would that we could dwell more " in the secret place of the Most High " I Then would we know ourselves-know our place-and know our service. Then there would be no running without being sent-no unholy intrusion of flesh into the sacred Service of God-no speaking when we ought to be silent-no acting when we ought to be still. Every member would know his proper place in the body, and working effectually therein, the body would be edified. Nor is it only as regards ministry that one needs to taste somewhat of the holy solitude of " the backside of the desert," it is also essential as regards our view of things around us-the estimate which we form of the world and its engagements. When one gets alone with God, it is wonderful how the world and the lust thereof sink in his estimation. He sees all the busy pursuits of men in their own proper nothingness-the strife of the politician-the feverish anxiety of the aspirant after literary fame-the toil and ceaseless perplexity of the man in trade-all the cares of life and all its pleasures are esteemed by us as the small dust of the balance when we find ourselves alone with God. There is no room for worldliness in the presence of God-a worldly spirit cannot exist " at the backside of the desert; " and if we knew more of what it was to be there, we should be far less worldly and carnal than we are. But the desert is pre-eminently the school in which a man is educated for the ministry. The Lord Jesus, when on earth, was wont to bring His disciples whom He was educating for the ministry into " the desert-place apart." There He calmed their excited spirits-subdued their inordinate elation of mind - removed from beneath them the false props on which they were prone to rest their rejoicings-showed them a little of their own hearts; in a word, led them into many things essential for them to know, but which they never could have learned in the halls of an academy where the flesh is nourished rather than subdued. The flesh is a great hindrance to a man’s usefulness in the church; consequently, if the flesh be ministered to by any particular course of education, it must be rendered a more efficient hindrance.

What we want, on the contrary, is to have the flesh crushed and kept under. " We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead." The only thing that can ever break down the flesh, is to have it always under the power of the light of God’s presence. There it was that " Moses trembled and durst not behold "-there it was that " he hid his face," and "put off his shoes," in the deep sense of his own nothingness.

Now, it was just to this point that the Lord was conducting Moses, although He might in His wisdom overrule the precipitancy of His servant for the purpose of shadowing forth some important truth; but with this we have nothing to do at present; it is with Moses personally we are occupied; and it seems plain to me that until he was taught to hide his face, and put off his shoes, he was not in a fit moral condition to be used by God in ministry. Nothing seems to prove this more fully than the fact, that when Moses was really brought to view himself in the presence of God, he was most unwilling to go upon that very mission on which he had been so hasty to go unsent. He saw his own littleness-He felt how unable he was to do anything of himself-the burning bush had taught him a wondrous lesson about himself; hence, when the Lord said unto him "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt," his reply was, " Who am I that I should go Unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" How was it that Moses could ask such a question after having of his own accord assayed to deliver the children of Israel? Because he-had now arrived at a knowledge of himself which he possessed not previously; and not only so, but the total failure of his previous attempt must have weighed with him when thinking of again presenting himself before

his brethren. This will ever be the case. Where we do anything in haste or where we go out of our proper sphere of service, it is sure to have the unhappy effect of weakening us and rendering us unfit for that which properly belongs to us. We can never do anything, no matter how trivial, save as we are realizing the sentence of death written upon everything in ourselves, and also the quickening power of Christ. " It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I say unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63). It is important that we should not only not go out of our place or sphere of service, but also that we should work effectually therein. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3). Whenever we move out of our place, if we would only examine our hearts, We should find that we have been thinking of ourselves " more highly than we ought to think;" and, on the other hand, whenever we work not effectually in our place, it is because we are not thinking " soberly according has God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Moses, then, is most unwilling to go, although the Lord had said, "I will send thee;" and again, "certainly I will be with thee." Surely such assurances ought to have sufficed to confirm his soul. But no; Moses had felt something like what Jacob felt when the hollow of his thigh had been touched-when he felt himself a poor, weak, withered thing in the presence of God, who had been wrestling with him for the purpose of breaking down his nature. Moses had at first run into an extreme, and here we perceive a violent reaction-here he runs into the very opposite extreme; and one is disposed to ask, Carr he be the same man who sought to deliver Israel forty years before, who now says, " Send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send" (Exodus 4:13). O how difficult it is to combine deep humility with 'full confidence in God-how difficult to blend a " Woe is me!" with " Here am I, send me!" We all need to pray for this more and more. There can be no service -no real service for Christ either in the church or in the world except where the character of the servant partakes of these two elements. Nothing so hinders our usefulness as pride and self-sufficiency. God cannot use a proud man, because such would not give all the glory to Him. " The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me " (Judges 7:2). Had the Lord owned Moses' first mission, it would have been an allowance of man's full-grown energy, or of the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians, and thus man would not have been ever so willing to confess " it is the finger of God." But how does God act, in order to show Moses the vanity of all human attainment unaccompanied by divine energy? He inquires, " What is that in thine hand?" And what was it? "A rod." He does not direct his thoughts at all to his own natural powers, nor yet to his learning and wisdom, but rather to the very humblest thing he had about him, " a rod," the very instrument with which he had tended Jethro's sheep in the wilderness. The Lord would show Moses that he must act in public by the very same power that he had acted in secret; or rather, that he had been brought into the secret place for the purpose of qualifying him for public work. So was it, long afterward, with David. He brought no other power to bear upon the giant in public than that by which he had slain the lion and the bear in secret. This is very important. Moses might have thought it a very simple thing to serve the Lord in the desert, and that it was only in Egypt he would need anything like eloquence; but the Lord sheaved him very plainly that He regarded not any such thing; and further, that whether it were in the sheepfold or in the congregation, in public or in secret, it was divine power alone that could enable him to do any work for God or His people. The

Lord’s work must ever be regarded as being beyond man’s reach; and it matters not what the character of the work may be, it is all alike beyond the power of man to accomplish. It requires the same character of power to slay a bear in the desert as to slay a giant in the view of contending armies-to drop the glad tidings in the ears of a pauper by the roadside, as to proclaim it before a crowded assembly in London-to pay a visit at the other end of the street as to go to Africa as a missionary. I say, the same quality of power-for the power must be divine, if the thing be done to the Lord-the measure may differ.

All this is taught us in the fact, that when the Lord called Moses into the ministry, He did not take up his learning, which had doubtless lain dormant during his forty years’ sojourn in the wilderness, but He took up " the rod " with which he was actually engaged tending the sheep. " Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where are the disputers of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Corinthians 1:20-21). And may we not ask ourselves, Why is there so little work done for the Lord? Why are there so few conversions? Why is there so little fellowship and true cooperation in the spirit? Is it not because we are not sufficiently simple in our way of working? Do we not lack more unaffected energy? Do we not often imagine that the Lord’s work lies there, when in reality it lies here? Are we not often vaguely looking for something like eloquence, when the Lord would make use of " the rod"? 1: e., of whatever might be within our reach. I have no doubt of the real importance of such questions as the above. We cannot look around us, and see the poor condition of things as regards testimony and work for the Lord, without confessing that " we are straitened in ourselves."*

(* Nothing can be more truly sorrowful and humbling, as regards the Lord’s work at the present day, than to see dear Brethren spending their time, talents, and energies in mere controversy " about words to no profit." We "lift up our eyes and look on the fields, and behold them white already to harvest;" and then, when we proceed to ask " the Lord of the harvest " to send forth more laborers, the mind instantly recurs to the thought, that at this very moment there are gifted men of God wasting time in the mere effort to build up some theory or other, which, after all, can only tend "to the subverting of the hearers." 0 that we could be made to feel the surpassing importance of the Lord’s work in this day of need. We see deadly error spreading rapidly around us, and yet we will spend our strength in the attempt to set forth and establish speculative points. We want to live, work, and preach for eternity.) But Moses is at length prevailed upon to go upon the mission in the strength of the Lord alone; he is at length satisfied to " take the rod of God in his hand," and, although he was not eloquent, yet, seeing the Lord was to be with him, he would go forth in dependance upon Him:-" Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit." When a man really knows this, in the power of it he can move above his own strength, as well as above his own weakness. And now let us see the triumph that marks every step of his course. From the moment that Moses became satisfied to work with " the rod of God," all was peace-all was victory. Success attends every step-every action has weight and power in it, and every word tells. There is no more "looking this way and that way," no more uncertainty or painful trepidation. No; everything he does exhibits the evidence of his divine training in the desert. He had been alone, with God, and that was enough; he had put off his shoes before the burning bush; he had stood in that place where alone flesh is made to sink into its own proper nothingness, even the presence of Jehovah; he could therefore act as a mere " earthen vessel," confessing, in all things, " that the excellency of

the power was of God, and not of him." Hence we find, in tracing him through a few following chapters, that he receives token after token of the fact that the Lord was with him; and, as a consequence, that he was "a mighty man of valor." Aaron went forth to meet him at the Mount of God, and kissed him (Exodus 4:27). This was a happy and an encouraging token. Again, " Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel; and Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had 'spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed then they bowed their heads and worshipped" (verses 29, 30). How different is this from his former reception! " Who made thee a prince and a. judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian yesterday?" Pharaoh, too, and his land, are made to groan under the successive strokes of the rod of God; and even the magicians are constrained to acknowledge "the finger of God." in a word, all combine to bear testimony to the divine power in one who had been trained in the desert, under the immediate eye of Jehovah.

It is truly marvelous to see how a man is carried through his services when he is able to say, " The Lord hath sent me." This it is that gives power, real moral power, without the faintest tinge of assumption or affectation. The reason of this is, that nothing is undertaken which there is not power to meet. Nothing, ever causes confusion or strained exertion but the assuming of things beyond our measure. God will always supply the needed strength for any work to which He sends us; but, if we will run unsent, we can only expect to be left to the sad and humiliating results of our own reckless folly. Now, as the true power of ministry, both as regards its origin and its continued exercise, consists in the full acknowledgment of God, and the disallowance of all human competency in the matter; so failure in ministry consists in reversing this order, 1:e. in shutting out God by refusing to acknowledge Him, and in setting up man by not disallowing his pretensions. Thus was it with Moses. So long as he was enabled to move on in company with God, using the rod as the divinely appointed badge of his legation, he went on triumphantly. The Lord owned the work of Moses because Moses acknowledged the hand of the Lord. But the twentieth chapter of Numbers unfolds to us something which cannot fail to exert a solemnizing influence upon the minds of all who occupy a position of ministry in the church of God. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the Lord as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of the rock? And d Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice" (ver. 7-11). The true object of ministry is to lead, the souls of those ministered to directly to God Himself', and not to the ministry. When the latter occurs, God is disowned and all is failure. True, souls may receive refreshment, but God judges the vessel. The congregation enjoyed the refreshing stream gushing forth from the smitten rock, but Moses went not over Jordan.

It is exceedingly solemn to find Moses, the meekest man in all the earth, failing in this particular point; it shows us very plainly the great danger of all those who minister in any way amongst us. Whenever the ministry is used to procure a measure of influence for the man, God must come in in judgment, and lay the vessel aside. It is not at all a question of personal acceptance. Paul could say, " Nothing can separate us;" and, at the same time, "lest I become a cast-away" (αδοκιμος.). In one sense it was better for Moses to be quietly laid aside, and not to see the lamentable evils

that were to befall the people; or even had there been no such evils, it was better to be taken up in company with the Lord to Pisgah's top, and from thence see the land, than to go over to possess it; yet, it was because of his having failed duly to acknowledge God in his ministry to the congregation that he was prevented from going over into the land; and if the blessed God brought a superior blessing to him out of his failure, all that can be said, is, " Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

I believe there is nothing that calls for so much watchfulness and prayer on the part of those engaged in public ministry as the liability, through the infirmity of the flesh, to become the object of the thoughts of those ministered to. It is an exceedingly solemn thing -dangerous in the extreme; so much so that nothing but the firm and deeply rooted conviction that the Lord has sent a man, should ever induce him to take a place of ministry in the church. It is not being able to speak on the word with fluency-it is not the possession of knowledge, though both are indispensable. O no; it is the holy consciousness that the Lord hath sent us out-that we are speaking for the Lord, or, as the apostle Peter has it, " as the oracles of God."

Gideon too failed in this matter. " The Lord had looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might," etc., and so long as he did go in that might he went happily -so long as he was satisfied to work with the instrumentality of "the lamp and pitcher," and to say " the sword of the Lord and of Gideon," his work was owned as was Moses' while he worked in company with the rod of God. But Gideon seemed, for a moment, to forget that " the treasure was in earthen vessels"-he was tempted to think of himself. " I would desire a request of you," said he, " that ye would give me every man the ear-rings of his prey." He would not be a lord over God's heritage-he refused to rule over the people-but he would look for a pledge of love from those to whom he had ministered, and having got it, he made a god of it, and thus ruined his house, and gave rise to the sad and humbling train of circumstances which, as we know, led Jotham to deliver the parable of " the bramble king."*

(* It has been well observed, that, in Jotham's parable of the bramble king, we learn the important truth, that, wherever there is real power or gift in any one, he will be lifted up above the desire for mere official standing. The vine, the fig-tree and the olive, would not take the office of king because they were already endowed with inherent competency to bless; but the bramble that had nothing was glad to assume office to make himself something.) Our constant effort should be to lead those to whom we minister into the immediate presence of God; and then it will not be, " must we bring you instruction out of this book," nor, shall we be led, at any time, to ask for a pledge 'of love from the people of God:-no; we shall remember that " a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven;" and, further, that we have nothing that " we have not received."

O that the Lord would ever keep these things in the remembrance of the thoughts of our hearts, that so the stone out of the brook might not lift itself up, nor the sling magnify itself against the hand that has used it! I doubt not that David felt he had as little to do with the slaying of the giant as the stone which he had taken out of the brook, or the sling which he held in his hand; and Moses should have felt-that he had as little to do with the refreshing stream that gushed from the rock as had the rod with which he had smitten it. Just so should it be with the man that ministers in the word; he should feel-abidingly feel-that he has as little to do with the conversion of sinners or the edification of the Lord's people, as the book which he holds in his band or the pen with which

he writes. If this were more fully realized amongst us, there would be far more fruit for our labor than there is. We have little idea of how many impure motives creep in to spoil our work and hinder results. God can only own that work which is done with a single eye to Him, and in the energy of His Spirit. " We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God which raiseth the dead." The correctness of some of its statements (bearing, however, merely upon the application to individual cases) of general principles, I question in this paper.-ED.

Vol 01 - Remarks on Failure*

Remarks on Failure* The leading subject of the Epistle to the Galatians, as is manifest, is the correction by God's Spirit, of the first form of error by which the doctrine of Christ began to be corrupted; and, it may be observed, there is a severity of expression in its terms of reprobation, both of the propagators of the error, and of the error itself, that has no parallel in any other of the Apostolic Epistles. This fact, bearing in mind, that error in doctrine rather than evil in practice is the subject of the Spirit's censure-is very strikingly in contrast with our ordinary thoughts; and most especially opposed to the latitudinarian sentiments of the present day.

(* The title of this paper is the Editor's.) The principle of this is plain. Nature can take its measure of human conduct; but Faith only can estimate the importance of the truth of God. And perhaps there is nothing that more strikingly displays the low spiritual condition of the church, and its utter incompetency to judge of things according to the mind of God, than that laxity of feeling which prevails with regard to doctrine, in comparison with the moral walk.

It could never be imagined that God had placed the two in opposition -for, indeed, the doctrine of the gospel is " the doctrine according to godliness;"-but the tendency of the natural mind, as to their relative importance, is always to reverse the judgment of the word of God. The spiritual mind, however, which makes God and not self its center, will at once discern that the sinking of the foundation is incomparably more fraught with danger than a fracture in the edifice; and the corruption of the truth, which creates and sanctifies the church, is infinitely more fatal than a lapse in the walk, which is but the external witness of the power of the truth within. The church may be recovered while the truth of Christ remains; but if Christ be gone, nothing but hopeless corruption must ensue. This is plainly the ground on which that unparalleled severity of rebuke, which pervades this Epistle rests. For example, he says, " I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, LET HIM BE ACCURSED. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED."

Here, in the outset, the Apostle, by the Spirit, enters his solemn protest, not against others only, but against himself, if he should ever swerve from the purity of that gospel he had preached. If man or angel, or himself; should ever become a perverter of the grace which he was empowered of Christ especially to proclaim, he invokes upon either a solemn curse; and thus raises a barrier against the possibility of his own, or others, turning back from the full position of grace and acceptance before God, into which the wondrous work of Christ introduces a sinner! No authority must for a moment be allowed to cast a shadow over the full grace of the gospel; or question the divine truth of that declaration, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, (or a new creation), old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." A man may be warned how he builds upon this

foundation,-and the word of the Spirit is express, " Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity"-but, " other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "Let GOD be true, but every man a liar." This is "the shield of faith;" and is the merited rebuke of the least perversion of the "true grace of God, wherein we stand."

Unquestionably the church is the place of holiness" the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are"-but it is so, practically, only as it answers to the description, "the pillar and ground of THE TRUTH "-the wondrous vessel of that which the Apostle thus denominates. For he directly adds, " without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up to glory." This is " the truth," of which the church of the living God is to be the pillar and ground. It is both formative of its character and is the basis of its walk:-" He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

Laxity of walk, or worldly principles and habits, may be corrected by bringing in the light to manifest the darkness-for we are to " walk in the light as he is in the light"-but when the truth is corrupted, the light becomes darkness, and the very instrument by which God is pleased to work is destroyed. But our moral sense is outraged by flagrant conduct. Self is touched, in our associations, at least, when it is a question of walk. But it is only the spiritual sense that rightly estimates the danger of an inroad on the truth; and it requires the sensitiveness of the spirit to turn us from seeking our own, and "not the things that are Jesus Christ's."

Still, nothing is more important, than to heed the moral association of things in the mind of God. For example, in Php 3:19, those "who mind earthly things" are in the position of "the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame!" This is God's moral connection of things; and the true contrast of this, is to have "our conversation in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." So again, in a matter of more ordinary note, in 1 Timothy 6:9, "They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." This is God's moral association, and what in his mind is knit up with the commonest of all desires-the desire to be rich! And his path of escape is this, "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content."

Also in Romans 16:17-18. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." There is no middle course between serving the Lord Jesus Christ and one's own belly! And once more, in 1 Corinthians 15:32; If the dead rise not-let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;" just as in the corresponding truth our Lord associates the expression, " My Lord delayeth his coming," with the servant's beginning to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken.

Now it is this Divine moral association of things, that accounts for the severity of expression, noticed, as pervading this epistle, whose object is to correct the very mildest-in our thought-and most universal form of error by which the grace of the gospel is perverted. For what is so common in the forms of Christianity around us, as the grafting of the law and Judaism on the gospel. But, it

is this, which in this epistle calls forth the stern rebuke, " Behold, I Paul, say unto you that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing...

.. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." " But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage-' to whom we gave place by subjection no, not for an hour: that the truth of the gospel might continue with you." " Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain. I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you." " When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision…… Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation…O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified? This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Ye did run well: who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offense of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off, which trouble you!"

Now though there was manifest corruption and worldliness in the church of Corinth, and they were " carnal and walked as men," yet is their evil not rebuked in any degree with the sternness that pervades this epistle. It is true he says, "your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump:"-a universal principle, applied in Galatians to doctrine, as here to practice. And again in 2 Corinthians 12:20-21. " I fear lest when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall not be found unto you such as ye would: lest there be debatings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults; and lest when I come again my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness which they have committed." In visiting those who had so sinned, he says, "I will not spare." But he does not once say, " I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain"-" I stand in doubt of you"-" Ye are fallen from grace"-" I would they were even cut off who trouble you"-" Christ shall profit you nothing"-" Christ is become of no effect unto you."

Alas! it is forgotten, that, if the Church is to be the epistle of Christ, it is Christ known and valued, and all things else esteemed as dung and dross, in comparison, that can alone make her that epistle. " We have this treasure in earthen vessels." And in vain is the cleanliness of the vessel and its external polish regarded, if the treasure which is alone of value be extracted!

Christ crucified and risen, and we risen in Him, is the church's morality. " Let us hold fast grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

Whenever grace is questioned, and a legal standing sought, there is introduced the wholesale principle of the corruption of the church's morals-" walking in the light, as he is in the light:" and 66 walking as he walked." For in the first place, conscience will stop at the lowest point at which it can be satisfied; and in the next place, the law deals with the flesh of man, in which grace teaches us "

there dwells no good thing." But grace leads to holiness, through a new nature, which is born of God, and the subduing of the flesh. Never therefore is holiness, in its true character, so much in danger as when it is sought to be established apart from grace-which in its grossest form, is the Puseyism of the present day. And often the assumption of an ascetic sanctity, where the gospel prevails, sinks into moral debasement, that shocks even the natural conscience. In the opening of the epistle-" Paul, an Apostle not of man neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead "-we get a principle that characterizes indeed, but extends much farther than the apostleship of Paul, and teaches us that nothing which is " of man" as its source, or " by man" as its authority, can be acknowledged in the church of God. It must be, " by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead." Hence he says, " I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Neither man's ordinances, nor man's authority, nor man's obedience, can reach up to Him whom God hath "set at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave HIM to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." The grace of the gospel is a thing altogether beyond man's power, and independent of man's authority; and is thus wonderfully expressed by the Apostle,-" I, through the law, am dead to the law "-I have been killed by it outright-" that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the SON OF GOD, who loved me and gave himself for me! " And this is the Christ, and this is the grace, that is to be guarded against all that is " of man " and " by man"! For, whatever is "of man" or "by man," necessarily subverts this grace, which flows alone from its divine fountain-"Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." Can anything for a moment that is " of man " be borne with, by the heart that has learned this truth, " the SON OF GOD hath loved me and given himself for me F" or that which is so akin to it in Hebrews 1:1-14 " Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High." It is on this ground, that the Apostle says, in 2 Corinthians 5:16, " Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we had known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." And, as already quoted, it follows, " Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God."

Now, in Colossians the warning is, " Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him." What madness to attempt a supplement from man and his philosophy to the fullness of Him "in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily!" But here it is by the introduction of the law and circumcision. " Tell me ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law." And "Behold I, Paul, say unto you, if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Whatever man, in his wretched blindness may attempt, the two things-grace and law-cannot before God stand together. In grace, "all things are of God:" but the law, addresses itself to man: it requires something of man, which he, in his ignorance of his own condition, attempts to meet: although. " by the law is the knowledge of sin." "And as many as are

OF the works of the law are under a curse." If law is his principle, then he is only under a curse. " For it is written, Cursed’ is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The adding of "circumcision," which was the point at which this severely reprobated error touched the Galatians, was not in the least intended as an ostensible setting aside of the gospel, by the substitution of the law. But though they were deceived, the principle can receive no quarter. It may be only the addition of circumcision; but there is a principle involved in it which subverts the whole standing of grace-" If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing Ye are fallen from grace!" And yet this is the most natural condition into which the heart sinks that does not see-or has perhaps lost the perception of-the brightness of grace: and this on the most simple ground. For Judaism was God’s own institution-his earthly institution-for maintaining intercourse with himself, on a lower ground than that of the vail being taken away. Judaism was the religion of a people at a distance from God; who, however near their priest might come, which their necessity required, had a vail between themselves and God. And whenever the heart practically loses its sense of that nearness to God to which his grace has introduced us through the eternally precious work of Christ, we naturally lapse into Judaism. Not that there may be a formal adoption of it as a system, but there is a natural adaptation in it to the heart that feels it right to be occupied about the things of God, but is not in the brightness of intercourse with God himself.

Hence the Apostle says, " When we were children we were in bondage under the elements of the world, but when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying "Abba, Father." This was their place::this their altered’ position, through accomplished redemption, to be in communication and intercourse with God, as children with a father. And he therefore asks, " Now, after ye have known GOD; or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" It was the sweeping away of the whole position into which the redemption of the Son of God had brought them, to assume again the place of distance that belonged to those who were kept under the law shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed.

" Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." This was Judaism, no doubt; but then Judaism, it is but little imagined, was itself composed of " the rudiments (or elements) of the world." " The first covenant bad ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary;" and the whole of the Jewish institution was arranged after the rudiments of the world. God had a righteous claim upon the people in the midst of this, but their religious institutions were arranged to meet their natural feelings as men. There was the beauty of the tabernacle and the costliness of the temple..-the gold and silver and precious stones; the silver trumpets on their feast days, and the magnificent garments of their priests, all which are now maintained by royalty and are to be found in palaces and courts, while their festive periods of commemoration are still found in the anniversaries of the world. And it is this which gives it such a hold on our nature, and accounts for the universality of its prevalence, in conjunction with the profession of Christianity. It puts God at a distance, while it occupies the mind with religion, and sanctions the principles and elements of the world. " The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." God’s presence

could not then be reached. The vail was untaken away; and all that could be said of this array of services was, that they were carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation. And hence the severity of that word, " After that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements to which ye desire again to be in bondage?" " If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances? " The cross leaves no place for the elements of the world! " If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Death and resurrection, in Christ, alike leave Judaism and Gentilism amongst the "rudiments of the world;" while they introduce into the blessed knowledge and presence of God, and leave nothing to be rejoiced in, or to be desired, but " the hope of the glory of God."

Many other things in this epistle are worthy of note, but my object is not to give an exposition. In verse 15, 16, of chapter 1, " When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen: immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood," we get the whole principle of the Apostle's course and ministry. And this it was that also led him to say, " of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person." His only object and concern, was, " that the truth of the gospel might continue with them." And if the course of Peter even is opposed to this, he meets an uncourtly and open rebuke; and his, and Barnabas's dissimulation is as plainly censured, as when he says to his own converts, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth! "

It is this which fired him at the attempt to remove them " from the grace of Christ, into another gospel," and makes him say "I would they were even cut off who trouble you;" and at the close of the epistle to expose the hollowness of the wretched teaching of those principles, the destructiveness of which he had through the epistle so solemnly denounced-" as many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they, themselves, who are circumcised, keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh."- " But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature "-a new creation! If the cross brings inside the vail,-which it does, it at the same time, puts outside the world. God's " new creation " can combine with none of the elements of the old. The blood of the sin-offering, which brought the High-Priest within the vail, left the victim to be burnt outside the camp. " Jesus, that he might sanctify the people, suffered without the gate." The very thing which brings nigh to God, is that which entirely separates from the world! Would that against all these attempts of the enemy to subvert the grace of the gospel, we had the faith to say, "From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks (στιγματα) of the Lord Jesus!" But alas! where is now the sensibility of heart to Christ, which causes the blush to mantle on the cheek, and the soul to be filled with indignation, at any attempted admixture of law and grace, which is but the subversion of the gospel. Where is to be found the exhibition of that word-" the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up? "

Alas! in a day when faith is low, large scope is left for the reasonings of the natural mind; and often the surest resting-places of the soul are treated as points of debate. What is divinely taught is firmly held; but even the truth of God, gathered by human deduction, never rises to the point of

faith. The ground of so many questionings amongst God’s children, is, that there is so little faith. Faith settles the soul in the truth, and keeps it in the presence of God. And the reason why known truth is so feebly held, is, that there is so little faith, and consequently so little of God. The certainty of faith seems like dogmatism to the man of reason; and appears like the claim to a special revelation to the Christian whose habit is to gather his conclusions by a rational process, instead of by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. We allow a license to the " lusts of the mind," which we should not dare to do in the " lusts of the flesh." But it is not the actions only, but every thought that should be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. D.

Vol 01 - Remarks on a Part of Daniel

Remarks on a Part of Daniel My Dear Brother:-I send you some remarks on an interesting part of prophecy,-including some principles long ago remarked, and recalled by recent study of some parts of Daniel 1:1-21 shall be short. My object being to throw out the grounds of judgment rather than to reason on them. It has been long my conviction that there are two very distinct parties engaged in the trials of Jerusalem in the latter day. The alliance of Jerusalem with the one is the chief occasion of the desolation brought on by the other. This other is habitually termed the Assyrian in Isaiah 1:1-31 now proceed to give you the elements of certain passages which seem to me to throw light on these points, and to facilitate the understanding of Daniel. First, the indignation (see Isaiah 10:1-34), we have the revelation that the rod in the hand of the Assyrian is the Lord's indignation. This indignation is to cease in the destruction of the Assyrian. The characteristic term for this closing period is the indignation of Jehovah against the nation. We find, in Daniel 8:19, the expositor, who tells Daniel that he will make him know what is in the last end of the indignation, for at the time appointed the end shall be. The willful king prospers till this indignation is filled up. When the overflowing scourge (Isaiah 28:1-29), which is a flood and a treading down (compare Daniel 9:27; Daniel 8:13) comes through Ephraim (that is from the north)-the scornful men which dwell at Jerusalem have made a covenant with Death and are at agreement with Hell, and hence hope to escape the overflowing scourge; but, as there is a foundation-stone for faith, so judgment is laid to the line, and the overflowing scourge passes through and they are trodden down by it. We have then the period of the indignation and the special instrument of it (this attack of the Assyrian being repeatedly referred to in Isaiah, compare Psalms 83:1-18). We have also the fact, that, when the scourge of desolation passes through, the rulers at Jerusalem had made an agreement with Death and Hell to avoid it; but the overflowing scourge sweeps on. The distinction we have at the close of 30, where it seems to me the king is a distinct personage (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■Gam hoo lammelek).

It is prepared for the king too. These passages lead me to another expression of importance in this respect, and which also links together Daniel and these passages in Isaiah (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■chalah veneheratsa). The consumption decreed. You will find this Isaiah 10:23 (and something like it, 5: 22), in connection with the indignation, and the Assyrian and a very small remnant left of Israel from the judgment, but a determined one of God. In Isaiah 28:1-29 the judgment is clearly on Israel, coming, as I have said, as to its progress through Ephraim, it finds the rulers of Jerusalem in league with death; and they are warned (5: 22) not to be mockers, because (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■chalah veneheratsa), a consumption is determined on the whole earth (land). In Daniel 9:27, we find the same expression translated the consummation, and that determined. I apprehend the force is for the over-spreading of abominations (the protection of idols, which makes the great charge against the Jews of the latter day) ■■■■■■ (m' shomehm). There shall be a desolator until the consumption decreed be poured on the desolate; that is, the ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■(al c'naph shikkutsim), whatever that may be taken to be, is the cause why the consumption decreed is poured on the

desolate; some take it as a fact, or prefer the margin. As I take the sense of the English translation to be just, I venture on Hebrew ground, but only to put questions. I suppose ■■■ may mean because, or for, as in English.

Next, is it not certain, according to the points, that ■■■■■■(c'naph) is in regimen with nTN) (shikkutsim), both from letters and accents, and that it is because of the protection of idols; and that the idols of the desolator is not the connection in the Hebrew. The best translation I have access to concurs in this. If so, the sense, as it seems to me to be, is clear, namely, " because of the protection of idols, [there shall be] a desolator until the consumption decreed; this appointed measure of wrath [against Israel "]. I think the reading of the passages quoted in Isaiah shows plainly that the decreed consuming or accomplishment of judgment applies to Israel, and such a statement accords with the whole testimony of God's word on the subject. This confirms the English translation " on the desolate." And here again I appeal to my Hebrew friends: the usual sense of ■■■■■(shamehnz) and ■■■■■■(shomehm) is, I apprehend, " to be desolate." ■■■■■■(shomehm), the word used here, is several times used for Jerusalem desolate, by Jeremiah in Lamentations, and in other parts of Scripture, as to it and other subjects. No case of the active use is alleged by Gesenius; but this passage, which proves of course nothing, and Daniel 12:11, which rests on a similar basis, and 8: 13, all involve the question to be decided. For either of the two last cases, desolate or desolating gives a sense according to truth; but would in any case ■■■■■■(shomehm) be causing others to desolate. However, of this in a moment; the use of an unusual form (Ezekiel 36:3) is the only other authority. Bagster's Lexicon, by W. 0-, jun., does not give this sense. However this may be, there is no doubt that the common use of the word elsewhere is desolate, and that the other expressions are usually applied to Jerusalem. The consumption decreed is poured upon the desolate. Until then there will be a desolator. Thus, we should have the declaration that He (the Prince to come) confirms covenant with the many (the body of the Jews) one week; and in the midst of the week He will cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and because of the over-spreading or protection of idols, there will be a desolator until the consumption decreed be poured on the desolate -until God has filled up his judgment.

Now, a few words on the question of the desolate, 11:31. It is a different word, the abomination of ■■■■■■(m'shomehm) the word translated, 9:27, "he shall make it desolate " - rather, a desolator; they shall plant the abomination of the desolator. This seems admitted by the common authorities I have recourse to. It inclines me much to think that this passage refers much more distinctly to Antiochus than to the latter days (5: 32.) " Do exploits" does not seem to me to characterize that epoch. As to 8:13, I leave this question, whether it is not the transgression of the desolate; when the transgressors are come to the full, transgression against the daily. It is clear in either case, that that causes desolation, so that I have nothing to oppose; but I would arrive at the force of the word. It is not, at any rate, an active desolator, I should think, in a positive way-as ■■■■■■(m' shomem). The existence of the latter word in 11:31 makes 12:11 more interesting. There, and there alone, we have ■■■■■■■■■■■(shikkuts shomem); and to that, I apprehend, the Lord's solemn words specially refer as to the last days. I can hardly think that the Spirit uses, in 9:27, the two words as he does, to mean the same thing. If the difference in 11:31 and 12:11 be just, it throws vast light on the interpretation of the whole passage. Whatever may be the result as to the critical point, the connection of the two chapters of Isaiah (and others bear on it, particularly all from 28: to the end of 35.) throw much light on the solemn scenes of the history of Israel and

the world in the last days.

I just add here, that besides the evident division at the end of the sixth chapter of Daniel, between the historic scenes or dreams of others interpreted by Daniel, and the communications made to Daniel himself, there is a distinction to be made between chaps. 7 and 8, (which have a common character), and chap. 9, to the end. Chaps. 7 and 8 are communications made to Daniel of certain events during the power of evil-the Jews being in no way delivered-and give us the two horns, and their bearing on the history of those beloved of God, whatever their condition. But all this is seen as a picture, though a picture explained - a picture of the power of evil. In the four last chapters, which date subsequent to the overthrow of Babylon, Daniel, according to the mind of God, is brought forward as intercessionally interested in Israel, and he pleads for guilty Israel as Moses of old; differently as to tone, but presenting, by faith in God's own thoughts, the people as His people, whatever their state may have been; and that is the character of faith, while fully (for the very same reason) owning and confessing the sin. The result is remarkably analogous as to this. The Angel who speaks on the Lord's behalf calls Israel Daniel's people, and the city his city, as the Lord did to Moses. Daniel sees no vision here of historical wonders, but of the glory of the person interested in Israel, who communicates to him Israel's history in reply to his faith in God and love to Israel, as the man greatly beloved. Chapter 9 seems to me to refer rather to chap. 7, and chaps. 10 and 11 and 12 to chap. 8; the former to the Western, and the latter to the Eastern subjects of prophecy. I believe these considerations will assist in the intelligence of the book, the latter remarks opening considerably the bearing of the two subdivisions. The explanation of the seventh is not in terms con fined to the end of the indignation, as that of the eighth, though the special actings of the little horn are identified with the periods of chapter 12.

Vol 01 - Remarks on the Living God and His Church

Remarks on the Living God and His Church

" House of God, which is the church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."-" If the Foundations be destroyed, what can the Righteous do?"

Brethren Beloved,-We were "turned from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven." Mark it, serve; surely subjection to, and accordance of conduct with, the mind of the party served is involved in that word " serve." And, while (blessed be His name!) He has given us in the Scripture the alone perfect standard of His will-still it is the Living God we serve. The Book guides us, or would guide us, if read and understood, not to the fulfillment merely of certain duties and things, as in our own circumstances down here; but it would lift up _our heads as serving Him, the living and true God, and waiting for His Son from heaven. The Bible is not its own power; neither does its power Consist in its suitability merely to convict the thoughts and affections of man-for in the long night of Romanism there was the Bible; and in Protestant schools the Bible is learned by rote; and what the benefit as to salvation or obedience? None; without the power of the Spirit, through faith in Christ Jesus. Romanist and Protestant' may alike have had the oracles of God committed to them-and the one may have buried it in a napkin; and the other have exposed it to sale in the emporium of the world's merchandize. Both were the channel through which Scripture came down to the present day: they differed not as to being preservers of it, though they differed in the use made of it. The one used it as too sacred a thing for man's eye-in fact, saying God had no right to be heard in the streets of this world's city; or at best, that it was not His pleasure His word should be heard by, all. This was Satan's act. For God's title and pleasure is to speak before all men now-that which will be the ground of all men's judgment at the great white throne. And, moreover, this same word is the instrument of life to them that believe-the detector of the usurpation by Satan in God's world, and the keen test of flesh and worldliness. Still, there the word was; and whether in the Vatican, or on the shelves of the monastery, its unsoiled neglected pages, had no more tongue to speak the burden, joyous or awful, which they contained, than its soiled pages-frequented where fables of the virgin and the saints were traced upon, and illumined its once fair face-present to the eye of man what God had written. The Reformation was not the gift by God to man of Scripture or its contents; that existed with all its suitability to man before. The Reformation was the Lord moving, in the great grace of God, by His Spirit, through the word on the conscience. The movement was from above:-neither from below, as the Romanist thought, nor from on earth, as too many of us have unbelievingly admitted. The living God gave fresh power, in vindication of His own name and grace. And the Spirit-testifying still to Jesus, Lord of all-gave its tongue and voice to the word. God was with it, in the vessels He had afore prepared for the work; and whether in quickening, throwing light upon the path to glory, and upon those that traveled in it; or convicting, and discovering Satan, with his slaves on their downward march of rebellion towards hell-it was the Holy Ghost who was the power of understanding, and proclamation, and application of the word.

It is one thing to be blessed-another to define what the blessing is, and how it comes. I believe (let others judge what I say) that Protestantism, as such, had for its distinctive peculiarity, not the preservation of the scripture (others were before it in that, and it only took, with them, its place), but what was in it distinctive-was more the recognition of the object of the divine mind in giving scripture-that he had not given a book to be wrapped up in a napkin, but given one to be read, marked, and learned as inseparably connected with His own glory and with the destinies of Satan, earth, and man; of man whether looked at corporately as Jew, Gentile, or the church of God-or individually, as one's own little self. Many Protestant axioms seem altogether wrong-thus, objectively, " The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible" (true, if used with regard to the question of a standard) is most false if it would make " the Bible its own interpreter," and shut out thereby the blessed Spirit: and again, subjectively, "the right of private judgment," which is the Protestant parent of the Nonconformist`s liberty of conscience," is not true. Parent and child are both spotted with spots of self-will and human right. Now, I say, I know of no right I have as a private individual, save to a place in hell-fire-no liberty, as such, save to go thither. I do not mean to condemn those who, in their inaccuracy, may use these phrases to express better things-' but they are bad raiment good as the things meant to be clothed in them may be-" God is pleased and has a right to speak, and man is bound, at the peril of damnation or (if already saved, of) favor, to listen," is the more correct wording of the thought meant to be conveyed.

Scripture in hand-diligent in study-what is my safeguard as to understanding it? My own competency? Its suitability to what is in me and around, which is most divinely true? 0 no. For if it were so I should, instead a the sincere milk of the word, find in its best parts gall. As no one knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him, so no man knoweth the things of God save the Spirit of God. Let man humbly take the place of subjection, and God will not deny Him- self-the Spirit never fails to honor the Lord Jesus; and it is written,. If any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God. Blessed ground this for one's soul to rest upon in contrast with the neologian or infidel ground of human competency and human diligence. To the spirit of obedience and subjection all is sure.

One thing more I would advert to here, and that is, that obedience to the word is sometimes made (where the presence of the Spirit and the objective presence of God as the one, served are not seen) something rather which separates us from God than unites us in living fellowship, with him; and something, too, which limits obedience.

Many look merely at the letter of the word, and see a quantity of things to be done and to be abstained from; and they go to work truthfully; but they will find that the task rather leads them into their circumstances than to God, and that there are in their circumstances a thousand things daily to which they can apply, no " It is written" as their clue; besides the ten thousand things in which they equally need direction as to the when, how, where, how far, etc., the word applies. A common solution has been of this difficulty, when felt, to bring in either expediency or the habits of saints around us. The true solution is, " to serve in the spirit, not in the letter;" and instead of " doing many things," "to serve the living and true God." " I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye," is not a promise which presents the mariner looking at his chart merely, conversant it may be with the exact position of his vessel and everything else about her, but puts the soul saved by grace before God as walking under his immediate guidance. Now this is what I understand by serving the living and true God. I am a son of Him who is not only

Abba, but God likewise, whose actions and whose claims are connected not only with redemption, but providence also; and I need a present guidance from Him who, above the pit where I may be, knows what he is about to do as well as what his word directs. Now if I limit my obedience to the letter of the word, and I walk not with Him as a son that serves Him as the living God, I find that-good as this is, so far as it goes-in fixed circumstances of domestic or ecclesiastical nature, there are ten thousand things daily in which I am either perplexed or have to guess at his will or else to take my own; for expediency and the saints' will around me is too far steeped in worldliness to be accepted as a guide. And if so while in fixed circumstances as a private individual, how much more when all is afloat, and when, as a converted Jew or Roman Catholic, I have, for the Lord's sake, been cast out of all my domestic circumstances; or when amid the wreck of what the world calls the church, which has lost its landmarks, swept away in the rising deluge of infidelity:' or if I as an evangelist have to go where the Lord is willing to work, or as a pastor have to see the bearing of his mind upon the souls of others. Who is sufficient for these things? The living God will guide His servant. And moreover to serve in the letter is both the destruction of our affection as sons, and an entire disparagement to his grace who, as the Father has said, " Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. Beloved, now are we the sons of GOD." What grace to set us thus with Him that has called us brethren It is not sobriety, as a Christian, to overlook or to deny the present direct guidance, by the Lord, through His spirit, of His disciples, as being something over and above the written word: slow as we may be to understand it. To do so, is really to shut God out of the conscience. But now-as to the point with which I set out-We were, beloved brethren, "turned from dumb idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven." To serve Him as individuals most surely has each of us been called:-but still we are looked at as a group; WE. And every title of Him whom we serve, every blessing we enjoy at His hand, our redemption, privileges, hopes-all remind us of a fellowship with others equally called as ourselves to serve Him. The little flock looked at as the kingdom, or as "the Church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all," may present fellowship in. different aspects and of various kinds,- yet every title presents fellowship. And poor indeed must his thoughts of the Divine Word be, who, in serving the living and true God, has not, in measure at least, realized the wondrous truth of the unity of the Church as a whole. It is not my thought to enter upon that question, "What is the Church?" now: blessed as the subject is! Neither would. I attempt here to examine how far that which is gathered* on the earth as such, and boasts of being such, really has the Divine sanction. My subject is narrower far, viz.: How individuals serving the living and true God are to associate together?

(* See " Nature and Unity of the Church of Christ."-Christian Witness, vol. 1:

Fellowship of saints one with the other, while in the wilderness, is surely looked at in the word, as a means to an end-not an end itself-refreshing as it was to God and the Father, to the Lord Jesus and the Church, while she stood normally in dispensational perfectness; or as it is realized in its heavenly and eternal connections. As in dispensation, man has failed as to the deposit entrusted to him at Pentecost, as much as in every other previous deposit. But as every dispensational deposit which failed in fallen man's hand will be displayed in abiding power around Christ in the day of His glory, so also will Christ make good in his day a kingdom among his heavenly brethren. And though man may have failed, and has failed, in the second great truth, so far as realizing what it is to be and to live as part of the chaste Virgin espoused to Christ-the spring and security of this

blessing never rested in our hands; it hung on Christ-Head of the body the Church-members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. In glory He will present the Bride to Himself (an expression indicative of His own power), a glorious Church, perfect in all its parts. Part of that Bride are we, and precious as our place is as such (because we are only a part and not the whole), it can not be an end, for the whole, in Glory, is the end,-so far as being the body of Christ is an end: perfect means it is, perfect expression of His ineffable grace; but nothing short of the Church as a whole is this. We need to remember this for our present blessing, and more than for our blessing-for if we forget it and rest in present fellowship as an end, or as if having attained it we have reached our goal, we are not like-minded with Christ, and the manna gathered in our vessels will breed worms and stink. I do believe many of us have confession to make on this score-I am sure we have. The sweet comfort through the Spirit's power of the Lord's company with a few of us in the way, has made us, like some of old, constrain Him to continue the refreshment all night; but with the attempt at rest the sense of His presence fled. And our souls had to return through the night, whence we should not have wandered, and in search of our whole company.-Luke 24:28-33.

Alas! it is worse, when not merely from want of faith we thus wander; but when in pride of heart (Himself absent, unmourned) a little company (fiction of our own minds!) is gloried in. Surely, they who say, or think, " The temple of the Lord are we"- must see their idol pulled to pieces, if the Lord come in spiritual power now; as they would if He came in person on the clouds. The importance of the question of the principles involved in gathering is immense; because it really involves the whole question of the Church as a whole, and therein, of the grace of Christ. To ourselves, also, there is involved the question of the present pleasing or dishonoring of Christ, in our act of association with others. For one, I cannot consent to let our conduct say "Christ has and is to have no church." A strange thought in some minds, that ecclesiastical ground cannot be held by the Saint now, but only the ground of the family. Now, if on the ground of the ruin of the Church (as some speak), I deny the competency of any to re-organize or to ordain; much more, upon the same ground do I deny the competency of any to set up a new thing, something different from what Scripture presents, as having been at the commencement what was set up. To give new scriptures, or add out of one's own heart to those given, is not less evil than to assume we have powers which once existed, but now are not. Scripture remains to the end, the alone perfect standard. The obedience of faith will find its path with the Living God as much now as ever, wrecked as all around may be. If I could not have Scripture communion, I would not dare have any.)

What is the Church of Christ-with which the Spirit is? is one question; and How is she bound to act in the gathering together for worship? is another question. The Spirit is with the Church as a whole, from the Pentecost to the rapture; consequently, He is with each part of it in the successive displays of its parts in every age, from Pentecost to the rapture. And when the Church, or any of its parts, meets as the Church, it must be in such a way as to own the Lordship of Jesus its head, and the presence of His Spirit with it. I speak not now of the teaching or preaching of the Gospel, though of course therein also, without the Spirit's witness to Jesus in those that speak and in those that hear, there will be no blessing; but I speak of saints met as the Church. A Christian is one whom God has separated to himself from an evil world; having snatched him from Satan and delivered him from the judgment due to the flesh. It is the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, once dead, but now alive again in the glory of the Father, by, which the deliverance was

accomplished; and it is by the Spirit, acting through the testimony of the gospel, that the new nature has been given to him, and the anointing or christening. The Church is the company of such; which is gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus, while He, rejected on earth, sits as the Son upon His Father's throne. To the individual then the distinctive characteristic of salvation is separation from everything naturally in and around us,-to the church, it is a separation twice told, fox, while the individual can learn his own separation from coming doom, apart from the knowledge of the corporate glory, it is in the church's glory with Christ,- as the Heavenly Son of Man, that the positive blessedness of he separate glory, reserved for Him and her alone, is known.

It is not so much as to the difficulties of individual walk with God, that my soul groans or gets searched. His shepherd's love leads, along (how gently!) restoring the soul, and leading in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. But what is the Lord doing now in England-in Europe? Partly by testimony of the word, energized by the Spirit, and partly by providential actings, which no understanding of the prophetic word, apart from instruction from the living God, can read aright, He is developing, as I judge, on earth, in living men, the church's principles and the world's. Now, when I have looked at " What is," say in England, " ecclesiastical," and thought, What, if the Lord really is gathering out His saints to be ready to meet Him, can it be that this can be accomplished without the overturning of much and the snapping of many tender ties of kindly intercourse. The Lord is worthy; and if he please to do it, I would not, if I could, say Him nay. The living God seems to me to be distinctly forcing out into relief the two questions, What is the church? What is the world? in grace to His own people. Vindicating, it may be, the divine honor, in the midst of human failure.

●The Church And The World.-Into the testimony of scripture upon these two grand points, I would desire at some future time to enter. At present, writing more immediately with practice in view, I desire to say a few words only with regard to some things connected with their entire contrasts the one to the other, and the perfect impossibility of an amalgamation of them. The solemnity of the topic is great, as thus looked at in connection with the present actings of divine power-with the question how far are we intelligent in mind and zealous in heart to leave all and follow in. His wake-and with the deep personal interest one has; for when God is separating, one is sure to find oneself set either with the world or with his church, according as the principles we are acting upon are to his mind, not ours, either those of the world or those of the church. And now, as to the question, How can His saints gather, so as to be owned by Him therein? The question is one which has its real answer in the present application, through divine power of redemption, to living souls: still the word gives us its testimony hereon. Let us look to this then.

●" Where Two Or Three Are Gathered Together In My Name-There Am I In The Midst Of Them."

These are the words of the charter of our meetings together. It is not simply that Christians chance to meet together; but they " are gathered-apart-and in his name." The presence of the Lord, in the sense referred to above, is not promised in this verse apart from the question of object of gathering, and power by which, gathered; and holiness characterizes both.

If they that fear the Lord speak often, in the evil day, one to the other-much more will innate life surely draw those that have it together. But something more than this is referred to here: -In His name, marks OBJECT; and gathered together, marks POWER: and the place is HOLY. The accidental meeting of any number of godly Christians, then, for a benevolent purpose, would not

have the blessing promised; neither would a meeting which was religious in its object, but produced by any accident (as the want of a teacher), though it might be only of dear simple Christians as such; neither is the meeting of saints merely from brotherly love all that is referred to. " By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another.... we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.... he that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten," etc., are passages which show that, as in this world like loveth like, so there is a natural congruity and affinity in the children of God one toward the other. But, besides these spiritual, heavenly affinities, we have to consider the mode and way in which the living God acts upon them, to form the church for the fellowship of Christ's, sufferings now, as hereafter of his glory. For communion of saints may be looked at subjectively, or objectively.

Many portions are there which look' at the communion of saints subjectively, according to what is in the saints, and their circumstances-but this looks at it objectively, according to the power, and objects, and presence of God in accomplishing the intercourse-His working through the life given.

" He prophesied that Jesus should die that he should gather together in one, the children of God which were scattered abroad." The Lord Jesus will present the church to himself-" a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" hereafter, in fulfillment of this promise. His deed, that will be, whether working upon them that sleep, or upon us that are alive and remain to His coming-His innate power alone, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself, will accomplish that. In that hour no vile flesh shall remain, for he shall have changed our vile bodies, and fashioned them like unto his own glorious body;-and, gathered round Himself, the scene shall be laid in courts where Satan or his angels cannot come;-distinct and separate from the world, not only in its present moral evil (of joy without God), but above the world as to locality, in the heavenlies. Here the object, the motive power, and characteristic separateness will be plain enough. Is this blessed truth merely in prospect before us-a matter of hope? It is so, surely: but it is ours also now, as having the earnest of the Spirit: so that (looking up to where the Lord Jesus now is) the Holy Ghost gives to our souls, as individuals, the present taste and enjoyment of these things. For the same Jesus, who, on the cross, cried "It is finished" -as to the work of atonement, has this double glory his; now, Quickener of the soul,-and hereafter, Quickener of the body. And the same Spirit, who, in that day, will be in the church complete in glory, is now, by his testimony to the person of Him who is the center of all God's counsels, is now, I say, forming and gathering together in the wilderness, in the name of Jesus, those who shall be in the glory. And here, the same object, motive power, and characteristic separateness are seen, though the moral is left in weakness now, as hereafter it shall be innate with power in glory. And it is this, really, by which the character of a Christian, as an individual is formed. " Member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones... one spirit with the Lord":-and this, now true, gives me my individuality of blessing, and my church position as on earth. I am a member in particular-a member of Christ. Who can interfere between me and Christ? He has a body; and He, or His many members, can neither do without me,* nor I without Him, or them;-but still, it is simply as members of Christ that the subordinate members want the one the other. Until, as a whole, it is perfected in glory-the church militant, through grace, realizes, in its displayed parts, now, this blessedness-though it be in a Satan-usurped world, in bodies of sin and death. Now, this puts, to my mind at least, very simply, the proper answer to many a question of our own day. For that which does not answer to this

description, is not Christ's church-let its pretensions be ever so accredited, or its claims ever so high.

(* Individuality never may be lost-for it is I who have the joy, and this ministers to conscience; but one's place is in the church, as a whole the Bride, which gives to conscience its liberty, privileges, and power. Blessed scene of my and our common joy! And the blessed Lord, in sheaving his grace for our encouragement, says," To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna-and also a white stone with a new name written thereon which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." The first of these promises is the enjoyment, as I take it, of the divine joy of God His Father, in Himself, as our bread in the wilderness; the second, a secret between each conqueror and Himself. The wide expanse of His brethren's joy; and the depths of His grace individually to each separate one.) Are you not a member of Christ's body-one spirit with the Lord? Then you are no member of the Church. You may be a member of Christ's body and through ignorance not know it, and then you cannot confess Him as the One whose you are and whom you serve; but if you really are not a member of Christ, why, you are not a member of Christ, and no part of the Church, which is His body, " the fullness of Him that filleth all in all"-the object, and power, and separation, come in here also. Afloat on the ocean, of perdition is he that knows them not-blessed with everlasting blessing the soul which is subjected to them. And if you are that in yourself, and yet are associated in fellowship with that which is professedly not so, then your fellowship here is not with the Church of Christ at all; and your ecclesiastical circumstances and your soul will, if there be liveliness of faith, be in conflict: and the same will be the case if those with whom you are gathered are Christian, and yet not gathered in the name of Christ, and by His Spirit. The individual and the body corporate should have identity in object, in power, and in separateness. And here remark, that all and everything, the allowance of which would be a denial of this, must be ejected, or the FOUNDATION of the Church is denied. This is often questioned; but really it is too simple a thing to admit that any society has power to neutralize the conditions or terms of its own being, and still exist as the same thing. And be it remembered, to us, now, since the day of Pentecost the foundations of individual salvation and of the Church as a body, are not really separable. The thought involves in the particular case, a very wicked assumption of a power not possessed-for the Church is not a self-formed society, neither has power over itself, as we shall see-and it is morally and intellectually foolish. But there is no need to argue the case, for what God does not count His, none can make His•' and all the meaning which there is in the assertion of being a part of Christ's Church, when the elementary principles of His Church and His mind have been denied, is simply this, -we are deceiving ourselves.

I would say a few words on the application of this in detail.' And first, as to doctrine or truth. My corporate worship is the result of a common apprehension, by the Spirit, of the Father's grace through the Son -but I have it, first in my own soul as connected with individual salvation-and if the doctrine of Father, Son, or Holy Ghost is touched, not only is the ground of communion destroyed, but my individual salvation is called in question. Am I a saved man then? It is this which makes so sad the calmness with which one sees some either handle rudely, or bear quietly and unmovedly, assaults upon these foundations. I never can help thinking, Does he know he has a soul to be saved? If any one asked me to join in prayer or praise I should count myself happy of the occasion; but if, as we kneeled down, he said, " But remember, you must not use any expression which recognizes Jesus as the Eternal Son, or His perfect purity as man, if you would not grieve

me." Could I pray with that man? He has destroyed the ground on which we were about to meet; and I could as soon kneel upon an imaginary line of air, six inches from the floor, as really unite with that man. We might kneel together, but there would, there could, be no prayer in common. Or, again, if he said, " But remember, I do not believe the Holy Ghost to be God Himself"-could I pray with that man? He has neutralized the power of my competency to join with him more than if he bid me pray aloud in perfect silence; and the same if he said, " But remember, I do not own God, even the Father, as the source." Soul-sickness and revulsion, and sorrowful pity-and not fellowship in the expression of dependence to Abba would, on my part, be the real character of our relationship one to the other. I am not supposing a case of mere puzzledness of mind, nor of one who, in addition to his own soul-sick state, was trying to spread the error as an open heretic, but of one who in decision of judgment, yet candid (though self-preserving) confidence, so spoke, or who was assuredly known to myself so to think. I have no fellowship with such a one, and, please God, I will not so sin against his soul or Christ, as to deceive him as though I had. Moreover, his statement not only dishonors God and discredits himself, but rouses my soul in indignation, by its value for its own foundations in the grace of God. The same might be said where any foundation-doctrine, not connected with the person only, but with any of the works of the Lord, or of redemption, was concerned.*

(* The Lord (Revelation 2:14) blames for having there those that hold [not teach] certain doctrines. I never met a person that held either the non-eternity of punishment or the universality of salvation, or' the sleep of the soul between death and resurrection, who was not more or less unsound as to the person of the Lord. I say this, though I admit a distinction between "notions" and "heresies." The elect lady (2 John) was to mark her entire separateness from the corruptor of doctrine-if the foundation be destroyed what can the righteous do?) But if true of one's soul in its individuality, how much more are these things true of the Church as such. Time was, and time will be, when, to a quickened soul, the revelation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost was and will not be the name taught on earth. To patriarchs and to Jews other names of divine glory presented the correlative of their position, and so it will be hereafter. But the very being of the Church is inseparably connected with this name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Ere that name was revealed, the Church was never spoken of; and when hereafter other names of God give in various places their distinctively peculiar glories, the Church will have her fair and proper scene in courts above, with the Son, in the house of the Father-itself the body, in which there is to the Spirit, as I judge, a most peculiar place. Look at the recorded origin in the divine genealogy of the Church, and you will find the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost peculiarly involved; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost together and severally there. Look at the wondrous development of the plan:- at the formation-at the Being - fortunes - destiny - hopes of the Church-and say whether the personality or distinctive peculiarities connected with Father Son, or Holy Ghost* could be touched, and the Church not destroyed.

(* The writer does not doubt that the Trinity in Unity was taught in olden times, and will be taught on earth hereafter: he believes it was and will be for earth, in another name of divine glory than that referred to above.) So far as to the truth of the God with whom we have to do, into whose family, as sons and daughters, each of us is brought. But the mode in which we are blessed involves a good deal likewise as to what is lower than this, viz.-what is in, around, and against us-as the flesh, the world, and Satan.

Let us look at these, Satan, whether I am looked at as an individual or as a member of Christ's body, Satan and I have the same relative position. To bear with his assaults and resist him in every way, with the word of our testimony and the blood of the Lamb - one knows that one is called to. Can I as an individual be at peace with him? Surely not; but what if it were proposed by any company to make a compact with him, or to allow him the place of government, which in the Church belongs to the Lord alone, am I to submit to this? And when I have done my all to prevent it, if others will, must I, would I dare to remain? What! a devil owned for direction, as in Irvingism, instead of the Holy Ghost? Not I most surely! God helping me. What fellowship has Christ with Belial? The question is not, Are those thus beguiled Christian or not? But has a false spirit, a devil, had the Holy Ghost's place allowed to him by them? If he has, come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing: and come with the more zeal, according as you believe those left are Christians; it is your best hope of saving them-to get out thence whence prayer will not ascend-where, if you stay, you cannot help them. How strongly does John 16:1-33 show that the Church's very being is the testimony of Satan being conquered-" Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Inside the fold of Christ he has no allowed place. A deliberate sanction of worldliness would be just the same. " We are not of the world, as Christ is not of the world;" and " He gave himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." The church was left to be a widow till her lord's return; and the widow that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. The contrast of this is, " I sit as a queen and shall see no sorrow." It may require much self-judgment, and most surely will require direct guidance from the Lord Jesus Christ himself ere we can tell correctly, either as to ourselves or others, how far this or that thing of the world is as the withered leaf of the by-gone year, which will, if left alone, drop off of itself when the fresh sap flows, or as the spring bud of the new year about to develop itself; but the Lord Jesus Christ has his eyes of fire still, and in holiness He does discern, and while His gentleness will surely be shown in guiding aright those that will do His will, the individual soul which has no power by which to discern the world (little as any of us know how to use what discernment we have) is not a Christian at all; nor is the body, which has no power to judge of robes defiled by the world, the church of Christ, or owned as such by Him. Who can read John of the Ephesians, etc., and not see that the very being 17 or church is the emphatic testimony of this world's rejection and the introduction of a better one to come.

Emphatically we start as Christians with an end of the flesh (our flesh) through the death of Christ, and with a commencement of the spirit (His spirit) in ascension. Whether freedom from the lot of Adam the first, or standing, privilege, hope, calling or walk, are concerned; see Romans 6:7-8 : And, as in his body, one spirit with the Lord is our blessing. Flesh is flesh, whether it be trained in the court, sensitive, pathetic, delicate; or wild in the wood, rough, rude and grasping. And flesh is not to be owned or allowed in the church. How hard to walk in the power of the cross daily. How compassionate the Lord amid our failures! But, as a matter of principle, flesh is judged in the individuality of the Christian's standing, and in the body in which he has His position, and clearly it must be put down. The law was a system which measured man; but by the gospel is I measured into the church (the end of flesh having been found in the cross). " All spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

I would repeat here, too, a thought which (common, I conceive, in Protestant Luther's day) is too much forgotten now. As, "no hurdle, no fold," so, "no discipline, no church."* And this may be seen

as a point at which the common adversary is driving in many ways. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there must be judgment and discipline, as we see in 1 Corinthians 11:1-34 by the individual, or the body, or the Lord. And the fact that there is no such judgment exercised here or there, in what may call itself by the name of the Lord, only shows that he does not own it as His. Discipline which goes upon that which is common to the church as a whole, bringing it to bear upon the individual, is surely not sectarianism.

(* There is a monstrous delusion abroad, that the table of the Lord on earth has a seat at it ready for every one who has faith in the Lord Jesus, simply as such. As it is stated by some, " Our alone term of communion is faith in the Lord Jesus." This is true, if understood aright-as to the question of entrance, hut is not true in the sense in which it is used.

If the table of the Lord does receive one saying "I desire to break bread because the Lord has enjoined it to His disciples, and I am one"-it is quite clear that the last clause, "and I am a disciple," would be the ground of future conduct or discipline.

If theoretically one did not see that discipleship is in the word much more a matter of subjection to certain influences from above, and has more to do with a nature, objects; motives, positions, hopes, &c., than, with the adoption of any set of notions; yet surely we have seen practically, that so it is. A Jew, a Turk, a Socinian, a Romanist, etc., etc., if each were being drawn by the Spirit to God, through Christ, would find a sympathy the one with the other, and more than this, if they compared motives, objects, hopes, etc., they would feel that there was in them what corresponded. I say not that at first they would be able to rise so far above themselves as to see either the common power above, or the common portion within, to do that correctly might require either much power of the Spirit, or gift.

It is evident enough a man may get into a place upon the ground which is the opposite of that upon which he remains there. I was taken into the favor and peace of God upon the alone grounds of mercy in Him, and sin in me. My remaining in favor and peace are upon very different grounds, viz.: holiness in Him, and a new nature, through grace given to me. Save Christ, none but those who were sinners will be in glory; but no sin shall be there, nor murderer, nor liar, etc., nor anything that defileth. The cross, if the expression of pity to the sinner, damns his sins; it is simple faith, as being a poor sinner, in the Lord Jesus alone Which gives salvation and Church membership. But this is not without the Holy Spirit, and it gives a new nature. And if grace save him, does grace destroy itself in so doing? Has the Father’s heart and house no appeal to him, no lesson to teach beyond this,-" Thou shalt not die." Is Christ not a living person, who drew’ him and to whom he is drawn? Is he merely the Quickener of dead souls-in his title of Second Adam, Life-giving Spirit? Is he not also the Changer into His own image, from glory to glory-the Judge of works (where we fail to judge), as well as the Shepherd and Bishop of Souls-and is not the Church the House of God, "the habitation of God through the Spirit."

Some walking in the flesh would make the scriptural directions for us into a sort of "Act of uniformity"; others again, would so far hinder their having force (on the ground, either of the church’s ruin, or of their own uninstructedness) as to state that every one may do that which is right in his own eyes, provided he is honest. Both these are wrong, and lead to lawlessness.

If you ask what is the guide in discipline, I answer:-Christ's honor; and the science of the Divine nature in man (2 Peter).

Now, while scriptures contain the theory of this, they are neither their own power, nor the intelligence by which they are understood. And they teach us that living souls on earth have a living Shepherd in heaven, one who is the fountain and sustainer of life. Directly you begin to deal with the soul of a saint, you get to that which Christ is keeping and training; and unless you are guided to act in unison with Him, you cannot see what ought to be done. This is a solemn truth, as also that in 1 Corinthians 11:1-34, that the conduct of the individual Christian, of the saints collectively, and of the Lord, are all linked together.

Practical holiness may not be trampled under foot. Chief of sinners as I am, yet, saved through grace, I would rather walk to the end of days alone, than be the manifest sanctioner of sin. If I fail, let me confess; if not, let the saints judge me; and, if not, may God in His mercy not say, "Let him alone." Let God have glory, even in my failures, by confession, and let Satan have the blame, why should I carry it. Such a union is Romanism in its worst features; and be it remembered, that a work of the flesh like fornication, is not worse than spiritual wickedness-than filthiness of the spirit. Some sins are sins in the very nature ' of things-as lying. God cannot lie; Satan is the father of lies. Some things would be sin at one time and not sin at another. To kill a man, when divinely commanded to do so, was not murder.

And, moreover, the word of the Lord is plain: discipline in the Church, even to exclusion, goes upon the ground, not that a man is not, but is a Christian-delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh-that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. The delusion referred to would make the table the place where God was dishonored in the worst form: it separates between Christ and the Holy Ghost entirely; and lends the sanction of the Lord's name on earth to every evil thing.)

I have not spoken, and do not propose doing so now, upon the question of daily separating the daily growth of evil, and of the training and purging of one's soul and those of others from the daily defilements of the world. But only of such an allowance and sanction to elements of evil-in the world, the flesh, and the devil; whose judgments are presupposed in the church's very existence. As to the other, I would only remark, what was spoken of at the commencement, that the personal presence of the Lord and our walking with Him as a living person, will be found of paramount importance in this; because, having the mind of Christ, as a matter of privilege, it is alone by communion with Himself that we get the proper understanding of His thoughts, affections, and desires. And sure I am that the soul which knows and lives in his presence, will neither allow evil in itself nor in others around it, whom it will see and know as in His presence, one with Him and it, and whom it will suppose to be sharing with it the sympathies, thoughts, and affections of its risen Lord. Preposterous is the thought of sustaining communion with the Lord in allowed evil in any form round about us. It cannot be. In the light of Him, risen and returning, every spot will be detected. We know Him who has said, and every man that " hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure." Is the house of the Lord-the family of God, the habitation of God through the Spirit-to sanction evil in doctrine, morals or practice, which no individual Christian as such would dare to do?

And, note here, that the church is called to " walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing." It is not merely morality, but spirituality of walk. " Ye walk as men" was Paul's rebuke-not bad men; but, as

men. The saint, as partaker of the divine nature, most surely has his tastes, and perceptions, and inward assurances, which, while accordant to the word, will often take the lead in guidance; and which cannot may not be neglected or despised, if he would have a conscience void of offense. A mere servant can measure his doings by the written compact; but a son has the honor of the Father and His family upon his heart. Moreover, as having the mind of Christ, and serving the living and true God, guided by His Spirit,-it is not evidences, such as the carnal natural mind can weigh, which alone weigh with him. My soul may be assured that God is moving, or removing, in a way of which no evidence tangible to sense can be found. Surely I am responsible to walk in that way. Where is the spiritual wisdom in saying " God is evidently in much power among that gathering of saints-but, I wait for an evidence, such as I could show to man, ere joining myself to them;" or again, "God has gone out from the midst of that people, or they are utterly given up by God;" and yet, to say " I remain with them till I have an evidence of this, I can show to others." Nothing could lower the grace in which we stand more than this. For, in the abstract principle of such a thought, either redemption is not upon a higher ground than creation; or else, at best, the renewed nature is all which it recognizes, and God himself is shut out as the origin, sustainer, and end of that nature. Surely if any such awful conviction were justified-if justified in saying such a word of any gathering-some action is incumbent upon me. The distinctive characteristic of faith, as seen in James 2:1-26, is, that it is energetic.

God does not require me to convince the conscience of others, though he may require me to testify to them. He knows I cannot give conscience to any, though bound to keep my own unspotted.

The. Church is a habitation of God through the Spirit. Alas, for me, if I adhere to the place where He is not, upon the foolish thought, that what is called by me, or man, the church, must have the Spirit-there will be no fruit therein. It is Romanism. And, while sad, indeed, the thought of turning one’s back upon any company where He is, assuredly I am bound to expect, and to realize, that His presence, in sustainment and government is there, where I go-and to cease going where he is not. Let all human weaknesses be allowed for in me and in others, still God is God; and the soul that has known the realizings of faith in conversion, can, and will, in humbleness, know the self-same testimony to it, of the reality of the presence of the Holy Ghost, when it finds itself in that which the Lord Jesus owns, as corporately part of God’s church in the wilderness. For the Bride-chosen companion of the Lord, is the one, whose hope is the Bridegroom’s self-and Him alone. O for more understanding of the wondrous grace in Him, who now condescends to open his heart and mind to the chaste virgin that is espoused to Him. We are for Himself, and He is for us-as those wonderful words, "Bridegroom" and "Bride" teach. What grace has our God, to have such a title and such a glad honor for His Son, and for us. Both titles tell of joy-His speaks of power; hers, of beauty. But they answer the one to the other, as none other of our correlative titles do; and the savor of either one is more peculiarly for the other; and the other, more immediately only. Be the company in whose presence they shall be seen divine, as the Father’s whose house is theirs; or below them both, as of angels; or of the world, seeing His love making the display that she is loved even as He is loved-still they have a joy in one another’s love. Each needs the other; and both are perfected alone, when together. What means that title, "Bridegroom" without a Bride? or who is the Bride apart from the Bridegroom? What joy such as of the Bridegroom and the Bride? What glory, brighter witness, either of the worthiness of the Lamb, whose wife she is-or of

the rich, divine grace of the Father’s heart. May we remember whose we are, and serve him with a whole heart.

W.

P.S. Let the children of God weigh this paper. The writer prays-that wherein it is defective (much more, if in any matter it is wrong) in PRINCIPLE or unguarded in STATEMENT,-they may detect and object; and only receive what is of the Lord. Of the general value and correctness he has no doubt whatsoever in his own mind. The Headship of Jesus to His church, and his being Lord of all, closely connected as they are, are quite distinguishable. The distinction hangs upon the difference, not of "relative positions," so much as of "subsisting relationships." The saint knows his headship now, as a member of the body of which Christ is head, and as a servant in the kingdom in which He is Lord. This paper, though in principle applying to both, treats more of the former than of the latter. I notice this, because "profession and responsibility arising thence" are little treated of here, as more pertaining to the kingdom. Moreover, my object being to keep the elements of first principles, and their development before the mind,-I have intentionally avoided entering into any details of properties connected with these elements. What I mean is this, God separates me to Himself from the world, the flesh, and the devil. This is my subject. Whenever He acts, he acts worthily of himself; this gives what characterizes his acts. In redemption, how richly does the savor and fragrance of it fill all things, and rest upon the saint. This, though most precious, is not my subject, and is therefore little entered upon.

Vol 01 - Remarks on the Seven Churches

Remarks on the Seven Churches

I have a few remarks to make on the Churches. The object in view being their judgment,-it is not the power which produced blessing that is presented to us; but the state in which the Church is found when the blessing produced has been left in men’s hands, as an effect-the state after the spiritual energy has been at work. Another thing it is well to remember-that a previously described state does not necessarily cease to exist because a new one is introduced. The Church has lost its first love, though much else has come in since. Jezebel has not ceased to exercise her pernicious influence because Sardis has a name to live and is dead. The next thing I would remark, is, that when judgment is to happen to one of the Churches (and so is pronounced on the state which that Church represents), in the execution of it, the saints, where they are distinguished, are necessarily to be considered apart from the threatened evildoers, and the time of the punishment of the latter is not in the period pointed out in the address to the Church as such. These remain for the execution of the judgment after the encouraged saints are gone, and may be a carcass carrying its former name, but a mere carcass with no life at all. Thus, in Thyatira, certain are reserved for great tribulation, and certain to be killed by the retributive justice of God; but under what circumstances is not stated. The saints will be gone before the execution of this judgment; so that it is not in the mixed body to which the Lord’s given judgment applies. This modifies extremely the historical accomplishment of the results spoken of in the threatenings pronounced. This remark, however, I think, does not properly apply to the three first Churches: their corporate state is recognized, not as being what it ought to be perhaps, but as existing-as a recognized corporate object. Hence the Church, as such, is threatened with the Lord’s visitation, and " he that overcometh " is placed after the " he that has ears." But in Thyatira, the faithful are distinguished as "the rest" in Thyatira. The Church, as a professing body, had but its corporate witness. Hence the Lord’s coming is now put forward as a hope and time of expectation to the faithful, to whom the Church was no longer a stay and consolation; and the saints are particularly referred to that. " Hold fast till I come." This is very remarkable, as giving now a hope and stay out of the Church to the faithful. The change of " the overcomer" to a place before the warning to hear, that is the comparative individualization of the latter, accompanies this also, beginning with this Church of Thyatira. With Thyatira closes also the application of the characters of Christ found in the things John had seen. In Sardis, the title of Christ in the Church, as holding the seven stars in his right hand, is recognized: that could not be questioned; but after this all the titles are new, to be understood by a distinctive, faith, which is the stay, and gives its character to the fidelity of the saints who know this name, but which was not what John had seen displayed of Christ as in the midst of the Churches. Sardis and Philadelphia both participate in the announcement of the Lord’s coming; which, when the Church was thoroughly corrupted as at Thyatira, so that the residue were distinguished from the body, is held out to sustain the faith, and relieve the spirit of those oppressed by the evil. But then in Sardis the coming is presented in a very different way from what it is in Philadelphia. Sardis, whose reputation was great, but who was dead in relation with Him who had all the perfections of the

Spirit, has her works judged as not perfect before God; and she is threatened with the world's judgment (compare 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18; Luke 21:35). Here we have again to remark, that the judgment of Sardis will be, when all real pretension to be a Church has ceased, if even the form be preserved. The few worthy will be in white with Jesus; and, after their taking away, those who had formed part of the body will be judged with the world. In what form they subsist is not said, only we may in general say that it will be as unfaithful in the place they stood in, not as not being in it (see Matthew 24:50-51; Matthew 25:30). In Philadelphia, the Church is become a remnant, and the remnant is the Church in God's sight. All is encouragement; and though strength be very little, still an open door is there. They will be kept from the hour of temptation which will come on the world; and they are comforted with the assurance that the Lord is coming quickly. It is to them, as waiting for Him, a comfort and a joy. It is the faithful, the feeble awakened remnant at the close, who, entering into the patience of Christ, are comforted by the assurance of their entire separation from the world's lot, not merely in judgment but in the terrible tribulation coming. They would be entirely out of the time even in which it would be. But Christ is not yet come. In the Laodicean Church, Christ alone takes the character of" Amen" to promise, and "faithful and true:" -promise, and the name in which he is to be Head of all things new, soon to be manifested, " the beginning of the creation of God" (compare His two titles, Colossians 1:1-29). The Church has lost the sense of what Christ is and hence has a good opinion of her own state. And here again the principle previously spoken of applies. The execution of judgment on the persons guilty, does not come within the limits of the real existence of that addressed as " the Church." I say this of Laodicea; and it is here the question becomes really important, because the Lord addresses it yet as "Church." The overcomers have yet a place at least in the throne with Christ. The body had, when addressed, yet the name of a place before God, and was judged by Him as such; but its real state was nauseous to God, and it would be spued out of the Lord's mouth, utterly rejected as such. This is rather its rejection as in a church-standing, than the execution of judgment on those guilty. And this was, in the knowledge of God, its certain portion. Still, counsel and warning was addressed to it, till its rejection took place. But the Lord distinguishes the possible remnant that may still linger within, in the patience of His mercy, always unwearied while mercy is possible. But I judge that it is not the resulting judgment on those who refuse the warning and are cast out; but the entire rejection as disgusting to Christ, from the position in which they stood as a body. A faithful witness could no longer bear such a thing. This supposes, that after the Sardis state is formed, a Philadelphian body arises, through grace, which is to escape the time of tribulation. The forming of this body, I apprehend, induces, in result, the Laodicean state of the public body, which is what Christ will reject, as having to do with the church, leaving aside the judgment of the guilty after their works. The historical execution of the threatening is not given, no more than the rapture of the faithful, because the message is addressed to the body while it has, as a present thing, the character in which it is addressed, with the consequences of certain conduct; only here the declaration of rejection is unconditional, because already the body was what required that rejection. But I apprehend that the term μετα ταυτα(after these) supposes the execution of the judgment of spewing out of the mouth, so that nothing is any longer recognized as holding, in any sense, a church-standing before God, when the prophetic declarations as to the judgment of the world begin to take effect. The judgment which the individuals who composed the rejected body will undergo, though, I doubt not, having respect to their previous position (for those who have not professed cannot, for example, be apostate), depends on the position which they are found in,

which is not the proper subject of the judgment of the churches, though the declarations made to Thyatira and Sardis, generally considered, whether great Romish and Protestant bodies, intimate, in some respects, the ulterior consequences of infidelity in those positions respectively. D. The names of the seven churches have been anglicized, thus; Ephesus, desirable; Smyrna, myrrh; Pergamos, height, or elevated fortress; Thyatira, bruise incense; Sardis, prince, or song of joy; by others, remnant; Philadelphia, brotherly love; Laodicea, the people's judgment.-ED.

Vol 01 - Righteousness Without Works

Righteousness Without Works

I believe it will be found, that the first and simplest truths of the Gospel, become of growing value to our souls as we advance onward along the narrow road which leadeth unto life. Truths which are at first received authoritatively, because of the evidence of Scripture for them, become commended to us by their own beauty. And what we received at first, as it were by force of our own necessity becomes in our progress that which manifests the, glory of Christ;-so that we are able in measure to contemplate it apart from selfishness, and to; see it in the light in which God himself sees it. I think; I discern this feature in Apostolical teachings; while: they unfold mysteries, or develop practical truth, they also designedly connect all with the primary truths of the Gospel--thus bringing them into constant prominence. And this marks the teaching of the Holy Ghost., it is human to handle a particular truth as a subject;: but the object of the Holy Ghost is to hold up prominently to' view the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The soul becomes unsettled from its steadfastness,, when the mind takes the lead in learning even the truth of God. The Spirit who leads into all truth, connects everything in His teaching with those great primary, truths, the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.: The mind may get hold of something new, and be interested in it, as if it were more wonderful than -the truth already received. I do not wonder at the Apostle, saying, "so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God"-there he saw the deepest truth; or, in after-times, saying to Timothy, " Do the work of, an Evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry; for I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." It is an unhealthy symptom, when the simple gospel is not relished. It shows that the mind is rather at work than the conscience exercised before God, or the affections engaged with Christ. There are indeed wonderful discoveries made to us of the grace and purpose of God, and this too as that in which we are specially interested; yet when all is manifested and enjoyed without hindrance, then the primary truths of the Gospel will be seen in all their brilliancy, even the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, the object of adoration, admiration and praise throughout eternity. It is with these. thoughts I now turn to the great fundamental truth of the Gospel-"righteousness without works "-a doctrine we know which has not only been controverted by Christians, and sneered at by the wise and the moralist-but which many who hold it, have only become settled in, after much bitter experience of themselves. It is indeed needful for all to learn it in this school of experience. But we may also learn its beauty by looking forward to that day, when the righteousness of the one Man, as the fountain of all blessedness to the redeemed, shall be as illustriously displayed in heaven and in earth, as the sin of the one man as the source of all misery has been sorrowfully displayed in the history of this world. But there is another light in which the doctrine of "righteousness without works" may be regarded, namely, as leading us into present intercourse with God, and enabling us to walk in his presence it is the bearing of this great truth as a present influential principle, which the Spirit of God himself has carried out in the Thirty-Second Psalm. And the blessedness predicated of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness

without works, is a blessedness, not confined to the wondrous truths of' "transgression forgiven, sin covered, and iniquity not imputed;" but this blessedness is carried on into the exercises of soul, which result from being freely and fully justified I would now turn to the Psalm itself.

First, the great oracular declaration - " Blessed it he whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." On this statement, the Holy Ghost himself, by the Apostle Paul, has thus commented "Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works." "The blessedness"-we almost need to have this English word translated to us; so slow of heart are we to believe his goodness, when God himself proclaims it to us. Happiness, "our being's end and aim," is proclaimed by this oracle; and yet men are deaf to it. "Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven!" This is happiness-the alone happiness of which, man as a sinner is capable; because nothing but this can bring a sinner to God, in whose presence there is fullness of joy. There is indeed a happiness proclaimed in the first Psalm, " Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful." But where is such a man to be found? This blessedness only attached to the righteous One, the Holy One of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. It was what He did; because He is what He is. But as for us, it is not anything that we can do, which can make us happy, but that which God does for us. It is man's impossibility to make himself happy; it is God's possibility to make a sinner happy. And this oracle is the declaration of a sinner's happiness by means of the work of God himself. The distinction between transgression and sin is made sufficiently clear by the statements of the Apostle in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: " Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Adam sinned by transgressing a positive commandment of God; and thereby incurred the penalty of death. Others were liable to the same penalty who bad never sinned by transgressing a positive commandment of God; therefore, there may be sin where there is not such transgression. And the Holy Ghost announces this oracle, according to the usual order of the awakening of conscience. In most cases, it is awakened to a sense of positive acts of sin against the known commandments of God. And so the Apostle, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, adduces proof of the practical ungodliness and immorality of both Gentile and Jew, before he opens the source from whence it all proceeds; original and indwelling sin. Man may draw out a theory of Christian doctrine; but the Divine way is, not to teach a theory, but to grapple with the conscience, and to make man sensible of his wretched condition as in the presence of God, and that nothing short of God's own provision of Christ can meet his necessity. "Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh to me," says Christ. The oracle before us regards man as he is, "an enemy to God in his mind by wicked works." Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in the name of Christ among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. "Beginning at Jerusalem" shows the character of transgression which the Divine remedy can reach. There was acted out "the great transgression." The testimony against them was, that they had denied the Holy and Just One, and had killed the Prince of Life. Yet, in the name of Jesus, whom they had crucified, whom God had raised up, there was forgiveness even for this great transgression. Who need despair of finding forgiveness in the same name, in which alone there is salvation? If we turn to a different and more frequent character of transgression, we find it written, " Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are

justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." It is to man, therefore, as a proved and convicted transgressor before God, as already condemned by the righteous judgment of God, and when awakened by the quickening power of God condemned in his own conscience, that forgiveness of transgression in the name of Jesus is proclaimed by God himself. And blessed, by God's own testimony, is the man who has an ear to hear it.

I much question if the bare idea of forgiveness of transgression, apart from the solid groundwork on which it rests, viz., the infinite atonement of Christ-" forgiveness in his name"-would ever satisfy the conscience. The groveling thought of escape is, indeed, the careless thought of the unbelieving mass; without one just thought, either of the character of God, or of the evil of sin. But if such a manner of forgiveness were possible, it would leave the recipient of it in that state of uneasiness which a man feels who finds himself in the presence of one whom he had injured, yet who had forgiven him. He would be under the conscious sense of degradation. Such a condition would be the very opposite of being blessed." It is the mode of the forgiveness, bringing the person forgiven to stand at ease in the presence of God, declared to be just, while he is the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, which constitutes the blessedness. The atonement of Christ is indeed the remedy, the only remedy, the divine remedy for the forgiveness of transgression; it is more, it is the great medium of the display of moral glory of God. "Angels look into these things," and learn the glory of their God by means of his dealing with sinners. And it is a wondrous thought, that man's necessity as a sinner and the manifestation of the divine glory, find their one and only, meeting point in the cross of Christ. Yea, blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; and so forgiven as that God is glorified. Oh, what riddance of anxiety to the soul, when its salvation is thus taken from off its own responsibility, and it is no longer the question, Shall I be saved? but, Shall God be glorified? Blessed peace, indeed surpassing. all understanding, when God and the conscience are alike satisfied.

"Blessed is the man whose sin is covered." It is not the manner of the Holy Ghost to use redundant expressions. We often use many words where few would suffice. But "the words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times." And man "liveth by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Now, I believe as the conscience becomes alive to God, and exercised before God, it necessarily draws the distinction between transgression and sin. Outward reformation is seen by others, but the soul itself cannot rest on this. There is a very wide difference between reformation of character and conversion to God. Reformation of character will necessarily follow conversion to God; but for a soul "to believe and turn to the. Lord is something far more deep than outward reformation of character; it brings us to Him with whom we have to do, before whom all is open and naked. And there it is that we learn the difference between transgression and sin. In human thought sin is an act; in divine judgment it is a principle. And this discovery is so appalling, that transgressions appear. thrown into the shade by the discovery of what sin really is-viz., a settled principle of insubjection to God; a desire to do what God has forbidden, because He has forbidden it, even when there is no positive act of disobedience; a reluctance to do what God has commanded, because He has commanded it. Yes-we have a will contrary to the good, perfect and acceptable will of God; and this is very experimentally known after we are made willing, by the grace of God, to come to Christ so that to do the will of God is more or less connected with denying self. "Whose sin is covered? Who would not faint under the struggle, if it were not so? God himself has covered

sin up, out of his own sight. This is what we need. How man tries to cover the evil of his heart from his fellow-man; yet, even human sagacity can often pierce through the hollow covering. And man himself is ill satisfied with it; witness his round of religious duties to try to cover it, and his natural proneness to superstition. But it is the atonement of Christ which covers sin before God. It is God himself who has set forth Christ as a propitiation through faith in his blood. Here, when we discover sin, we can yet meet God, not in anger, but in mercy; for the sin which we have discovered is covered up before him. I do not believe that there can be settled peace in the soul, till, taught of the Spirit, it finds the emphatic meaning of such like texts as these.: " Our old man has been crucified with him"-" God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh"-'God " made. Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." The mighty moral necessity of the Son of God becoming the substitute for a. sinner alone meets the case of the conscience alive to what sin is., And I have admired the wisdom of divine teaching, as well as the infinite grace, that it is after showing sin in the shape of transgression, sin in connection with death, sin as dwelling in us, the announcement follows-" There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Let the conscience be ever so alive to what sin is in its various phases, the moment Christ is regarded as the object held out by God himself to faith-" No condemnation," is the answer. This distinction between transgression and sin helps to solve a phenomenon not unfrequently brought tinder the notice of those who are watching for souls. The deepest sense of sin is by no means always found where there has been the greatest amount of transgression. The transition from a state almost of remorse on account of transgression, to peace with God through faith in Christ, may well lead the soul to put its Amen to the Apostolic declaration" This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Now when such are led on in exercise of conscience before God, to know sin as a principle, they find that the outward conduct has but too faithfully represented the inward principle. They find, too, the need of not trusting in the outward reformation; and that the heart, from whence all evil proceeds, has to be diligently watched. But when persons who have been happily kept free from gross vice, gentle, kind, and amiable, are awakened by the Spirit of God to a sense of sin, the judgment they form of sin is not so much by its injuriousness to themselves and others-which may, even apart from the quickening power of the Spirit of God, affect the conscience-but they measure sin by its contrariety to God; and instead of being able to rest complacently in the blamelessness or innocence of their lives, or in the praise bestowed on them by others, their very lives appear to them as one act of hypocrisy, the motives of action and conduct being now judged in the light of God's presence. And the result often is such self-loathing as betokens deep and steadfast conviction of sin, and needs the fullest application of all that Christ is to the conscience. There may be a measure of loathing oneself on account of transgressions committed, even from a generous impulse of nature; but to loathe self because we have discovered what it is before God, marks the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, and will be found a deepening work as we go on.

" Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." How needed is this clause for the peace of an awakened soul. There is the consciousness of iniquity; and the announcement is, that although the Lord knows iniquity to be there, he does not impute it. And wherefore? Surely, because God hath imputed it to Jesus. "He hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." He hath seen it there, and judged it there. " The chastisement of our peace was upon Jesus, and by his stripes we are healed." It is the greater wonder that God should have imputed iniquity where he only saw

righteousness, than that he should not impute iniquity where he sees it to be. And I repeat again, that nothing short of the truth of the actual substitution of Christ for the sinner, gives full relief to an awakened conscience. The cross of Christ is to us the marked expression of the love of God towards sinners. " God is love. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The Cross, further, is the declaration to us of the righteousness of God. " Whom God hath set forth as a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness."

Again, it shows the infinite hatefulness of sin in the judgment of God. The cup could not pass away from Jesus. He bowed his head, and drank it. And God hid his face from Him, and made Him to know on the cross, in bitterest experience, what sin was-" God made Him to be sin for us." The Cross is both the way for God to come nigh to man as a sinner without destroying him by His presence, -" And having made peace by the blood of the Cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself"-and the Cross is also the way for man as a sinner to come near to God" You that were sometime far of are made nigh by the blood of the Cross."

All these several aspects of the Cross, deeply important and interesting as they are, would fail of giving settled peace to the soul; if the truth of the actual substitution of Christ for the sinner were kept out of sight. " He loved me and gave himself for me." Here we find such solid ground on which to rest our souls-the wonder of the Holy One of God being made sin on the Cross, is far greater, than the wonder that any measure of guilt should be answered by it to God. But there is more than this. The idea of simple pardon, is at the best negative-blessed indeed, even in that view, that iniquity, although committed, is not imputed. Speaking humanly, we have the idea of a free pardon emanating from the grace of the Sovereign; we have the idea also of an amnesty; but we cannot get the idea of justification. It is the idea which God alone can present, because He alone can justify the ungodly; and this is the new and blessed idea here presented. David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works, saying, " Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." Now in these words we have not the actual statement of the imputation of righteousness. It could not be clearly and fully announced (although it was the only principle on which God had acted from the beginning), because the great groundwork, The Cross, was not an accomplished fact. However, it may have been anticipated by faith; still there was all the difference as to perception, between a promise made, and a promise accomplished. Everything was suspended on the death and resurrection of Christ. " We," says the Apostle, speaking to the natural heirs of promise and natural children of the Kingdom, " declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made to the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same to us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again." The proper person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his death and resurrection, is the key by which we are able to unlock all Scripture. The Holy Ghost, Himself the inditer of all Scripture, the Spirit which moved the prophets, is especially known to us as " the Spirit of Truth," and glorifier of Jesus-his great testimony is to the suffering of Christ, and the glories to follow. And as soon as the death and resurrection o: Jesus became a matter of fact, the Holy Ghost brought it to bear on his own precious Scriptures; and in that light, we clearly discern, that &iniquity not imputed, righteousness imputed. " God hath made him to be sir for us that we might be made the righteousness of Go in Him.". There is nothing simply negative in the

Gospel.

It is not a prohibitory system. It is a gracious system of conferring positive blessing. To forgive sir may be negative; but to give righteousness, is a positive and inalienable blessing. This marks the genius of the Gospel. "Whosoever believeth in Him [Jesus] shall not perish;" it stops not here, but "shall have everlasting life." "That they may receive forgiveness of sins,"-but it goes on, "and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith which is in me." If we are "delivered from the power of darkness," it is by translation into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. Alas, our narrow minds and dull hearts deprive, the gospel of it; glory. It is the glorious gospel of the blessed God: it represents God in the gracious place of the Giver, am sets man in his only place of possible blessing, that of a simple recipient. " By faith we receive Christ," John 1:14; receiving Him we receive from Him power to become the sons of God; we receive forgiveness o sins, abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness we receive eternal life. Christian action follows or this reception of Christ. The teaching of the Holy Ghost unfolds to us what we have received in having received Christ. It is well to keep this principle constantly before the soul: it is not that which we renounce any more than that which we do, which makes u Christians, but that which we receive. And this principle runs through the Christian life: it is a life whit] has its affections, sensibilities, energies and activities Our Christian life is not a system of negation any more than is our natural life. This marks it so forcibly from the common notion of religion. It is said, "Cease to do evil "-it is added, "Learn to do well." "Abhor that which is evil "-" Cleave to that which is good." " Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him work with his own hands that which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." " Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying." Hence arises the danger to Christians from misusing even the good, holy and righteous law of God. It is not for the righteous. Their need is to have the life already received, nurtured, by the ministry of Christ, the true and living Head, in order that the energies of that life may be called forth in its varied and appropriate activities. We have Christ himself for our standard, and the righteousness which we have in Him, as our standing before God, presented to us as our highest but certain final attainment. " Not as although I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after; if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Hence it is that the one hope of our calling, which is so certain, because according to the purpose of God, becomes so formative of the Christian character. To be conformed to the image of God's Son, as the first-born among many brethren, is the blessed destiny of those whom God has already justified. It is upon the certainty of this, that the Holy Ghost acts in our conscience and affections, not making what we shall be to depend on what we practically are, I mean as Christians; but, taking the divine certainty of what we shall be, as the mighty moral lever, now to elevate our affections; and even now beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

" Beloved, now are we sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see Him as He is; and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." This hope grounded on Christ is the great power of present purification. " Desiring to be teachers of the law," was in the Apostles judgment the result of ignorance in those who undoubtedly thought to promote holiness thereby. And so there is even a way of pressing conduct and service, which, instead of strengthening the life of

Christ in the saint, turns him back on the question of his own salvation. Such is not the way in which the Spirit leads. He glorifies Christ, and takes great care to establish the soul in Him, when leading it on into practical holiness. Such is the order of instruction for the most part in the Epistles. And I believe the wondrous truth of " righteousness without works" to be the very ground-work of righteousness and true holiness. It is the positive blessing received, recognized and enjoyed" God delivered Christ for our sins and raised him for our justification;" which calls the Christian life into activity."

Secondly, " And in whose spirit there is no guile. It is written of Jesus " he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." Of all others the description is but too true - " with their tongues they have used deceit:" This is indeed a humbling condition of being-to dissemble what we are, to pretend to be what we are not-to use the tongue, or to put on an outward demeanor, to conceal the thoughts of the heart-and at the same time on every moment of serious reflection to be conscious that we are not before God what we seem to be, or profess to be before others. This is a condition which makes the thought of God insupportable. It is too much of restraint for man always to be acting a character, and "the idle" off-hand word betrays the condition of the heart, which perhaps more studied speech had concealed. It was by the idle word-" This man casteth out devils by Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils "-that He " who knew what was in man," made manifest from his very words what was in their hearts. Whence then the remedy for so evil a condition-whence the blessedness of having no guile in the spirit? It is alone the result, the first and blessed result of the great truth of " righteousness without works." This doctrine at once cuts off all effort at concealment, and all pretensions to be what we are not. The very ground-work of the doctrine is that the very God before whom all things are naked and open, who knows us thoroughly, and has taught us to see ourselves in measure as he sees us, is the one who has covered up our sin-yea, he has covered up all the sin which his omniscience knoweth to be in us; for he has not acted towards us on our estimate of sin, but on his own. None can condemn-since God himself justifieth. God has not put us in the place of justifying ourselves; He does that himself. And He takes our part much more effectually than we could take our own. Hence there is no guile in the spirit. So to speak it is not needed. All anxiety about making out a case for ourselves is removed, since God himself declares his righteousness in covering our sin, and making us righteous. If we search ever so deeply (and it is well to do so), as to what sin is, God knows it more deeply, and has dealt with it in judgment on the Cross of Christ according to his own estimate of it. There is no guile in the spirit, where there truly is faith; because the truthfulness of our own character, and the truthfulness of the character of God are alike maintained by the marvelous Mode of God’s dealing with us in and through Christ.

There is no guile in the spirit of him who at one and the same time takes his place as the chief of sinner’s, and yet also as perfectly righteous in Christ. There is no guile in the spirit of him whose object is to glorify Christ and not himself. Hence it follows that when self-vindication becomes needful for a saint, which is but rarely, he is placed in the most humiliating position; because he has to speak of himself instead of Christ. The Apostle was thus compelled to speak " as a fool." But as a general rule confession and not self-vindication is the path of a saint. An over-sensitiveness about our own character argues a state of soul little occupied with Christ. If our care be his glory, he will in due time vindicate us. And what is not cleared up now will be in that day (1 Corinthians 4:1-21). And I do admire the grace of Christ in the Apostle which could make

him turn all the aspersions cast on his own character to establish the faithfulness of God (2 Corinthians 1:1-24); and thus turn the thoughts of the Corinthians away from himself to a better object.

Thirdly, " When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long; for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." Where can a guilty conscience find relief? The very effort at concealment only aggravates the burthen. How many broken hearts are there, and how many heavy spirits, who dare not tell their sorrow to another. How many who have found bitter disappointments in everything, and in themselves also, who are ignorant of the real cause, because they are ignorant of their real condition as lost, and think their own case peculiar. They know not that God has thought upon their case and considered it; and provided the remedy. They think not of telling their case to God any more than to their fellows. God, they think would spurn them for their unworthiness; and man ridicule them for their singularity. They keep their case to themselves. They keep silence, although it be only to aggravate the raging fever within, by being thus thrown on themselves. They know not that they are only realizing what the constitution of man as a moral creature is. He is insufficient for his own happiness; and the creature too is insufficient to make him happy. This may not in the ordinary acceptation be felt as though it were sin; yet, it is the deepest principle of sin, because it is in fact " worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." How many aching hearts are there, how many sensible of a void which refuses to be filled, where there is no conviction, properly speaking, of sin; nothing which makes manifest the need of an all-sufficient atonement. They think not of the Gospel as the remedy for them. They know not that Jesus, heart-sick in a weary world and rejected by it, in the conscious possession of everything man needed either as a creature or a sinner, turned to such and said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and. I will give you rest." How has the Gospel been degraded in being regarded merely as a remedy for sin, which it assuredly is: but it is far more; it is the manifestation of God himself in such a way to man as a sinner, as to make him happy in God, -whilst God is glorified in thus making him supremely happy. The state above described is that which knows not God as the blessed One; and knows not the blessedness announced by the Oracle of God. " Blessed is he," &c. And herein is the crying evil of the professed Christianity of the world-a mere system of ordinances, nullifying the necessity of the Gospel These poor broken-hearted ones are hindered from seeing there is a remedy of God’s own providing for their misery. They want the Gospel in its simplest form; but they hear it not. They attempt to act out Christian duties, or even to assume Christian privileges, without knowing its first principle-free intercourse with God on, the ground of the propitiation of Christ.

There is no relief till the soul can tell out its sorrow to God. Even the very hand of God may be felt and acknowledged, and yet God himself is regarded as inaccessible. The soul goes on bearing its own burden because it dare not cast it upon God. The whole spirit is gone, just as the natural moisture is dried up under a raging fever. In such a case it is sometimes found that the hand of God (acknowledged and felt, because it has touched some idol or other in which the soul was seeking rest or at least diversion from its misery, instead of graciously subduing the soul) produces fretfulness against God. God is regarded as an enemy, as having gone forth against the sufferer, at the very time he may only be removing the obstacles in the way of the desired relief. He " waits to be gracious,"-he "will be exalted to show mercy." Here is much of the controversy between God

and man-whether the remedy for man's misery is to be found in man or in God. The first thing under all circumstances of misery is the acknowledgment of God. Man finds out many ways of accounting for his misery, and applies his various remedies; but until he acknowledges God, he always accounts for it on wrong ground, and never discovers the real remedy for it.

There are certain principles which apply with equal truth to man as a sinner, and to one born of God. And, this is one-" When I kept silence," etc. It is a condition of exquisite misery to the sinner, because he is ignorant of the revealed character of God, and knows not the relief it would be to tell everything to God; and to the Saint, because knowing God in grace, he does not use the truth aright to deepen himself in self-knowledge. He has so far forgotten his standing, as to have guile in his spirit, by not being open with God. The statements of the Apostle are generally applicable. " If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." When God is really known as the one who imputeth righteousness without works, any concealment from him must necessarily produce heaviness of spirit. We cannot come near him by reason of the concealment; and then comes on coldness. And how often in such a state of uneasiness of soul do we find the fault laid anywhere, even on God himself, rather than on ourselves for keeping silence. When we have been restless in spirit, downcast and unhappy, have we not often been able to solve the difficulty? Frequently it arises from mortified pride. Our self-esteem has been lowered on discovering some unsuspected sin; as if our blessedness consisted in our character, instead of our having righteousness imputed, without works. God will not allow us to have confidence in our character, or in our faithfulness to him, but in His own revealed character, and His faithfulness to us. This tendency in the saint to self-righteousness, accounts in very great measure for the misery found in Christians; when in any degree entertaining it in ever so subtle a form, they have departed from the real and only ground of their blessedness. But if there be sin unconfessed, or made light of in confession, or only generally, and not specially confessed, it must induce misery; if God has told out to us all his grace in forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, it is that in the knowledge of this, we may have no concealments, or rather attempts at concealment from Him. He would have us look at ourselves as we really are, and justify him in so dealing with us as He has done in the Gospel of his Son.

Fourthly, " I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, 'I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

What relief is here-full immediate relief; the sense of forgiveness accompanying the very act of confession. Silence was broken by confession-no longer is effort made at concealment. The very One whose hand was felt to be so heavy, is the One to whom the heart is opened and poured out; " I acknowledged my sin unto Thee. I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord." There is no "creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." It is a solemn thought that we have to do with God; and when once this truth gets fast hold on the conscience, the effort at concealment from him produces the exquisite misery described in the two preceding verses. Confession gives relief, because it at once puts us in the actual place of having to do with God. It practically acknowledges, that all things are naked and opened unto his eyes, that He is the rightful and truthful judge, that what his word says of the evil of our hearts is true. Then is God justified by confession. This is true if God were

regarded only in the character of a Judge. But how much more is God justified, when confession is made, under the sense of his love as known in the Gospel of his grace. There is it deepest, and fullest, and most truthful; then the forgiveness of the iniquity of transgression, leads the same heart and lips which have confessed unto sin, to make confession unto salvation. And in this we find the deepest elements of the character of the saint. He had before but one subject of thought and study; that was himself: he has now another, the Christ of God. Has he to speak of the first, it is the language of confession, ever deepening as he advances in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; but is he in his proper and happier element, has he to speak of Christ-it is to confess him as all his salvation and all his desire. How happily do confession and praise unite; happily because truthfully; no language is sufficient to express the real degradation of a sinner; no language sufficient to tell out the grace and glories of the Savior. And when confession and praise are so united, what fervency they give to prayer and intercession.

Now, I doubt not that a great deal of the trial of spirit to which saints are subject arises from their not exercising themselves in self-judgment and confession, under shelter of the blessed truth of " righteousness without works" It is the right apprehension of this blessed truth which puts us in the place of self-judgment-a place exceedingly high and wonderful. If God, the Judge of all, has become the justifier of those who believe in Jesus, is it that they shall make light of sin? Far from it; it is that they may judge themselves. The blood of Jesus gives us access into the holiest; there we are in the light; there we are in the privileged place where Israel’s High Priest could only enter once in the year, but which is ever open to us by Jesus, our great High Priest. Entering into the very presence of God, with unshod feet consciously touching the sand of the desert-there it is we address ourselves to one part of our priestly ministry, self-judgment, separating between the precious and vile; judging between things which differ. We are then in the light, and the light in which we are detects that which is inconsistent with itself; and we could not stand there, unless under the shelter of that very blood which had introduced us there; and when there, we learn more of our need of that blood than we had ever before known. We have found in it remission. of sins-it has washed us, and still keeps us clean. Now, I believe " the uprightness of heart" mentioned in the last verse of this Psalm to be very intimately connected with self-judgment; for this eventually turns us back on the blessedness announced in the Psalm, that the very evil which we have only now detected God doth not impute to us-God has covered it. It is thus that the heart is kept humble, and the conscience tender and lively. I believe the uprightness and honesty of confession which may have been manifested at conversion; is frequently impaired, from neglect of self-judgment before God. A saint may become too solicitous about his own character in the eyes of his fellow-saints, or of the world, and thus unconsciously be led to act a part, instead of getting his life strengthened from the spring and source of life. There was a truthfulness in the exercise of heart which led first to Christ, but this is impaired when the maintenance of our character becomes our object, instead of Christ. Now, by self-judgment truthfulness is maintained, and our need of Christ in new and various ways becomes manifest. Let the exercise of soul be ever so personally humbling, yet if it leads to Christ, it leads to a larger apprehension of the blessedness declared in this Psalm: we really are strengthened. At times I marvel at the grace of God in permitting us to judge ourselves. He can never give up his title as "Judge of all;" we have come to Him as such, but so completely has He, by His grace, justified us through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, that He would have us arraign ourselves before the judgment-seat, and be the judges of our own selves. The right apprehension of standing in complete righteousness before God in Christ can

alone qualify us for this. Self-judgment may have been carried on by us in our ignorance on a different principle-viz., seeking to find some ground in ourselves for acceptance with God. But now it is to search and see how just and holy is the way of God in dealing with us, so as to make us debtors alone to grace, and yet this very grace reigns through righteousness by Jesus Christ; since redemption displays the holiness, justice, and truth of God in strict accordance with his mercy.

There are three characters of judgment with which the saint has to do-self-judgment-the judgment of the Church-the judgment of the Lord. These are very distinct in their character. Attention to the first necessarily precludes an individual from falling under the judgment of the Church, whose province it is to judge those within, while those who are without God judgeth. The failure of the Church to exercise judgment, in its own proper province, on overt acts of evil-such as occurred at Corinth-brings on the judgment of the Lord in some outward and manifest form. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." It is equally the province of the Church to judge the doctrine of those within. The Lord had it against Thyatira-that Jezebel, which called herself a prophetess, was suffered to teach her seducing doctrine. And the Lord must judge in this case also, if the Church tolerates evil doctrine. But the judgment of the Lord is ever supreme, and we are always, individually and collectively, amenable to it. Self-judgment, indeed, would prevent us, as individuals, from falling under the Lord’s judgment in a marked and manifest manner. " If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, but when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord." The rod for willful disobedience need not be applied, because self-judgment would prevent such outbreaks, the principle of which would have been secretly judged. But although the judgment of the Lord, in the shape of present punishment, would thus be avoided, this does not interfere with the general truth, that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." The difference of the Lord’s dealing, even where there might be outward sorrow, would be very apprehensible to the conscience of those who came under it. To the soul exercised in self-judgment it would readily be interpreted as the interference of love, the wisdom of which would be discerned. To the careless saint it would be felt as punishment, and regarded as a warning to bring him to a sense of his actual condition. Nor must we forget how much the needed discipline of the Lord is preventive; and this, too, is learned in self-judgment, in the holiest of all. The " thorn in the flesh " might have been interpreted by the Apostle very differently from what the Lord intended, had his soul been unexercised before God about it: "Lest I should be exalted above measure." He had not been so exalted; but there was the unsuspected danger and tendency to be guarded against; and this the Apostle discovered, not by revelation, but by exercise of soul before the Lord. And have we not all had occasion, not only to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God for something positively wrong in our ways, but also to justify His love and wisdom in some special discipline, the preventive character of which has been taught to us by Himself in the holiest of all. I feel increasingly the importance of deep searching self-judgment, under the shelter of the blessed oracle: " Transgression forgiven- sin covered-iniquity not imputed." I say not that we are always able to interpret the Lord’s dealings with us; but I believe self-judgment as to the springs of evil, leading to confession before God, to be the means of attaining this interpretation. God is always right-a simple but deeply practical truth. We put God in the right by confession; and we not only get relief, but we actually learn that God is right, and understand his ways.

O if saints did know the toilsome process of self-vindication, and instead of justifying themselves were to justify God, what sorrow would they avoid. And it betrays so much want of confidence in God to be anxious to vindicate ourselves; as if, after all, it was our own character, and not His grace, which was the real power of blessing. I think we see the design of the Apostle in using the word "discern," not simply judge (see Greek, 1 Corinthians 11:31). If we would "discern " ourselves, we should not be judged. Self-discernment, getting a positive insight into the real moving springs of the activity of the flesh. Who can bear to look too closely into it, unless he know the blessed truth that God had judged the flesh in the Cross of Christ. "Our old man has been crucified with him." The new evil which we discern in it God had seen from the beginning, and allows us now to see, that we may justify Him in. His total judgment of it. The flesh cannot discern itself-it cannot stand before God. It is by the power of life, communicated directly from Christ, brought into this exercise by the Holy Ghost himself, that we thus discern ourselves; and this in the immediate presence of God himself. " The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things." It is a human aphorism that " the proper study of mankind is man," but deeply fallacious. Man knows not himself by studying himself, but by studying God: " This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." It is by this divine science that man really knows himself; not by measuring himself by himself, but by measuring himself by God-by God as he is revealed in and through Christ. And I have often thought that the annals of history dark as they are, or the record of crime black as it is, would not together present such a picture of the depravity of man, as would the secret confessions of saints to God, if they were laid open to us as they are to Him. Nothing but the consciousness of complete justification could ever embolden the saint to confess before God those secret springs of evil which he detects when judging himself Immediately in the presence of God. We wonder not at the most devoted saint speaking of himself as the chief of sinners.

" For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found; surely, in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto Him. Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

It is indeed a blessed encouragement to the soul to be assured that there is nothing we may not tell God. He has done everything to win our confidence, even delivering His " Son for our offenses, and raising him again for our justification." And it is by confession that we practically maintain our confidence in Him. It is because of the connection between confession and forgiveness that every one that is godly can pray unto God in a time when he may be found. If sin fresh discovered in ourselves need not bar access to God-if he does not hide himself away from us, but is always to be found-what can hinder? And, practically, what does hinder intercourse with God? It is not God himself. It is not that either a sacrifice or a Priest are to be sought-all is ready. But the unreadiness is in ourselves. There the real hindrance is to be found. We often try anything rather than the right thing. We may become more diligent in outward service-more regular in outward worship-more keen in judging the evil of others-when the one thing needful is confession. It is indeed a bad state of soul, when things most blessed in their place are used by us to interrupt our intercourse with God. God requires truth in the inward parts; and if there be alienation of heart from God, the restoration must be truthful. God must be justified, no blame must be laid on Him, all must be taken on ourselves; and this is just what confession does. He who is godly must regard God as the

only Justifier, and must know Him, as ever to be found, even when we have to go before Him with the confession of iniquity. And is it not in this way that we foil Satan as the accuser? If there be readiness of confession, is there not the consciousness that it is God who justifieth? Who, then, can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? That which the accuser would lay to their charge they have already laid to their own charge before God-and it is forgiven. It is thus, by experience, that the exercised soul knows God himself as its hiding-place-" Thou art my hiding-place." There may be many ways in which the blessedness of faith in faith may be experienced; but I question if any way is more vivid than the difference between hiding ourselves away from God, as Adam did in the garden after he had sinned, and hiding ourselves in God. What a thought it is, that God should present himself, as He does in the Gospel of His grace, as the only refuge for a sinner; as the alone One who is able to take his part, and can effectually take his part. Is not this one blessed aspect of the glory of God? He makes all His goodness to pass before us, and proclaims His own name as just, yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus-the only God-because He is a just God and a Savior; and has thus given His challenge that there is no God beside Him; because he is a Savior God. There is a refuge from the accusations of Satan-from the frowns of the world -from that which is more bitter than either, self-condemnation; and this refuge is in God himself. He has laid himself out to us as the Depository of our every woe, the Sympathizer with our every care, the One who pitieth every infirmity, the patient Listener to every complaint we have to make against ourselves. All this is learned under the knowledge of the blessedness of the truth of " righteousness without works;" yea, is comprised in that blessedness. It is confidence in this divine way of righteousness which emboldens us to say, "Thou shalt preserve me from trouble." And is any trouble equal to soul trouble? How few are able to take the honorable place of suffering either for Jesus, or for righteousness' sake! such may rightfully rejoice. But spirit-broken, heart-sick, self-weary, whither can we go?-God is our hiding-place; He comforteth those that are cast down; He is the Father of mercies (pitifulnesses) and the God of all comfort; He can make us rejoice out of our sorrow. And surely it is not right for the song of redemption to be sung once only on the shore of the Red Sea, and then the notes of praise to die away, and to be succeeded by murmurings. Alas, so it is practically; the joy of conversion is frequently followed by murmuring and complaining. The beginning of our confidence is not held fast. The truth of the blessedness of God's imputing righteousness without works is let slip, as though we no longer needed it. Saints have to learn to justify the wisdom of God in redemption in all its fullness, by learning, in the progress of their own experience, that nothing short of it would meet their need. We do not, as we might expect, find saints singing the new song, new and ever varied, yet in substance the same. And wherefore? Because grace alone can be the groundwork of our song; and if the heart be not established in grace, we have no heart for song. But when a saint goes on under the shelter of the blessedness of " righteousness without works," learning it as he goes on his way, how frequent the boast of thanksgiving" Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." There is a " singing and making melody in the heart to the Lord;" and this not publicly, but privately in the closet. For great, unquestionably, as is the transition from darkness to light, by faith in Christ Jesus, at the outset, yet, what is the experience of the saint afterward? Is it not constant deliverances? " He that is our God is the God of salvations." It is a happy school into which we are brought to learn God in the character in which he has revealed himself to us. The history of each individual saint will tell out the same truth-that where " sin abounded grace has superabounded;" and the end of each saint individually will show forth the same truth as the Church collectively, " to

the praise of the glory of His grace." O that we may be honest and upright in heart with God, and then the marking his ways will issue in frequent songs of deliverance.

" I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse or mule which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle lest they come near unto thee."

Under the blessedness of transgression forgiven, sin covered, and iniquity not imputed, comes in a new order of guidance, the guidance of the eye of Him who has justified us freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. When it pleased Jehovah to redeem Israel out of Egypt he Himself became their guide. Israel needed guidance; and Jehovah went before them in a pillar of a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. He thus went before them to search out a resting place for them in the wilderness. They pitched or struck their tents at the moving or settling of the Pillar of the cloud. "The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys." This surely was blessed guidance-in strict keeping with the character of redemption then manifested-a shadow of a far deeper reality-but it was not intelligent guidance. There was no communion of soul with Jehovah needed to apprehend this guidance: " the cloud of the Lord was in the sight of Israel throughout all their journeys." But now the very end of redemption is to bring us into communion with the thoughts and ways of God, and such a guidance could not be suitable to our standing. " The servant knoweth not what his master doeth." He goes and comes at his bidding, but he knows not the reason of either. Such a character of obedience would not suit those who know the blessedness of transgression forgiven, and are thereby admitted into the very thoughts and counsels of God. " We have the mind of Christ." The obedience now suitable is intelligent obedience, " understanding what the will of the Lord is "-" proving his good, perfect, and acceptable will." Now just in proportion as the guidance is of a higher order, so is it more difficult; and there is ever a readiness in us from this very difficulty, to take the lower order of providential guidance, instead of the guidance of the eye. The "Directorship " practiced in the Romish Church, may as readily be accounted for, on the principle of being a relief from the exercise of conscience before God, as on the principle of priestly domination. It is far more congenial to the natural heart to have the conscience kept by another, than to have it exercised before God. And the plea of infallibility has a charm in it, because it saves us the trouble of judging before God, what is truth, and what is error-what is right, and what is wrong.

If the real power against the fundamental doctrine of Popery is found alone in the doctrine of " righteousness without works," the practical use of this truth in leading our souls into habitual intercourse with God, is the alone preservative from the principle of " directorship." It is not the guidance of the eye of God, when we follow an individual Christian, or a congregation of Christians. The provision of God in the blessed truth of righteousness without works, is that the conscience of each individual should be in direct connection with Himself. And is there any instance on record where even Christian legislation for the Church has not trenched on God’s prerogative, of having to do with the consciences of individuals. Apostolic authority dare not come in between God and the conscience. I utterly repudiate the idea of each man doing what is right in his own eyes, but I do most strenuously assert the truth of God’s right to have to do with the conscience; and of the believer’s privilege, I say not duty, to have his conscience exercised before God.-" Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." "Whatever is not of faith is sin." And is it

not the necessary fault of every establishment, that it arrogates to itself the right to settle those things which God has left to be settled by the conscience exercised before him. And thus the very obedience of saints is regulated not by God, but by the convention of the religious Society to which they belong. We are members of one body, and members one of another; but our healthful corporate action must be hindered, if we leave out the important addition, that we are severally members of Christ. How needed is intercourse with God to guide the conduct of a saint. And it is for neglect of this that we bring much discipline on ourselves. God will have his way with us. But we are as the horse or mule, which have no understanding: we do not understand the will of God because we study not the guidance of his eye. We are led by circumstances, and not by the Spirit. Wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty-we walk in a large place, when we walk before the Lord. But we turn each one his own way, and God has his bit and bridle for us. This he is wont to use for his enemies.-" Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou earnest." And how constantly do we as his saints, to our shame be it spoken, need the bit and bridle to turn us back by the way we have come. Who is there who has not to confess that the right path has been reached by painful and humbling discipline, which would have been readily found had heed been given to the guidance of the eye. Amidst the manifold proofs of present conscious weakness, this appears to me very prominent, the little confidence which the saints have of spiritual guidance in their several paths. They walk not as those consciously led of the Spirit. Among many, indeed, such guidance is not acknowledged even as a principle; providential guidance, if so it may be called (for providential control over circumstances, or even our own waywardness, can hardly be called guidance), is alone regarded. But where the principle of intelligent spiritual guidance is maintained as the privilege of the saint, how readily do we take hold of providential ordering as our ground of action. Hence we tread uncertainly: or we may follow the steps of others; but this is walking by sight and not by faith. This arises from the habit of only using our blessedness as a shelter, and not as that which introduces us into the presence of God. It is a beautiful description of the Thessalonians, that their " work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ," was " in the sight of God and our Father." To Israel God showed his acts, but he made his way known to Moses, the one with whom he conversed familiarly, as a man talketh with his friend. Surely God has by his grace introduced us into intimacy with himself that we too might know his ways.

" Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart."

Nothing can be more hollow than the mere conventional righteousness of men; it is based on human convenience or selfishness; without any regard to the holiness of God at all. It is simply character as man estimates character, the most fatal hindrance to the reception of the truth. " How can ye believe who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor which cometh from God only." And so strongly does this regard for character act, that even when the judgment is convinced of the truth of God, man is too cowardly to avow his conviction. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also, many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." There is one way in which we find the word of God frequently detecting this

hollowness, and that is, by the remarkable contrasts which it draws. " Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved; but he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." Here the human contrast to doing evil, would be doing good; but that would simply be man's estimate of himself, by comparing himself with his fellow men; but God contrasts man with himself', and "he that doeth truth" forms his estimate of himself from God. This is the thing needed. The light lays man open to himself as he is; naked and open before God. So again, God will send strong delusion on many to believe a lie, because they loved not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." And here in the Psalm before us we find "the wicked" contrasted with him "that trusteth in the Lord." And surely the wicked is he who "submitteth not to the righteousness of God,"-the one who will not submit to be saved as a sinner by the grace of God through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, but seeks for righteousness in some other way. To trust in the Lord-how simple, yet how sure-how honoring to God, and yet how happy for ourselves-to give him credit for having all in himself which we find not in ourselves-to go out of ourselves for everything, and to find every craving answered in Christ. God knows our need as sinners, and he has provided for that need in Christ. Yes, "We are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Such have obtained mercy --such know their need of it. God is rich in mercy-he is able not only to add mercy to mercy, but to multiply mercy; yea, to surround them with mercy; or, in the beautiful expression of the English Psalter, "mercy embraceth him on every side." This is our truthful place. If we look back, " it is not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy God has saved us." And it is " according to his mercy" that he still deals with us; there will be discipline and correction by the way, because it is for our profit; but God's rule of dealing with us is according to that which is in himself,-"his mercy." And if we look forward, does the thought arise of glory, as connected with our faithfulness or service? and the thought does arise sometimes to dispirit, and sometimes to set us on a wrong ground of service; how suitable the word, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." We have earned no title to glory. Glory shall come to us in the shape of mercy. God will make known " the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he hath afore prepared unto glory." When Israel came into possession of houses built which they built not, vineyards planted which they planted not, wells digged which they digged not-then the danger was of their forgetting the Lord, and assuming that as their own right for which they were merely debtors to the grace of God. This is too true a picture of our own hearts. We take as a right that for which we are debtors to mercy alone. We rejoice in the blessing which we have reached by trusting in the Lord; and then we trust in the blessing, and forget the Lord. We only and always stand in grace, we live by faith, we stand by faith, we are constant debtors to mercy; and in glory we shall know ourselves eternal debtors to mercy. And a great part of our most humbling discipline is designed to keep us in our right and no less blessed standing. " He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about."

It is interesting to follow the line of thought of the Spirit of God-if the expression may be allowed-to see the connection between one part of his utterance and another. It is of great advantage to have a solid substratum of Christian doctrine, such as we frequently find in the Protestant confessions of faith. But this, however valuable to detect error and to prevent headiness and high-mindedness, does not meet the need of the soul. The soul is not satisfied with an accurate theory; it needs the truth to be applied in its wondrous variety. In this Psalm the Spirit of God is not treating a subject,

but rather carrying out into its blessed results the oracle with which the Psalm commences. The "righteous" are not previously mentioned in the Psalm; and if we were to take our own thought of righteous, instead of the thought of the Spirit, we should sadly mistake. But the comment of the Holy Ghost himself, by the mouth of his Apostle in Romans 4:1-25, immediately leads us to connect the last verse of the Psalm with the' first verse, and to identify the righteous here spoken of' with those whose blessedness' is declared in the oracle with which this Psalm commences. And thus, too, we see that the Holy Ghost, throughout the Psalm, is describing the blessedness of those to whom God imputes " righteousness without works; " and closes all, with calling on such to be glad in the Lord and rejoice. Just as, by the Apostle, he says, " Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice." There is a time coming when " all lands will be called upon to be joyful in the Lord," even after He shall have made known His salvation, and after His righteousness shall have been openly shown to the heathen. But we wait not for circumstances. Knowing the Lord, we can and ought to rejoice. And wherefore is it that others judge, through us, of the Gospel, as though it were a system of privation and renunciation, instead of one of the richest acquirements? Is it not that we try to be glad in ourselves, or in circumstances, instead of in the Lord?-and thus are subject to much variableness, instead of living by faith in the Son of God; learning what He is of God made unto us, and what we are and what we have in Him. In the most truthful confession before God of what we are, we can still "rejoice in the Lord."Before He skews Himself publicly-before He manifests in glory to the eyes of all what the Sons of God really are-believing, we can rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. And wherefore our deplorable lack of such joy? Is it not that we fail in discerning and carrying out the blessedness of " righteousness without works? " We do not know it experimentally; we do not see its moral beauty; it does not shine with increasing luster on our souls;- because they are not exercised as they should be before God. We are, somehow or other, more occupied with that which displays us, before men, than with that which displays God. to us. Hence, we drink not at the spring head of joy. O that we could practically tell out to others that God himself had made us happy, and that we are happy in God. And the upright in heart are again connected with the blessedness declared in the first verses of this Psalm. We read of one whose "heart was not right with God." He had the base thought " that the gift of God might be purchased with money." Now, no real Christian can entertain the thought that such a gift as Simon coveted is purchasable by money. But the base thought is in our hearts, to earn something from God, and this hinders uprightness of heart. Surely, uprightness of heart is to maintain our character before God as sinners saved by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and to carry with us that character before men. If we forget what we are in ourselves, or what grace has made us to be in Christ, we are not upright in heart. It is blessed, indeed, not to have a part to act before God (for such is human religion), but to go before Him in the character which He has given to us, in the righteousness with which He himself hath clothed us. To be upright in heart is not to draw a line between religious and other duties, but to come to the light to learn ourselves, and learn the glory of God in His grace. Where there is human sincerity and human uprightness and conscientiousness, it cannot, perhaps, well be said that there is hypocrisy; but such natural uprightness is apart from God, and may exist, and has existed, where God has not been known or revealed. But now light is come into the world. Men may know their real character in the estimate of God. And the condemnation is, that " he cometh not to the light." And before God all will be found hypocrites-that is, acting a character-save those who, coming to the light, and learning what they are in God's judgment, have sheltered themselves

under the blessedness of "righteousness without works." Such are upright in heart; in their spirit is no guile. They may shout for joy.

Presbutes.

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The Apostolical Doxologies

" All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless Thee." This is an end most worthy of God; and it relieves the mind from many an anxious exercise to keep steadily in view that self-manifestation is the end of all God’s action; or, in other words, His own glory. What may be needed in order that God may display Himself, can alone be known to God; but it is well to lay down this as an axiom, that all the works of God-all His dealings with men in His various dispensations-are necessary unto His own great end, the making Himself known. This will be fully brought out in that final dispensation, when " God is all in all." The unintelligent creation shall praise God. All intelligent beings, whether created or redeemed, shall praise Him-even angels who have not tasted redemption themselves, do yet praise God for redemption, as that which most distinctively and prominently makes Him known. Angels own with admiration the worth of the Lamb. He is the object of their admiration as well as of their adoration. (Revelation 5:1-14, Hebrews 1:6.) " Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye His hosts; ye ministers of His that do His pleasure. Bless the Lord, all His works in all places of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul."

Praise is silent for God in Zion, for Israel is blinded unto this day: and as for creation, it "groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now;" so that there can be no expression of praise either from Israel or creation. But the Church can now praise-yea, the saints can now bless. The essential elements of the Church’s praise are fervency of affection, depth of intelligence, admiration and adoration. It is praise of the highest character. She can "Sing praises with understanding." Praise is the proper element of the Church. " By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." But praise cannot be forced; it must be spontaneous: it is in vain for those that wasted Israel to say to Israel, " Sing us one of the songs of Zion." They could not " sing the Lord’s song in a strange land." The heart must be suitably attuned to praise. Melody must be made in the heart to the Lord ere it is intelligently expressed with the lips in praise. Hence, the heart established in grace and occupied with Jesus, marking the thoughts and ways of God as they are manifested, alone understands the comeliness of praise. In marking the apostolical doxologies, we can hardly fail of perceiving that they are the expressions of an overflowing heart, filled with wonder and admiration, on account of the grace and wisdom which God Himself is discovering to the spiritual understanding. Sometimes a didactic discourse is interrupted by a burst of intelligent praise. Sometimes the soul bursts out into rapture, in contemplating the specialty of the relation of Jesus to itself. Alas for our hearts! so " slow to believe." How little intelligent praise do we find among Christians. It is indeed recognized as part of the worship of Christians. The doxology-" Gloria Patri"- is of ancient date, even earlier than the Nicene Council, and is a valuable testimony to the faith of the Church; yet in its prescribed use how little are the affections called out; how hearty as well as intelligent is the simple "Amen" of the Apostle in Romans 1:25. It interrupts indeed the course of his argument, but he could not

announce the Creator " blessed forever," without adding his " Amen." The first formal doxology is found at the close of the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. It is very brief-" To Him be glory forever. Amen." But brevity is here becoming; for the doxology is the utterance of a soul absorbed in admiration both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. The Apostle had rapidly glanced at Israel's past history, his soul yearned in tenderness over their present blindness; again it warmed with joy at the thought of the Deliverer coming out of Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. What deep instruction did the survey unfold to his soul! The purpose of God in election and calling so fully vindicated. Legal righteousness unattained, but righteousness by faith in Christ fully established. The failure of that which had been outwardly dispensed, and the security of a remnant. The diminishing of Israel, the riches of the Gentiles. Gentile high-mindedness warned by what had happened to Israel. Israel enemies for the Gospel's sake, and yet beloved for their fathers' sake. Israel's actual blindness subserving the great end of bringing mercy and truth together, since they are to be received even as sinners of the Gentiles on the ground of mercy, and on that ground alone God ful- filling to them all his promises-not because of their worth, or their righteousness, but because of His mercy and His truth. How different is inspiration from a mere didactic style. The Holy Ghost in informing the spiritual mind calls out spiritual affections. Man often regards the Gospel as a theory, as a plan of salvation; but the Holy Ghost. deals with the conscience and affections of men. The Apostle, under his guidance, could not dismiss this subject without an expression of his admiration-"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom- and knowledge of-God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" And who is the expositor of these ways but God himself-not only as revealing them, but as being himself the Originator, Cause, and End of all things. "For of, Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." This solves many a perplexity. That which is hidden from the wise and prudent, because they attempt to master infinity by that which is finite, is plain to the babe. He recognizes God, and the difficulty is solved; and. then how suitable the brevity of the doxology-"To Him be glory forever. Amen." Everything is lost sight of but God; and God himself manifested most blessedly, even through the folly, weakness, ignorance and sin itself of the creature. The next doxology in order is found Romans 16:25-27. It is one of a class most interesting for our study, because it concerns the manifestation of the perfections of God in relation to ourselves. It shows the ability of God to do that for us which we, cannot do for ourselves. We find similar admiration of the power of God expressed in the doxology Ephesians 3:20-21, and also in Jude 1:24-25. The Epistle to the Romans might well close with the fifteenth chapter. In the latter part of that chapter the apostle had to write of that which personally concerned himself, and especially of his desire and intention of visiting Rome; and closes with the brief yet complete benediction, " Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." The sixteenth chapter is like a postscript, commending Phoebe to their notice, and distinctively saluting individuals by name. It is in such notices that we derive instruction which could hardly be conveyed by systematic teaching. It is the expression of the mind of Christ in the apostle. What a readiness there is to link others to himself. The acknowledgment of oneness in Christ, one body hut many members, was a deeply practical truth in the soul of the apostle, and he never missed the occasion of manifesting his delight when oneness in Christ had been the means of specially associating him with individuals. It is often so in family relationship; brothers and sisters are, by circumstances, thrown as it were into pairs, and this tends to heighten the closeness of their actual relationship. So the apostle, in the house of God, the church of the living God, delighting in common sonship and common heirship, found the common tie strengthened by

being able to regard individuals as fellow-helpers, fellow-prisoners, fellow-soldiers, yoke-fellows; fellow-travelers. There was a power in the thought of fellowship which greatly enlarged his heart. After these salutations, the epistle again closes with the benediction, "The grace. of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." The benediction is repeated after the salutations of several individuals to the saints at Rome. Then all is closed with the doxology, "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made Manifest and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen. In all this there are marks of divine skill. It has pleased the Holy Ghost to convey his doctrinal teaching in the epistolary form. In this form there is abundant room for the flowing forth of the affections. In the former doxology the apostle seemed lost in the contemplation of the discoveries which he was the channel of communicating to others; now his thoughts turn, may we not say anxiously turn, to those before whom the great outline of the marvelous and gracious dealings of God with man had been so clearly laid down in his gospel. He well knew that, not the blessedness of the truth so revealed, not the wonder of its being preached to Gentiles, not its suitability to their necessities in its great leading truth of righteousness without works, connected as it is with the hope of glory, not authoritative apostolic ministry, could establish their souls according to his gospel, when an evil and deceitful heart within, the power of circumstances without, and the wiles of a spiritual adversary were all in combination against that gospel. Their souls must be practically linked with God. Faith in the power and wisdom of God could alone establish them. How delicately were the saints at Rome thus instructed. He hands them over to God for safe keeping. He could have no confidence in their stability; but be had all confidence in the power and wisdom of God to establish them for his own glory. How easy to say, that "God is Omnipotent," or "God is All-wise," yet how hard to apply the truth. The ascribing Omnipotence to God is the denial of power to the creature. If God be "the only wise God," "the blessed and only Potentate." then have we neither wisdom to guide nor strength to keep ourselves. "All things are possible to him that believeth," because faith is in God, to whom all things are possible. " The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," because faith looks to the Lord as the only one capable of guiding through a deceitful and perplexing path. God can do it, God will do it. ".He will keep the feet of his saints," getting himself the honor due unto his name, in taking up that which is weak and foolish in itself, keeping and establishing such in the truth, whilst the wise and prudent stumble and fall. It is a wonderful thing that any of us are kept according to the gospel which the apostle preached. The history of Christendom is but the proof of departure from that gospel which the apostle so emphatically calls " my gospel." Human authority and human wisdom have reduced the gospel to articles of faith and a system of ordinances. The very thought that the omnipotent and only wise God can alone keep the soul established in the faith is abandoned. The gospel of Paul, in its riches of grace and its riches of glory, has been reduced by men to the least possible minimum of truth necessary for salvation. The display of the glory of God in the salvation of a sinner; through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, is well-nigh forgotten. Arid the great present end of the gospel, in giving the soul happy confidence in the presence of God is done away with. That God is of power to keep and establish may be admitted as an abstract truth; but that He does this so as to make known his wisdom to other intelligences, in keeping the weakest of creatures, opposed by the strongest of enemies, from being overthrown-in keeping the most

fickle in stability-in giving to ignorance itself real wisdom-is only apprehended by faith. And faith gives the glory where it is due. "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

Although formal doxology has no place in the Epistles to the Corinthians, yet there is a very peculiar character of praise found in the first chapter of the second epistle. The utterance of the lips is from an overflowing heart. The deep anxiety of the soul of the apostle, in dealing with the Corinthians, was compensated by his practically learning what the mercies and comforts were which God had in store for him. He would never so have learned this lesson, but for the sorrow and trial into which his service to the saints at Corinth had brought him. But if these mercies call forth gratitude, his soul rises higher than the mercies-to the Source of them. " Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort." It was not the subject matter of that which he had to communicate to the Corinthians, but his own experience of God which called out this overflowing of a grateful heart. In the Epistle to the Galatians, the address of the epistle closes with a brief doxology. But the address itself contains deep doctrinal truth-the very truth which met the special error of the Galatian Churches. In the third verse we find the usual for a of the apostle’s benedictory address. But under the circumstances of his writing, the very mention of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ seemed to bring before the mind of the apostle the shame and dishonor cast on the perfect work of Christ by these fickle Galatians. They were in reality turning back to the course of this present evil age, to deliver us out of which Christ had given "himself for our sins, according to the will of God and our Father." How the recognition of the one amazing truth of "The Cross" served, to the soul of the apostle, as the answer to every argument for the law. The law could never deliver from this present evil age. But after knowing deliverance from this evil age, on which the judgment of God was about to come, to go back to it again must be the most fearful infatuation. And it could only arise from losing sight of the Cross of Christ, in which the apostle saw the glory of God so illustriously displayed. And therefore he closes this most brief, but most comprehensive statement of doctrine with the doxology, " To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the apostle’s object is not to correct error, but to make known to them, and through them to the church at large, those rich revelations of its heavenly blessings in Christ-its union with Christ and its position in heavenly places in Christ. The apostle closes his doctrinal teaching with that magnificent doxology in the end of the third chapter, so strictly in keeping with the wonderful doctrine of the previous part of the epistle, " Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end. Amen." The real force and practical power of this doxology is sometimes lost by using part of it as an abstract proposition-that " God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." This is undoubtedly true; and in perplexities, when not knowing which way to turn, it is well to remember, that " with God all things are possible." But such a use of these words will be found-to divert the mind from the full and blessed thought contained in them as uttered by the apostle. His soul retraces the communications made to him of the previously hidden mystery, and which by him was now to be made known to the sons of men. He is rapt in admiring love, and his heart finds vent in this burst of praise. Let us retrace with him the wondrous things unfolded. At the outset, we find that his heart overflowed with thankfulness at the vastness of the subject which he had to communicate. He could not speak of it in, a mere cold didactic manner; it is an utterance from the heart. In reading the first -fourteen verses of the epistle, we see that the Holy Ghost does not• bind: down the

tongue which he uses as his pen to the rules of human rhetoric; yet whose heart has not warmed, and his soul beamed With fresh intelligence, as he reads from time-to time this passage? How different from reading the same truths in systematic theology. The subject imparts grandeur to the language in. which it is con-. vexed; and such dignity, such blessedness, is alone resolved into that which is in God himself, " according-to. the good pleasure of his will according to the riches of His grace "-" according to his good pleasure which he hath proposed in himself "-" according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Why are we so little intelligent in the things of God? Is it not that we come to be taught as " wise and prudent," instead of being as babes who look to God to give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation? Is it not that we often practically forget our only standing, namely, sinners saved by grace: sinners to whom God can make known what He can do for His own glory-for " the praise of the glory of His grace"-for " the praise of His glory "? In all this, we find the heart of the Apostle " inditing a good matter." Then follows a prayer that the saints might know what their blessings really are, and especially what was the character of that power of God which, had reached to them and wrought in them. This is described as "the exceeding greatness of the power of God." It has no parallel in creation or in destructive judgment. It is the triumph of God over every obstacle. In one instance alone has it been fully exemplified-in the resurrection, ascension, and present session of Christ at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. This is the character of power by which God, " to whom all things are possible," is alone working unto real blessing. It has wrought in us who believe, and it is still the power with which faith has to do. " Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" He has raised Jesus from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places. He still acts " according to the working of His mighty power." Yes, poor trembling believer, it has wrought in you, and it yet remains to Co publicly manifested that it has wrought in you. Let it not surprise you that you are unable to give to others more convincing evidence that such power has wrought in you. Others may see a change of character and ascribe the change to many an influence; but a power has opened your eyes to see a blessed object you never saw before; a power has unstopped your ears to hear the very words which have been uttered as to the deaf a hundred times before; a power has given you new sensibilities, new fears, new affections. To the eyes of others you are a changed man-in your own soul’s inmost apprehension you are a new man-so really a new man as to be able to judge yourself. " Old things are passed away-behold all things are become new." Various moral influences, and various circumstances may alter the character (yet no truly converted person ever can feel confidence from his own change of character); but it is one power alone which turns a man from himself, to see, delight in, and live on an object outside himself-even Christ-in the glory of His person-Christ in the perfectness of His work, and that power is the same which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. The power is manifested to be the power of God by being without effort.

It is not perceivable to sense in its actual working. It works silently and secretly, yet how mightily. The fact exhibitory of the exceeding greatness of the power of God-the resurrection of Christ-caused little noise in a world, the field for the display of the energies of man. It was to the world a mere question of Jewish superstition, " concerning one which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." And so now the mighty power of God in quickening a soul is unheeded. It goes on silently and secretly, and will alone be palpably demonstrated in the glorious resurrection of the saints. But faith is the result of, and has to do with, this power, and carries it on to its blessed

results. Has it wrought in Christ-raised Him from the dead-seated Him in heaven; so also has it wrought in us-dead in trespasses and sins-and has made us alive in and with Christ-raised us up, too, with Him, and has seated us together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We dare not say that anything short of this is our portion, if the same power which has wrought in Christ has also wrought in us. And it is interesting to mark the very difficulty of defining with any degree of precision where the prayer of the Apostle in the first chapter closes. It would almost seem as if the Holy Ghost led the Apostle from prayer to holy musing, and thus brings out the deep instruction as to our portion, in chapter 2:1-10. The double action of the cross of Christ, no less manifested in bringing into happy accord the most separated classes of men, than in bringing man as a sinner separated from God, into nearness to God; the wondrous " one new man"-his privilege of access to the Father by the one Spirit through Jesus-the new Temple still rearing-yet even now the habitation of God by the Spirit. The Apostle goes on to application; but here there is another interruption, for the practical application is resumed at the first verse of chapter 4: He is (surely the Holy Ghost so leading) turning aside to speak of the special grace given to him as the Apostle of the Gentiles; of his deep understanding in the now revealed mystery, and of the Church itself being now used as the means of instruction to principalities and powers in heavenly places, and all this according to the eternal purpose of God which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Highly favored Church! highly honored Church! but still subordinate to that which is higher-her own Lord-her own Head. Never has the Church so deeply fallen as when occupied with her own glory and beauty, her highness and dignity. She has regarded herself instead of Christ as the end of God. She is indeed called according to the purpose of God, but that " purpose is in Christ Jesus our Lord." What confidence of access does this give to us. And how truly is the Church exalted when her one absorbing thought is the honor of her Lord and Head. Then follows another prayer-blessed mode of instruction -very different from the prayer in chapter 1. It is a prayer for the present power and enjoyment of our own blessings-strength "by the Spirit in the inner man "-" Christ dwelling in the heart by faith"-the blessed anticipation of His receiving us to Himself, and being with Him where He is. It is a prayer for us to take our place in the love in which we are set, and thence to survey what that love really is; and this prayer closes with the doxology above noticed. Can we not trace the mind of the Spirit in this doxology? That we may know the order and character of the power according to which God is acting unto blessing, is one subject of the prayer in the first chapter. It is the poorer which has reached to us-and is in present exercise toward us. Difficulties and perplexities there will be in seeking to maintain a Church position and Church privileges; difficulties the greater the more we apprehend the real dignity of our calling; difficulties again enhanced by the known fact of the unchangeable evil of the flesh, for it is said to those seated in heavenly places in Christ: " Let him that stole steal no more." " Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Truth.

He no less regards our actual condition in the flesh, than He reveals to us and leads us into the enjoyment of that which we are and which we have in Christ. Difficulties there will be to maintain " the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," when there is at one and the same time to be found in every one of us naturally, principles and dispositions alike attractive, repulsive and divisive-difficulties surely greater than ever, when our habits, thoughts, and feelings have all been formed on the actual state of the Church in its divided and scattered condition, so that the very term "Catholic" has been well-nigh synonymous with corruption. But what difficulties are insuperable to that power which is toward us, which has already triumphed over more signal

difficulties-raised up Christ from the dishonor of the grave, after he had "borne our sins in his own body on the tree," and set him in the highest place in heaven; that power also which has quickened us who were dead in trespasses and sins; that power which has so broken down by the Cross and Resurrection all that which separated the two most opposite of men, Jew and Gentile, as to lead them " with one mind and one mouth to glorify God." All natural and moral impossibilities have been overcome by this power, and that power is still illustriously displayed in guiding the poor weak and worthless creatures that we are in ourselves, in circumstances so perplexing that human wisdom and prudence are utterly at fault. It is not thus, in one sense, that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God. " Have faith in God." Here is our great defect; nothing can make up for loss of faith in God. The wisest rules and the most honest admiration of them must fail to meet the ever-growing difficulties in the path of the Church. But God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh, in vs." How tenderly are we thus committed to him who is of this ability. Does it not speak to our hearts, more pointedly than the most solemn warning? That which is so wonderful in its revelation, so blessed even in its feeblest apprehension, is alone safe, whilst we hang by faith not only on God’s power for us; but on God as actually exercising the very power in us which raised up Christ, and has quickened us. Surely we can say, " The Lord hath triumphed gloriously." Let us seek to say with intelligence-" O my soul thou hast trodden down strength." His alone is the power and glory, whether he triumphs for us or in us. And it is well to notice by the way, that in this the Saints have, under all circumstances, their alone title and security for power of action, according as the Church should act. There is God-the living and true God-and whatever be their weakness, He " is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." " Lord, increase our faith." All may appear in ruin, disappointment in the fondest expectations be bitterly tasted; death written against ourselves, and on everything-but " God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." And all the most humbling discipline may be turned to account in this way-that we trust not in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead. " Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages; world without end. Amen." The suitable brevity of the doxology, Php 4:20, will be readily acknowledged. The apostle had reckoned largely and confidently on his God. " But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." The apostle was very closely bound up with the Philippians in the fellowship of the gospel. They alone of all the churches planted by him had communicated to his temporal necessities. He in return makes over to them, in the above bold words, that blessing of the Lord which maketh rich, and with which no sorrow is added. Fellowship in the gospel, branching out into various kindly communications between himself and the Philippians, leads his soul to the primary source from which it all came, and to which, as an end, he would have it all directed-even the parental love of God. "Now unto God and our Father be glory forever and ever. Amen." The next in order is the very sublime doxology, 1 Timothy 1:17, " Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." The soul of the apostle was filled with the thought of " the glorious gospel of the blessed God." He seemed to himself to be the special instance of the glory of the gospel of the grace of God. It could meet his case, who was before a blasphemer and persecutor, and injurer. And what a blessed God He must be whose grace could not only abound over all this sin, but cause that the very one who had been so conspicuous as a persecutor and blasphemer, should now be more conspicuous for faith and love which is in Christ

Jesus! And 0 what a blessed God, not only thus to triumph in his grace; but to entrust him with the ministry of this so glorious gospel! There is not only a heart overflowing with thankfulness-" And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord "-but the heart also is filled with admiration, and finds vent in this doxology. The glory of such grace will be forever attributed " to the King eternal, immortal, invisible." The apostle rendered it now with the deepest personal feeling indeed, yet still regarding himself as a pattern and specimen of those who should hereafter believe on Jesus unto eternal life. Such attribution of glory would spring forth from all the redeemed as with one mind and one mouth. It is no passing doxology; it is addressed to " the • King eternal," etc.-addressed to Him as such by the apostle on earth, but to be continued with deeper intelligence in heaven. But what a crowd of thoughts do we find here-" the King eternal "-the one who had ordered every age and every dispensation that he might fully manifest himself; " immortal" (or "incorruptible," as in Romans 1:23), untainted by all defilement, even in communicating with defiled sinners in a defiled world- unsullied in His own perfections in dealing with them in the riches of His grace-and able too in His mighty power to raise that which is sown in corruption in incorruption. " Invisible," although all things visible declare His " eternal power and Godhead;" " invisible" to human search in that which displays His highest glory, and yet fully seen in " the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of, the Father." "The only wise God," as only able to make Himself known; wise as only able to make the creature happy; wise in His glorious gospel which so harmonizes the knowledge of the blessed God with the blessing of a ruined sinner; " the only wise God" as using the fittest instruments for the accomplishment of the purposes of his grace, even the blasphemer and persecutor, to tell out to others the riches of the grace and the riches of the glory of the gospel. " To the only wise God be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." As " the glorious gospel of the blessed God" has illustriously brought out the distinction of the persons in the Godhead; for it is impossible to see redemption aright without very particularly apprehending and duly appreciating the doctrine of the Trinity. The doxology appears especially addressed to the Godhead-the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And the context is remarkable-" The glorious gospel of the blessed God"-and " I thank Christ Jesus our Lord" -" and the grace of our Lord"-" that in me first Christ Jesus might spew forth all longsuffering." The deity of Christ, the glory of the Person of the Son, the Image of the Invisible God, and the Sender of the Holy Ghost, appears to have been before the soul of the apostle. In other passages, Christ as Mediator may be more prominent; but in this the glory of His Person, on which all redemption is suspended, is more conspicuous. Thus in the previous doxology (Romans 16:1-27), we have, " To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever." Here it would seem that the apostle was, for his own soul’s joy, regarding Jesus Christ, in His own proper glory as the great Center of everything. Seeing the Godhead displayed by Him-" the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily"-he bursts forth into this blessed utterance. And so far as it is possible for us to know God, and delight in Him, it will be in Christ Jesus and through Christ Jesus, forever and ever.

There is a brief doxology in the last chapter of this same Epistle to Timothy, verses 15, 16, brief, yet full of interest. The contrast in the apostle’s mind was "gain," or the present advantages which one might have as a Christian, especially its mitigation of the hardships of the slave, and eternal life without present advantage. The one was appreciable by the senses, the other only by faith. The one would be acquired by that to which, alas, the glorious gospel of the blessed God in our corrupt use has led-even contention for the rights of man, the other would only be grasped by fighting "the good fight of faith." The one was visible, palpable, and present; the other unseen and

not present, but only the subject of a confession which seethed contradicted by appearance. It is this confession which the apostle exhorts Timothy to keep in its integrity, till the need of confession would cease in the full display of the subject of confession, whether it be the glory of Jesus Himself, or that of His saints in Him and with Him. " I give thee charge in the sight God, who quickened' all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting: Amen."

Abraham stood before God as the Quickener of the dead, so that the things that were not became to Abraham as though they were. In this passage God is described as quickening all things., The confession of Timothy appeared to some as though it were unto a nonentity, but God gave vitality and existence unto it. Jesus Christ Himself had witnessed to the truth of His own kingship in the midst of circumstances which appeared entirely to contradict it. But the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ would clear up every doubt and difficulty, and this appearing would be in the time of God, the proper suitable time; even as there was a fullness of time in the divine counsel for the incarnation, the suitability of which even we ourselves can in some sort discern, and a set hour for the Cross; which no man could hasten, so is there also a fullness of time for the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, of which God is alone the judge, but His times are the right and proper times. " Him [Jesus] God raised up the third day and showed Him openly: not to all the people, but to chosen witnesses"--but "in His times" God will show publicly, to all, the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. No trace of doubt shall rest on the mind of any of His intelligent creatures as to the glory of His person, or as to this Glorious One being Jesus the crucified. If we may reverently speak, without intruding into things which we have not seen, " His times " will be, after there has been the full display of human energy and its sorrowful failure to secure human happiness. "Behold, it is not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labor in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity." And then shall God, as the BLESSED and ONLY POTENTATE, display Himself in this character, and all the attributes which follow, in showing the appearing of Jesus. To Him the Spirit in the apostle ascribes " honor and power everlasting." That which man has arrogated to himself will then be publicly ascribed to God. But the church tarries not for the future; that which is eternal is to her as now, and therefore the denial of honor and power to God alone by men's asserting both to themselves is, by the church, now attributed to God. " To Him be honor and power everlasting. Amen." The doxology, brief as it is, 2 Timothy 4:18, shows us how readily the heart of the apostle turned everything to the account of showing forth His praise who had called him out of darkness into His marvelous light. The apostle had, in his ministerial sufferings', drank deeply into the cup of his once-rejected but now glorified Lord. Desertion was the Master's portion in His hour of trial-" all His disciples forsook Him and fled." And when his faithful servant and witness stood before Caesar to answer for himself, " no man stood with him, but all forsook him." " Be it not [says he] laid to their charge."- " But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that my preaching might be fully known, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." In his case tribulation had wrought "patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." And such confident hope! " And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom." It is to the Lord, to Jesus, to whom he attributes

the glory of his present deliverance, standing by him when others had forsaken him, and rescuing him from the very mouth of the lion. It is to the same Jesus he looks for future deliverance, and for certain keeping unto his heavenly kingdom. His heart must utter-" to Him be glory forever. Amen."

O what hair-breadth escapes! O what prompt deliverances will the saints in glory be able to retrace, when they shall fully know the care of their Shepherd Lord! How wise to train the heart to mark such deliverances now, and to ascribe the praise to Him. Surely, " He that is our God is the God of salvation."

We find a brief doxology to the Lord Jesus, Hebrews 13:21, having reference to Him in one of His ancient characters as Shepherd of Israel. " Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." But what deep interest is given to these words when we apply them to Jesus; the Good Shepherd, who had laid down His life for the sheep and set up a new fold for them in heaven, into which He Himself is the door, and where the sheep find safety, freedom, and pasture. The smitten Shepherd was brought again from the dead. What grace was shown in this: how illustriously is God displayed as the God of peace. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." To Him, the still-rejected One of Israel, but exalted by God, and owned by every believer, as the substance of every Jewish ordinance and office-" To Him," says the admiring soul of the apostle, " be glory forever and ever. Amen."

How appropriately the doxology in 1 Peter 4:11 is introduced, we can justly estimate from sorrowful experience of failure in the end proposed by the apostle as to the use of gifts. The ministry of the manifold grace of God should be unselfish and mutual, under direct responsibility to God, so that the grace and power of God might be seen in the gift, and that man should not arrogate to himself either glory or power from the possession of a gift. What readiness do we find in our own hearts to leave out God himself as the end of all lie does in saving us, and of all the grace He confers on us. It is God, known and seen in Christ Jesus, and acting through Him, "to whom," says the apostle, " be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen." From the circumstance of the same doxology being found in the next chapter, we might judge that there is a leading thought in the mind of the apostle. " Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," most suitably comes from Him who had known by bitter experience the broken reed of self-confidence. But after that bitterness he had deeply known the power of restoring grace-" when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." With what intensity of meaning do these words come from the fallen and restored Simon. " But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory, by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." It is the apostle who had been so strong in fleshly confidence, who says, " kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." It is the same apostle who said, " Lo, we have left all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore "-who says, " be sober, and hope to the end for the grace to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." He is now occupied with the God of grace and His ability to keep. Had Peter stood steadfast in his fleshly confidence, the glory and power might be claimed by Peter.

But, knowing the wonderful power of restoring grace, glory and dominion are ascribed to God " forever and ever. Amen." The close of the Second Epistle is with a doxology, following a precept:-" But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen." This Epistle treats largely of disastrous times-" false teachers bringing in damnable heresies, so that the truth itself shall be evil spoken of." Doctrinal pravity is shown in its connection with moral pravity, and a return to the pollution of the world. Where then is security? The occupation of the heart and soul with grace, and the deeper study of the Lord Jesus Christ. Two things scarcely separable; for unless the heart be established with grace it cannot well study the Lord Jesus Christ as an object of the deepest interest. The habit of the soul to give Him glory now, is but anticipation of what will be the effect of the deeper knowledge, both of grace and of the Lord Jesus Christ, which the saints will have in glory. " To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen. ' The Epistle of Jude opens to us a very special feature of the corruption of the faith once delivered to the Saints. That the grace of God should be perverted into the rights of man„ is, at first sight, monstrous, yet is capable of being historically traced. Such a corruption is nearly allied to another form marked by the Apostle Paul: " Men shall be lovers of their own selves." Thus inverting the leading practical feature of the gospel, by putting self-seeking in the place of self-denial. These cognate forms of corruption have sprung from the early attempt of putting the new piece to the old garment, by men using the precepts of the gospel, so far as they would conduce to present advantage-" considering gain to be godliness." The assertion of the rights of conscience contains the important truth, that God has never entrusted to any one dominion over the conscience of his fellowman. But still if it be only so far stated, it is but partial truth, which necessarily leads to erroneous consequences. There needs to be the positive Statement as well as the negative-that is, that God, and God alone, has dominion over the conscience, and requires it to be exercised before Him by each individual. And it will be found to make a very material difference in the state of the soul, whether the right of God to be obeyed be asserted or the right of conscience. How readily, under the plea of conscience, will self-will find a shelter; whereas when the authority of God is recognized, the alternative ever is, "We must obey God rather than men." But when the Gospel of the grace of God is so perverted as to be made the sanction for self-will, it is regarded by God as the denial of the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ; and as a necessary consequence, the contempt of dominion (lordship of every kind) and speaking evil of dignities. The avowed denial of the Lordship of Jesus, brings out the climax of evil; for it is, in fact, the denial of the Christian profession; " If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus;" " Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Men say" Our tongues are our own, who is lord over us!" The answer of faith is: "The Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment." They are very evil days indeed, when the grace of God is avowedly made the shelter for human willfulness; then the duty of the saints is twofold, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; " and to build themselves up on their most holy faith." In every corruption of the faith, there has been the tendency in the saints to remedy it by human arrangement, but the Apostle leads the soul back to the original principles of the dispensation, both to show the greatness of the departure from the Divine original, and the remedy by returning to God Himself. However conscious we may be that the sanctity of Christians is very low indeed, we do not readily trace the defect to some unsoundness, practical unsoundness, in the faith. The Lordship of Jesus is the only sanction to any act of the Church on earth; so far as that act is recognized in heaven. It is thus the Warrant runs:-"Irt the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST,

when ye are gathered together, and my spirit with the power of our LORD JESUS CHRIST." Or again, in private walk, " Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Soundness in the faith has to do with the sanctity and discipline of the Church. But in evil days, the heart is necessarily much discouraged in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, and is readily disposed even to compromise the faith for the sake of peace and quiet.

It is when the greatness of the corruption of the faith is in measure discovered (for what portion of the faith once delivered to the saints has escaped untainted?) when the very grace of God has been made the shelter of human willfulness, and the Divinity and Lordship of Jesus so denied, that men own no constituted authority at all, that the heart becomes ready to sink, and to give up all as lost, and to consider it as utterly vain to attempt to stern the general current which is carrying all along with it. But there is one, and ever the same resource to faith, and that is God Himself. And how blessedly does the Apostle, who has so graphically portrayed the corruption, and pointed out to the saints their duty in the midst of it, close his Epistle with this magnificent doxology:" Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling."

One alone is able to keep us faithful in the midst of unfaithfulness-to cause us to know the grace of God as teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts-to make the practical acknowledgment of the Lordship of Jesus, the basis of the acknowledgment of all lawful authority; and He is the only God, but He is also a Savior-God. But not only is He able to keep us in the faith, but to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Alas, the very feasts of charity had here been tainted by intruders, and the saints might well be fearful of contamination; but the only God and Savior was,, able so to keep, as to present them blameless in the presence of His own glory. This is indeed a surprising thought. The very glory in which He would be revealed to execute judgment on the ungodly was, that before which He would present His saints. But when it is added " with exceeding joy," surely the soul can only admire and adore. Does the Leper say, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean;" the answer is ready: " I will; be thou clean." Does the soul of the saint, awakened to an alarming sense of all that is against it, and the prevalence of corruption on every side, say, "Keep me, and I shall be kept; hold me up, and I shall be safe." The answer is, not only that He is able to keep and to present faultless before His own glory; but that it is His exceeding joy to do so. (See Zephaniah 3:17.) How have we, even after the great fact of the Incarnation, gone back to the abstract idea of God, instead of beholding in " God manifested in the flesh " the love as well as the power of God, interested in our security. God has "the river of His own pleasures "-" He delighteth in mercy," and makes this known to us for our joy and comfort. There appears great propriety in the attribution of the praise to God as the only God* our Savior, as well as in that which is here specially attributed to Him. It is to God, in the character in which He was denied-God in Christ-" the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ," that the glory is here attributed. It is in this that the value of the faith once delivered to the saints is perceived. An abstract idea of the unity of the Godhead, necessarily cuts off all intercourse between man and God, because man is a sinner, and holiness without intercourse with God is impossible. But when Jehovah says, " There is no God else beside me: a just God and a Savior: there is none beside me." The very idea brings God into contact with man. And when this became manifested in the Incarnation and the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, the denial of the real proper Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ necessarily deprived ’salvation of its groundwork, and faith of its sanctity. It is to God in Christ-God as a Savior-God, that the Holy Ghost by the Apostle attributes that which was denied

to Him by man. They denied Lordship, and spoke evil of dignities; he ascribes "glory and majesty, dominion and power, to Him;" and this glory, this majesty, this dominion, this power, would be especially manifested in keeping the saints from stumbling in evil days, and in presenting them faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy; so that whatever further display there might be in future ages of the glory, majesty, dominion and power of Jesus Christ, the only Lord God and our Lord, the saints themselves would be the most blessed illustration of it, and occupied both in exhibiting it and acknowledging it forever and ever.

(* "Wise" appears to be canceled in almost all editions.) The latest Apostolical doxology is one of peculiar interest and instructiveness. The opening benediction of the Apostle John to the seven Churches of Asia is markedly distinct from similar benedictions in the Epistles. But although the Lord Jesus is mentioned under titles not used on any such occasion in the Epistles, namely, as "the faithful witness, the first-begotten from the dead, and Prince of the kings of the earth," the Spirit in the Apostle gives utterance to the expression of the feelings of his own heart on the mention of the name of Jesus Christ, and attaches to it in its own and our name, that most touching doxology: "To Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father-to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." And is there a scene opened to us in this wonderful book, where the soul will not be led to remember this doxology for its repose? It is the characteristic utterance of the Church, just as in the closing chapter we have the characteristic response of the. Church to the Lord’s own announcement: " Surely I come quickly-Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The doxology here, if the expression may be used, springs from personal feeling. Spontaneousness and intelligence are alike conspicuous in it. It is not what Jesus Christ is as revealed in the Revelation, but that which He is to her to whom the Revelation is given. When every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue confess to the Lordship of Jesus-those associated with Him in heaven, His own bride, whilst gladly owning all which others own, shall specially mention that which He is to her, and that too when arrayed in royal and priestly majesty. That very majesty shall testify to the preciousness of His blood; and instead of attempting to rival or eclipse His glory, will be the very occasion of most entirely ascribing all glory and dominion to Him. Happy Church-so happily saved, as to find her highest joy and dignity in ascribing all glory to Him. Happy Church, to be forever in dependance., and inheriting all things; to be continually ascribing the right and title she alone has to such an inheritance, to the same blood by which her sins have been washed and she presented by Jesus to Himself without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and presented by Jesus to God and His Father as kings and priests. "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Presbutes.

The Church, the Habitation of God

God, in " the old dispensation," was displaying himself, in the government of his people Israel, as the Most High God.* The devil had made it appear to the world (which had become an idolatrous world), that he was the alone source of that good and evil Which was felt to result from man's conduct here: he had caused men to worship other gods. That a testimony might be raised against this, and an opportunity afforded in the midst of it for the display of his providential government, God took up one nation and separated them from the peoples of the earth to himself. But to this end, the separation must needs be a manifest one. An external character, distinctive in the eyes of the heathen, must be given them; and therefore ceremonial observances were enjoined which effectually separated them, and marked them off as a people distinct from all others; and this separate character being preserved, the surrounding nations were henceforward dealt with in judgment or otherwise, according to the manner in which they acted towards the Jews. Hence resulted the judgments upon Edom, Moab, Babylon, etc. " Sin was imputed."

(* Rather as Jehovah who was the Most High God. Ed.) But whilst they were thus called to be a witness for God against the idolatry of the world, and to be the medium for the display of His character, as the Most High God, towards the nations, the responsibilities which were laid upon them, together with the conditional blessings or curses annexed to their fulfillment or neglect, gave occasion for the constant display of his government' amongst themselves. They were to be blessed in earthly things if obedient, and to be visited with curses if not (see Dent. xxviii). But they failed: and, instead of having rest and blessing in the land, and the first place among the nations, Nebuchadnezzar, was permitted to carry them away as captives into Babylon. But when Christ came and displayed all the goodness and grace-in a word, all the moral glory of God; and when, the Jewish witness being displaced, another had now to be raised up, the character of this witness must, of necessity, be altogether new. The providential government of God was now no longer to 'be the special subject of the testimony; but that light of the knowledge of the glory which God had given in the face of Jesus Christ had now to be reflected. Indeed, Jesus Himself being in the heavens and His glory invisible, the saints in their path here on earth were to represent Him, and to be the witness of His glory. They were to take His place here-in a word, they were to be Christ's epistle of commendation to the world (2 Corinthians 3:1-18). Evidently, therefore, the character and relations of this new witness, unlike those of Israel before, must needs be heavenly., But perhaps there is nothing in which the difference is more strikingly seen, than in the hope which is set before, us; for, although it is true we do replace Israel on the earth, yet it is in " the ends of the world" we stand (1 Corinthians 10:1-33). We are in the last times (1 John 2:18); and so true is this, that nothing is revealed as of necessity intervening between us and the glory. The glory is before us as our immediate hope: it is to this heavenly glory we are called. Thus our calling is identical with our hope: but with those of old it was far otherwise. The present calling and the eternal hope was with them distinct; so that it was not merely that intervening events were revealed, but intervening objects of hope were presented to their faith.. Thus a Jew was called into separation

from the Gentiles to the enjoyment of present blessings in the land; and although doubtless individual faith reached out beyond the proper calling of the dispensation, and laid hold of what was eternal; and although in the ministry of the prophets (a ministry which was introduced in grace because of the failure), the better hopes of a resurrection state were more clearly opened to the view of faith, that the souls of those faithful ones who felt the present ruin might be sustained; yet these were at best only indistinctly seen, and were ever, as it were, in the distance. It was only through a lengthened vista that they viewed them; for " life and immortality were brought to light through the Gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10). Abraham, for example, looked for a " city which hath foundations, and so dwelt as a sojourner in the land of promise" (Hebrews 11:9); but it was only through a lengthened vista that Abraham viewed the city; for it was revealed to him that he was to be buried in a good old age-the iniquity of the Amorites was yet to come to the full, and his seed was to be afflicted -four hundred years in a land that was not theirs. But in this dispensation the present call and the eternal hope are one and the same. We are called into the immediate hope and expectancy of that glory into which Jesus, with whom we stand in present association, has already entered.

We are now by the Holy Ghost made conversant with our eternal blessings, no longer indistinctly seen in the distance; but "brought to light," so as to become objects of present delight and enjoyment. The glory is immediately before us, and we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. God grant that we might each be able to say with the Apostle, " This one thing I do."

There is, however, still a very simple and definite sense in which the saints of the present dispensation may be regarded as replacing Israel on the earth, without in any way detracting from their high and heavenly standing as members of Christ’s body. It is evident that we replace them now (just as they will us again in the Millennium), as heirs of promise on the earth, and this is the subject which the Apostle considers in Romans 11:1-36. But we must remember that here we descend into the region of the kingdom•’ indeed, we get entirely on earthly ground, for the Apostle is here treating of the administration on earth of those promises which naturally belonged to Israel.

It is important to observe, that the olive-tree itself retains its place throughout the past, the present, and the future dispensations: some changes indeed are made as regards the branches; but the stock,* and some of the branches, retain the same place throughout, without any change whatever. Now the Jews are here represented by the natural branches of the olive-tree, that is, they stood on the earth as the heirs of the promises to Abraham; but on the setting aside of that dispensation, some of the branches, 1:e., the unbelieving’ portion of the Jews, were broken off; and we, who were sinners of the Gentiles, being graffed in, partake with the branches that were left of the root and fatness of the olive-tree: in other words, we, together with the remnant according to the election of grace out of Israel, now stand in Israel’s place, as the only present inheritors here on earth of these same Abrahamic promises and blessings-a place which the Jews will again themselves fill in the next dispensation; for then the natural branches shall be again grafted into their own olive-tree (Romans 11:24-26).

(* This may be said to be the stock of promise.) But our participation during our sojourn here on earth of the fatness of this olive-tree, cannot for a moment be understood to imply that all our privileges and blessings are derived from it. The fact is, that the proper distinctive privileges and

blessings of the Church are in no way whatever connected with it. The arrangements of Heaven do not come within the statements of the Apostle in this chapter at all: he merely speaks of what takes place on earth. All indeed that is stated as to the present position of the saints is simply this, that whereas the Jews were the depositaries of the promises of God on earth in the former dispensation, we (inasmuch as we are actually on earth for the present) have become the depositaries of promise now: a place in which we shall, in our turn, be succeeded by the Jews again in the Millennium. That responsibilities are, of course, connected with this position is sufficiently plain from the same passage,-responsibilities too upon the fulfillment of which our very continuance in the enjoyment of the privileges in question is made to depend; for it is said, " If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Nor does anything which is here said about the responsibilities and conditional privileges of the saints as replacing the Jews on earth, in the slightest degree interfere with the heavenly character and privileges of the Church as taught elsewhere. Let us suppose the case of a householder who, having conferred certain privileges on his servants, afterward chooses to break up his establishment, and dismiss them all for a time; but during the interval he allows his sons to enjoy the privileges and perquisites which had previously belonged to his servants. Would any one for a moment suppose that they would of necessity lose thereby their place and character as children, and be reduced to the mere condition of servants?

Nothing, indeed, can be more plain, than that the apostle, in this 11th of Romans, simply speaks of the transfer of certain privileges and responsibilities here on earth from one body to another, without in any, way touching upon the character and condition of that body to whom they are thus transferred. But it is at the same time most important, that we should very distinctly recognize the position in which the saints are presented in this chapter; for it is as standing in this place, that we fill up the gap in the earthly dealings of God, and partake of the character of an earthly dispensation. And it is because the saints have entirely failed in fulfilling the responsibilities belonging to them in this position, that we speak of the failure and ruin of the church. It must be plain to all, that she has not fulfilled the conditions of the 11th of Romans.*

(* In the 11th of Romans, the apostle does not allude to the introduction of the tares, or to the creeping in unawares of those mentioned in Jude; nor the condition and aspect which the church on earth then assumed (this is treated of in Peter and elsewhere); but he here speaks of the failure of the true saints in fulfilling their responsibilities, and of their consequent excision from the place of dispensational privilege in which they had been set. The coming in of the tares, etc., was, of-course, a consequence of this failure; but a consequence not noticed in this chapter.)

Surely no one can read the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, and compare the state of things there described with that which now exists around us, without seeing that the most sorrowful failure has undoubtedly taken place. We have not " continued in the goodness of God"; and the unavoidable sentence of excision therefore hangs over us-" otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Nor does Scripture hold out any hope whatever, of our regaining that dispensational standing and privilege which, through the apostasy, has been lost. But although it is evident that the Church, looked at as a system left on earth to witness to the things which are above, has entirely failed and is to be "cut off"; this, of course, in no way whatever affects her in the enjoyment

of those eternal blessings and privileges, which belong to her as united to the Lord Jesus Christ in heavenly places. As seated with Him in the heavenly places, she is above dispensation, and therefore is not subject to failure; she is now associated with God in His thoughts about the dispensations, rather than being herself the subject of them; and it is in this high and blessed place we have the Church presented to us in Scripture. But in order to have any distinct thoughts as to her privileges and blessings, it is most necessary for us first to ascertain what the Church, properly so called, really is.

Now, whilst God, by the Old Testament prophets, had distinctly revealed the place, character and history, of his earthly people, there was yet a "Mystery" which he never had revealed (Colossians 1:25-26). He had purposed, even from before the foundation of the world, to have a people before Him who should be made worthy of Himself (Ephesians 1:4); "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." And this people was to be made a medium suitable for the display of the exceeding riches of his grace in the ages to come. We are said to be quickened and raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, "that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Now this purpose had been "kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25). It had been "hid from ages and from generations" (Colossians 1:26); and was only revealed by the preaching of the Apostle Paul* after the Lord had taken his place as the risen man in the glory. It is, therefore, in vain for us to search in the Old Testament Scriptures for the blessings and privileges of the Church. The Church is never spoken of there at all. It is in the New Testament, and, I believe, especially in the Epistle to the Ephesians, that we must look for the doctrine of the Church. Now, it was when the flesh had been fully tested, and when, too, the world having rejected and crucified the Lord of Glory, had been left by God as in hopeless ruin for judgment, and all the earthly dealings with Israel had been thereon suspended, and when moreover the Lord Jesus, upon the accomplishment of his work on the cross, had taken his place as the risen man in the glory, that the Holy Ghost came down to gather and form the body of Christ-the " new man," of which the apostle speaks in the Ephesians, and which he there distinctively calls the Church: and it is, important to observe, that the body thus formed, being in its Head rejected from the world, even before it was itself called into existence, could not possibly have had any place upon the earth at all. It was formed for the heavens, to be the associate of Him there who has been rejected and crucified by the world. And it is plainly said to be formed out of those two classes of men into which the world had been heretofore divided. The Jew was taken out of his place, and the Gentile out of his; and so of the twain the one new man was made (Ephesians 2:15). It was not that Gentiles were introduced into the standing and privileges which Jews had enjoyed before; but sinners, gathered indiscriminately from among Jews or Gentiles, were introduced into a place in which none had ever yet stood-into new and unthought-of privileges; for it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:9-10). That God would bless sinners-that they were the blessed objects of his counsels-was revealed from the beginning; but that sinners should ever share the blessing of His Son, and should even whilst here be brought into living union and present realized association with Jesus, so that, instead of being merely the objects of his counsels, they should even have the mind of Christ, and thus be of one counsel with him, was surely to those of old an unheard-of and unthought-of thing.

(* This is what Paul calls "My Gospel," distinguishing it thus from the Gospel of the Kingdom-a testimony which, although in a general sense to be continued throughout the whole of the present interval, yet has its special place in the short periods just previous t the church's manifestation in its proper heavenly standing, and immediately subsequent to its removal at the Lord's coming.)

Moreover it was evidently necessary that Christ should die upon the cross, before this " new man" could be formed; for it was by the cross that the enmity between Jew and Gentile was slain, and that both were reconciled unto God in one body" (Ephesians 2:16). Since therefore this body had no existence until the present dispensation, the Old Testament saints evidently could not have belonged to it. That they will have a common place with us in the glory, is not hereby questioned; but they clearly form no part of what is termed in the Ephesians the " new man," " the body," or " the Church."*

(* Whilst it is quite true, that many things which are said of the Church here, may be said also of all other saints; yet it is nevertheless evident that the Apostle does not contemplate the Old Testament saints in any of his statements in this Epistle.) The Church is a body which began to be formed at Pentecost; and which will be completed when Jesus its head returns again in glory. It is, indeed, evident also, from the very nature of the unity of this body, that none can be included in it but the saints of the present dispensation. We have been accustomed perhaps most of us to think of the unity spoken of in the Epistles as consisting in the common possession of divine life. Now that every quickened soul must possess divine life, and therefore the same life, and that there is therefore a unity which will take in every saint from the beginning to the end of time, I suppose no one will deny. This indeed may he called invisible unity in Heaven; but this is not the unity of the body; it is not the unity of which the Apostle Paul speaks. He speaks of a present unity on earth (see Ephesians 4:1-32)-of a unity which hangs not upon the common possession of divine life, but which is in virtue of the presence of Him, who having formed the body at Pentecost, continues to dwell in it as its living power of unity. Thus it is a unity which never existed at all until the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile had been broken down, and the law of commandments contained in ordinances had been abolished: " For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross."

Now, the body, thus gathered and formed, is now the " habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22). It is the temple in which God still dwells on earth. "For. ye are the temple of the living God" (2 Corinthians 6:16). And again, " Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). Now, the truth contained in these passages is of the utmost importance. It is not the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in individuals which is spoken of in them; but the presence of the Holy Ghost, in abiding living power in the Church. He first forms the body, He sets the different members in their several places in it, " For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all " made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13). And He then dwells there in present living power, to minister to it, and to guide and direct all the movements of its members afterward. " But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (1 Corinthians 12:11). Nor is this presence of the Holy

Ghost of which these passages speak, a presence merely in the assemblies of the saints; for although, doubtless, there will be an especial manifestation of it there, yet the assembly is not the church, and Scripture speaks of his presence in the church, where, indeed, he will still continue to dwell, even if there should be no assemblies of the saints at all. " Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Nor, indeed, are the actings of the Holy Ghost in the body confined to the assembly, or necessarily connected with it. The Church again, be it remembered, not the assembly, is the "habitation of God"; and although many of His actings are especially seen and developed in the assembly, yet He is seen acting where there is no assembly at all. It is evident that neither the gifts of healing, nor the discerning of spirits, nor the working of miracles, were to be exercised merely in the assembly, nor indeed perhaps in the assembly at all. Indeed the full power and bearing of this doctrine of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church has, I believe, been often lost sight of, even by those who have held it to be true;* for it has surely been too often regarded amongst us as bearing merely upon the meeting of saints at the Lord’s Table or on other occasions for worship; and whilst it has thus been used as a doctrine which proves a title to what is called " liberty of ministry," and has been often enough applied as a lever to overturn the religious systems of the day, the display of the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost in the Church out. side of the assembly has often been but too little recognized or thought of. And it is important ever to remember, that although it is the same Holy Ghost who dwells in the saints individually and who dwells in the Church corporately, yet Scripture carefully distinguishes between the two; and, I believe, marks His operations as dwelling in the individual, as distinct from His operations as dwelling in the Church. Thus, as dwelling in each saint, He makes us to know the Father (Galatians 4:1-31). He is the power of individual communion and worship (John 4:1-54); and He is to our souls the blessed earnest of the coming glory, enabling us even here to enjoy the blessings we anticipate (2 Cor.). But as dwelling in the Church He is the Witness of the Lordship of Jesus, and asserts, in and through the Church in which He dwells, the title and power of Christ as Lord. He is the immediate agent in all the work of God on earth. In this we see Him acting by individuals of course, but still by them as members of the body in which He dwells. He bestows on them their gifts, and thus sets them in their various spheres of service as servants of Christ the Lord. But then He not only bestows the gifts, and thus gives faculty and power for service, but as dwelling in the Church He is ever there as the present and abiding source of power for the varied use and exercise of these gifts. This, I doubt not, is the meaning of the. Apostle, when he says, " but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will" (1 Corinthians 12:11). He had, in the previous verses, stated the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost in bestowing the gifts on whom He pleases; but here he adds, that the self-same Spirit who had bestowed them is ever present as the animating energy to them. He works them all, and apportions too, from time to time, to each who has the gift, the occasion and opportunity for its exercise. It is evident too, as it has been already observed, that as the exercise of these gifts was never intended to be confined to the assemblies of. the saints, so it is plain that the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost in the Church may be displayed in guiding the evangelist or the teacher in their more individualized labors, quite as much as in moving one and another to speak in the assembly of the saints..

(* We may often see the importance of the full recognition of this truth, in the case of a saint who has fallen into sin. We may see such a one restored to a consciousness of individual communion with God, because he has in secret mourned over and confessed his sin; but still finding a

remaining hindrance to mutual confidence, and happy communion with the saints, because he has not confessed his sin to the Church, and thus owned and honored the Holy Ghost as present there, and therefore is not restored to his proper place in the body.) And surely we have often failed in power and blessing, because this truth has not been sufficiently kept before us. It is of little use for us to own the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost in bestowing the gift on whom he pleases, if it be supposed that the gift is afterward to be used according to the will of him on whom it is bestowed. This, indeed, would only open a wider door for the exercise of self-will. But on the other hand, we may equally err in suffering ourselves to be controlled in its exercise by the church, or indeed, by any man, or set of men whatever. The attempt in them is the greatest sin. It is on their parts the assumption of that authority over Christ's servants which belongs alone to Him; and in those who yield to it, it amounts to a denial of Christ's title over them, and is the most positive unfaithfulness to Him. By the possession, of the gift, I am Christ's servant, and am responsible immediately, and only to Him, for the measure and manner of its exercise; and we be to me if I yield that subjection to another, which is due only and exclusively to Christ himself! Surely if gift is bestowed, it is that it may be used in subjection to Him who gave it. And happy is it for us when this subjection is fully and practically owned; we shall then feel ourselves to be just as dependent upon Him, to make the opportunity, and give us the occasion for the exercise of the gift, as for power to use it right when the occasion comes.

Now whilst we must remember the importance to our souls of apprehending what the Church will be in the Glory; for this indeed is the bright and blessed hope which cheers us on whilst laboring in the midst of the present hopeless ruin and apostasy: it is, I believe, of far greater moment than we think, that we should have before our souls a very distinct view of what the Church is now. Just as the Spirit of God by Balaam not only contemplates the future condition of the people of God, when the star shall come out of Jacob and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; but taking also a present view of what they then were in the wilderness, says, How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river side, as the trees of lign-aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar-trees beside the waters": so does it become us to take as it were this present wilderness-view of the Church, to have God's idea of the Church distinctly before our souls- to have a very clear apprehension of the place which it has in Christ's affections as His espoused, and what it is as the present habitation of God on earth through the Spirit. This, as we have in part seen, is the character of the teaching in the Epistle to the Ephesians. The Apostle does not speak there of what the Church will be in glory, but of what it is now; and this was a few years ago laid upon the hearts of many-great blessing and joy was felt in the apprehension of it, and an important movement amongst the saints of God has been the result. But I believe we have found a constant tendency amongst us again to let it slip; and certainly the weight and importance of it has been in a great measure lost sight of: nor indeed is this greatly to be wondered at for I believe we always find that whenever the display of the energy and power of the Spirit of God in the Church has become feeble, that the saints have been usually content to fall back upon those truths which constitute the ground of individual salvation. These, such as justification by faith, the security of the saints in Christ, etc., they have still perhaps continued to hold firmly; but they have at the same time been content with the lowest possible amount of truth which could entitle them to be ranked amongst orthodox Christians, and have neither realized in their souls now, nor looked for in hope much beyond that which has been the common portion of the redeemed in all dispensations. The commonly received orthodox belief of

Christians contains indeed little or nothing beyond this. It just leaves out those very truths by which God acts upon the affections of his people. All the peculiar and characteristic blessings of the Church-all that which characterizes the teaching of the Apostle Paul, which he specially includes in the term " my Gospel," is quite left out. Now it is by these very truths - truths which reveal the blessings which belong exclusively and peculiarly to the saints in the present dispensation-that God acts upon our hearts, and touches the springs of hope in our souls: nor can there be fullness of joy, nor energy, - and well-directed devotedness in service, unless these are recognized and held.

It has been truly observed by another, that the life and spiritual energy of a saint depend on his faith in what is proper to his own dispensation; that is, it depends exactly on those very truths which in the commonly received orthodox belief are just left out, and which are therefore now often regarded amongst Christians as dangerous novelties, or at least are classed among things very unessential and unimportant.

If therefore the display of the energy and power of the Holy Ghost has become more feeble of late amongst us, surely it cannot be wondered at that we, too, have in a measure lost our sense of the importance and blessedness of those truths through the apprehension of which so much blessing was once wrought. But if this be so, it surely becomes us to seek to trace the source and origin of the failure, that in humiliation and confession before our God we seek a renewal of blessings from Him. Now I would ask, may it not be traced to the coming in of the world, and its influence amongst us? Has not this greatly tended to sap and undermine the original power and blessing?-Those who in our day first gathered themselves around the table of the Lord, simply as His saints, understood, in some measure at least, what the Church is as the habitation of God through the Spirit.- They saw its heavenly standing and calling as the Bride of Christ. They went forth outside the camp, and the world was left behind. Their souls fully compassed the truths which in much exercise of heart and conscience they had learned. There was the consciousness of weakness. They assumed to be nothing more than the representatives of the present weakness of the Church. In their meetings there was simple dependence upon God. No stimulant in the way of fine or acceptable teaching was then needed. The sweet fragrance of the name of Jesus was there, and they were intent to enjoy Christ together. Much real spiritual power and blessing was the result. God made them a testimony, and others gathered round; but as time went on, many came from various motives-some out of a real desire to partake of the blessing which they saw; but although attracted by the blessing, they had not faith to tread the same path of devotedness and self-denial through which the others had been led into it; instead of leaving their importance and respectability behind them in the world, they often brought it with them, and thus attached it to the gatherings to which they came. This soon caused a serious hindrance to the blessing; it was a deadening weight, the depressing power of which could only have been resisted by a correspondingly increasing energy of faith on the part of those who saw the evil. G. P.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2:15. The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God. James 4:4.

Vol 01 - The Difficulties and Dangers of Prophetic Study

The Difficulties and Dangers of Prophetic Study

It is hardly possible not to feel interested in the present revived attention to prophecy. Whether this has arisen from the stirring events of the world, or from the awakening of the Church to a sense of her own proper glory, still, as a matter of fact, the numerous late publications show that the attention of many is now being turned to Prophecy. If passing events have given this impulse to prophetic study, it will in all probability be merely ephemeral, ending in an attempt to make the present era an important one in the prophetic chart; and if there should be anything like re-settlement in the nations of Europe, the study of prophecy will, by the many, be dropped. If, on the other hand, the Church is being awakened to a sense of her own proper glory, and the high prize of her calling, we may expect, from the known love of the good and great Shepherd of the sheep, that He is about to open to them their own proper hope, to make them see this hope more distinctly and vividly, so as to act influentially on them; and by this very means, perhaps, to unfold to the Church what is written in the Scripture of Truth, concerning the closing scene of this present evil age. I must confess that it is not without much anxiety that I look at this revival of the study of prophecy among Christians. In the space of twenty years, I have witnessed the formation of two prophetic schools, each issuing in fundamental error, respecting the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. I speak only of what has fallen under my own limited sphere of observation. It just twenty years, this very month,* since I took from Nisbet’s counter the first number of the "Morning Watch," and read it with much interest. But how soon as this interest disturbed by the growing intellectual character of the work, its dogmatism and antagonism, its attempt to unsettle the mind on every truth commonly received among Christians; till, at last, speculations on the person of Christ, soon ended in the heresy now known as " Irvingism." I doubt not that the book did its work; and for myself, I can say, that painful as was the process of the Irvingite controversy, I am thankful for the result of it on my own mind, as it taught me the important truth, that the person of the Lord was set before us, not as the subject of speculation, but as the object of faith. And from that day to the present, I have felt the safeguard of the canon-" No man knoweth the Son but the Father." But besides this, although ending in false pretensions and a system of ordinances, yet attention was called, by means of the Irvingite controversy, to what the Church really is in her privileges and endowments; to the specialty of the relation of the Holy Ghost to the Church, and His distinct gifts of ministry; subjects well nigh forgotten even by real Christians. It is indeed a sorrowful "needs be," yet those who have learned the truth of God by means of it can understand the Apostle’s words: " There must needs be also heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest." God has not given His truth to minister to our self-conceit. In this way, truth might indeed be " sweet in the mouth as honey." But if, by fault of spirituality or faithfulness, we have so trifled with the truth of God as not to be able to digest it, and thus find it " bitter to the belly," He will make it to become so by another process, even by " heresies." Divisions will spring up, a party will be formed in support of some erroneous dogma, and in separating truth from error, the truth will be found " bitter to the belly."

Within the last few years another prophetic theory has been formed, which was almost stamped with infallibility; and this also has been discovered to be connected with fundamental error respecting the relation of Christ to God by Incarnation, an error as dishonoring to the person of the Son, and as subversive of the Gospel as Irvingism itself.

Now, with such experience before me, I feel convinced that there are dangers and difficulties specially connected with prophetic study, which have proved a great hindrance in the way of the sincere inquirer, and probably a stumbling-block in the way of some, to their pursuing the inquiry at all. Some of the dangers and difficulties appear almost on the surface; others may not so readily be seen. I desire to set down such of the difficulties and dangers as have presented themselves to me.

Besides the natural curiosity in all men’s hearts to pry into the future, prophecy presents itself as a proper field for the exercise of human learning. It has been connected with antiquity, history, and chronology, and can reckon among its students some of the greatest names. I fully admit that we are greatly indebted to some learned men for their researches; but the point now before my mind is, the exceeding facility with which the study of prophecy may become a merely intellectual study. I mean, without any deep tone of spirituality, without bringing out anything which might tend to establish or feed the souls of the poor of the flock.

Now, that which is true as regards persons of great learning, may be true also among those whose range of information is exceedingly limited. Prophecy itself is their learning-that is, an accurate acquaintance (or what in their own judgment they deem to be such) with the future eventful crisis. In such minds the study of the prophetic Scripture is nothing more than a mental exercise; which is, I believe, always more dangerous where there is shallowness, than where there is real learning; because the very truth of God becomes the subject on which the mind is at work, instead of the mind being itself subject to the truth of God. It is one special office of the Holy Ghost to " guide into all truth," and to " show things to come." And this He does as the One who glorifies Jesus. Never, in his teaching, does the Blessed Spirit divert the soul from the person and work of the Lord; never does He guide onward in truth so as to disturb the soul from that to which it has, under His own teaching, already attained. And when He shows things to come, He shows them as vivid realities: if they be blessings, He presents them so as to give them a present subsistence to the soul; if they be judgments, so as to enable us to read the present in the light of the future. But the future which the Holy Ghost shows is God’s future. Man has his own future as a creature of time and circumstances; but man’s future is not the future about which the Holy Ghost informs us. He informs us of the future according to the purpose of God, whether in relation to the Church, to Israel, or to the nations of the world. Prophetic study is liable to the danger of becoming a mere mental exercise, and one of its greatest difficulties is true subjection to the patient but safe guidance of the Holy Ghost. In this respect, I fear we have all greatly grieved and dishonored the Spirit. We have become impatient of the place of inquirers, and then relieved ourselves from this irksomeness by becoming theorists. For it is very remarkable how readily the mind, when once interested in prophecy, forms a theory of interpretation. I hold it as one of the most important pre-requisites for prophetic interpretation, that the special and characteristic relation of the Holy Ghost to the Church be practically acknowledged. The divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost, His indwelling in the Church as a body, and in the members individually, when really recognized, becomes a safeguard against a speculating habit of mind, " intruding into that which it ought not,"

even the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Another danger is that " of private interpretation." We find in the Scripture, that when the value of prophecy is insisted on as " a light that shineth in a dark place," there the caution is given -" Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It is this caution which makes me hesitate in my own mind as to the result of the present revival of attention to prophecy. Christian men attempt to solve the extraordinary aspect of political events by prophecy. Now the Holy Ghost, who inspired, is the alone One who can interpret; and His interpretation is not found to be an isolated fact, but that which connects things with the glory of Christ and the purpose of God.

Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." This is a principle of the deepest importance. Man regards passing events, and seeks to make them the interpreter of prophecy; but he who is led of the Spirit seeks to ascertain how everything is connected with the revealed purposes of God. God, in announcing His purposes, has always allowed Himself (if the expression may be used) room for action. We are quite incompetent to judge what is needful for His glory in evolving that which He has proposed. The first announced purpose of God has been gradually evolved, and yet awaits its final accomplishment. We should never have thought that a world destroyed by the flood- the call of Abraham-the introduction of the law-the ministry of the Prophets-the giving power to the Gentiles - the Incarnation of the Son, His Cross and Resurrection-the coming down of the Holy Ghost-the preaching to the Gentiles-the gathering the Church, were all included between the announcement, and even primary actual accomplishment of the purpose announced: for it is not the shutting-up of Satan in the bottomless pit, but his eventual consignment to the lake of fire, which constitutes the full " bruising of his head." Not only were all these events to intervene, but the one great object of the divine intention-viz., the bringing out the several glories of God and His Christ-could not otherwise be answered. It is thus that we are able to regard the purpose of God, either retrospectively or prospectively. " In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things IN CHRIST, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." It is important for us to keep the revealed purposes of God steadfastly in view. God is steadily pursuing His course towards their accomplishment. In the meanwhile, men are acting as though God had no definite object before Him, and thus they become the unconscious agents of accomplishing what He has foretold. " And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers; but those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled." Again-" Of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." Thus, we see that the most wonderful of all events is here viewed in connection with the counsel of God. The responsibility, as well as the unconsciousness of the agents ("howbeit in his heart he thinketh not so"), is fully stated, yet all in subserviency to the purpose of God. " Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." I believe "

private interpretation" to be the regarding any event marked in prophecy, apart from its connection with the counsel of God; the event itself will then be more regarded than the counsel of God in the event. When God has made some further communication of His mind to man, and thereby set him under a new and distinct responsibility, He has indeed thereby disturbed man's thoughts and plans, but He has never disturbed His own purpose. And it is the peculiar blessing of those " upon whom the ends of the world are come," to have the comment of the Holy Ghost himself on the past history which he himself has written. Those who were under the law regarded the law as superseding the promise of God. " Is the law then against the promises?" By no means; but it had a use in subserviency to the purpose of God, in order to bring out the promises of God in more prominent relief. The need of man, which promise alone could meet, and the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promises were, by means of the law, most fully illustrated.

Again, the calling of Gentiles to be " fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel," appeared to disturb the constantly repeated declarations of Israel's distinctive glory, and the bringing in of the Gentiles under the shadow of their wing. But not so. The earthly glory of Israel was still the destined order of God, interrupted and deferred, but not set aside. God had allowed himself room to act in blessing whilst Lo-ammi was written on Israel, and this interruption of God's purpose towards Israel furnished the occasion for the revelation of that mystery " which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men," and " which, from the beginning of the world, had been hid in God." This, however it disturbed the cherished thoughts of Israel, did not disturb the purpose of God in supremely blessing Israel on the earth, and the Gentiles through them. The Apostle James, by the Holy Ghost, was enabled to see this " new thing" in perfect harmony with the old; and although for awhile, as to real blessing, the distinction between Jew and Gentile would be lost in the wonder of the " one new man" in Christ, yet after the accomplishment of this newly revealed purpose of God, -which was first in order in the divine mind, though last in its revelation,-God would " return, and build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down;... that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." God had known from the beginning that which He was about to do, and here the important truth is fully recognized by the Apostle James; and it is still most important for us to recognize it. From this time it may be said that the Holy Ghost, who had moved Prophets to speak, now takes his place in special relation to the present purpose of God. Those who are now called are called according to a distinct purpose. " Unto me," says the Apostle, " who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." The recognition of the present special relationship of the Holy Ghost to the Church, is, I believe, a necessary preliminary to prophetic study; and the lack of this recognition may account for much of the difficulty and danger in that study. The Holy Ghost, by the Prophets, had testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories* to follow. He was to them, as He is to us, the Spirit of Truth; but until the purpose of God was distinctly revealed. He could not guide into all truth; until Jesus was glorified, He could not come from heaven to glorify Him; He could not take of His things to show unto us; He could not show us the things freely given to us of God, or become Himself the earnest of our inheritance. He

still shows in " things to come," but makes them also a present reality unto the soul. Now I believe, when under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the study of prophecy which He Himself dictated will never disturb our apprehension of His special relation to the Church, or of those blessings which are special and peculiar to the Church.

(* κα■ τ■ς μετ■ τα■τα δ■ξας. 1 Peter 1:11.-Editor.)

I would in all humility, and yet in a great measure of confidence, suggest to the saint, whether the difficulty and danger connected with the study of prophecy does not, in great measure, arise from a vague apprehension of what " The Church" really is, What the calling of the Church is-what its privileges-what its present endowment, and what its destiny, according to the eternal purpose of God. This is the present great subject of the Holy Ghost; it does not at all nullify or supersede, or even disturb the previously announced purposes of God-it affirms them; but yet there is a special subject of interest to God, hidden from the wise and prudent, revealed unto babes. What eye hath not seen, what ear hath not heard, what hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, God hath revealed to us by His Spirit. Now I fully believe, that the past and future history of the nations, the past history of Israel, as well as its future destiny, may become subjects of deep and interesting study to Christians, apart from any just appreciation of what the Church of God really is. And if such a study become absorbing, I can well understand that it might lead to a depreciating view of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; because these things appear to be more immediately connected with Him in his human and earthly relationships. We find Paul, immediately after his conversion, "preaching Christ in the synagogues that he is the Son of God." That He was the Son of David, was the truth uppermost in the thoughts of a Jew. And the solving of the Lord’s question will alone set the Jews right-how David’s Son is David’s Lord. It is as Son of Man that he takes the kingdom; but the essential glory of his Person was revealed to Peter. " Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am "? "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." On this revelation of the glory of his Person to Peter by the Father, the Lord immediately adds, " this Rock will I build my Church." And when the Church was actually formed, and set up on earth by the coming down of the Holy Ghost from heaven, the glory of the Person of the Son, the living rock on which the Church was founded, becomes one great subject referred to in apostolical teaching. We have no reference to the title Son of Man in the Epistles.* The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Romans, contrasts the true title " Son of David," so familiar to Jews, with that of" Son of God with power." So our Lord himself, in his own teaching in the third chapter of John, speaks of " the Son of Man in heaven," " the Son of Man lifted up," and then brings out the proper glory of his person -" for God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son." Are we reconciled to God? it is by the death of His Son. Are we to enlarge our expectations from God? " He that spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things"? Is the life communicated by the Spirit to be nurtured? it is written, " The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Are we in our proper posture of hope? we have turned to God, and wait for his Son from heaven." So long as the Church is mindful of her calling and destiny -so long must the person of the Son be, of necessity, kept before her remembrance. I believe it to be impossible to have an accurate idea of what the Church is, without recognizing the glory of the Person of Christ its living foundation. And if the soul has not entered into the idea of the Church, I believe that prophetic study must be attended with danger; and if in any measure it becomes an exclusive study, the danger will be great. I do not say that

much of the truth of God, as to the future, may not be taught and maintained; but if the higher truth of " the Church," which forms the special present testimony of the Holy Ghost, be not apprehended, the very truth of God will, by thus handling it, become disproportioned and disjointed, and tend to unsettle rather than establish the soul. It is well known, that there is a system of the doctrine of the second advent, very extensively held and taught by persons most unsound on the fundamental truths of the gospel. Amongst such, so far as my own observation goes, there is no just idea of " the Church of God." The prophecies of Daniel relating to the kingdom, appear to be the basis of the system. To many also it is known, that very minute prophetic statements touching the coining glories of Christ have been made, where the personality and deity of the Holy Ghost is denied. It is impossible that the idea of the Church can be entertained by such, because that which forms the Church, the presence of the Holy Ghost, is denied. The danger and difficulty of prophetic study, I believe therefore to arise, even among the really orthodox, from not regarding the truth of God in its just proportion.

(* Hebrews 2:6, does not refer to this title. In all other places I believe our translators have used a capital letter in Son, where the expression occurs. In this passage they have not.)

It is a work of patience, and an exercise of soul before God, to see the truth of God in its just proportion. Now, if that which is the present special testimony of God, viz.: "the Church" and its future destiny, is less engaging to our thoughts than the future dealings of God with Israel and the earth, we do not see things in their just proportion. The Apostle Paul speaks to the Colossians of "the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I Paul am made a minister": and afterward he speaks of " the body" of Christ, " which is the Church; whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill [or fully to preach] the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." I do most assuredly believe, that these two ministries of the Apostle were quite distinct, and yet perfectly harmonize; but they came into exercise under very different circumstances. In his life of busy activity, St. Paul was exercising the first; his imprisonment at Rome was cheered by bringing out the other into exercise. He had gone from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and fully preached the gospel of God. He had gone about preaching the kingdom of God; but in prison he had fully to tell out the previously hidden mystery in all the riches of its glory. It is all-important to look out at the future from a Church-position. The position in which we actually stand, cannot fail of influencing our judgment in contemplating the future. How readily would the Christian patriot see in prophecy " a sealed nation." There are Protestants who regard Protestantism simply as protest against error, and that nationally (and God has honored such national protest); yet, even in their view, the destiny of the nation will be the more prominent thought than that of the Church. The nonconformists, who know happy deliverance from the galling yoke under which their fathers groaned, may easily read the glowing descriptions of coming blessing on the earth, as expressive of civil and religious liberty. And so influential is present position on our interpretation of prophecy, that when the Babylon of the Revelations was pressed by Protestants as prefiguring Rome, some of the most learned Papists invented theories of interpretation to turn aside this application.

Church-position, practically recognized, is in my judgment the only place from whence we can calmly and unselfishly survey the future. Deeply interesting and wonderful as that future is, according to the revelation of God, yet nothing can be more wonderful than the riches of grace already made known by the Holy Ghost-himself a present possession in the heart as " the earnest." The Church when delivered from trial, at rest, and in glory, will be occupied in beholding the glory of Him who has "presented her to himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle." But the Church even now, under the guidance of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, seeking advancement in the knowledge of Christ, is led by the same Spirit to see that next to Him, her foundation and head, nothing is so wonderful a study as her own standing, portion and destiny. It is indeed humbling to be writing about the Church, instead of consciously enjoying the " riches of glory" of which the Apostle speaks; such enjoyment can only be "joy in the Holy Ghost." Paul, as an Apostle, had his fellow Apostles, though not a whit behind the chiefest of them. As an Evangelist, Timothy had the same ministry as St. Paul. As a Prophet, others of the Apostles have left on record their predictions. But as " a Minister of the Church," St. Paul evidently claims a distinctness and specialty; " To fulfill the word of God "- " whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ"-" that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." Such expressions imply a distinctness and specialty of ministry entrusted to St. Paul. No one really caring for Christ’s sheep, would lead a young convert not established in peace of soul to prophecy as a suitable study; because the soul in such a state is likely to be disturbed by connecting coming glory either with devotedness or service. The need of such is to have the heart established with grace; and when this is the case, the apprehension of glory is not accompanied with that amazement which unsettles the soul. So also I believe the most important pre-requisite for prophetic study, to be a practical apprehension of what the Church is, according to the tenor of the prayers of the Apostle in the first and third chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians. The first prayer being for the knowledge of our own special blessings; the second, for the real present power of those blessings. The Church has its own proper hope-- " the one hope of our calling." We find great indistinctness in the minds of Saints as to their own proper hope. The "personal coming of Christ," " the personal reign of Christ," and similar expressions, will generally be found to merge in vagueness the proper hope of the Church. The coming of Christ for the Saints to meet Him in the air, and the coming of Christ with the Saints to order the world in blessing, so that the will of God shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven; are very distinct. " I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may also be," is an announcement as gracious and blessed, as it is distinct from Christ’s coming to bring in " the restitution of all things," the great burthen of prophetic testimony. We wait for " the Son of God from heaven"; while we, actually, are in an evil world and a groaning creation; " and ourselves also who have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves"; but, in position, by faith, we are in heaven- " we sit down in heavenly places in Christ"; or, as it is written, " Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." There is one specialty of the Church’s hope by reason of the Holy Ghost being the earnest of the inheritance, and that is, that the Church even now knows, tastes, and enjoys her own blessings. They are actually accomplished blessings.

All spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ are already her portion, although not palpable to sight-" for what a man seeth why Both he yet hope for; but if we see them not, then do we with patience wait for them." And the Church is waiting to have her own blessings manifested, and to enjoy those blessings where sorrow and trial cannot enter; even where the wretched selfishness of our hearts can no longer hinder our full apprehension and enjoyment of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus -the Son of God and the Lamb of God. It is now the portion of the Church, while she cannot actually see Jesus, yet believing in Him, to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; what then must it be to see Him as he is, and to be like him? That which the Church knows, she enjoys even now, by the special relation of the Holy Ghost as the earnest. Her hope is to enjoy what she knows and tastes already, in the Lord's immediate presence, where there shall be no slow heart or dull mind. Israel waits for glory and blessing in their own land; but still being in blindness and unbelief and in a strange land, Israel has no foretaste of the joys which await them; their harps must hang upon the willows; they cannot sing the song of Zion. Creation too awaits its jubilee; the groaning creation earnestly expects deliverance from the bondage of corruption; but it has no foretaste of that deliverance. May we not say that the hope of Israel is as unintelligent as that of Creation itself, the blessed agent by whom the blessing is to be accomplished, and the mighty work on which that accomplishment hangs being unknown; and the hope itself, as revealed in the Scripture of truth, is only seen at the end of the dark vista of the wrath of God. But God's future to the Church is all bright and glorious. " The sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed in us." The tribulations are manifold," "now" and "for a season": out from these tribulations the Church looks for her rest and glory. There is a real present manifestation of Christ to the Church now that he is unseen by the world.. This is the wondrous problem-Christ manifested to the Church, unmanifested to the world. The hope of the Church is, so to speak, unselfish; she knows accomplished redemption; she knows present deliverance; she looks for the Savior, to see him and be satisfied. Now, I believe unless the Church be true to her own proper hope, there will be danger and difficulty in the study of prophecy. But when she looks at the future, from her own proper position, realizing, however it be in feebleness, her present portion, and looking to her own proper hope, both danger and difficulty are in great measure removed; because she can unselfishly connect everything with her own risen Head.

God uses the Church now as his instrument to make known to other intelligences, principalities and powers in heavenly places, his "manifold wisdom." And that which she now displays to others, ought to be the subject of her own study. She has capacity for it, for she has " the mind of Christ"; she is in the right position for learning it, for she is admitted into present deep intimacy with God through redemption; she is not without a guide or a rule, for she has the Holy Ghost and the Scriptures. And I am fully convinced that the soul even of an unlettered Saint, instructed in his Church standing and Church destiny, would, from such a position, be quite able solidly to grasp the great prophetic outline. And it would indeed be a marvelous instance of the abounding grace of our God, if he were pleased to retrieve the study of prophecy from being, as is too often the case, merely a mental exercise to the refined or intellectual Saint, so that it might minister to the spiritual nurture of the mass of Saints. To such, Prophecy can only be presented on the ground that they are spiritual, and thereby capable of testing what they hear. They have eternal life. They know the Father, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent; and therefore they know already that which is the deepest truth-a knowledge in which they are to grow forever. They have a standard, therefore, by which to measure things; and by such, prophecy can only be valued, as it unfolds to them the

glories of Christ, the grace of God, and the peculiar privileges of their own standing. They will not receive it if it lowers the dignity of their Lord, or the dignity of their own standing. Happy indeed would it be, if prophetic teaching ceased to be peculiar teaching, and was felt to be food of which the whole Church has need; because it is the exponent of the manifold wisdom of God. How interesting to the Church in contemplating all the future revealed glories-to be instructed in them, and to share in them, as knowing something deeper than all revealed glory; even that she is loved of the Father, as Jesus himself is loved of Him. How interesting to trace the common elements in all blessing; and yet for the Church to see what is distinct and peculiar to herself. How it illustrates the grace of God! how it manifests the value of the Cross, thus to regard what it has pleased God to reveal! But how deeply important to the Church to know the Holy Ghost -the eternal Spirit-the one who has quickened in every dispensation, in his own special relation to herself, "the earnest"-" the other Comforter"-" the one Spirit" animating that " one Body" which has a place here, whilst-its risen and glorified Head is in heaven. I believe, therefore, that the study of prophecy from a Church position will not only be safe, but remove many difficulties which present themselves to the spiritual mind, even at the outset.

I would lastly advert to that which is a very practical difficulty in the way of profitable study, I mean the want of a mind so disciplined, as to enable us to enter on it in a right spirit, even the spirit of Him who wept over Jerusalem, when contemplating its fixed and settled doom. The closure of this present evil age, out of which we have been rescued by Jesus giving himself for our sins, according to the will of God and our Father, is fearfully portrayed in the scripture of truth. To study this profitably, there is a needed preparation of soul. Exclusiveness of study of the final development of evil-often tends to self-complacency, harshness of judgment or legality. The great professing body of Christendom is to be cut off, because it has not continued in the goodness of God. The safeguard of Christians, therefore, is continuance in the goodness of God. Then they are able to exercise spiritual discernment as to the principles of evil, and to find that there is nothing manifested in the close, the beginning of which is not marked by the Holy Ghost as already working, when there was apostolic power both to discern the evil and to provide the safeguard. When the Apostle Paul opens to Timothy the perils of the last days-he solemnly charges him before God and the Lord Jesus Christ-" preach the word," " do the work of an Evangelist." The Apostle Peter closes the exposure of the awful ungodliness of the last days, with this safeguard " Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ." And Jude, testifying of the fearful manifestation of evil in turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, thus guards the saints: -But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Now, all these forms of evil are viewed by the Holy. Ghost from the place of that blessed grace in which God had set the Church, and therefore to see them aright we must get into that place, and then we shall be able to detect in many more trivial evils the same principles working. the fruit of which will be fully ripened in the actual close. The Prophets of old were faithful protesters against the corruptions of their day; but we see from the sacred word they needed previous discipline of God in their own souls, lest they should protest with any measure of self-complacency; also that they might fully justify God in his judgment on the evil. The vision of the glory of Jesus to Isaiah, made the prophet feel that he himself was a man of unclean lips, as well as that he dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips. He would not have been a suited instrument to go and blind his countrymen, had he felt himself better than they were. The Prophet

must feel that he, himself, was simply spared by the grace of God, and as deserving of the judgment as his countrymen. It was needed, for Daniel the "greatly beloved," to have his comeliness turned into corruption," that he might understand what should befall his people in the latter day." Ezekiel and Hosea had to go through most painful and revolting discipline, in order to lead them into a realization of the baseness into which Israel had sunk in the estimation of God. It may, indeed, now be God’s method to discipline his servants by special circumstances, in order to train them to study the future aright. But the special peculiar training, is a conscience exercised before God. It is the habit of the soul which leads it into the presence of God to judge things there. " The spiritual man judgeth all things." And however fearful may be the crisis of evil, the soul exercised before God can discern in itself principles which, if unrestrained by the grace of God, would lead to it. Hence the soul becomes more rooted in grace, experiences more consciously what a debtor it is to grace. And, in this manner, the firmest protest against evil becomes linked with personal lowliness. And whilst there is increasing thankfulness for the promise of being kept from the hour, of temptation, which is to try all that dwell upon the earth,-there is real self-judgment of the evil principles which are to be manifested in the crisis, and sympathy and intercession for those who are blindly helping it on. I believe the way of God to enable us to meet the growing evil of the last days, is practically to unfold to us the deeper resources of his grace, because the study of evil by itself is most injurious to the soul. The recognition of the faithfulness of God-of the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church, and. of the untouched blessings of the Church, in Christ, notwithstanding all which has failed here, will lead us farther outside the camp to Jesus, bearing his reproach. And thus shall we be in principle, in position, and in spirit, enabled to take our place in " the Wilderness," and from thence to learn " THE MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH," and at the same time to take our place on " the great and high mountain" - thence to survey the graces and glories " of the Bride, the Lamb’s Wife."

Presbutes.

Vol 01 - The Dwelling of God and Man Together

The Dwelling of God and Man Together

Genesis 9:27■■■■■■■■■■■■■ -"And He [the LORD God of Shem, 5: 26] shall dwell [or shechinah it] in the tents of Shem." As the LXX. ■ θεος...κατοικησατω ■ν τοις ο■κοις του Σημ. Is there not, here, a noticeable prophetic allusion to the Shechinah of God's manifested presence between the Cherubim in the Tabernacle (con. Exodus 25:8; Exodus 29:43-46)? How many are the blessed and gracious thoughts which are connected, in Scripture, with the dwelling of God and man together and how various!

G. W.

Vol 01 - The House of the Lord

The House of the Lord

How sweet it is to look to the end of our weary way-and what an end-"the house of the Lord"! and that " forever"! Surely "goodness and mercy shall follow me all the clays of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Can anything be sweeter, goodness and mercy now, the house of the Lord hereafter?-D.

Vol 01 - The Lord's Last Promise

The Lord’s Last Promise John 14:16-18; John 16:7; and Acts 1:4-5; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 4:31-35.

Most precious were those parting words Of our Almighty Friend, Who loved his own while in the world, And loved them to the end.

" I leave you not as orphans here, The Comforter shall come And fill your hearts with joy and peace, Till I shall fetch you home." And soon upon that watching band The Heavenly Stranger came;

And, like a rushing mighty wind, Thrill’d thro’ each trembling frame.

Like a vast flood, he buried deep, Pain, grief, and worldly care; In Resurrection-Life, they breathed Heaven’s own fresh vital air.

Dead to the world thro’ Jesus’ love, Nothing their own would call; With power they preached their risen Lord;

Great Grace was on them all.

Like ointment pour’d on Aaron’s head That down his garments flow’d, Was that rich oil of grace and joy From Christ, our Head, bestow’d Great Smitten Rock! From thee flow’d forth A stream so full and free.

Each desert heart that drinks the flood, Shall soon like Eden be.

Well may we ask, "Will God indeed Descend to dwell in clay?"

We marvel at such wondrous grace And well indeed we may. As once the pleased Rebecca trod A desert, long and drear, While Abraham’s wealth, and Isaac’s love, Rang in her raptured ear: - So, in this howling wilderness, The Holy Ghost makes known The Father’s House, the Son’s rich love, And all he has, our own.

Blest thought! Our hearts are with him there.

We see our glorious home Made ready for our bridal joys - Come Jesus - quickly come!

Vol 01 - The Mother of Moses and the Reward of Faith

The Mother of Moses and the Reward of Faith

What a volume of instruction the Holy Ghost presents to us in few words! The crowded events of a life are compressed in the compass of a few verses, and when most concise, so beautifully distinct that the soul, in communion by the power of the Holy Ghost, has the picture delineated as vividly before him as if an eyewitness of all that occurred. The portion of the Word under consideration is a striking illustration of this. A mother's cares and a mother's joys, her faith in God and the reward of her faith, are presented to us-" Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." " And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and bare a son. And when she saw him that he was a proper child, she hid him three months." We read in Hebrews 11:1-40, " By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw that he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment." In the book of Acts (7:20) we read, " In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding (margin, to God) fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months." The judgment passed upon Satan in the garden, that the "seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent," became at the same time the promise of God to our first parents, upon which they founded their hopes. The commandment of Pharaoh to the midwives, that, if a son was born, " they should kill him," directly subverted the purpose of God in the promised seed. The hearts of the faithful expected a Deliverer; and each mother in Israel might be the channel of blessing in giving birth to Messiah. Faith in the parents of Moses appreciated the promise; and apart from the instinctive desire for the preservation of their offspring, we read, it was " by faith " they were urged to conceal the birth of Moses.

Scripture is silent as to any direct revelation to them, that Moses should be a deliverer. We have the clue to their conduct in the knowledge " that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent." To destroy their children would be a death-blow to their hopes, and frustrate the grace of God to them. Doubtless this stimulated their faith in His present help. Their love to their child and the promise of God were blended together. And He whose tenderness is developed in Jesus, did not withhold His blessing from those whose natural instinct was his own precious gift, and who hoped in His mercy. The Scriptures abound with testimony to His surpassing grace. Creation bears witness to His love: The birds of the air, the fishes in the sea, and the wild beasts of the desert. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God; "not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice." "Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have store-house nor barn; and God feedeth them." But it is not as the God of creation alone we have to contemplate Jehovah. We know Him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We measure His gifts by the gift of His Son-" God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son into the world." God commended His love in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We know that neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Jesus was the Brightness of God's glory, the express Image of His person-" In Him alone dwelt the fullness of the Godhead

bodily." The perfect knowledge of God is in the f tee of Christ; yet, in the revelation of His ways, as in the Old Testament, how distinct the features of His grace, how discernible the traces of His character--the God of all grace! The care of Jehovah for the mother of Moses furnishes a blessed subject for meditation. His grace in awakening her faith in His love; His grace in meeting the confidence He had awakened. The eye of Jehovah rests upon the fond wishes of the mother; the heart of the mother unburdens her sorrows to Him. The child is born-she. " had gotten a man from the Lord." Yet at what a time was her lot cast-a king had arisen " over Egypt that knew not Joseph." ". And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigor." But this was not all. The king of Egypt had issued an edict for the destruction of every male child that should be born of the Hebrews. And at such a time Moses is given to his parents. "And when she saw him, that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months." Alas, what a time for a mother! the delight of her eyes must be hid in the darkness, the affection of a full heart must be stifled. The charms of her infant forgotten in solicitude for its existence, "she hid her child." How difficult her task, is apparent from the nature of her avocation. The daily toil imposed upon her, her relative duties, the diligent search of the destroyers, the suspicions aroused about her, all added to the difficulty of the concealment of her babe. And then for its nourishment. How stealthy her tread to the spot, how vigilant her eye! What searching before, what looking behind; how wildly her poor heart throbbed! She has reached it; and the God of her fathers has preserved the babe from the reptiles; which abounded in Egypt. Her eye is lifted up in gratitude to Him, her bosom is open for her child. Flow eager the infant; how hard to hush its cry of delight. What fear lest its noise should attract; lest the evidence of its life, such joy to her heart, should prove the occasion of its death. And the young sister mentioned in the fourth verse would be the mother’s confidant in this. It might be, on the watch, peradventure an enemy was near. The heart of the mother was around her child; the sister’s affection aroused for her baby-brother. And in this scene of emotion, this tumult of affection, confidence in God was as oil on the troubled waters. In the morning they cried unto Him; in the evening commended the babe unto Him.

Blessed picture of God, the center of attraction, where alone the pangs of humanity could unburden themselves. The parents believed in His love; His love solaced the parents. All was hostile around them. Evil passions had snapped the chords of affection betwixt man and man. The ties of nature were severed, its sympathies obliterated. The mother of Moses reposed her heart on the love of her God-and she hid her child three months. But the enemy has discovered it; "she could no longer hide him." What agony of soul! Still it is but for a moment. She cannot trust man, she will then confide in her God. The poor babe, unconscious of the agonies it gave birth to, is removed. She made an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein, and she laid it in the flags by the river’s brink. What confidence of faith. The wickedness upon earth forbade her to nourish her own. Cruel world; conduct answerable to that in after-years, when the tenderest of hearts, the truest love was repaid with ignominy, scorn, and the cross. Her child, exposed to the dangers of the Nile, was safer than in the abode of humanity. The offspring God had given her she could no longer sustain. Faith commits it to His care. Dead indeed were the earthly hopes of the poor mother; fit coffin for them was the ark of bulrushes; fitter emblem still the water, the waters of death. But faith saw beyond things around. " It is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for." Help below there was none; God alone could help her,

and on His arm she relied. His ear is ever open to the cry of His children. Almighty God interests himself in the sorrows of His creatures. He who would one day manifest Himself in the flesh and be born of a woman, how perfectly could He sympathize with the sorrows of the heart of one. The three months' trial of her faith was before him. Her steady confidence in His love, her maternal solicitude, the anxious cares, all were known to Him (Psalms 139:1-2). And this last confiding act, this casting of her burthen on the Lord, would he not meet it? He loves to be relied upon. His object in creating us was to rejoice in His love to us, and in our love to Him. He who gave us sympathies, which even in the degradation of our fallen nature ever and anon gleam of heaven, could best appreciate them when aroused. It is not enough for the God of' all grace to dispense of His bounty, wondrous grace though it be; He seeks beyond that, the confidence of children in the love which dictates it. "And his sister stood afar off to wit what would be done to him." And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself in the river. " A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps." Surely this truth was fulfilled in the direction of the daughter of Pharaoh. Her maidens walked along by the river's side, and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it; and when she had opened it, she saw the child, and behold the babe wept, and she had compassion on him and said, " This is one of the Hebrews' children " " Who is a God like unto our God," gracious and full of compassion. The child was entrusted to Him, and he ensures its safety. The prayers of the mother were heard of the God of Abraham. He had sent deliverance, and after such manner as became him. The little outcast from earth and from home, found a welcome, by the providence of God, in the heart of the princess. The edict of her father had doomed it to death. The compassion of his daughter decrees its life. The sympathies of nature were kindled in her breast for one of a despised people. " The babe wept;" she had compassion on him, and said " This is one of the Hebrews' children." How wonderful the ways of God; how rich the possessor of His " favor which is life, and his loving-kindness better than life." Every circumstance on earth was opposed to the poor Hebrew mother. God in heaven was for her. She gave up her child to His keeping. He will skew himself worthy of the trust.

Happy the people whose God is the Lord! The sister was no unmoved spectator of this scene. The mother was pouring out her heart in prayer-the answer was ready at the door. The sister, with discernment, doubtless of God, had read in the face of the princess, beaming with compassion, the safety of her brother. "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said, Go; and the maid went and called the child's mother." Surely her cup overflowed t Whilst she was praying, before the thoughts of her heart found words for expression, her child is re-restored, and in such a manner!-The palace of the foe to her race, should be the sanctuary of, her babe, and she, happy mother, should nourish her own I "And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take the child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child and nursed it, and the child grew; and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter. And she called his name Moses, and she said because I drew him out of the WATER. In poverty and trial the babe was born; in fear and dread it had been nourished. But now how altered the circumstances! The mother had wages from the daughter of Pharaoh for nursing her own. The protection of his power secured its life. There existed no occasion for concealment. She could embrace her child in her arms, she could clasp it openly to her bosom. How her heart would rejoice in the God of her salvation, her child's salvation. " He giveth liberally." They had trusted him with their child-see how their faith is rewarded. Surely she received him back as from the dead, God's gift to her in resurrection. " He was dead and is alive

again, he was lost and is found.", What stimulus to confidence in God is here. Well might our Lord say, " Have faith in God." Well does our God deserve our confidence. "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof and be glad." W.

Vol 01 - The Name of Jesus

The Name of Jesus

Among the crowd of interesting thoughts awakened in the soul by the name of Jesus, two present themselves most prominently-Savior and. Lord. Savior and Lord are almost inseparable, and we find them associated, almost necessarily associated, in the preaching of the Apostles. We find them also linked together in our own proper confession. The sanctity of the faith is preserved by maintaining them in unison; lawlessness in the Church leading to lawlessness in the world is the fearful result of the practical severance of Savior and Lord. The name of Jesus was given on earth and again in heaven. " And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb." But this name so given on earth, is ratified in heaven, as supreme there, after his humiliation even to the death of the cross. " Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow-of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." But the name of Jesus, with all its associated titles, depends for its efficacy on a name not given, but essential. " The only begotten Son" is no given name, it is essential. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." " He that believeth him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." When this essential name was revealed by the Father to Peter, the Lord Jesus not only pronounced Peter blessed in the confession of it, but also pronounced Himself, thus confessed, as " the living stone" on which the Church was founded. The Church, therefore, is set for the confession of the essential glory of the Person of the Son, as well as for the confession of all his given names, titles and glories.

He who by his essential name Jehovah made Himself known to Israel in delivering them out of Egypt, and had made it the special covenant-name in relation to them as a people, now appears again among them, in all lowliness and grace, yet making it known that it was the same "arm of the Lord" which had " cut Rahab and wounded the Dragon;" " which had dried the sea, and the waters of the great deep, and made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over." Thus Jesus visited Israel, but " Israel would none of Him." How often would he have gathered them, as a hen gathereth her chickens, rising up early and sending them prophets; but now, even his own most gracious overtures are rejected.-He Himself was visible among them, yet they believed Him not.-He forgave their sins and healed their infirmities, yet they blessed Him not.-They would not have Him to reign over them.-They saw and hated both Him and His Father.

Israel could accept of no Savior short of Jehovah himself. Was the Jesus then whom Peter preached, and whom Saul blasphemed, the very One who thus speaks:- " Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God beside me; a just God and a Savior;

there is none beside me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength; even to Him shall men come, and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory."

Saul, the Pharisee, had once denied this name as belonging to Jesus, and this denial constituted him "a blasphemer." But the Lord of glory appeared to him by the way-and he preached the faith which once he destroyed.

It was the rejected Lord-Jesus of Nazareth-whose name in saving power and rightful Lordship, even as the glorified man, the Apostles preached. " Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." This is properly mediatorial glory; but none could " bear this glory," or even put himself in the condition of acquiring it, but he who had glory essentially belonging to him-even "He who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Israel had rejected "God manifested in the flesh." They discerned mot the glory of His humiliation. Jesus is glorified" the second man, the Lord from heaven," is now owned as the Lord in heaven; and the time shall come when Israel shall thus hail Jesus:-" Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Even as Thomas, the type of Israel in the latter day, who will believe only when they see " my Lord and my God."

It was an ancient oracle to Israel, that there was a day coming, great and terrible, and only one way of escape. " Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21). The testimony of Peter after Pentecost, was to identify that name with Jesus; to prove the power of the name of Jesus as Savior and Lord-Savior, because He was the Lord Savior to all who acknowledged Him as Lord once crucified, but now glorified; this was the great point at issue between Peter and the Jewish rulers. Thus in Acts 3:1-26 " Silver and gold" (says Peter) " have I none; but such as I have, give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." The multitude might indeed ignorantly gaze on the instruments of such beneficent power, but only to bring out more fully the name of Jesus. " Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk!... His name, through faith in His name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know." This testimony to the name of Jesus gives offense-the Apostles are arraigned before " the rulers, and elders and scribes", and asked, " By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, replies" Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead;... neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." The rulers could not deny the miracle wrought on the impotent man at the beautiful gate of the temple: but they " commanded the Apostles not to speak at all, nor to teach in the name of Jesus." But the Apostles were set for the confession of the saving power of that name, and they cry to the Lord " for boldness to speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." This controversy as to the present power of the name of Jesus between the Apostles and Jewish rulers, is continued throughout the fourth and fifth chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. " The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew

and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins; and we are His witnesses of these things; and so also is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him." This double witness the Lord had spoken of during His ministry. " But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." The Apostles were unimpeachable witnesses of the facts of the cross and resurrection of Jesus, and of His ascension-witnesses also in their own souls' experience, and by the very acts of which they were the instruments, to the present power of His name as Savior and Lord; and the Holy Ghost come down from heaven was witness also of the exaltation of the name of Jesus in heaven as Savior and Lord.

Before the calling out of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, that which characterized the disciples, was that they called upon the name of the Lord. The name " Christian" was not as yet known. A certain class of Jews in Judea and Jerusalem, and in distant cities, were separated from their brethren by acknowledging Jesus as Lord, and rendering to Him worship, by calling on His name. This distinguished them. This saved them " from the untoward generation." " Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he 'lath done to thy saints at Jerusalem, and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name." And when Ananias goes to Saul, he thus addresses him:-" The Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou earnest, has sent me." " But Barnabas took him (Saul) and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to Him, and how He had preached boldly in the name of Jesus." When the Apostle Paul speaks of himself it is as separated unto the Gospel of God, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name. When he writes to others, it runs thus:-" Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints, with all that, in every place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."

These Scriptures sufficiently show the inseparable connection between Savior and Lord in the testimony of the Apostles to Jesus. Our confession runs thus:-" If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation for the Scripture saith, " Whosoever believed]. in Him shall not be ashamed... for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him-for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Our confession is unto the Lordship of Jesus, as well as unto salvation in his name. It is our present blessing, being made willing by his grace to own Jesus as Savior and Lord-and what misery is in store for unbelievers, to have the unwilling confession extorted from them that " Jesus Christ is Lord," when the acknowledgment is only to hear sentence of judgment from his lips. Jesus is Lord of all; but there is a specialty of Lordship in which the church owns him, when she owns him as "our Lord Jesus Christ." It is the acknowledgment of the endearing, claim he has upon her as having saved her. He has " bought her with a price." This is His new claim of Lordship.-The Church owns Him as Lord of all; but she also owns him as Her Lord-the Lord who hath bought her, and thus confesses that she is not her own but his. He is her Lord, and she worships him. It is on this plea, besides his rightful title to

universal obedience, that He claims her obedience.-" If ye love me, keep my commandments." What blessed harmony do we thus find in the name of Jesus between Savior and. Lord. The severance of salvation from Lordship is the introduction of the worst form of evil. When Jude had to write of " the common salvation," and to exhort the disciples earnestly to contend for the faith " once delivered unto the saints," the principle of corruption is stated as being in the separation of Salvation from Lordship-,-a form of evil exactly suiting the corrupt selfishness of man. " The grace of our God was turned into lasciviousness," and the deity and Lordship of our Lord Jesus Christ was denied; and in this way contempt of all authority was introduced even into the world.. The confession of the Church unto Jesus as Savior and Lord, is most happily illustrated in the disciples coming together in one place to eat the Lord’s supper. The Church acknowledges Jesus as a present Savior, as a present Lord; and this exactly answers to the very constitution of the Church, for it is the Lord who adds to the Church such as are saved. He saves, and as Lord He adds to the Church; for He is Lord of the Church and in the Church. He is " Lord of all," although the world knows Him not; but the Church acknowledges, that " all power in heaven and earth is given unto Him." The title for "the saved" to meet together is the name of Jesus-the same name is the title for them to act, and when they so act they practically acknowledge that all power on earth, as well as in heaven, is given to him. They act as thus associated in this name as truly as the judge and magistrate act in the name of the sovereign who has delegated to them his power. The idea of meeting together " simply as Christians," is often very bare and defective, and almost appears to make a party of Christians socially assembled to stand on the same ground as the Church in her most solemn public acts. It has pleased the Lord, for his name is " gracious," to allow us liberty in many respects. He will not exact, for he " loveth a cheerful giver," and is pleased to say to us-" Whilst it remained, was it not thine own?" He has not put a rigid restriction on us as to social intercourse, because he would leave room for the exercise of spiritual sense and charity. If any of them that believe not bid you, and ye be disposed to go." It was one disciple only that "leaned on the bosom of Jesus," thus showing by his own example that we are permitted to have our Christian intimacies and friendships. The social principle is indeed very prominent in the Church, but it is balanced by two others, one of equal and the other of paramount importance, namely, liberty and conscience, so that there may be direct individual responsibility to the Lord. When man forms an association, it is his object to centralize everything, so that liberty and conscience are alike disregarded. If such a human element is brought into the Church, it necessarily renders the Church irresponsible. But the social principle in the Church necessarily implies both corporate and individual responsibility to the Lord, because her association and her acts are in the name of the Lord. When disciples come together to break bread, it is around the Lord’s table they are gathered-they eat together the supper of the Lord-they show forth the Lord’s death till he come. That we are of the blood-bought family is our title; but then the Lord’s title is to be acknowledged. It is the Lord who bids the guests, spreads the table, and orders the feast. This ’is not left in the power of the guests; and this we have very specially to acknowledge, for it is written for our instruction, that on the failure of the Saints to maintain the order of the table, the Lord sheaved himself in chastening judgment (1 Corinthians 11:1-34). To meet together for the Lord’s supper on our title of being saved by the blood of the Lamb, without owning the title of Jesus to be obeyed as Lord, would at once place us on the verge of the precipice so fearfully portrayed in Jude, and the neglect of discipline in the Church would thus lead the way to lawlessness in the world. The Lord has been pleased to constitute the Church His court, as that in which He now presides in

judgment. The church is the only present sphere in which judgment is exercised. Those " within" become amenable to judgment, whilst as to the world, its judgment is yet future. The saints now gathered together, those who have made a covenant with God by sacrifice, are those among whom He at present acts judicially. " God is judge Himself" (Psalms 1:1-6.) " The Lord adds to the church the saved." And when the Church, not infallibly as the Lord, but according to the measure of her spiritual mind, accredits one as saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, she receives him, because Christ has received him; whatever his previous life may have been. There may be hesitation, as there was in the case of Saul at Jerusalem, they believed not that he was a disciple; " But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way; and He was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem." In this respect the Church responds to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, by acting simply in grace. But the act of grace which has brought from the world (" without") to the church (" within"), at once set the person, so brought, in the place where he is amenable to judgment. So that when one went from one city to another, he would have so to speak to carry his credentials with him. " And when he (Apollos) was disposed to pass (from Ephesus) into Achaia, the brethren wrote exhorting the disciples to receive him." It was thus happily that the unity of the body was preserved. A Jew, a native of Alexandria, in Africa, receiving the first rudiments of the knowledge of Christ by the baptism of John,-comes to Ephesus, in Asia, and is there more perfectly instructed in " the way of the Lord" by a private Christian and his wife, and then passes into Achaia, in Europe, and there " helped them much which had believed through grace."

Circumstances of themselves would have forbidden intercourse, rather would have nullified the very thought of it, but there was a power in activity above circumstances-for "unity of the Spirit" is independent of’ circumstances, and is based on, and maintained by, that which is essential. "One Body and one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all." We need not wonder at the difficulties in the way of preserving a unity to which all circumstances are adverse, and which can only be maintained by living faith in that which is unseen. The sources of discord in the early church were both of Jewish and Gentile origin. But the Apostle designates both these forms of error under one term-" rudiments or elements of the world" (see Galatians 4:3-4; Colossians 2:8-20). The same sources of discord have marked the whole history of the church. There has ever been the tendency to revert to the Law in its principle as the regulator both of the morals and worship of the saints, and to make human wisdom the exponent of divine revelation. Both, in a variety of forms, have been found subversive of the unity of the Spirit; for unity of the Spirit can alone be maintained by a holy jealousy for essentials instead of eager contention about circumstantials. That which leads into the last form of wickedness, which brings oh the swift judgment of God, is the denial of " our most holy faith.’ One peculiar Characteristic of Apostolic teaching is the notice given of the danger of the faith being corrupted from many quarters. It was a great thing for one Apostle to be able to say, " I have fought the good fight. I have kept the faith."

It must have occurred to almost every reflecting Christian the increased difficulty of walking as becometh saints, now that a great professing body, arrogating to itself all the claims of the church of God, is settled and acknowledged. This body has been formed by the church receiving into herself " the elements of the world," and by the world using for its own ends anything which availed in the church, "considering that gain is godliness." The result is, that the very idea of what the

church essentially is has been lost, and that the world has been raised in its moral tone; and thus conventional righteousness, in other words public opinion, has immense and unsuspected influence in forming our thoughts and judgments. It may easily be conceived, that in every revival in the church, in other words, when at any time by the special action of the Holy Ghost a few, in the midst of general declension, have been led back to the essential principles of the church, that they must necessarily have discovered the immense difference between the conventional standard of the professing body, and " righteousness and true holiness." Such righteousness and holiness is according to the knowledge of the truth, and will be found not only immeasurably above the conventional standard, but often to traverse it, so that those who assert it will be regarded as troublers of Israel. Such has been the estimate of the few by the many in every instance in which God, by the energy of His Spirit, has in any wise disturbed the order of the world, even though it be the religious world. The interference of God Himself, with anything which man has arranged, is never tolerated.

Whenever by the power of truth received into the soul through the teaching of the Spirit, Christians have been led " to live soberly, godly, and righteously in this present world," there has always been the danger of antagonism to formal religion taking the place of faith; and thus room made for carnal weapons: or, on the other hand, freedom from the restraint of opinion being asserted as a principle, instead of resulting from present faith in God. This is sure to lead into inconsistencies and improprieties which cause the truth to be evil spoken of, so that the saints are again turned back to the maintenance of their own character, and the very power which brought the blessing is thus lost sight of altogether. It is no longer faith exercised on essentials which are in Christ Jesus, leading into a heavenly path and gracious separation from the world, but saints occupied about their own character and credit in the eyes of men; and thus unconsciously reduced again to the conventional standard of righteousness. It is the old error beginning " in the spirit, but seeking to be made perfect by the flesh." This alone accounts for the constant tendency in the minds of Christians to separate faith and morals; and having so separated them, although in truth not separable, to be more anxious for the purity of morals than for the purity of the faith. There is an accredited standard of morals in the professing body, but the standard of the sanctuary, where everything is seen according to God, is only known by those who have the Spirit. In the sanctuary we learn both the cause of, and the remedy for, the declension. And judged there, declension in morals will be found to have originated in some departure from the faith; and the remedy is to lead hack the soul to the Lord Himself. It is the giving to Him his due place, and the assertion of His honor wherein He has been dishonored, which is the spring of godly conduct. Whenever the saints themselves become their own object, so that their own character becomes their anxiety, it will invariably be found that all things are measured by the conventional standard; and thus insidiously the way is prepared for the very worst form of evil, the unity of Christians among themselves, even at the expense of the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen in the past history of the Church the result, in a unity, apart from every essential of unity of the Spirit--a unity in form, not in power; a unity in death, not in life; a unity which the confession of Christ as only Savior and only Lord, the fountain of all grace and the head of all power, necessarily invaded. The Church is properly " the pillar and ground of the truth"; she is founded on the truth, and set for confession to the truth; and her confession is to Jesus as " the truth," and to Him very especially as Savior and Lord. But the question may arise, Is it possible for Christians to act on Church principles, torn as the Church is by divisions within, and identified as she is with the world? Can Christians attempt to

act otherwise than in individual faithfulness? Must not the attempt to exercise godly discipline, however desirable, be abandoned as hopeless, because Christians are, by the overwhelming power of circumstances, unable to act corporately, unless they act sectarianly? Are these things so?

We know that Christians do meet together. Is, then, such a meeting merely a voluntary association on their parts, or is it in the name of the Lord? They are not prepared to abandon the Lord's Supper, which by its very nature is a social act. The Lord has spread a table not for an individual saint, but for saints collectively. " And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take--eat; this is my body. And He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission. of sins." " And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread." That many a believer has received blessing to his own soul by using the Lord's Supper as a means of his individual communion is most true; but this is no valid argument against the social character of the institution. Now, unless Christians are prepared to say that, when they come together into one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, but merely a comely regulation of their own, they must, by so doing, allow that they act in so meeting together with the full sanction of the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the Church, in its best times, and under far more healthy circumstances, had only the same power and authority for their meeting together. And meeting together in that name, they could act also in that name.

Blessed be God for His pitiful grace, that we are not left to the alternative either of surrendering our blessings as saints, or of acting " Every man as it seemeth good in his eyes." " All things are possible to him that believeth." Circumstances may alter, but our essential blessings remain untouched, because not left in our own keeping. We have the same Lord; and if He has receded farther from the Camp, faith is able to find. Him. It is true that when corruption has set in, the word is addressed to us individually-" He that hath an ear, let him hear." This indeed nullifies the expectation of corporate reformation, and sets faith in individuals in activity, without waiting, for associates. But individual obedience speedily and necessarily leads to union, because the individuals are led to the same object. If Moses, by faith, discovered that the Lord could no longer be in the Camp, where the calf had been made and worshipped, and therefore " pitched the Tabernacle without the Camp, afar off from the Camp" -not only did Moses there find special intercourse with Jehovah, but " Every one which sought the Lord went out unto the Tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the Camp." It was indeed the Tabernacle of the congregation-the place where each faithful Israelite sought the Lord, and the place where the faithful met each other. A common object necessarily associates; and if the object be the Lord Jesus Christ, association around Him will be a holy association. If it be confession unto His name, the owning Him in the glory of His Person, and in every title which was denied to Him in the days of His flesh, and the practical acknowledgment of Him in all that which is now virtually denied to Him by corrupted Christianity; if such confession leads into association, then is that association formed on the very same basis as that on which the Church is constituted. Such an association is therefore in a capacity to act as the Church at large should act. Faith in the name of Jesus was the alone power and warrant of action in the Church, undivided and in unity, and faith in the same name is the warrant and power of action for the feeblest possible minority in the midst of

declension and corruption.

We recognize the competency of the Church of Corinth to act, but this was the only validity of their commission to act. " In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my Spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ." They might not act in their own name, they might not act simply as believers associated together, but as believers associated together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They did not require the presence of the Apostle to give validity to their action. He was present with them in spirit, on the same common ground as any other believer, because of the unity of the Spirit. It is very possible that the case is recorded to illustrate the character of the order and discipline of the house of God. The Apostle did tell them authoritatively to maintain the order of the house of God, but the action was not to be his, but theirs in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. So also when he had to stir up their pity to the penitent offender, as lie had previously to kindle their indignation against such grievous sin, he says, " Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many, so that contrariwise ye ought to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore, I beseech you, that ye would confirm your love towards Him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ, lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices." Here the action of the Apostle followed the action of the Church of Corinth. They acted and he ratified their act in the person of Christ, thus illustrating the order of the Lord in the Church-that the binding and loosing in heaven should follow on the binding and loosing on earth. The spring of the action of the Church on earth must flow from the grace, really, though secretly, supplied from the fullness of the Head of the Church in heaven, but the action itself of discipline, is first in the Church on earth, and then ratified in heaven. It was neither the authority of an Apostle, nor any contingency of present judgment on the offender, which gave validity to the act, but the name of Him in whom the act was done. If in the case of the incestuous Corinthian, the sentence of the Church was followed by grievous bodily sickness, which was removed on the reversal of the sentence, it is no more a proof that such a sentence must be followed by such consequences, than that the quickening power of the Holy Ghost giving faith now to a palsied man, should necessarily be followed by vitality communicated to his limbs. Our blessedness is to see not and yet believe. The present Lordship of Jesus, disowned of the world, is that which the Holy Ghost enables us to own-for no one can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost. Jesus is present in the Church by the Holy Ghost, the other Comforter. If believers then use the promise of the Lord, in the present sense of weakness, as their only title to pray unitedly, and to warrant an expectation of answer to their prayers-if it be not the outward manifestation of power, but the life communicated from their living Head, and the prevailing power of that name in which their prayers are offered, which gives them confidence;-if the hearts of the feeblest few are warmed and encouraged by the gracious promise, " Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven; for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them:" if this promise can be brought to bear at the very point where individuality ends, and association begins-for thus low has the gracious Lord brought it-then has the Church of the living God still the power of discipline; because its action is valid on the very ground that united prayer is acceptable and answered. " Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." To deny

the power of discipline, because the Church is broken and disjointed, without either manifested power or unity, is to deny ourselves for the like reason the privilege of united worship. But, blessed be God, the name of Jesus is of the same efficacy as ever. We, by His grace, look to that name alone for salvation; that name both sanctions and gladdens any assembly of saints, be it large or small; surely, then, faith in the same name will enable the saints so to act as to preserve the purity of the faith once delivered to the saints, and the holiness which becometh the house of the Lord. It is not the thought of authority, but the liveliness of conscience for the honor of Christ, which leads to discipline. Association has a natural tendency to blunt conscience, and the Apostle had to awaken the sleeping conscience of the Corinthians; when that was done, discipline was but the healthiness of spiritual life. They were more angry with themselves for their insensibility to the honor of the Lord, than with the offender (2 Corinthians 7:11). The recognition of the Lordship of Jesus, acting in present power by the Holy Ghost in the Church, can alone set an assembly of Christians practically on the ground of Church action. So far as they are assembled in truthfulness of confession unto Him, so far in principle do they occupy the place of " pillar and ground of the truth;' and one sure characteristic is a holy jealousy to maintain sound doctrine (1 Timothy 3:15-16; 1 Timothy 4:1).

Christians may come together by voluntary compact, even though it be in one place and for the Lord's Supper; yet the word may apply-" When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper." They came together without any due regard to -Jesus as the provider of the supper, and the regulator of the order of His table. If Solomon could regulate every department of his household, so that when his illustrious visitor saw " the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance Of his ministers.... there was no more spirit in her," surely He who is greater than Solomon is to be acknowledged as alone competent to arrange the order of His own table. We meet together at " the Lord's table" to eat " the Lord's Supper," and to tell forth to one another, and to strangers who may look on, " the Lord's death till He come." The connection of ministry with the name of Jesus may be very suitably noticed. " There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." Every gift of the Spirit necessarily implies direct responsibility to the Lord for its use, because it is a gift of ministry-putting the recipient in the place of a servant to a common Lord-and in grace also (that is, by no right or title of theirs) to the saints, and even to the world. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." " Though I be free from all, yet have I made myself the servant of all." How important is the recognition of the Lordship of Jesus in ministry may be gathered from his own instructions. When He left this world, the care and order of His house was in great measure entrusted to His servants, but His servants expecting at any hour His return. The character of His servant was to be "faithful" to him, and "wise" in giving to His household the portion of meat in due season. The danger to the servants was entertaining the thought that the Lord might not come at any hour, and so to treat the household as being lords over it themselves. The history of Christendom in clerical usurpation and domination is the too faithful verification of the picture drawn by the Lord of the evil servant. How did " the faithful and wise servants," Peter and Paul, testify against such usurpation-" not as being lords over God's heritage"-" not that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy, for by faith ye stand." It was thus that " the faithful servant" never interposed his authority so as to take the saint off the ground of direct responsibility to the Lord himself. In the assignment of the different talents to the servants " according to their several ability," the account is rendered to the Lord himself on his return. " Lord,

thou deliveredst to me five talents." They are his talents, to be traded with for his use. The servant was neither master of the household, nor the servant of the household; if he had acted in either of these characters he would not have been a faithful and responsible servant to the Lord himself of the household. He must own the Lord of the household in the household itself, in carrying out the directions of the Lord in it; and hence the servant entrusted with a talent becomes amenable to the Lord, in the same way as any other member of the household. No ministry, of whatever order, is above the name of the Lord himself, in which He empowers the Church to act collectively. While no one, therefore, as a servant of the Lord, derives his authority from the Church, but from the Lord himself, by which he is placed in immediate and direct responsibility to the Lord-still he, must own the title of the Lord in the Church gathered together in His name, since his special service in the household gives him no exemption from the common order of the household, over which the Lord himself is supreme. The acknowledgment of the Lordship of Jesus with regard to ministry, is not only the safeguard against clerical domination, but against the equal danger of leaning on human authority. The Lord Jesus himself was challenged as to the authority by which he acted. He had no human credentials to produce; but his works, words and ways alike attested his divine mission. The Lord answered their challenge by an appeal to their own consciences as to the baptism of John. Divine authority carries its attestation to the conscience. He who is in conscious possession of divine authority will not allow it to be backed by human authority, because the admission of such an authority necessarily implies a responsibility to it, and thus would directly interfere with the use of the talent as being the Lord’s talent. If two sources of authority be regarded as co-ordinate-the one from God and the other from man-experience has proved, as in the case of Scripture and tradition, a spiritual gift and human appointment, that the authority of man has superseded that of God, and hence the Lordship of Jesus has been virtually set aside. The principle of not being the servants of men, is most opposite to that of each one doing what is right in his own eyes. " Ye are bought with a price"-ye belong to another Master, even the Lord Jesus-therefore " be ye not servants of men."

Again, the recognition of the Lordship of Jesus in ministry is the safeguard against trading with the talent, for the advantage of the individual entrusted with it, instead of seeking therewith to promote the honor of the Lord. " The Spirit is given to every man to profit withal"-not for his individual profit, neither for his personal elevation, but for common profit. It is the Lord’s talent. "In a steward it is required that he should be found faithful." High as an Apostle was officially, and accredited by signs as an Apostle, yet in reference to ministry, he could only take the ground of a responsible servant using the talent entrusted to him. When others regarded him or others as authoritative or irresponsible, he asks-" Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave" to each of them? The Lord used both Paul and Apollos in different ways indeed, but under common responsibility to himself; and they were used by the Lord in that which must have been regarded by them both as of far more importance than themselves individually. " We are laborers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry [or tillage] ye are God’s building." Their highest honor as fellow-laborers was to be employed in cultivating or building that which peculiarly belonged to God. Their highest honor as individuals was to be themselves part of the tillage, part of the building of God. If Saints, individually or collectively, only thought of magnifying the name of the Lord, what numberless difficulties would be avoided! In the name of Jesus we find salvation; in the same name we find power of action. This name alone keeps us from self-will. The name of Jesus will make the most timid and retiring bold and energetic, when confident of acting

only in that name. It can restrain the forward and self-willed who would substitute human influence for divine authority. Surely we can say, " The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him."

Presbutes.

Chapter 30

Vol 01 - The Names "Jesus, Saviour, Lord and God" as Found in One

The Names "Jesus, Saviour, Lord and God" as Found in One Jesus the Saviour! Lord and God!

How great! How glorious Thou! With head uncovered - foot unshod, Before Thy feet I bow. As Son of God thou'rt known - Fully as God art own'd; The Father's Son - Rest of His Love - As God the Son enthron'd.

There worship, due to God, is Thine - 'Tis freely, gladly giv'n; The throne, the glory - all divine, Are owned as thine in heaven.

Maker of all! Upholding all!

Redeemer! Who but Thou? And - Empire Thine! Spite the fall, To Thee each knee shall bow. As King of kings, and Lord of lords! In the bright coming day, The word of God to Thee accords A universal sway.

Saviour! How sweet that precious name, Precious to God and faith - The God-Man proves in us His claim O'er Satan, sin and death. His blood and righteousness suffice To smooth the way of grace:

God can be gracious, we can rise And meet Him face to face. The Lamb on high, the veil within, Presents Himself to view;

Banner of God! that pardons sin, Our peace and pardon too. The " Savior Jah" (Jesus) declares The who and what Thou art: The Spirit moves, and faith prepares The love-note of each heart.

Thou lowest me, Lord! how pleasant 'tis To lisp of love to Thee.

Thy love to us! 'tis perfect bliss And shall forever be.

Thy name and works and self concur To speak redeeming grace; To God they bring the sinner near, And songs of gladness raise.

-C.M.

Vol 01 - The Promise of the Father

The Promise of the Father When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son. Never had intercourse been so fraught with healing and joy to publicans and sinners. The Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins. He was come to save, what was lost. Never had saints of God listened to such words of sweetness whereby was disclosed to them the bosom of His Father, which He, the only begotten Son, knew so well. " The Word was made flesh," one of them could say, " and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." In the simple tale of the Gospels, we have the blessedness of the disciples in the presence of the Lord. There is no distance nor reserve. He speaks to them face to face; He calls them and treats them as His friends. And O what a friend was He! Blessed pattern of all meekness, of lowliness unknown, of patience that could not be wearied, of grace that flowed out the more, the more He was wounded in the house of His friends, like a sweet herb that breathes fragrance when trodden by the heedless foot of man! It was true that this presence rendered more conspicuous the infirmities, the dangers, the sins, and the enemies of God’s people. But never did murmur break from His lips who had undertaken their cause-God’s cause. Notwithstanding their unbelief, their pride, their insensibility, and their perverseness,- never did He complain, " Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? Wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?" Instead of saying-" Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers?"-Jesus, the good shepherd, looks onward through the vista of His sufferings to the day when He could say, " Behold I and the children which God hath given me." Instead of saying-" Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people?"-He, and He alone, could say, " The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

It was, indeed, a crisis when Jesus appeared. God had given His law, but holy, just and good, as the commandment was, it could not better, and was not meant to better, the heart of man. It detected and condemned what issued thence, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. Prophets, too, had been sent by the Lord God of their fathers. But what could they avail save to show the importunate love of Him who rose up betimes and sent them, because he had compassion on His people and on His dwelling-place? They mocked and misused His prophets " until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy." In this state of things He appeared. Truly we may say that in the person of Jesus, God brought himself nigh to the sinner. But in vain. Jesus must suffer for sins; the just for the unjust. He must bring us to God. All might bear Him witness and wonder at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth; and surely had there been one pure thought in the heart of man, one feeling undepraved by sin, Jesus must have drawn it forth. But there was none-nothing Godward. His presence, therefore, could but demonstrate that the carnal mind is enmity against God. " If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth Me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they

both seen and hated both Me and my Father."

" Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up." The grand basis of blessing was laid. God’s righteousness was declared not only at this time, but for the passing over of sins that were past in His forbearance.

Still, while in that death, all the past dealings of God were divinely vindicated, Christ himself, in anticipating. the anointing oil being the well-known symbol of the unction from the Holy One. Thus Jesus was first anointed Himself with the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:38); afterward being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, " He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33). Having borne the wrath of God, and having annulled by death him that had its power, and so removed every obstacle, He was enabled to send the Holy Ghost to dwell in the believers, so that the apostle could appeal to them, " Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Plainly also the miraculous conception of Jesus is totally distinct from His anointing, though both were of the Holy Ghost. As man born of the virgin, He was the Son of God. But besides this, the Holy Ghost descends upon Jesus baptized and entering upon His public service: in other words, He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power. Analogously, we find that as to believers, their life and relationship to God, and their anointing by the Holy Ghost are quite distinct. When Jesus arose, He could say, " Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." But they were not yet anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power. Subsequently to His resurrection, He says, " Behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." Waiting, they found the sure promise of the Father. The Holy Ghost was given. They were anointed then and not before. Nor was this anointing, I need hardly add, a boon conferred there and then only; for the apostle in addressing the Corinthians writes, " Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." These are assuredly not signs and wonders wrought by the hand or tongue, but the blessed presence and actings of the Spirit in the heart. Compare also 1 John 2:20-27. In principle, then, the coming of the promised Spirit was contingent on the departure of Jesus; and in fact, it was when He took His seat, as the glorified man, in heaven, that the Spirit was sent down. Assembled together with the disciples previous to his ascension, He " commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of me: for John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence" (Acts 1:4-5). The next chapter records the accomplishment of the promise on the day of Pentecost. The Comforter was given. Now IN them was He, who was promised to abide with them FOR EVER* (John 14:1-31); the third person of the Trinity being now, and permanently, present in them, as truly as the second person had been with them before He ascended to heaven. The Holy Ghost was the grand witness, as His presence in the disciples was the new and wondrous fruit, of the glorification of Jesus in heaven.

(* This is true, I suppose, individually as well as corporately; and thus the apostle exhorts, " Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of’ redemption"--(not lest He should

leave you); whereas in the Old Testament the cry is, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me" (Psalms 51:2),-" Quench not the Spirit" (in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-28) connects itself with "Despise not prophesyings." The subject is a different one altogether.) Are the operations of the Spirit of God from the beginning denied? In nowise. Creation, providence and redemption, all speak of Him. His energy is to be traced in every sphere of God's dealings. Who moved upon the face of the waters -strove with man before the deluge-filled Bezaleel with understanding and all manner of workmanship-enabled Moses to bear the burden of Israel, or others to share it? By whom wrought Samson? By whom prophesied Saul? It was by the Spirit of the Lord. And as in their early national history, His good Spirit instructed the people, even so could the prophet assure the poor returned remnant, " According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remained' among you." Were any regenerate? They were born of the Spirit; and the blessed and holy actings of faith in the elders who obtained a good report were, beyond controversy, the results of His influence. So far, the way of God is still and necessarily the same. Jesus set not aside in the least the need of the Spirit's intervention. He proclaimed its necessity as a fixed, irreversible truth-" Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Far from weakening its place, He rather gave it a prominence never so clearly enunciated before, though, of course, always true.

Life, peace and sonship (while all are communicated and known by the effectual working of the Holy Ghost), are in no sense the presence of the Comforter. We have seen that the disciples possessed these privileges before the Lord Jesus ascended. They are therefore entirely distinct from the promise of the Father, which the disciples did not possess, and which none ever did or could possess till Jesus was glorified. The presence of the Comforter is clearly the distinctive blessing since Pentecost. It was never enjoyed before, though the Spirit had wrought, and wrought ravingly as regards believers at all times. The communication of life through faith (as common to all the redeemed); of the power of intelligence (Luke 24:45, compare Acts 1:15-26, 1 John 2:20-27);-of life more abundantly, as: connected with the risen second Adam (life-giving Spirit, John 20:22), which indeed was needful as the basis of sympathy with all his future services; -of the Holy Ghost personally, at once the power of testimony-the seal (the Spirit of adoption?)-the Earnest (according to the subject, connected with the Lord of glory, which He in-wrought in the believer) is the outline which another has suggested. While the liberty of filial and fraternal love leaves the heart free to communicate the result of its researches, the Divine fullness of the written word creates (no wonder!) differences of thought and makes accurate classification next to impossible with those who know but in part.-ED.

●Proper Names of the Old Testament.

Observe: They had, each of them, a meaning,-which, for the most part, is traceable. In some cases the cause of the selection of the name is obvious: thus, Genesis 2:7, " the Lord God formed man [■■■Adam] of the dust of the ground [■■■■ Adanzah]"; " and Adam called his wife's name Eve [■■■Havah] because she was the mother of all living [■■ , Hay]"; 4:l," she bare Cain [pp gotten], and said, I have gotten [■■■■■ gotten] a man from the Lord"; 4:2, " his brother Abel [■■■Hebei]" a breath (as was his life); 4:25, " called his name Seth [re] for God.... hath appointed me [■■Sheth] another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew."

Vol 01 - What Are the Meanings of the Hebrew Words in the Book of Psalms, Which Are Not Translate...

What Are the Meanings of the Hebrew Words in the Book of Psalms, Which Are Not Translated Into English?

1. Aijeleth-Shahar.

(Psalms 22:1-31 title).

Aijeleth occurs only here and in Proverbs 5:19, "the loving hind"; and Jeremiah 14:5, " the hind." But there are many kindred words which confirm this meaning.

Shahar occurs about twenty-three times; it means morning, e.g. Genesis 19:15, " when the morning arose"; and 32:24 (25) " the breaking of the day"; and 26 (27), " the day breaketh," etc. The marginal reading for Aijeleth-Shahar, given by the translators is, " hind of the morning."

Query? Was this the name of an instrument; or of a tune to which the Psalm was to be sung; or was it rather a name given to the Psalm on account of its subject.

2. Alamoth occurs in 1 Chronicles 15:20, " with psalteries on Alamoth";Psalms 46:1-11 title, " A song upon Alamoth." The same word Alamoth (which is only the plural of the word commonly used for Virgin, as Isaiah 7:14, a virgin shall conceive," etc.), is, however, found, Psalms 68:25, "the damsels playing," etc. Song of Solomon 1:3, " The virgins love thee"; Song of Solomon 6:8, " Virgins without number."

"For the Virgins" (1:e. virgin voices) makes good sense, and accords with modern singing: as we say, " for boys' voices."

It may, however, be the name of an instrument, or of a tune.

3. Al-Taschith occurs in the titles of Psalms 57:1-11; Psalms 58:1-11; Psalms 59:1-17; Psalms 75:1-10.

Al means not, and Taschith, destroy, as the translator's margin reads "Destroy not."

Observation must decide whether this was connected with the subject of the Psalms, or whether it was the name of a tune.

4. Degrees. Though anglicized songs of Degrees in Psalms 120:1-7; Psalms 121:1-8; Psalms 122:1-9; Psalms 123:1-4; Psalms 124:1-8; Psalms 125:1-5; Psalms 126:1-6; Psalms 127:1-5; Psalms 128:1-6; Psalms 129:1-8; Psalms 130:1-8; Psalms 131:1-3; Psalms 132:1-18; Psalms 133:1-3; Psalms 134:1-3, a few words may not be amiss, inasmuch as "Degrees" is nearly as unintelligible to some, as would Mangaloth be. The same word is used in Exodus 20:26, for the steps of an altar, as in 1 Kings 10:19, of a throne; 2 Kings 9:13, the stairs, and 20:9, the degrees of a sun-dial; 1 Chronicles 17:17, a man of high degree;Ezra 7:9, for a journey, " began to go

up";Ezekiel 11:5, "the things which come into your mind"; Amos 9:6, " he that buildeth his stories in the heaven (marg. ascensions or spheres). The word from which it is derived means, simply, to go up-ascend.

Luther renders it," in the higher choir," (im hohren Thor), higher, either as to position in which placed, or, perhaps, tone of voice.

Some have supposed these songs were sung on the steps of the temple; so the LXX., and Vulgate. To my own mind, there is an internal evidence in them, of their being written, in grace, for the times when, thrice in the year, the males were to go up from their homes and appear before the Lord. A few of them may also have reference to such goings up as Ezra's from captivity.

5. Gittith. Psalms 8:1-9; Psalms 81:1-16; Psalms 84:1-12. The word Gath, wine-press, is by most connected with this word, as the inhabitants of Gath were called Gittites.

Whether the vat; or Gath, the town; or an instrument of the name; or a tune is referred to; Query?

Some one suggests that they are all joyous songs, suited to be sung on such an occasion as a harvest-home, or a vintage.

6. Higgaion. Thus once rendered in Psalms 9:16. It occurs in three other places:" and the meditation of my heart," Psalms 19:14; " harp with a solemn sound,"Psalms 92:3; "and their device against me," Lamentations 3:62. The humming sound of a harp struck, is supposed to correspond to the indistinct thoughts of musing; or the device against one who is hated; for the device, in this case, tells, but indistinctly, the hatred within.

I do not see why meditation, or solemn sound, or device might not have been put for Higgaion, and the verse anglicized with the addition of some words in italics, as (this was their) meditation, or device; or a solemn sound, (this).

7. Jonath- Elem - Re-Chokim is only found. Psalms 56:1-13 title.

Jonah means dove, as in Genesis 8:8-12; or pigeon, as in Leviticus 1:14, etc.

Elem means bound; the verbis frequently used to mark silence; as, I was dumb,Psalms 39:3; Psalms 39:10 : but it is applicable to any binding: as, Genesis 37:7, binding sheaves. The word Elem only occurs here, where it is commonly said to mean silence, and in Psalms 58:1, where it is rendered "Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation?" (1:e. mass of persons bound together)..

Rechokim, in Hebrew, is a distinct word from Elem; though, in English, sometimes printed as one with it; it is a participle of the verb translated (Psalms 22:11),"Be not far from me;" see also 5: 19, and 35:22, and 38:21, and 71:12, and 109:17, &c.

" The dove of silence (among) strangers" is a common literal. The dove of-that which is bound - persons afar off-are its three representative terms in English.-Compare the Psalm itself.

8. Leannoth, see under 9.

9. Mahalath occurs alone Psalms 53:1-6 The dictionary says, "meaning uncertain." Why not, as others, sickness, or disease, taking it as the common noun of the verb (Genesis 48:1) " thy father

is sick;"Psalms 35:13, " when they were sick," etc. The 53rd Psalm is striking, concerning the diseased state of the nation, and its importance as a Psalm is seen in its being given a second time in the book, but slightly altered (see 14). The word Mahalath also occurs with Leannoth, after it, Psalms 88:1-18, which may be the plural of the word rendered Wormwood,Deuteronomy 29:18; Proverbs 5:4; Jeremiah 9:15; Jeremiah 23:15, &c.; and Hemlock,Amos 6:12 - unless Leannoth be a proper name, concerning the sickness of Leannoth; concerning the disease of wormwood (1:e. the deadly, bitter disease), which would suit the Psalm. The LXX. divided Leannoth into k, the preposition to, and ■■■ , sing, respond to; and consider Mahalath either a proper name, or the name of a tune, or instrument, ■περμαελεθ του ■ποκριθ■ναι, to sing on, or to Mahalath. I prefer the other.

10. Maschil. Translated in margin, " or giving instruction."

There are thirteen of these Psalms, viz. Psalms 1:1-6; Psalms 2:1-12; Psalms 3:1-8; Psalms 4:1-8; Psalms 5:1-12; Psalms 6:1-10; Psalms 7:1-17; Psalms 8:1-9; Psalms 9:1-20; Psalms 10:1-18; Psalms 11:1-7; Psalms 12:1-8; Psalms 13:1-6; Psalms 14:1-7; Psalms 15:1-5; Psalms 16:1-11; Psalms 17:1-15; Psalms 18:1-50; Psalms 19:1-14; Psalms 20:1-9; Psalms 21:1-13; Psalms 22:1-31; Psalms 23:1-6; Psalms 24:1-10; Psalms 25:1-22; Psalms 26:1-12; Psalms 27:1-14; Psalms 28:1-9; Psalms 29:1-11; Psalms 30:1-12; Psalms 31:1-24; Psalms 32:1-11; Psalms 42:1-11; Psalms 44:1-26; Psalms 45:1-17; Psalms 54:1-7; Psalms 55:1-23; Psalms 74:1-23; Psalms 78:1-72; Psalms 88:1-18; Psalms 89:1-52; Psalms 142:1-7. As the translators have given a rendering here, I say no more than that their side readings (as found in King James' Bible) are as authoritative as their text, and of far more value than modern " lit." which are often worse than nonsense. As a whole, their translation is as wonderful as is the mercy which God has shown to this land, in connection with it, as above that of other lands.

11. The Michtam Psalms are 16, 56- 60

I know no better rendering than the common one, a golden psalm. The word Michtam occurs no where else; but the word rendered, in gold of Ophir, Psalms 45:9, and golden wedge (Isaiah 13:12) is a kindred word, and occurs nines times, as gold, and in no other sense.

12. Muth-Labben. Psalms 9:1-20 title.

Muth (Psalms 48:14), our guide unto death.

La, for the; ben, son. "Concerning death for the Son." The LXX. ■π■ρ τ■ν κρυφ■ων το■ υ■ο■, concerning the secret things of the Son.

13. Neginah, of which Neginoth is the plural.

Job 30:9, " I am their song";Psalms 69:12; Psalms 77:6, song; so Isaiah 38:20; and Lamentations 3:14; Lamentations 5:14, music;Habakkuk 3:19," on my stringed instruments" (margin, neginoth) shows the meaning plainly enough. The verb is to strike the strings. Neginah occurs on Psalms 61:1-8 title: Neginoth,Psalms 4:1-8; Psalms 6:1-10; Psalms 54:1-7; Psalms 55:1-23; Psalms 67:1-7; Psalms 76:1-12 Upon the stringed instrument, or upon the stringed instruments.

14. Nehiloth. Psalms 5:1-12 The pipes, or flutes, as commonly derived from the verb, to pierce.

15. Selah occurs seventy times in the Psalms, and three times in Habakkuk.

All sorts of tortures have been inflicted on this word, to make it speak. Some take its three consonants as the first letters of three words, and render it as equivalent to, our da capo, in music: let the musician return. But this is very unlike old Hebrew.

Gesenius says it is Silence, supposing it equivalent to the words, at rest,Daniel 4:4; as if Shelah and Selah were the same. Though 1 desire to read with shoes off my feet (for the place is holy, and I dread conjectures), it might, ac-Cording to kindred words, mean raising. And so silence, as the result of one's rising from singing; for the idea of weighing is found in tem Lamentations 4:2, in a good sense, comparable to gold; and also, in a bad sense rev Psalms 119:118, trodden down.

I observe that Selah is put often where a pause is natural, as after some peculiar statement; and thus, practically, I feel that it is pause, or silence, with Gesenius. More I cannot say.

16. Sheminith occurs 1 Chronicles 15:21; Psalms 6:1-10 title, 12 title. The translator's margin gives, on the eighth. It is the common ordinal adjective for eight, and refers to strings of instruments.

Some render it Octave, as denoting that it is to be played an octave lower than it is written: so, I think, Gesenius. I prefer the margin.

Observe that in 1 Ch 20:21, Alamoth and Sheminith are in contra-position.

17. Shiggaion. Psalms 7:1-17, and Habakkuk 3:1, upon Shigionoth in the plural. The verb is, to err, as in Psalms 119:10; Psalms 119:21; Psalms 119:118; Leviticus 4:13, sin through ignorance. A wandering ode -an ode of wandering.

Variable songs-songs with variations. But I prefer either of the former.

18. Shoshannim. The lilies, as in Song of Solomon 2:16; Song of Solomon 4:5, etc., occurs Psalms 45:1-17; Psalms 69:1-36 and in connection with Eduth,Psalms 80:1-19.

Shushan-Eduth (Psalms 40:1-17) is the same word nearly, it occurs only 1 Kings 7:19, lily. Eduth is the common word for the testimony, in Exodus, etc. The lily is supposed to refer to an instrument, from its shape: so, I think, Calmet. Others connect it with the name of a song. The word for upon may just as will be rendered concerning, to, etc.

Aijeleth -Shahar…the hind of the morning.

Alamoth…Virginals.

Al-Taschith…Destroy not.

Degree…To go up, ascend.

Gittith…The wine-vat.

Higgaion…Meditation.

Jonah-Elem-Rechokim…The dove dumb (among) strangers.

Mahalath…Disease.

Mahalath-Leannoth…Bitter disease.

Maschil…To instruct.

Michtam…Golden (psalm).

Gnal Muth-Labben.

Neginah … A stringed instrument.

Neginoth … The stringed instruments.

Nehiloth … The pipes.

Selah… Pause.

Sheminith … Eight Stringed instrument.

Shiggaion … Wandering ode.

Shoshannim… The lilies.

Shushan…The lily.

Shushan Eduth… of the testimony.

Psalms 1:1-6; Psalms 2:1-12; Psalms 6:1-10; Psalms 11:1-7; Psalms 12:1-8; Psalms 15:1-5; Psalms 16:1-11; Psalms 17:1-15; Psalms 19:1-14; Psalms 21:1-13; Psalms 23:1-6; Psalms 26:1-12; Psalms 28:1-9; Psalms 29:1-11; Psalms 32:1-11; Psalms 34:1-22; Psalms 39:1-13; Psalms 93:1-5; Psalms 101:1-8; Psalms 102:1-28; Psalms 103:1-22; Psalms 107:1-43; Psalms 110:1-7; Psalms 111:1-10; Psalms 112:1-10; Psalms 114:1-8; Psalms 117:1-2; Psalms 120:1-7; Psalms 121:1-8; Psalms 124:1-8; Psalms 125:1-5; Psalms 126:1-6; Psalms 127:1-5; Psalms 128:1-6; Psalms 129:1-8; Psalms 130:1-8; Psalms 131:1-3; Psalms 132:1-18; Psalms 133:1-3; Psalms 134:1-3; Psalms 137:1-9; Psalms 139:1-24; Psalms 140:1-13; Psalms 141:1-10; Psalms 142:1-7; Psalms 148:1-14; Psalms 149:1-9; Psalms 150:1-6 (forty-eight) have not ■■■■■ God. In Psalms 43:1-5; Psalms 44:1-26; Psalms 45:1-17; Psalms 49:1-20; Psalms 51:1-19; Psalms 52:1-9; Psalms 53:1-6; Psalms 57:1-11; Psalms 59:1-17; Psalms 61:1-8; Psalms 62:1-12; Psalms 63:1-11; Psalms 65:1-13; Psalms 66:1-20; Psalms 67:1-7; Psalms 73:1-28; Psalms 77:1-20; Psalms 82:1-8; Psalms 114:1-8; Psalms 150:1-6. (1:e. twenty) ■■■■ does not occur LORD.

Much of the force and beauty of the Psalms hangs upon the Divine names, titles, and glories used in them. (Signed) Va. The Editor would add a few general remarks to the foregoing, in connection with the Book of Psalms. The name "Psalms" is evidently derived from the Greek ωαλμο■, lyrics, as expressive of their being fit to be sung to the lyre or other stringed instruments. In Hebrew, however, the title is different, viz., ■■■■■ and signifies " hymns", or " praises", which in Greek would rather be ■μνοι. Than ψαλμο■: only one Psalm (145), however, is headed ■■■■, The titles. Each Psalm, as the general rule, has a title. Those which have none, have been called " orphans", in number twenty-three, viz.: 1, 2, 10, 33, 43, 71, 91, 93-97, 99, 104, 105, 107, 114-116, 118, 119, 136, 137, and eleven more, making the number of orphans in all thirty-four, if the word "Hallelujah" is not looked at as a title; viz.: 106, 111, 112, 113, 117, 135, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150. As to the value of the titles: they are, I believe, an integral part of the Divine text; even if the

inserting of them be ascribed to Ezra, as is the arrangement of the present order of the Psalms by some. The difficulty the Septuagint translators found in translating them into Greek, suggests that they were ancient in their days; but their authority rests upon the same basis as the rest of the text. The use of them. It was, we may presume, the difficulty of deciding this, which caused the translators to preserve in the English text the Hebrew words. The difficulty may be seen in the option given in the paper above, and a much larger one might be made.

Acrostics are of peculiar interest in Scripture, as showing the condescension of God to man's ways, even in the style of composition. I know of none in the New Testament. In the Lamentations, each verse of the 1James 2:1-26 nd and 4th chapters begins with the letters of the alphabet in their successional order. Chapter 3 is in triplets; the first three verses have ■; the next three have ■, and so on. In the Psalms, the 119th is in octaves; the first eight verses begin with ■; the eight next with ■; and so on.

Psalms 25:1-22; Psalms 34:1-22; Psalms 37:1-40; Psalms 145:1-21, also are in measure acrostic, though not perfectly so. The Book of Psalms is, in some Hebrew Bibles, divided into five Books. The following have been suggested as the scope of each of these Books:

Book 1.-Christ in his sufferings, in the midst of them, in the discovery of the people he is among, and the responsible relationship to God he thereon assumes, as identifying himself with the saints. 1-41.

Book 2.-Himself and the remnant as cast out by Antichrist, out of Jerusalem. 42-72.

Book 3.--Himself about Israel, as lying beyond Judah. 73-89.

Book 4.-His coming into the world. 90-106.

Book 5.-The Great Hallel-all from every part coming up to the blessing of Jehovah-Shammah. 107 to end. May the Lord bless us in the study of his word!-[ED],

Vol 01 - What Is the Church?*

What Is the Church?* This is a question raised in many hearts by that which is passing around us-a question of the deepest interest in itself, even though circumstances did not make one feel the need of a clear and satisfactory answer. But the state of the professing world now so much agitated on the question of the Church in every form, and in which a multiplicity of movements, (which in general only create more perplexity and questions in most souls), present themselves as the reply to the need which is felt of finding the truth on this point-this state of things, I say, will render a serious examination of what the word of God says on the subject useful to many, in order that, enlightened by that only true light, they may, by learning at the fountain of light, while putting themselves in possession of the light itself, be able to judge calmly and soundly of all that presents itself as being the light, and, as a consequence, claims submission, or at least adherence to the course which is proposed as being such. But this is not all; I doubt not but that God has not only permitted, but that it has been His will that this question should have been raised, in order that His children may learn what is the extent and what are the thoughts of His love; and that they may take morally, and with true Christian devotedness, a position practically answering His infinite goodness. For the question of the Church, seen as presented in the Bible, is one eminently practical. The position in which the Christian is placed, by the very fact that he is a member of the Church of God; governs the affections, and forms the character. This consideration makes more opportune a work which views the Church in the light of God’s word. As a matter of fact, the question of the Church is generally presented as a question of the organization of some new body amongst Christians-a question of which the heart gets wearied. Hence, it follows, that many persons discard the subject altogether as injurious to sanctification, and seek, and induce others to seek, spirituality by setting aside a point of which, after all, it is evident that the New Testament is full, and of which it treats in terms which attach to it a great practical importance. In fine, if-as many serious Christians think-we are in the last times, although circumstances can add nothing to the essential importance of truth, the fact that we find ourselves to be near the end of the age, will add much to its practical importance. The obligation under which the wise virgins were to watch and to keep their lamps ready, at all times, became an imperative duty when the cry had gone forth at midnight, " Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

(* Written in French, this Paper was translated into English, and then revised by the author, before the French went to press.-Ed.) The considerations I have just presented, will have clearly pointed out to the reader the object of this little paper, viz.-an examination as to what is the teaching of the word of God on the subject of the Church; and the practical results, for our souls, which flow thence. My aim is not to examine the basis of individual salvation, although the teaching of the word on the Church throws much light on this point. It is even of consequence to understand that they are distinct things; for God never passes by our individual responsibility, whatever privileges may be conferred upon us by being joined to an assembly. We are saved as individuals, although God may gather in one body those whom He saves, if He sees fit. Salvation is a thing which, though complete in Christ, supposes in the heart of the person enjoying it, personal exercises

which go on necessarily and exclusively in his own conscience, and which bring his soul into immediate connection with God, and without which, all connection with Him-all happiness-the existence of spiritual life would be impossible. The intercourse between God and an intelligent and responsible soul, which before was in sin, necessarily supposes that, consequent on the establishment of this new relationship, many things pass within, which are for that soul alone. The special form which the relationship takes, adds, and may add, much-may give a special character to it; and this is what takes place, but this does not do away with personal relationship. This is one of the essential differences between the truth of the word and the idea of the Church as it is viewed by the Romanist; who, making ordinances a means of salvation, attaches salvation to being of the Church, instead of making the Church the assembly of those who are saved. If but one individual were saved, his salvation would be equally perfect and sure, but he would not be the Church. This (the Church) has a thought-an additional relationship to the other (that of the saved individual). What is this thought? Let us lay aside human definitions, and cleave to the word. The Church is something infinitely precious to Christ. He " loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." This is a revelation which makes us feel the importance which God attaches to what He calls the Church. What an object of the affections of Christ-of His care-and how glorious will the accomplishment of the counsels of God be respecting this Church! What a privilege to be part of it! This passage teaches us, moreover, that there is in the union of Christ and the Church, all the intimacy that exists between a husband and a wife beloved,-a feeble figure, after all, of the reality of this great mystery, that we are thus members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones; that the Church holds to. Christ the place which Eve held with regard to Adam-the figure of Him that was to come-who was associated with him in the enjoyment of all that had been conferred on him by God. This last thought, it is true, is only suggested here by the analogy of the position of Eve, used by the apostle to represent that of the Church; but it is taught as a doctrine elsewhere. It is natural to suppose that what holds so prominent a place in the mind of God should be found more than once in the word; and such we shall find to be the case in passages, the bearing of which we will presently consider. At the same time, it will be easily understood, by the nature of the thing itself, that this position is quite peculiar; that such an association with Christ is a special object of the counsels and purposes of God; for the place of a bride, like that of Eve, is a very special one. She is not the inheritance; she is more than a child, however dear it may be to the father. It is a higher thing than being God’s people, though both may be true at the same time. It is difficult to imagine anything more closely linked with self, than one’s own wife, one’s own body. " No man," says the apostle, to express it, " ever yet hated his own flesh." It is one’s self. It must be evident to the reader, that from such a relationship must flow immensely practical consequences; because it is connected, at the same time, with the closest affections and the most absolute duties. The Lord Himself expresses the force of the position of His Church the first time He speaks of it in a formal manner after the commencement of its existence, when He says " Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Let us notice the three chief points presented by Ephesians, chapter 5 of which has suggested these reflections. Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it. It is redeemed at the cost of His blood, of His life, of Himself.

Having purchased it exclusively for Himself, he begins secondly to fashion it, to sanctify it, that it may be according to His own heart's desire; that He may, in the third place, present it to Himself a glorious Church, without the least thing unbecoming the glory, or that might offend the eye or the heart of her Divine Bridegroom. There is here a testimony to the divinity of Jesus, so much the more remarkable, as it is only by the way, and the allusion is made as to a known truth. God, having formed Eve, presented her to the first Adam; but Christ Himself presents the Church to Himself'; because, if He be second Adam, He is, at the same time, the one who can present it to Himself, as being the author of its existence, of its beauty, and of the perfection in which it must appear in heaven, to be worthy of such a Bridegroom and of the glory that is there.

We will consider its history further on; but we may already observe here, that whatever may be the circumstances through which the Church is called to pass, she is always considered as a whole-as much while she is being purified by the word upon earth, as when she is presented glorious to her Bridegroom in heaven. The redemption of this body, by the cross, has taken place upon earth. Her purification through the word, by the Spirit, also takes place on earth. The glorious result, at the return of Christ, will take place in heaven, for which place she will have been made ready. Although the marriage has not yet taken place, the relationship has always existed, as to its rights. I do not speak merely as regards the eternal counsels of God, but in fact, as for the knowledge and the duties of those who were called. Since Christ purchased the Church to Himself (I speak of the fact, and historically now, always allowing time for the communication of the truth, as to this, by the Holy Ghost), the Church has been His, as regards the conscience of those who were called to the enjoyment of this position The relationship exists; and as Christ has always been faithful, the Church ought also to have been so too. Her purification, on the part of Christ, had necessarily reference to this relationship, as this passage formally proves; it ought to have been viewed in the same light by Christians-by those who, alas! can fail in this relationship as in all others; but they are responsible for faithfulness in it. The manner in which this truth must act upon the knowledge of an accomplished salvation, upon sanctification, as well as upon the joy of hope, is plain. For, with regard to the first, the existence of the Church is based on the fact that Christ has loved it and given Himself for it; so that its purchase, its salvation, the gracious perfect love of Him who redeemed it, and that with the end in view which cannot fail of presenting it in glory to Himself,-form the basis of its whole life, of its everyday relations. It is not a people put to the test by a rule given. The Church is the subject of a perfect work through which Christ has purchased it to Himself when it was enslaved to Satan, defiled and guilty. It has no other responsibility as the Church, but that which is based on its being the purchase of Christ. This tells her, no doubt, that she ought to be entirely His; but if she ought to be His, it is because she is so already. The Christian, instructed of God, in this doctrine has the peaceful assurance (an assurance which gives a calmness that is the basis of the sweetest affections) that he belongs to Christ according to His perfect love and the efficacy of a work in which Christ could not fail-that His heart might have satisfaction in the object which the Father had given Him. As regards sanctification, the influence of this truth in the conscience is equally great; for it is the purification of that which already belongs to Christ in an absolute manner, in order that it may be fit to live with Him forever: a purification which extends consequently to the thoughts, the affections, the manner of viewing things in all respects. Being wholly His, the Church has to do with Him in each movement of the heart, in each sentiment; if not, she fails in her relationship with Him, in any circumstance in which it is not so. As to the result which He has had in view, He will certainly no more fail, thanks be unto God, than He

has with regard to the redemption:-He will present it to Himself without any wrinkle. But the heart of the Christian ought to respond to that work.

Such is the position of the Church and her relationship with Christ; but there is a consequence resulting from it, the figure of which we have seen in the connection in which Eve was placed with the Creator, but on which I will make a few more remarks by the way. Christ, says the Apostle, at the end of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, is the Head of the Church, " which is His body, the fullness of [or that which makes complete] Him that filleth all in all:" that is to say, Christ is the head, and the Church the body; and as the body is the complement of the head to make up a man, so is it with Christ and the Church: He, as Head, directing, exercising all authority over the Church- His body;-but the Church, as the body, rendering complete the mystical man, according to the eternal counsels of God. For it is evident that this is no question about the divine person of Christ. But in the counsels of God, the Mediator Christ would not have been complete without the Church.

Let us remark by the way, - that it is this thought which was completely hid (hid in God) under the old covenant, and which is not found in the whole of the Old Testament. The idea of a Christ not perfect simply in His own person, as an individual, would have been un- intelligible to the most advanced saint of the Old Testament. There was to be blessing under His government -but the being a part of the Christ, as a member of His body, would have been incomprehensible. The union between Jew and Gentile which flows from it will come before us afterward. Now the effect of such a union of the Church with Christ has been to associate the Church in His dominion over all things, with all his glory, such as He received it, as Mediator, from his Father-and such is the force even of Ephesians 1:21-22, which we have just quoted. That is why he sets forth the members of the Church as a new creation-as being the fruit of that same power which placed Christ there-verse 19, and chapter h. verse 7. And that is connected with the whole of the first chapter where the apostle has revealed the fixed purpose of God for the administration of the fullness of times, which is, that he will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in Him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance. In the meantime, God has given us, who have believed before the manifestation of Christ, His Spirit, as the earnest, until the redemption of the inheritance itself. Therefore, the apostle shows that, in order that we might enjoy the inheritance with Christ, we are the objects of the exercise of the same power which placed Him above all things when he was, in grace, in our state; and that in Him, we are in His state. If it be asked how such things can be; chap. 2:7 tells us the reason. But numerous declarations confirm the consequences to us of this union. We only speak here of the consequences. " The glory," says the Lord, " which thou gavest me, I have given them, that the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:1-39). " Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"-(1 Corinthians 6:2-3.) I do not speak of these things as being all exclusively characteristic of the Church, but as of things which, to us, are the consequence of our belonging to it.

After this short review of the position of the Church with regard to Christ and the whole creation which will be subjected to him, we will consider in a more consecutive manner, the doctrine of the word respecting the Church itself, and then the position it holds historically in those ways of God, the course of which is given to us in detail in the Bible. The fixed purpose of God, as it is expressly

revealed to us in the first chapter of Ephesians, is to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth. The Church will be associated with Him, as His body-His bride-at that time.-(Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 5:27.) But all things are not yet put under Him; God has not yet put them all as a footstool under His feet; nor is the Church as yet presented in glory to Christ, who is yet sitting on the right hand of God.-(Hebrews 2:8.) It is needless to quote passages to prove that the Church is not yet glorified nor raised; we are, dear Christian reader, you and I, proofs of it* - happy to be so - waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

(* I do not feel it needful to notice here the heresy of a handful of enthusiasts who think that the Lord has come, and that the resurrection is past already. Some avo wing this latter doctrine as a necessary consequence of the other; others saying nothing about it. The last verses of Revelation 16:1-21 to the end, suffice to refute this idea. It is well to bear in mind that the Revelation was written long after the destruction of Jerusalem.)

Whilst waiting, then, for the happy moment of our meeting with Jesus, is there a Church? Did it enter into the thoughts of God that there should be a Church upon earth, till the final accomplishment of His magnificent designs respecting her glory in heaven? There can be no doubt about it, to one that is subject to the word. Let us examine the word on this point. Christ Himself is the first to announce the commencement of the Church:* "Upon this rock I will build my Church." The declaration that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, skews plainly that it is not a question of the Church already presented in glory. It is upon earth. I would notice a few important points which are revealed by this passage. The Church was yet to begin. Christ, recognized as Son of the living God, was to form the foundation of a new work upon the earth. The fact that there are believers upon the earth, and even believers acknowledging Jesus to be the Christ, does not constitute the Church. It was so when Jesus spoke, and yet the Church was still to be builded. This was a work to be done, as regarded the children of God; and this is confirmed by a declaration of John’s respecting the involuntary prophecy of Caiaphas, that Jesus should die for the Jewish nation, " and not for that nation only," adds the apostle, "but that He should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad." There were already children of God scattered abroad-isolated; Christ, by His death, was to gather them together; not merely to save them so that they might be together in heaven - since they were children of God, that was done already-but He was to gather them together in one. There were already believers; the Church was** yet to be builded by the gathering together of these believers, and that upon the earth. We know that this has taken place as a fact, through the word of Jesus, and through the power of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. We may cite here the request of Jesus, that not only those already manifested, but those who should believe through their word, might be one, that the world might believe. Before passing on to the epistles, we may remark, by the way, that the Lord, besides the general idea of the Church which He was about to build, gives us an insight into the practical operation of the assembly in detail (Matthew 18:1-35); attaching to it, at the same time the efficacy of this operation, and the authority of heaven itself-though but two or three should thus form the assembly-provided it was really in His name they were thus met. How precious the light that the word affords for times of darkness!

(* This declaration of the Lord (Matthew 16:1-28) has a more decisive character, if we consider the circumstances under which it was uttered. In the beginning of the chapter, He had pronounced the

judgment of the Jewish generation, giving them His death under the figure of Jonas, as the sign; and He left to themselves those who were seeking a sign. Then He asked His disciples what was said of Him. Peter, on this occasion, makes the unique confession -" Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This latter part is only found on this occasion, and it is what gives its peculiar importance to this confession. The Son of the living God, in building His Church, would shelter it from the power of Hades, and of him who had the power of death. The death of the Messiah might break the links between Israel after the flesh and the head of their blessing, whatever grace might do afterward for that nation; but whatever was based on the power of the resurrection (and it is in resurrection that Christ has been declared the Son of God with power), was secured against him who, at the most, had the power of death. St. Peter is always full of this idea of life (1 Peter 1:3; 1 Peter 1:21; 1 Peter 1:23-24; 1 Peter 2:4-5). Matthew 17:1-27 adds the millennial glory of the Son of man; and towards the end, leading His disciples back to the subject of His rejection amongst the Jews, explains the ways of grace, and on this occasion introduces Church action (18:17).)

(** Remark here that what is falsely called an invisible church was precisely the state of Israel-a body of professing Israelites, by birth and ordinances, and a certain number of isolated believers in the midst of that, enjoying, through faith, the goodness of God and their common faith when they met.-(See Matthew 3:16, and Luke 2:38.) It is out of this state that the Lord has brought believers by " building the Church.") But through the descent of the Holy Ghost, the doctrine of the Church has received a much fuller development. The fact of her existence is declared in the second of Acts, " All that believed were together*, and had all things common," and the number of them was already three thousand: " And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."** The union and unity of the saved ones were accomplished, as a fact, by the presence of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. They formed one body upon the earth; a visible body, owned of God, to which all whom He called to the knowledge of Himself joined themselves, and that, as led of the Lord who was working in their hearts. It was the Church of God, so far composed of Jews only. The patience of God was yet waiting in Jerusalem; and if this latter owed ten thousand talents, by the death of Jesus, He was still proposing repentance by the testimony of the Holy Ghost. God was remembering mercy, and declaring that on the repentance of the nation, guilty as they were, Jesus should return. This is the subject of the third of Acts. But Jerusalem turned a deaf ear to the call, and her rulers, resisting, as always, the Holy Ghost, stoned him through whom He was testifying. From that time, though the unity of the whole was preserved by the conversion of Cornelius, a new instrument of the sovereign grace of God appears on the scene. Saul, himself consenting also unto the death of Stephen, Saul the persecutor-the expression of the hatred of the Jews, against the Christ - becomes the zealous witness of the faith he had sought to destroy. But this sovereign grace, whilst still mindful of the Jews, no longer goes out from Jerusalem as its starting point. It is from Antioch, a city of the Gentiles, that Paul went forth to fulfill his apostolical work. But this event was accompanied by a very remarkable development of the doctrine of the Church, or rather preceded by a revelation which made, not a new gospel [for the way of salvation is ever one and the same, but] a new starting point, as to the preaching of this gospel as regarded the person of Christ Himself, Up to this time, although they had preached a Christ exalted, the only Savior, yet it was as a man known amongst the Jews by signs and miracles, as they knew, and whom God had raised and made both Lord and Christ.

I need not say that this testimony was quite according to God and in its proper place in the midst of the Jews. Ye also, the Lord had said, shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. Peter and the other Apostles having accompanied Christ during the time of His ministry, followed him up to the time that the cloud received Him out of their sight. They had received the testimony that he should return in like manner. The consequence was, that the relations of Christ with the Jews were always maintained on the ground of faith in Him - exalted to the right hand of God, no doubt, but whose scepter was to go out from Sion, and who awaited the repentance of His people. But we have seen the testimony of the Holy Ghost to a glorified Christ rejected by the blinded nation: and the death of Stephen, in making this rejection signally manifest, reveals to us the Son of Man in the glory of God in heaven, receiving the spirit of His servant above, instead of returning to Israel here below. This transition from the character of the Christ or Messiah to that of Son of Man (suffering and inheriting all things in heaven and on earth) is often taught by Jesus in the Gospels (see for instance Luke 9:1-62); it is now being accomplished as a fact-the Lord, at the same time, not losing His rights as Christ-they are reserved for the age to come. But here Paul enters on the scene; and God, whilst continuing His work at Jerusalem, begins a new one, and that by a new revelation of His Son to him who was not to know him personally after the flesh. Saul sees Jesus for the first time in heavenly glory too resplendent for human sight. It is not Jesus known upon earth, made Lord,*** but the Lord of glory, who, as such, declares that He is Jesus. But for Paul and his ministry, where is he found on earth? In those who are his. Seen unequivocally as Lord in heaven, Saul asks, " Who art thou, Lord?" I am," replies the Lord, " I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." The saints were Himself, His body. The conversion of Paul identifies itself with the full revelation of the union of the Lord in glory with the members of his body upon earth. His starting point, his knowledge of salvation could not be separated from these two things. They are re-produced in his epistles. Thus, (2 Corinthians 4:1-18) he says, " If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." This, whilst setting forth in a sail more striking manner the worth of His sufferings, invested at the same time the preaching of the Apostle with a peculiar character.

(* This passage shows the futility of the objection, - objection refuted besides by a thousand experiments,-that the gathering together in one is an impossibility. It may be so materially; and it was no doubt the case here: when they broke bread from house to house they were not three thousand then. That does not hinder, in the mind of God, their being gathered together in one place in moral and real unity. There is no question of moral disposition here, but of facts which demonstrated the power of the Holy Ghost.)

(** The word I render here by " should be saved "- (a meaning given in good versions),is a word used by the LXX.(and I doubt not in St. Luke) for the remnant of Israel who were to escape the judgments of God. Now what the Lord did with them, was to add them to the Christian assembly.)

(*** An examination of the Acts of the Apostles will show that Jesus is never preached as Son of God, before He is so by Paul after his conversion. With Peter, it is always the man known upon earth glorified. But Paul, immediately after his conversion, preaches Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. We must not think that there is any imperfection in the ways of God here; on the contrary, it is a proof of their perfection. The expression "raised up his Son Jesus" is quite a different word from Son of God. It would even be more correctly translated servant. [It is παις not

υ■ος.-Ed.])

I will not enlarge on this part of the relations* of Paul with Christ, in order that we may come to that which concerns more directly our subject, the Church. Whatever God's ways upon earth might be, it is evident that all question of Jew and Gentile was at an end when the question was about the Lord of Glory and the members of His body; the relations became heavenly, and in the unity of the body of Christ, thus known in heaven, there was neither Jew nor Gentile. The Church was upon earth according to this revelation of her position, for she was persecuted; but she was identical with the Lord in heaven: it was He (the Lord glorified) who was persecuted in his members.

(* It is, however, a subject full of interest-the contrast between a Christ, object of prophecy and of promise, and a Christ revealed in the fullness of His person, as beginning, foundation, having accomplished His work, of the new creation-its Head, filling all things, having re-established the relations between God and them, relations ruined by sin; and, at the same time, beginning, foundation, and Head of the Church, whom he reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, having united it, quickened in himself, by the Holy Ghost, to Himself, as His body. These two things constitute the mystery in its whole extent. The second part is more fully treated in the word as concerning us more particularly, and also the admission of the Gentiles which flowed from it. But what presents the highest interest in this subject, is the glory of the person of Christ Himself, which is the foundation on which the fulfillment of all these counsels of God rests.) On to what precious ground does not this introduce the heart? We have, and that from the mouth and the heart of the Lord Himself, the strongest expression of our union with Him; that He considers the feeblest member of His body as a part of Himself. Let us pursue, however, our subject, that we may get the doctrine as a whole.

We will examine the epistles of St. Paul. The Church is not the subject of the epistle to the Romans. Having convicted the Gentile without law, and the Jew under the law, of being both guilty before God, it shows the individual justified before God; not by the law, but through faith, introducing resurrection, as putting him in a position quite new as regards justification, as regards life, (that is a new life outside. of the dominion of sin), and as to the law:-by grace the believer was justified, renewed, heir of God, had the feelings of the Spirit and was kept for glory by a love from which nothing could separate him. This well established, the Apostle reconciles (9, 10, 11.) the admission of Jew and Gentile, without distinction, to the enjoyment of these blessings, with the promises made to the Jews; and he shows that the Gentiles have been grafted in to be a continuation of the line, as children of Abraham, in the enjoyment of the promises.

But, although the main subject of the Epistle to the Romans does not afford opportunity for teaching concerning the Church, the exhortations at the end of the epistle furnish us with an element which flows naturally from the revelation made on the way to Damascus. It is, that being members of the body of Christ, we are necessarily for that reason members one of another (12:4). " For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing," etc. The Church is absolutely one. It is evident here also, that the Apostle speaks of what is upon earth; and even though there were members whose souls were with the Lord, those being no longer able to glorify the Lord upon the earth whence He had been rejected, and where Satan exercised his power-he refers to those only who were still down here. The body in its

practical and true sense was composed of these. The first Epistle to the Corinthians furnishes us with precious instructions on the point now engaging sour attention. This epistle gives us details of the interior of a local and particular Church, being addressed at the same time, to all who call on the Lord. It teaches us that the Christians of a locality, gathered in one body, are the realization, so far, of the unity of the whole body. The Church at Jerusalem was, at the beginning, both these two things at once; but now there were many assemblies, yet the Christians of each locality gathered together in a body and formed the Church or the assembly of God in that locality-" Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth." There was but one: it was composed of those that were sanctified in Christ Jesus, of called saints who were at Corinth. The Apostle reckoned on their being confirmed unto the end. They were outside the world; a body known as entirely separated from it by their profession and common walk as a body. Their individual relations with the world are discussed, and go no further than the ordinary communications of life; but even in these, the most formal and complete distinction is marked between the brethren and the world. There were those without and those within: that is to say, it was not a moral difference in the individual walk alone, but a common walk as a body, and as a body formally separated from the world (see 5: 9-13; 10:17, 21, 22; comp. 2 Corinthians 2:1-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16-17). The Lord’s Supper was the external sign that gathered them together (1 Corinthians 10:17). Now the presence of the Holy Ghost was found in the body, in the whole body of the Church; but realized and manifested in the local body, according to its state. This presence of the Holy Ghost in the body is distinguished from the presence of the Holy Ghost in the individual. The body of the individual is the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 6:19). But the Church was also the temple (3:16, 17), because the Spirit dwelt in it. Having gathered this scattered information, we may examine the chapter which expressly treats our subject, introduced by that of the spiritual powers which were manifested in the assembly. The demons are many. The Spirit of God is only one Spirit, whatever may be the manifestations of his presence. These were found in the gifts; and these manifestations of the Spirit were given for common use, the Holy Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will. These gifts were found very largely developed among the Corinthians. Having long been carried away by the craft of demons, they were in danger of confounding the energetic manifestations of these demons with those of the Holy Spirit; because they were looking for power rather than for grace. The Apostle gives them first an absolute rule for discerning between the Spirit of God and the demons, in the confession that Jesus was Lord; a confession which these demons would never make. Afterward he takes pains to make the Corinthians understand the true doctrine of the presence of the Holy Ghost, the effect of which went much further than to produce the confession of the Lordship of Jesus, though this confession was the touchstone of it. The Holy Ghost united all Christians in one body; and Christian service, or the exercise of gifts, was nothing more than a member of the body, exercising its functions for the good of the whole body. It was that one and self-same Spirit which divided to each; "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is "Christ"*-Christ, for the Church is Himself, His body" For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles." The unity of the body thus established, all the gifts came under the idea of members of this body; that is, all exercise of ministry was the activity of the members of the body.

(* The identification of the body with its Head is expressed in a remarkable manner by the use of this word.) But other truths of the greatest moment are revealed to us in this chapter, and particularly the means God used to produce this unity, to form this body. By one Spirit ye are all

baptized into one body.* Christ having fully accomplished His work, and having ascended up on high, has received the promise of the Father, that is, the Holy Ghost, and has sent Him into this world to be, on the one hand, the witness of this accomplishment and of the personal glory of Jesus at the right hand of God; and on the other, to unite the members of this body to Himself, and at the same time to one another, whether Jews or Gentiles, who, all distinction being lost, form but one body united to its head in heaven; that is, to the Lord Jesus. Two truths clearly result from the teaching of this chapter; 1st, that the formation of the body is accomplished by the presence of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven; and, 2nd, that this body is formed upon the earth; its unity, such as it is presented in the word, takes place essentially upon earth, since the Holy Ghost has come down here to accomplish it. The accessory circumstances confirm this truth; for it is most evident that the gifts in question are exercised upon the earth. The disciples were the body of Christ by the union produced among them by the presence of one Spirit, who, being one, was found in them all, and at the same time in the whole of the united body. It is well to recall the passages already quoted, which teach us the difference between these two last points. While 1 Corinthians 16:1-24 reveals to us that the whole is the temple of the Holy Ghost; 6:19, shows us that each believer individually is the temple of God.

(* The Lord’s Supper is the sign and the external center of this unity, as the presence of the Holy Ghost is the power of it (1 Corinthians 10:17). This declaration gives a very interesting character to the Lord’s Supper.)

It is evident that this unity will not be lost in heaven when all the members of the body are reunited, and that God keeps the souls of the deceased for that day of glory; but the manifestation of the unity of the body of Christ is now exclusively upon earth, where the Holy Ghost has come down to establish this unity. Faith knows very well that souls are preserved with Jesus for that; but, thus disunited from the body, they do not, for the present, enter into the account, being in a position where communion is no longer a possibility, any more than manifestation of unity in service for the glory of Christ. Where the Holy Ghost has come down and where He abides, there is the manifestation of the Church, whilst its head is seated on the right hand of the Father. The Spirit, in speaking to the Church, addresses Himself to Christians on the earth, and to the m alone; and this is what he says,-" Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular. And God has set some in the Church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healing, etc."

Here, then, we are taught by God, that the Church, which is the body of Christ, is formed in unity down here upon earth, by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, and manifesting Himself by gifts in the members of this body. Let me add, that this presence of the Holy Ghost is not regeneration, but the baptism of the Holy Ghost; not only His work in the heart, but His presence in the body, sent from above as truly and personally as the Son was sent of the Father, though not in the same manner. It is evident from the fifth verse of the first chapter of Acts, that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the descent of the Holy Ghost. The Epistle to the Galatians treats the question of justification, and of the right to the enjoyment of the inheritance through promise, as contrasted with the law, and only touches this doctrine by the single declaration that Christians are all one in Christ Jesus (3:28). But the Epistle to the Ephesians treats the subject at length, and requires special attention. The first chapter, after having laid the foundation of sovereign grace, declares (ver. 10) the fixed purpose of God, which is to " gather together in one all things in Christ, both

which are in heaven, and which are on earth "; and, having pointed out the children of God as sealed with the Holy Spirit for the inheritance in the end, shows us the Church united, as His body, to Him who was constituted Head over all things. Chapter 2 reveals the working of the power which has united the Church to Christ-the manner of this union-and sheaving that the Jew, by nature, was a child of wrath quite as much as the Gentile, and that both were dead in trespasses and sins-presents both as quickened together with Christ, raised together, and seated together in heavenly places in Christ, that thus the distinction was lost; God having made of the two, one new man, reconciling them both in one body by the cross. Now that was the Church. That work had its accomplishment in the Church. The Christian was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets [of the New Testament, comp. 3:5], Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. The Gentiles were builded together with the Jews to be the habitation of God through the Spirit. This chapter teaches us, then, according to the word in Matthew, that the Church, by its union with its head in heaven was accounted as being there, and that its calling was absolutely heavenly. As Israel was separated from the nations, so was the Church from the world-it was no longer of it; that its formation on earth began after the breaking down, by the cross, of the middle wall of partition; that it was as a new man: Jews and Gentiles being reconciled to God in one body. Besides, we find that instead of a temple made with hands, where Jehovah dwelt, this union of Jewish and Gentile believers in one body formed the habitation of God upon earth, and that this habitation was by the Spirit. This latter truth gives us the true character of the Church upon earth-a character, it is evident, of the most important bearing-a character which involves the deepest responsibility, and, let me say it, the most precious; for the responsibilities of Christians all flow from the grace which has been shown them; a character, in fine, which, thanks be unto God, in spite of its unfaithfulness to this responsibility, the Church cannot lose, because it is made to depend on the grace and the promise of God, that this other Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, would not go away as Christ did, but abide forever with those that were His. It is also most plain that it is on the earth that all this takes place, though, being on earth, our special position is to be seated in the heavenly places in our head, and to wait for the realization of our condition when we are gathered unto Him. The third chapter, the whole of which is parenthetic, unfolds this mystery, hid through all ages, but now revealed, of which the apostle was the minister, viz.-that the Gentiles should be of the same body with all saints. But I will reserve my remarks on this passage till we come to the second part of our subject-the place which the Church holds in the ways of God. The fourth chapter is the application of the doctrine of the second, and the apostle beseeches the saints to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called; that is, to be the habitation of God through the Spirit. The sense of the presence of God always produces humility; and the apostle, in pressing this point, exhorts them to keep the unity of the Spirit (that which has been set forth, chap. 2.) in the bond of peace. For the doctrine in question is this-" There is one body and one Spirit." This leads the apostle to the subject of gifts in connection with the body. Christ had gained the victory over Satan, and could confer on the Church He had redeemed, the power which would be the testimony of it; for it was rescued from the slavery of the enemy, and could be the vessel of this power and of this testimony. Christ, by means of these gifts, was nourishing and ministering to the growth of this body. The exercise of them was for the edification of the body of Christ. It is worth while quoting the verses which follow what we have just examined. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the

faith, and of the knowledge of the on of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head-even Christ-from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Thus the unsearchable riches of Christ by which He fills all things in the power of the redemption which He has accomplished-these riches, I say, form the basis of the edification of the Church of Christ, who is no longer looked at as a mere Messiah fulfilling the prophecies and the promises; but in a greatness of which no prophet had any idea, and no prophecy had foretold the extent of each part supplying, according to the grace given, of these riches of Christ to the body. The body itself, developed in its members, grows thereby into that fullness of which Christ is the measure. The truth which reveals this fullness, being the means of making the body grow up into Him, whose fullness is revealed, the perfect stature of the fullness of Christ being always the ultimate point of attainment proposed.

What infinite grace! Yet it could not be otherwise; since the revelation of Christ-and of Christ as filling all things-is the means by which the Church must grow, and this Christ is such, filling all things, as descended from the Father to the lower parts of the earth, and ascended from the place of death up to the throne of God-having come down in love, and gone up in righteousness, expelling, for faith, from the universe which He has made His by redemption as well as by creation, the conquered enemy, as, in fact, He will expel him from it when He accomplishes all the effects of His power. And where is this body found? Where are these gifts exercised? Where does this growth take place? Blessed be God! down here.

It is that which Christ does after the accomplishment of His work of redemption, but whilst He is seated on the right hand of God. It is through the Holy Ghost. It is the body-the Church-that one body which is the vessel of this ministry and of the Spirit which accomplishes it through the members of the body, and which causes the body to grow according to the mind of God in Christ, who is the Head of it; this body, the members of which are the members of Christ. Moreover, the apostle has before him the whole body; "and the whole body" viewed upon earth. Charity necessarily embraces all the members of it, as being the members of Christ. The connection between all this and the Church seen in the whole extent of her privileges, and of the thoughts of God, is seen in. a striking manner at the end of the third chapter, where the Apostle exclaims, " Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

I will not go over the infinitely precious teaching of the fifth chapter again, because I have already called the attention of the reader to this portion in beginning our thesis; but it is clear that the Epistle to the Ephesians treats the subject of a Church which is one body, whose head is Christ-a body formed and developed upon earth, since the ascension of Jesus, by the Holy Ghost sent from above, and who makes it His habitation-a body in which the glory of God will be reflected throughout all ages-a body which is the vessel upon earth of the Spirit, which He who, having gained the victory over Satan, and established the glory of His redemption everywhere, from death up to God, has sent to be the testimony of the power through which He has overcome, and who

associates the Church with its head in the heavens, giving it a heavenly calling, as being seated there in Him. This body, formed in perfectness at the beginning, was to grow by the energy of the Holy Spirit which dwelt in it, just as a child perfect in all its parts grows through the power of the life which is in him, in order to attain to the state of manhood. The Epistle to the Colossians brings before us some precious instructions on the subject we are considering. The Epistle to the Ephesians has taught us that God would gather together all things in Christ, and that the Church was united to Him, as His body; associated with Him in His dominion over all things. The Colossians teach us the same truth under another aspect. We shall also find that the idea of Christ which is presented in the first chapter, contrasts with all that He was as the hope of the Jews, according to the testimony of the prophets, as much as that which is found in the Epistle to the Ephesians, but in a different manner. Let us first look at what is said of the double glory of Christ-Head over all things, and Head of the Church; in the verses 15 and 16, He is presented as the first-born of every creature; and the reason of it is given-it is because He has created all things: He who had created all things having taken His place, as a man, in the midst of the creation, must, at all events, be the Head of it. This thought is confirmed, ver. 17. The second part of the glory of Christ is declared ver. 18. He is the Head of the body-the Church-who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead. These are the two truths presented in Ephesians 1:22-23; only the two things are considered separately here, as two diverse glories of Christ, in whom it has pleased all the fullness to dwell. The reconciliation of all things, and of the Church, follows. Having made peace through the blood of His cross, the thought of God is to reconcile all things through Him, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven: this answers to ver. 16. Then the Apostle, addressing the Christians called at Colosse, says to them, " And you that were some time alienated, He hath now reconciled:" this answers to verse 18. They were part of the Church of which Christ was the head, and of which the reconciliation takes place now. The verses 24 and 25 present, as following this distinction, and this double glory of Christ, and this double reconciliation, a double ministry; the ministry of the Gospel to every creature under heaven, and the ministry of the Church which is the body of Christ. This ministry, a complement in its doctrine of all the preceding revelations, completed the teaching of the word of God (verses 24, 25,26). The Church was a mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations; a mystery which admitted the Gentiles into all the privileges which it revealed, and spoke of a Christ, not the crown and the accomplishment of the glory of the Jews, but who, in the Gentiles, or in the midst of the Gentiles, in Spirit, was the hope of glory. The presence of the Messiah amongst the Jews was to have been, and will be, the accomplishment of the glory which had been promised to them. But the presence of Christ, in Spirit, among the Gentiles was the hope of glory, of a more excellent glory-a heavenly glory. In Ephesians, Christ is considered as exalted at the right hand of God, whence He sent the Spirit to confer upon the Church the gifts which were the testimony of His victory, and the manifestation of His power, as man victorious over the enemy-a glorious head of the Church which was upon earth. In Colossians, He is considered as present in the Church, securing to the Gentiles the possession of the heavenly glory into which He has Himself entered. This chapter then brings the Church into prominence in a very interesting manner.

Christ raised is the Head of it-the Church is His body; its practical reconciliation takes effect now, founded on the peace made through the blood of the cross. Gentiles belong to it quite as much as Jews; and Christ, in Spirit, dwells in it, the hope of glory. This last expression teaches us, without controversy, that the Church is contemplated as exclusively upon earth, though having the sure

hope of a heavenly glory. Its unity is not declared as in the Epistle to the Ephesians; but it is self-evident that the body of Christ can only be one.

I confine myself to the doctrine; adding that the Epistle, as a whole, shows that the Colossians were in danger of losing sight of their close union with the Head of the body-Christ-in whom everything was accomplished, and they, complete in Him, and of seeking, by forgetting this truth, to add something else, which was nothing but the setting aside of Him. Consequently, the Epistle brings into prominence the riches and the perfection of Christ, to remind the Colossians of them; whilst the Ephesians, who held fast the faith of their union with Him, were able to profit by the teaching which revealed to them the whole extent of their own privileges. The faithfulness of the one, and the unfaithfulness of the other, have both turned, in the hand of our God, to the blessing of the Church in all ages. The first Epistle to Timothy furnishes us with some precious thoughts in a short sentence,-" The House," it is said (3:15)," of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Here we stand on ground more connected with the practical character of the Church upon earth. It is the House of God: it is there that truth is found and nowhere else; there alone is it maintained in the world. Let us understand this declaration: the Church does not create this truth, but has been created by it. It adds to it neither authority nor weight. The truth is of God before it is received by the Church, but the latter possesses it. It exists because it possesses the truth and it alone. Where besides in the Church is the truth found? Nowhere. The supposition that the truth is anywhere else would be the denial of the truth and ways of God. The truth can be nothing but what God has said; it is the truth, independently of all Church authority, of any but that of God, who is the source of it; but there where the truth is, there is the Church, and the Church, which possesses it and subsists by possessing it, thereby manifests it to the world. The authority of the Church cannot make that which it teaches to be truth. Truth alone does not constitute the Church; that is, the meaning of the word Church embraces other ideas:-a single man holding the truth is not the Church; but the assembly of God is distinguished by the possession of the truth. An assembly which has not the truth, as the condition of its existence, is not the assembly of God. The passage under consideration, and the import. ante of this point, must be my excuse for this little digression, which is but indirectly connected with the subject of the Church.

There is one more passage which presents the Church in so complete a manner as to its hope and its service, that I will quote it in closing this series of testimonies from the Bible. It is that of Revelation 22:1-21 -" The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." In this passage we find the Spirit introduced in a very remarkable manner, somewhat analogous to Romans 8:1-39 Both passages show how far the Holy Ghost is considered in the word of God as dwelling upon the earth since the day of Pentecost, and as identifying Himself, either with the believer or with the Church. In Romans it is, " He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because," he says, " He maketh intercession for the saints according to God." Now it is our groanings that are spoken of there. Here in Revelation The Spirit and the bride say, Come. The Spirit so takes His place with the bride, that the sentiment of the Church is that which the Spirit Himself expresses. The Spirit is upon earth and animates the Church, being the true source of its thoughts-the Church animated by these very thoughts, expresses her own affections under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Had it only been an expression of affection, one might have

questioned its legitimateness, and that also of the groan of Romans 8:1-39; but since the Holy Spirit connects itself with it, this desire of a feeble heart has the power and authority of a divine thought. This is then what characterizes the Church in her desires, in her hope. She desires that her Bridegroom should come. It is not a question about prophecy; it is Christ, the communicator of the prophecy, who presents himself: " I am the bright and morning star." The Church knows Him. She will be with Him before the great day of His manifestation comes-she will appear with Him in glory. But when He is thus presented in His person, that awakens the earnest desire of the bride that he should come. But there is also a testimony to bear; it is what follows:-She calls upon those who hear, but who have not understood their privilege of being of the bride, to join this cry and say, Come. In the meantime, she already possesses the river of living water, and turning towards those who are athirst, she invites them to come and to make a free use of it. What a beautiful position for the Church-for our hearts! The first affection of her heart is towards her Head,-her Bridegroom, who is to come like the morning star to receive her to himself in heaven, before He is manifested to the world.-Then she desires all believers to share this desire, and to reinforce her cry that He may come. In the mean time she is the vessel and herald of grace according to the heart of Him who has shown it to her.

What more blessed position could be thought of, for such poor worms as we are, than that which sovereign and creative grace has given us? If the reader examines chapter 17 of the gospel of John, he will and that the object of the chief part of the chapter is to place believers, beginning in a special manner with the Apostles, in the same position as Jesus was, as those who take His place. We well know that He alone, by His Spirit, can be the strength through which they can accomplish such a task. This truth enables us to apprehend what the true position of the Church is. Christ was upon earth, but at the same time one with His Father. He was manifesting Him upon the earth. He was a man upon earth, but a heavenly man displaying upon earth the spirit an& sentiments of heaven where love and holiness reign, because God is love and holiness. He says, "the Son of man which is in heaven." He was separate from sinners, and yet at the same time perfect in grace towards them. In His case, His person was the cause of it: being at the same time true man and acting by the power of the Holy Ghost in a dependence upon God, which constituted His perfection as man. In the case of the Church, it is clear that the question is no longer of a divine person; yet she is not of the world even as Christ was not of the world. United to her head in heaven by the Holy Ghost, come down from it-dead and risen with him and seated in Him in heavenly places, her character is purely heavenly. She is upon the earth, where the Holy Ghost has come down to manifest there a heavenly walk, the motives and the mind of heaven. She lives above in Christ by the Spirit; her life is hid there with Christ in God; she seeks for nothing down here, declaring plainly that she is yet seeking her country. She is one-she knows it-it cannot be otherwise. Can her heart recognize that Christ has another bride, as companion of His heavenly joys? The manner of her being necessitates her unity, as well as the character of her Bridegroom and the unity of the Spirit. She is upon earth; she sighs after her country, but still more after her Bridegroom who will come to receive her unto Himself; that where He is, there she may be with Him. In the mean time, she bears testimony upon earth as united into one body by the presence of the Holy Ghost. This is the place where God owns her till Christ comes to take her to Himself. From that time she will bear testimony, in the glory and by the glory, to the love which has placed her there, and to the mighty redemption which has taken poor sinners and has placed them in the same glory as the Son of God and in the same relations with His Father, except that which is essentially divine-" that in the

ages to come [God] might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in His kindness towards us through Jesus Christ."

What we have already said leads us naturally to the second part of our subject-what place the Church holds in the ways of God. The heavenly aspect of this question finds its answer in several passages which we have just examined, which treat the subject of the nature of the Church. God has willed that His Son, Ruler of all things as Son of man, should have a bride to share His glory and His dominion: glorious position I testimony of the infinite Grace of God. Such is the Church-the companion of Jesus in the heavenly glory. This will take place at the same time with the earthly glory, which will be the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament. God, for the dispensation of the fullness of times, will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him, as Head, whose bride and body the Church is. The Old Testament, which gives us the history of the ways of God upon earth, and in its prophetical part announces what the result will be, does not reveal to us this mystery. The Church, as such, does not come in the continuation of the ways of God upon earth. The object of the counsels of God from before the foundation of the world, she had been hid in the depth of these counsels, till Christ, having been rejected upon the earth, might become her heavenly Head; and the testimony to this glory, having also been rejected by the Jews, who, in a certain sense, had a right to the promises, the door was plainly opened for the revelation of this glorious mystery-hid in all ages. In considering a little the facts, either with regard to man or with regard to the Jews, the suitableness of these ways of God will be understood without any difficulty. Until the rejection of Christ, man had been put to the test in every way-without law, under the law, and even under grace, presented in the person of Christ-for God was in Him, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Now man, by the death of Christ, has proved himself an enemy of God, an enemy who hated even His mercy, his only resource, because it was of God. Christ, as the new man, raised, glorified at the right hand of God, out of the world, takes His place as a man, such as this place was to be in the counsels of God. There is a man at the right band of God, to whom the Church can be united as His body by the Holy Ghost.

Such a heavenly standing could not possibly exist before; the body could not be before the Head, to which it was to be united, had taken his place, such as it had been prepared for Him in the counsels of God. There was not before a glorified man in heaven to whom the Church could have been united.

If we consider the Jews, the thing is still more intelligible for other reasons. They had prophecies and promises. Christ was to be presented to them. Till they had rejected Him, God, ever faithful, could not set them aside to establish anything else which denied their privileges, blotting out all distinction between Jew and Gentile-a distinction which the Jew was bound carefully to maintain. The crucifixion of Jesus has put an end to all that. There is no Jew in heaven. But man having completely failed in his responsibility, and the Jews having rejected the one in whom the fulfillment of the promises had been presented to them, God, before fulfilling them, as He will do, has revealed the hidden mystery which was connected with the heavenly glory of the Son of man, that is, with the body united to Him, gathered during the rejection of Israel-a body which was to be manifested in glory with Him, when He should, in His sovereign grace, resume his dealings with Israel upon earth: " for blindness, in part, has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." Israel, unfaithful as men, have lost all title to the enjoyment of the promises, by the

rejection of Him in whom they were to have this enjoyment. They were, after all, children of wrath, as others; but that will not hinder God from fulfilling His promises. He cannot be unfaithful to His promise, whatever the unfaithfulness of man may be. His gifts and calling are without repentance; and the blindness of Israel is only temporary. It is what Romans 11:1-36 teaches; as the Lord also has said to them, " Your house is left unto you desolate till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." But here is the perfect wisdom of God. Israel having rejected the Christ when He came to present Himself to the nation, they are without remedy. It will be the sovereign grace of God which will reinstate them in the enjoyment of the promises, according to the word, as poor sinners. Israel, under chastening, and kept for that day, abides without the true God, and without a false God, according to the prophecy of Hosea 2:1-23; and God, during this interval, brings in the fullness of the Gentiles, displays His multiform wisdom* in the calling of the Church, a heavenly people, established not on promise but on perfect accomplished redemption, and accomplished through the act by which Israel placed themselves under condemnation. But it was not only that man and Israel had been fully tried. God had also displayed His wisdom in His ways with both-His power, His patience, His mercy, His government in man and according to the conditions of His holy law, by promises and by miraculous interventions, by chastenings and blessings, by righteous judgments, by the most tender care and the most magnificent providences. Even a world swallowed up in the mighty waters had borne witness, in disappearing before His judgments, to the ways of God with man upon earth.

(* The word "manifold" (Ephesians 3:10) is remarkable-πολυποικιλος-much variegated.-Ed.) Angels had seen these things, they had seen the wisdom and power of God in exercise in his ways with men on the earth. The Church was to supply quite a fresh manifestation of the depths of the counsels and wisdom of the infinite God they adore. The demonstration of the inability in which man was found to profit by the ways of God, furnished the occasion of it.

There remains yet one thing to which I would call the attention of my reader; it is, that until Christ was glorified, the Holy Ghost could not come down to form the Church upon earth; for the object of His testimony, the heavenly glory of Christ and the redemption accomplished by His means, was yet wanting. The Holy Ghost was not yet* [given], because Jesus was not yet glorified. We shall see with what clearness the word of God presents the Church to us as quite a new revelation of that which had no existence before, save in the eternal counsels of God, and that these counsels of God predestinated for her an existence outside the course of ages.

(* The expression "was not yet," which is the simple and exact translation of the passage, shows to what a degree the presence of the Holy Ghost upon earth, come down from heaven and dwelling in the Church, was a reality for the Apostles, and filled their mind, as, to them, the whole of the idea of the Holy Spirit, for indeed He was there. This is evidently not a question as to the existence of the Holy Ghost as a person; but since He was now come down and that His presence was upon earth, in consequence of the redemption and the glory of Christ-this presence was to them the Holy Ghost. The same expression occurs in Acts 19:1-41. We have not so much as heard whether there he any Holy Ghost. They had been told by disciples of John the Baptist that the Lamb of God would baptize them with the Holy Ghost, and what they said to Paul was, that not only they had not received Him, but that they did not know whether He was yet.) The writings of Paul, who was chosen to bear this testimony and to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, a ministry which was connected with these truths, are full of this doctrine, bringing

into prominence this glory of Christ which was beyond all that the prophets had said;-thus 1 Timothy 3:16. Having spoken of the Church in a passage already quoted, he naturally turns to the truth of which the Church was the pillar-this mystery of godliness. A Messiah, the fulfillment of the prophecies, was not a mystery; but a Christ such as the apostle presents Him in verse 16, had never been known before:-" God manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Certain elements found here were connected with Messiah upon earth, because this same Messiah, ascended up on high, must come down again to fulfill the promises made to the Jews; but such things as a whole had never been presented to faith. As to the Church, the thing is true in a still more absolute manner. This is what the apostle says of it (Ephesians 3:9-11.)-" And to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Impossible to get anything more absolute than "hid in God." This mystery of the Church, hid in the depths of His counsels did not get disclosed. Nor did she exist in fact till that. It is "now" that unto the principalities and powers is made known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God. They had seen His patience; His power, His government, but never a heavenly body upon the earth united to His Son in Heaven. Thus God could set aside, for the time, the course of his earthly government to enter into relationship with a heavenly people. This passage is very clear on this point, that the Church neither existed nor was revealed before. Up to that time it was a mystery hid in God, who having established it in his counsels, was testing man under His government, before creating a heavenly system, based upon an accomplished redemption in union with the second Adam in heaven. It is important that the reader should get very clearly in his mind the teaching of this passage. The object of the apostle is to show that the Church is a new thing. There had been other means to show forth the wisdom and ways of God-earthly means. -Now heavenly powers saw in the Church a kind of wisdom quite new. Not only the Church had had as yet no existence, but it had not been revealed before its existence; it had been a mystery hid in God. This last point is confirmed by other passages which we will quote; but it is well to develop the first point by the teaching of the end of chapter 2. The truth of the union of Jews and Gentiles in one body-the Church-is established as the consequence of the cross in verses 14 and 15, in the most formal manner -the middle wall of partition, established by God Himself and absolutely binding, had been broken down only by the cross; and by means of this also they were both reconciled in one body-those who were afar of and those who were nigh. Then they had been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; that is, the Church could, only exist, after...the cross had rendered possible the union of Jews and Gentiles;* the enmity of man against God having been manifested, the enmity of his nature-Jew or Gentile-and the Jews having lost all title to the enjoyment of the promises, grace received in a sovereign manner both the one and the other according to the eternal counsels of God, for a better inheritance. God having been manifested in the flesh, and having set things on the footing of eternal realities outside all earthly economy or dispensation, and received up into glory, having acquired a people which was associated to Himself according to the election of God, purposed before the foundation of the world to share this glory as His bride and his body.

(* This union would have been a sin before the rejection of Christ, before the cross.) To return to the revelation of this mystery. Speaking of the Church-the body of' Christ (Colossians 1:26),-the

apostle calls it, " The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." For the Jew, Christ is the accomplishment of the glory; but Christ present in Spirit becomes the hope of heavenly glory for those in whom He dwells.

Thus, also, in the epistle to the Romans,-" Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest," etc. The more the Epistles of Paul or of Peter are examined, the more examples we shall find of the contrast between the hopes and election of Jews and Christians-only Peter never treats the subject of the Church -and the more we shall find the eternal election of the Church brought into light (Ephesians 3:1-21), this mystery is also called the mystery of Christ; for indeed, before, it was Christ an individual man, and not Christ the Head of a body spiritually united to Him; and the Apostle declares that it was by a special revelation that it had been made known to him (verses 3, 4, 5), the knowledge of a mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men; this mystery being, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs of the same body.*

(* In the Epistles, it is Paul only who speaks of the Church; and as we see (Ephesians 3:3), as of a truth which he had received by a particular revelation. He alone even employs the word in its application to the whole body. John speaks twice of a particular Church.)

These passages show enough the way in which Paul presents the Church as an essential doctrine of truth, but as a mystery which had never been revealed under the Old Testament, and which never had any accomplishment before the death of Jesus had closed all the relations of God with Israel which had reference to the prophecies and promises, so far as their accomplishment depended upon the faith and faithfulness of man. They show, that blindness having come upon them for a time, God, who will fulfill his promises to His earthly people, has found in the period of their blindness the occasion of manifesting this admirable fruit of His eternal counsels, viz., the Church, who, when Israel is restored, through grace, to the enjoyment of the promises made to them, will shine as the bride of the Lord in the brightness in which He will Himself be manifested.

Such is her destiny! Whilst waiting, what is her place-what is her calling? We have said, that the Holy Ghost come down from heaven gathers her upon earth-if the Bridegroom delays His coming, and if souls go to wait with him for the moment of the reunion of all his own raised or changed in His presence in the air, those of the redeemed who remain gathered down here, where the Holy Ghost the Comforter abides, always form the Church. There may be ignorance-the members may be scattered here and there-the Church may have been unfaithful and stripped of her ornaments; but it remains equally true that until Christ calls her to meet him in heaven, she is always the Church, always the bride of Christ. She has been espoused as a chaste virgin to Him; but it is to a heavenly Christ-Israel is His people upon earth. Whilst Christ is in heaven, the Holy Ghost is gathering the Church to be His up there. However, she has not only a heavenly calling, she is also His bride and His body. When all the thoughts of God have been fulfilled, she will, as a fact, be with him. Her thoughts and her character are (ought to be at least) formed after her portion according to God. Thus she is already united to Christ by the Spirit. She is one, and can only be one. But she is characterized by yet other traits. When the world rejected Christ, it passed

judgment and condemnation upon itself. "Now," said the Lord, when Judas had gone out, "is the Judgment of this world." The Church was set up in grace when the relations of God with the word on the footing of the responsibility of man were ended forever by the rejection of Christ. Thus she has been called to come out of the world to be received of God. She is Christ's alone; "Come out from among them," says the Word, "and I will receive you," a peculiar people belonging only to Him. " You are not of the world," says Jesus, "as I am not of the world." And this is true, not only as regards individuals, but "that they may be one," says the Lord, "that the world may believe." It is a unity perceptible to the world outside itself. " What have I to do," says the Apostle, " to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? Them that are without, God judgeth." The Holy Ghost was upon earth, to establish the closest and most formal union between the members of the body; they were members one of another. This unity was recognized among them. All knew that a Christian was not of the world, because he was of the Church. If one member suffers, all the members suffer with him. This unity was truly and distinctly manifested in each locality. It was the Church of the place, as the very addresses of several epistles show. But this local unity, proved the universal unity-any one member of it was thereby a member of the universal unity.

Teachers, evangelists,-apostles, Timothy, Titus, Paul-did not belong to one Church more than another. The gifts were members of the body, the idea of a member of a Church is not found in the Bible: the thought there is very different, it is that of members of the body of Christ. But " these joints and bands," which might exercise their activity in local churches proved the unity of the whole body, and made it visible and perfectly perceptible to the world.

Christians acknowledged one another, and were acknowledged as one body-a sole well known and well defined body, having common interests, and the most intimate ties as a body apart from the world. The Holy Ghost cannot unite the Church with that world out of the midst of which He has taken her. Persons might come in unawares into the formal body, but it was a distinct body into which they came as false brethren. It is plain that if the Church be one in the midst of the world, her duty is to glorify the Lord in that unity, and by that unity, and as a whole. For this responsibility cannot be separated from every position whatsoever in which we are placed by God. And the motives are so much the more powerful as the grace of that position is excellent. We are the salt of the earth-the light of the world-a city set on a hill-the epistle* of Christ-an epistle which ought to be read and known of all men. The body of Christ ought to reproduce, by the power of the Spirit, the character of its Head and thus glorify Him on the earth; and that power of the Holy Ghost which overcomes all the separative principles which selfishness and sin have introduced into the world;-the bride should manifest her attachment to the Bridegroom-that she is wholly and exclusively His! People talk about an invisible Church: the word says nothing about it; it is a notion which denies the force of the passages we have just quoted. The scattering of the children of God has hid them; but no one would venture to deny that individuals should not be invisible, that is, that they should not conceal their Christianity:-" Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," it is clear then that individuals should not be invisible: now, if that be true, to say that the Church may be invisible means nothing short of this, that these individuals ought not to be united. Now it is certain that the Lord says that they ought to have been one, that the world might believe.

(* It is not said " epistles." It was the whole of the Church of Corinth which was "the epistle.")

If there be divisions, they are carnal and walk as men. If the duty of all individuals be to let their light shine before men, and all these individuals are closely united and form a separate body, outside the world, making every where a profession of their union, as it was undeniably the case at the beginning, to say that that body is invisible has no sense. Now this body is the Church. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid,-but this in passing. The question I am now treating, is not how far the Church realizes this position.-I am speaking of the Church such as it is presented in the word. But if the Church be the bride of Jesus, she ought to desire, as such, to glorify Him during His absence; her heart must be given to Him;-she must receive her directions from Him alone.

If she be the house of God, she must seek to keep herself pure on account of the holiness of the Spirit who dwells therein. If she be the pillar and ground of the truth, she will not be able to endure anything but the truth, which is the basis of her existence;-for the glorious revelation of Christ, who has accomplished her redemption: God manifested in the flesh, preached to the Gentiles, received up into glory has given her being, as she is the witness of it.

Conscious of being the bride of the Lamb, she will have the affections proper to such a relationship: she will long for the coming of the bridegroom to receive her to Himself. She will understand that she belongs to Him in heaven, and consequently will not mix herself up with the world, nor confound her expectation with the coming of Jesus to judge the world; she knows that when He appears, she will appear with Him in glory. Thus separated from the world by the Spirit who is the power and earnest of this hope, she will seek to realize it as much as possible upon the earth. He that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as He is pure. That is also the force of the teaching of Php 3:1-21; which, however, has an individual for its object. I quote it, because I speak of the normal effect of this truth in the heart of the Christian. He who hath learned it will have the conscience that the Church is one-can only be one. He will have the conscience that she belongs to Christ and can belong to none other. He will have the conscience that she ought to manifest this unity, and render a constant and practical testimony that she is His alone. The presence in her of the Holy Ghost who gathers the members in one body will be the power and life of this testimony. The path will be the path of faith; and the path of faith will be the path of sufferings; but they will be the sufferings of Christ for His body, that we may be glorified together. J.N.D.

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1st Samuel, chap. 27 verse 1, " And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul"; and this after the marvelous escapes narrated in the 22nd, 23rd and 24th chapters. So is it oftentimes with us. Circumstances occupy us instead of God, who delivered us heretofore:-" Thou hast been my help, leave me not, neither forsake me" (Psalms 27:1-14 verse 9), is used as a plea for continued favor. Again, in Psa. verse 7, " Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings I will rejoice." None had more experience of delivering grace than David; nevertheless all is forgotten now: "I shall perish one day," takes the place of God's promise (1 Samuel 16:12), " Arise, anoint Him, for this is He." Present dangers obliterate the remembrance of past escapes. He sees only the hand against him and not the hand for him. His eye is averted from God, unbelief deprives him of communion, and forgetful of divine strength, he puts forth his own. And what a scene is now before us! He who was an example for us becomes a warning. He who, in former difficulties cried unto God most High, now turns for help to the Philistines. " He arose and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish the Son of Maoch, king of Gath. And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men," etc. How are the mighty fallen! How marked the departure from the steps of Abraham, in Genesis 14:22-23. But so it is ever. Unbelief plunges us into sin,-is that sin which in itself includes all others. His back is turned upon God as was the prodigal's upon his father's house; and the journey into the far country, the riotous living, and the unhallowed associations, were but the consequences of the first false step.

David in communion would have scorned a refuge in Gath, or shelter from a Philistine. Now he stoops still lower: in verse 5, David said unto Achish, " If now I have found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country that I may dwell there, for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee." Out of communion, David was wearied of the pilgrim's life. Time was, when the mountain sides, the cleft of the rock, or some lone desert place and fellowship with God had more charms for him than the king's palace. Time was, when his soul rejoiced in danger, for the joy of deliverance at the hand of his God. " *hen he was brought low He helped him." Now, he longs for a place, some settled abode, where he might rest, such a rest as unbelief longs for. God permitted his request to be granted, and " Achish gave him Ziklag; and the time that he dwelt there was a full year and four months." In verses 8 and 12, we glance at his service from this place. Zeal against old enemies is manifested-conquests are achieved-yet there is no communion. And what after all is service worth without the of God in it? The Lord, in His sovereignty, may use his children out of communion, to avenge Himself upon his enemies, even as he could use Cyrus who knew him not, to show favor to His people. He can guide with His eye, and sweetly lead in the path we should walk: or He may restrain by the bit or bridle (Psalms 32:1-11). And oftentimes the child of God, in a false position, may be very zealous in the Lord's service, go beyond even those who are in the narrow path: still it is unsanctified service, cruel in its character, and selfish in its ends-dishonest in the manner of it, and needing falsehood to conceal its aim-as in David. He dissimulates to Achish his career, and by bold untruth retains his favor. But

to pass on to the history in chapter 29.-How sad the story!-the Philistines gather all their armies to Aphek. The enemies of God prepare to fight against the people called by His name; and amongst these foes of His people, are assembled David and the Hebrews with him. Who would have looked for David, the conqueror of Goliath, numbered with the enemies of Israel, seeking alliance with them against his own nation? " Is thy servant a dog that he should do this?" Alas when dependence upon God, the living God ceases-when unbelief is fully at work, there are no bounds to declension, save in the sovereign grace of God.

He had marked the ways of David, and now uses his enemies to forbid the alliance David, out of communion, was degraded enough to solicit. " The lords of the Philistines said unto" Achish, " Make this fellow return," etc. (verse 4); and (verse 11) " David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines."

Thus far we have followed David in his downward career. We have traced his actions to the state of his heart. " He said in his heart, he should one day perish by the hand of 'Saul." He had used his intelligence in the circumstances. His path is before us. The consequences of his unbelief become more glaring in every after-step. But he is a child of God, and a chosen one too. He should learn himself and his own heart in the light of the sanctuary. His weakness, and the cause of it, should be left upon record for us, and is recorded for our admonition (Romans 15:3). " And it came to pass when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag and burned it with fire, and had taken the women captives that were therein; they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away and went on their ways. So David and his men came to the city, and, behold it was burned with fire; and their wives and their sons and their daughters were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and David was greatly distressed." " Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." " He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." And surely David had experience of his folly now. In his self-will he had carved out his path and pursued it. He thought there was nothing better for him to do, than to speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and he did so. Then he desired a place to dwell in. In this, also, his wishes are accomplished. But the end of his contrivances is before him. " There is a way which seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

He was greatly distressed.-He had said in his heart he should one day perish by the hand of Saul. He distrusted God, and now where is he? His companions " spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every. man for his sons and for his daughters." Alas, the miseries which unbelief entails upon us. Not only was David distressed, but his fellow-brethren in exile are hurried into affliction and trial. It is not his grief or his loss alone, his example draws others along with him. The bitterness of death in his own soul was hard to be borne; but he was surrounded by others, the victims of his folly and unbelief. " And they spake of stoning him." Surely he had kindled a fire and compassed himself about with sparks; and his lot was to lie down in sorrow (Isaiah 1:11). What instruction for the children of God is here afforded! How simple the narrative How full of warning! He had distrusted God in his heart. Had " forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn out to himself broken cisterns which could hold no water." And such must be the consequence of unbelief-present discomfort, unsanctified service, and the end bitter

disappointment. Whatever is relied upon apart from God, must and will fail us. And in the days in which we live, when the world itself is wearied with its contrivances, and the Church of God torn asunder by divisions, there is but one remedy, and that returning to God. " Wherever two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord, his presence is assured. "His Spirit remaineth with us always." The presence of the Holy Ghost secures his children from error, for the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Truth, and the truth secures holy discipline, for the Spirit of Truth is a Spirit of Holiness. The Lord in his mercy did awaken a portion of his people to the ruined condition of the visible Church around, and led hearts which were broken in sorrow before him, to cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils. He revealed in His Grace the position of His saints as risen with Christ, and made to sit together with him in heavenly places; and with this their position also, as being indwelt by the Spirit, and having His presence to rule and guide in their midst. They saw in the word that believers were builded together a habitation for God through the Spirit, and His presence amongst them secured their harmony and love. We read of the early Christians, " Great grace was upon them all" (Acts 2:1-47), not because they were preceptively taught their duties, but the presence of God the Holy Ghost insured it, even as Paul writing to the Thessalonians (4: 9), says, " Ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." And this simple truth became the rallying-point of many. The word of God was accredited, His presence was realized, and much blessing the consequence. But, alas, notwithstanding this revival as heretofore in the history of God’s people, so now unbelief enters, and the presence of the Holy Ghost is practically denied. The doctrines and traditions of men are admitted. Unhallowed questions about the person of the Son of God have arisen; and this would alone convict us of our failure, for the work of the Holy Ghost is to glorify Jesus. Added to this, our present contentions, the jarring and strife, the restlessness manifested by some, the openly avowed hostility of others, all prove our grievous declension. And surely many are saying as David did-" There is nothing better for me to do than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines." But let us ponder the path of our feet (Proverbs 4:26). Whither shall we go for rest? What hope have we from the efforts of men in the past, that we should rely upon them as guides in the exigencies of the present? Alas, is this a time for going into ceiled houses and the habitation of God lying waste? " Seek first the kingdom of God, and all things else shall be added unto it." So, seek first the presence of God, and the chaos will be reduced to order, and contention to harmony.

Yet, whilst we have warning in the history of David in Ziklag, so, also, we have wonderful encouragement. For, when all was lost that he had relied upon, the Philistines reject him, Ziklag is destroyed, their wives and little ones taken captive, and the people spake of stoning him; then, even then, "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." And the Lord was gracious unto him, and heard him, and counseled him, and he recovered all! Surely this is written for us. What though we have so grievously fallen as to say in our hearts, " We shall one day perish;" what though some have sought refuge in worldliness, excusing their own sin by dwelling on the failings of others, and many are crying out for a place to dwell in, forgetful in present trial of the past gracious dealings of our God; what though many are " so troubled that they cannot speak;" yet here, also, David gives us instructions, for when thus brought low, in Psalms 77:1-20. His soul was restored by "considering the days of old." "His spirit made diligent search." "Will the Lord cast off forever, and will he be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever? doth his promise fail for evermore? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? And I said this is my infirmity.’ And it is our infirmity. Let us remember the works of the Lord, let us talk of His doings,

and though " the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Let us take with us words, and turn to the Lord; say unto Him, " Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously" (Hosea 14:2). Let us comfort ourselves with the words in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ’ But let us not add to all our other sins, continuance in unbelief. " As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." W.

(* Twice did David restrain his followers and spare the life of Saul, because he was the Lord’s anointed. See 1 Samuel 24:1-22; 1 Samuel 26:1-25. When the Lord was about to smite Saul by the Philistines, David would have been among them and been instrumental in Saul’s death, but for the sovereign grace of the Lord (1 Samuel 28:1-25). What a God! and how worthy to be trusted is the Lord. [Ed.])

Vol 02 - A Little Leaven Leaveneth the Whole Lump

A Little Leaven Leaveneth the Whole Lump

I had heard this passage referred to in the latter place, where it occurs (Galatians 5:1-26); but I confess my mind was struck on a comparison of the two passages where it occurs in the Word. In the first (in 1 Corinthians 5:6), it is in respect to evil walking; in the second (Galatians 5:9), it is evil doctrine. And what is said of one will clearly apply to the other.

Let us look, therefore, at the former passage (1 Corinthians 5:1-13) Evil of a very flagrant character had manifested itself in one instance. Remark one ground on which he calls for judgment on it: "Do ye not know, that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" It is the character of the leprosy to spread. This, therefore, concerns them all. "Ye have not mourned," etc.

Next see the decided clearness and holiness that he calls for: " Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a NEW lump, even as ye are unleavened." Now, mark the most important ground on which this is put. "For even Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast," etc. So that the allowance, the tolerance of leaven is a dishonor done to that Paschal Lamb. Is it not fitting, that the unleavened bread should be eaten with the Lamb? Shall we allow the little leaven to begin to rise, and work, till the whole be leavened? Nor is the fact that such and such a one is a Christian, any reason for allowing leaven in him? It is not the persons that are to be looked at, but the fellowship of the Paschal Lamb: that determines all is it worthy of that? Compare 1 Corinthians 10:18 (Greek), "Are not they that eat the sacrifices in communion with the altar "(κοινωνοι)? It is just because he is outwardly in fellowship there, that we are called upon to judge him.

Now, apply this as the Spirit applies it in Galatians, to false doctrine, legal teachers there (verse 9): "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Will not what was said apply equally to false doctrine? Is evil doctrine less formidable than evil walk? No. Evil walk may be a solitary, detached thing, without any other definite root than the essential evil of the flesh in the individual. Evil doctrine is a root, a principle from which a whole course of action will necessarily follow. It is from principles that actions flow. It is, therefore (whilst I would observe, let the importance of judging the other never be depreciated), no less carefully to be removed. And surely this is ground that appeals to the heart of every saint; the very presence of the Paschal Lamb, the Lord that bought us, demands it.

There may be question further, How far this searching, purging process is to go? I would remark, it must be no outside thing-no clearing of external symptoms only; it must meet the presence of the blessed Lamb. There is a passage to me very instructive in Leviticus 15:2 on this point: " Speak unto the children of Israel, when any man hath a running issue out of his flesh, because of his issue he is unclean. And this shall be his uncleanness in his issue: whether his flesh run with his issue, or whether his flesh be stopped from his issue, it is his uncleanness." As I said, it is not the question before God, Have the mere external symptoms been removed? but, Is the fountain of the evil removed? In short, is it healed? But it may be said, Yes, but the apostle did not

excommunicate the Corinthians because of that evil. I say, No; if the Corinthians were awakened by his summons to clear themselves from the evil, surely that was the thing he desired (2 Corinthians 13:7); his authority was given for edification, not for destruction. It is the Lord's way,-" If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord;" consequently, it should be his servant's way, for "we are fellow-workers with Him" (1 Corinthians 3:9, θεου συνεργοι): "I gave her space to repent" (Revelation 2:21). We do find (whether resulting from that First Epistle, as is most probable, I have not time strictly to examine now), that the Corinthians were brought to a blessed state of repentance, and dealing with evil (2 Corinthians 2:6). They received Titus with fear, trembling, and obedience (7:7, 8). In all things they approved themselves clear in this matter. " For to this end," says he, " did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things" (2:9). He was in readiness to revenge all disobedience, when their obedience was fulfilled (10:6). So in Galatians 5:10. "He had confidence in them in the Lord, that they would be none otherwise minded." But if they had refused at Corinth the apostle's attempt to rouse them to the putting away of evil from them; if, like the Benjamites, they had " refused to deliver up those who had done the evil " (Judges 20:13), would the apostle then have recognized them as a Church of God, as in the fellowship of the truth? Assuredly not. How is the Church God's habitation but by the Spirit? And if they refused the Spirit in the ministration of Paul (1 Thessalonians 4:8), refused his operation in the putting away of evil, were they then the habitation of God? and, if not His dwelling-place, can it be our dwelling-place (Numbers 35:34)?

Again I ask, is Christ's fellowship to bind us to fellowship with Satan? "What fellowship hath Christ with Belial?" When I began this, I did not think to bring in what I have done. Some may shrink from it as being personal and controversial; but I would say, with regard to controversy, if it be a true thing, it is God's controversy, and surely, therefore, cannot be slighted by us. Nor can it be unsuitable to touch upon, if in wisdom, as though ephemeral, etc.; should we not rather think it is the most important lessons He is teaching us? thus, it may be the very things we most need.

G.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."-Revelation 22:11-12.

Vol 02 - Baptism Over the Dead

Baptism Over the Dead "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

"Man being in honor abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their -beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me" (Psalms 49:12-15). Such is the doom of the wicked: they go down to the grave: their memorial perishes with them. And hereafter, when the bright and beautiful morn of the kingdom shall break, they shall be ashes under the souls of the feet of the righteous (see Malachi 4:3). In the words of the above-cited psalm, " The upright shall have dominion over them " then. The rest of the dead (that is, the wicked distinguished from those who will have part in the first resurrection) we read, "shall not live again until the thousand years shall be finished "; while others are reigning in life, they, and many of them kings of the earth in their day, will lie forgotten and uncrowned in the dust. While the righteous are feeding on the hidden manna above, death, the mighty destroyer, will be feeding on them. They shall be raised, it is true, but raised only for judgment-to be cast, after the millennium has ended, into the lake of fire forever. How different this from our hope! "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for He shall receive me," says the believer, in the above-cited passage, as he contrasts his own happy lot with the fearful condition of those who live and die without hope. "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? "Such is his song, even now, in the midst of this death-stricken world.

Thus then, in accordance with this, standing, as it were, encircled by a vast cemetery, where the unregenerate dead of past ages lie moldering beneath-the very soil under his feet being almost composed, we might say, of their ashes-the saint (an exception himself to the general order of men), by a simple act on his part, declares himself to be a child of resurrection, to have passed from death unto life; expresses his union with, and, at the same time, his hope in Him who is " the resurrection and the life." This act is that of passing through the waters of baptism. Others around him are dead, yea "twice dead," as the Apostle declares, dead both as to body and soul; and the day, as we have said, is at hand, when he shall have dominion over these lost ones. Hence, now, even now, in the anticipation of full triumph at last (while he mourns their fate, it is true, not willing, in one sense, to share such a victory), he stands over their graves as a conqueror knowing that though death is their portion, and that they shall never see light, he himself has passed from the kingdom of darkness into the very regions of life, of light, and of glory. And there, as I have said, he is baptized-baptized in His name who has given him the victory. This seems to me to be a solution of that difficult passage, " Else what shall they do which are baptized over the dead (■π■ρ τ■ν νεκρ■ν), if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized over the dead " (1 Corinthians 15:29). As an illustration of this, we may say of the elect in the days of Noah, that as the ark wherein they were sheltered floated in safety over the nations of those that were lost, that they were baptized over the dead. We have, I believe, sufficient warrant for this, inasmuch as the

baptism of the Spirit is the anti-type (■ντ■τυπος) of both; namely, of the ordinance as we have it, and also according to 1 Peter 3:20-21* of God's deliverance of Noah. Again, the children of Israel, we read, were "all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." And, as they lifted up their voices in triumph over their Egyptian pursuers, now lying conquered and dead on the shore, is it too much to say, in like manner, that the baptism through which they thus passed, was a baptism over the dead?

(* In the passage here referred to, instead of the " like figure whereunto," etc., it should be as follows: " The anti-type (■ντ■τυπον) whereunto (referring to the salvation of Noah and his house in the ark) even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Here observe, Noah's deliverance by water is the type, the baptism of the spirit the anti-type. With us, water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Ghost are, one of them the type, and the other the anti-type.)

Without saying that I feel assured that this is the true view of this passage, I beg to offer these thoughts, just by way of suggestion, to Christians, merely observing that this commends itself to my mind as a very probable interpretation of the Apostle's words-βαπτιζ■μενοι ■π■ρ τ■ν νεκρ■ν, "Baptized over the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:29). In our translation, it is rendered "for," not "over, the dead." But the primary meaning of the preposition ■περ, the first indeed which presents itself in the Greek lexicon, and that moreover governing the genitive case, which, it does in this passage, is "over," or "above." The common interpretation which refers it to such as were baptized for, or instead of, those who, for Christ's sake, had suffered martyrdom, filling up the place in the ranks of those who had fallen, has, I suspect, never much satisfied even those who have held it, having, I venture to say (and this is a point which should never be lost sight of in the interpretation of Scripture), no moral connection with anything else which we find in the Word; whereas the above interpretation appears to my mind to be fully in harmony with the glorious prospect of those who hope to meet the Lord in the air at His corning, to attain unto " the resurrection from amongst the dead" (ε■ς τ■ν ■ξαν■στασιν τ■ν νεκρ■ν) (Php 3:11), and now, even now, are alive in the midst of a world where death has reigned from the outset.

Then there is another point. Knowing that they surely shall rise, the saints, in this 15th of Corinthians, are represented not only as passing through the waters of baptism, but also as willing, if needs be, to pass for Christ's sake through the fires of persecution, to die in His cause. "Why stand we," says the Apostle, "in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink: for to-morrow we die" (1 Corinthians 15:30; 1 Corinthians 15:32). Here we have a further, a second testimony, in the persons and acts of the saints, to the truth of the doctrine of resurrection. This, I believe, is needful to notice, because we may easily confound the act of being baptized over the dead, in verse 29, with that of suffering for Christ's sake spoken of in the above-cited verses; whereas, I believe, though closely connected, of course, they are distinct things altogether-the one being the first act of the saint in his course (at least, so it should he), the other the continuous suffering, the hourly jeopardy, the dying daily, the refusal to eat and to drink like the world, which, of necessity, follows the confession of the name of the crucified Jesus. And here, in addition to the first part of this subject-namely, what I have suggested with regard to verse 29-let me observe that this victory of the saints over death is in harmony with that which Christ Himself in the end will achieve. He

triumphed, we know, when He Himself rose from the grave: He will triumph again when His Church shall be raised: but not till " the last enemy," Death, is banished forever beyond the precincts of the new heavens and new earth, will His conquest be perfect. It was defilement in Israel to touch a dead body, a bone, or a grave (Numbers 19:1-22); and hence, during the millennium, this earth, however pleasant and fair it may be, will not be perfectly pure. No; because Death, the sad witness of sin, will be there: they who shall have no part in the first resurrection, the nations of those who are lost, will continue still to pollute it. But, in the end, this death defiled world will be wholly dissolved-not annihilated, I say, but dissolved-yes, and in the very act of dissolving (so at least to me it appears), unable to hide them from the all-searching eye of their Judge, it will give up its dead to be finally punished, to be cast into the lake of fire forever. After which, out of identically the same materials, those atoms of which it was formed at first, now thoroughly purged from the least trace of mortality, even to a dead leaf or an insect, the new everlasting earth will be formed. This I believe to be an explanation of the following passage: "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead -which were in it; and Death and Hades (■δης) delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works: and Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away: and there was no more sea " (Revelation 20:11, etc.) With regard to this passage, if it were otherwise than what I have stated above-if this earth is to be annihilated, instead of being dissolved, and then made anew, as I have said, the power of Christ in redemption would, in this instance, be foiled. But no, it will not; I believe it cannot be so. This earth, just as much as our bodies, is redeemed by His blood; and hence, though dissolved, like the body, when sown in corruption, like the body again, when raised in His likeness, it will know in the end the full power of His resurrection. Hence the new earth, and, let me add, the new heavens, in like manner, will be the very same heavens and earth which we see around us at present, purged by the fires of the last day from every trace of corruption and death. And here, in conclusion, I would offer what to me seems an explanation of the two above passages. First, " Death and Hades (■δης) delivered up the dead which were in them " (Revelation 20:13): secondly, " Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire " (Revelation 20:14). Hades, we know, is the place of the soul in its unclothed and separate state-the grave that of the body while under the power of death. This passage then applies, as I take it, to their re-union and final destruction-I mean of the bodies and souls of the wicked. The body (Death’s prisoner) being called forth from the grave (death here by a figure being put for the grave), the soul, on the other hand, being summoned from Hades, to be united forever, and forever tormented.

Such is the doom of this world. Filled, as it is, with itself, its wisdom, its glory, its many inventions, such is its terrible end. Such, however, is not the lot of the righteous. We, even we (blessed thought I) are the children of God, joint-heirs also with Him who is Heir of all things both in heaven and in earth, and, as such, conquerors, like Him, over Death and the Grave. Well, then, may we, as we turn from the thought of the judgment which is to finish the drama of this world’s history, and look up to heaven, our birth-place, our home, where we are to dwell forever with Him-well, then, I

say, with such a hope in our souls, may we echo the sweet words of the poet, and sing- His be the victor’s name Who fought the fight alone;

Triumphant saints no honor claim, Their conquest was His own.

He, hell, in hell, laid low:

Made sin, He sin o’erthrew:

Bow’d to the grave, and killed it so- And death, by dying, slew.

Bless, bless the Conqueror slain, Slain by divine decree; Who lived, who died, who lives again, For thee, His saint, for thee.

E.D.

Vol 02 - Divine Names and Titles*

Divine Names and Titles*

It would suppose great want of even natural observation in a reader of the Bible, to imagine that he had not noticed that there are many names used by the Spirit; who, through the inspired writers, indited Scripture, for the God with whom we have to do. God; Lord God; Jehovah; Jah; I AM; God Almighty; God of Abraham- of Isaac-and of Jacob; God of -Israel, etc. etc., occur in the Old Testament; and those of God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; LORD GOD Almighty, etc. etc., are too observable in the New Testament for any one that at all knows the book not to have noticed them.

(* Reference has already been made to this subject, briefly, Vol. 1. p. 424.) The believer, moreover, will be conscious of there being, not only many names, but of a difference in the variety which the number presents. He may have thought of God, in time past, merely as " GOD all-mighty," and of the Lord Jesus as "the appointed Judge of quick and dead"; but now he knows, as having tasted, the grace of this Almighty Creator, and Jesus is owned by him, not only as Judge for a day to come, but now, as Lord and Savior. His earliest lessons in the school of Christ have enabled him to discern the difference between the God of Righteousness at Sinai, proposing that, which, while it described the Perfect Man (and, there never was since but One such) measured and condemned every mere child of fallen Adam,- and, the God of Grace at Calvary, sheaving Divine Perfectness in the seed of the woman, the Man Christ Jesus on the cross, and there teaching the remedy for ruin, as it is written:-" But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.: but their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:7-18). His early lessons thus have taught him a difference between the glories proper to God as the Creator, as the Upholder (God of Providence), and as the Savior-God; while his very possession of salvation supposes some knowledge, at least, as to the places, and offices, and works respectively peculiar to the Father, the Son, and the. Holy Ghost, in the work of redemption: and, further, the plain teaching of the double glory to be given to the person of the Mediator, God manifest in the flesh, a glory celestial and a glory terrestrial, a new

heaven and a new earth, in [both] which [■ν ο■ς, wherein, or in which] which, in plural] dwelleth righteousness, must, early in his learning, have come before him:-"Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him" (Ephesians 1:8-10). " For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Colossians 1:19-20). That some names, as being descriptive of that which is essential, are and must, in the nature of things, be incommunicable to any save Deity; and that others, descriptive of offices or works, or even a parts of character or attributes, may, in a secondary sense, be communicable, will not surprise us. Perhaps name would be the more accurate appellative for the former, and title for the latter; for, correctly, a name should describe its subject, and it alone; whereas a title has a more adjectival character, as being descriptive of a known subject, and frequently, therefore, shared by that subject in common with others. The Jews considered, correctly as to the fact, that the name of Jehovah, or LORD, was a name of essence, and incommunicable* to any other; and the facts as to the use of the name prove this (as we shall see), and prove the Deity of Jesus of Nazareth, too; for this name belongs to Him, as the Messiah prophesied of as both to come and suffer about the time that man crucified Him, who is now the Lord Jesus. But of this more in its place; compare Zech. 10:12, 13; Matthew 26:15; Matthew 27:3-10; also Zechariah 13:6-7; Matthew 26:31; Isaiah 6:6; Isaiah 6:10; and John 12:40-41, as showing that Jesus is Jehovah.

(* Many of the Jews went. even further, for they considered that the "sacred name," "the Tetragrammaton" (1:e. the four-lettered) name, ■■■■ (which we render by Jehovah, or Loan), was not communicable, even by lip; 1:e., that it could not be pronounced, if even known, by man. Many have stated this as their reason for not attempting to pronounce it when they read the Hebrew Scriptures, though others, who proceed not so far in their superstition, assign only the fear of violating the third commandment, by a too frequent use of that name, and they therefore substitute Adonai or Elohim for the name when it occurs; as if the sin of taking the name in vain was not in the irreverence of spirit in which a man might speak of the God of Israel, but in the empty or needless use of that one particular name under which he revealed Himself to Israel. That I have not overstated the superstitious (not reverential) feeling of some Jews, may be seen in " Histoire de l’etablissement du Christianism; time des seuls auteurs Juifs et Paiens." Par M. Bullet. Paris, 1814.) On the other hand, our Lord’s own word will show us that the title "God" is not always a title of the Supreme Being. " Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods. unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:34-36).

Now, whether, or not, we understand this " calling of them gods, unto whom the word of God came," matters not for the argument: " the scripture cannot be broken," and the term " gods" is used, by our Lord Himself, concerning those to whom the word came. The list of names might easily be given, and the distinctive peculiarities of each (as likely to have been felt by the believer) noticed; but this would be to anticipate: enough has been said to bring before the mind of any

simple person the two thoughts, that names divine are many, and that they vary in their significancy.

It is this subject, however, into the details connected with which I desire to enter, persuaded that, blessed as are the vague thoughts which the Scripture reader feels to attach to these various names, yet much blessing is to be found in the clearing away the vagueness and obtaining the power of presenting our thoughts definitely with " Thus saith the Lord," or " It is written," as the known basis, the firm stones in the pavement, beneath our imaginings. It is not, however, as a teacher, that I would write; but rather I would seek, as being myself, on this subject, really an enquirer still, to hold that place while writing; the place of an enquirer with those who will inquire with me. And blessed is it to know the fullness of the field of revelation, the richness of the harvest, and yet know our liberty either to reap or glean in it, under the hand of the Boaz to whom it belongs. No human heart or mind, though divinely fed and taught, could, surely, ever contain all the fullness of the testimony which the word of God presents as to our Lord: and yet it is the blessed privilege, of even the least of the saints, to glean their individual modicum, and to enjoy it, too, in the renewed affections they have received; and, conscious of their Lord’s sympathy in their joy, to communicate the little they may have observed to their brethren. I would present, then, my own observations in the word, thankful, if I state the thoughts of my own mind instead of the truth of the word, to have this pointed out; and thankful if the perusal of this leads others to add ’fuller and more perfect instruction, or even only awakens, in some, inquiry upon subjects, surely blessed subjects in themselves, to which attention had not been awake.

●1. The divine name which meets us first in Scripture is that of "God:"- "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

Without denying that the word ■■■■■(Elohim, God); may be significant (according to the meaning of the root) from which it is and ought by us to be derived), of certain things which it is more particularly the pleasure of God to present, as connected with Himself, when He so names Himself,-I do question the propriety of deriving our first and leading thoughts about this, or any other divine name or title, from the root from which we sups pose the word derived. The subject is too high, and we are too foolish for such a process; and, moreover, He who is the subject, in gracious consideration to us in our littleness, has made the understanding of His names and titles to hang upon faith in His word (which all His people have), and not on skill in the analysis of Hebrew words. Man loves to define; but He who made man, if) He would teach man concerning Himself, gives, not a definition of His being, or various displays of Himself, but presents to man a record of His actions and doings, and they teach to faith its lessons. Let us, at all events; examine the Scriptures first, even plain passages of Scripture, in the light of their contexts, before attempting to analyze the meaning of the name. There are passages enough for our instruction, if we find grace to be teachable and, in trust upon God, expect His Spirit’s guidance. The whole of the first chapter of Genesis speaks only of the title "God," or Elohim; so also the 1James 2:1-26 nd, and 3rd verses of chapter 2: In this portion we have the origin of the world traced up to Elohim; and we may say, boldly, " that which may be known of God is manifest to men; for God has spewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead;" so that men are without excuse. But the portion which follows, flews us other truth; for in Genesis 2:4, and onward, man is not looked at, as in the preceding portion, as merely a part of creation, but

man’s distinctive position, as a center in a system, is the subject, his position and relationship in Eden with Elohim; and here a new and another name is added, and Jehovah-Elohim (■■■■■■■■■) is the name in the Garden of Eden. It is no longer "Elohim," nor is it "Jehovah,"* but "Jehovah-Elohim," that the scene presents.

(* This is to be observed, because in Exodus 6:3, it is written, " but by my name of Jehovah was I not known to them," 1:e. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To them he appeared by the name of God-Almighty (El-Shaddai). Myself, I cannot doubt that the display which reveals the compound name Jehovah-Elohim, is different from that which reveals the single name Jehovah.)

Much learning, and no little reading, would it require ere a simple mind could feel that it understood at all what the meaning of the words Elohim and Jehovah might be, according to the words whence they are respectively derived;-very little observation does it suppose to say, I see that Genesis 1:1, to Genesis 2:3, present A Subject, A Part of which is taken up in Genesis 2:4, and onwards in a different aspect; the shoot of this latter portion, found folded up in the former portion, is here A Subject, germinating, and has peculiarities distinctive to itself-it is man’s portion and place in Eden, the center of a system, as distinguished from-the rest of creation; and if Elohim’s glory is proclaimed by the six days’ work, and the rest of the seventh day.... Eden’s tale, speaks forth something concerning Jehovah-Elohim, or LORD-God.

If any one doubt whether there is weight in this remark, let him consider what it is which his doubt implies? To me it seems to be nothing short of this,-a doubt of the accuracy and intelligence of the Spirit in the use of the language of man as his medium of presenting truth. I know the Spirit’s accuracy and intelligence must be perfect, with them that are "perfect"-I observe that this use of names has varied. Is there not a reason? What is that reason? To any inquirer pausing at this step, I would suggest two questions for examination.

1st. What is the difference of Psalms 14:1-7 and Psalms 53:1-6?

2nd. Why is it the rule in the Gospels to speak of "Jesus," and in the Epistles to call the same person "The Lord Jesus?" By the rule I mean the common and more frequent custom, one from which indeed the exceptions are comparatively few. To my own mind, the invariable use and oft-repeated occurrence of " God" in the portion Genesis 1:1-31; Genesis 2:1-3; Genesis 2:1 :e. in the history of the creation or origination of the world, and of " Lord God" in Genesis 1:1-31; Genesis 14:1-24; Genesis 15:1-21; Genesis 16:1-16; Genesis 17:1-27; Genesis 18:1-33; Genesis 19:1-38; Genesis 20:1-18; Genesis 21:1-34; Genesis 22:1-24; Genesis 23:1-20; Genesis 24:1-67; Genesis 25:1-34; Genesis 1:1-31:e., in the account of the owning and placing of man in his peculiar sphere in Eden, has great weight, as pointing to a difference between the two names. To look, now, more closely at our subject, as presented in the former portion, the history of the creation or origination of the world-

1. ORIGINATION seems the peculiarity of the chapter. " By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water" (2 Peter 3:5). This passage is distinct. So, perhaps,* on the same subject, is, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3).

(* I say, perhaps, merely because the term rendered " world," here (α■■ν, so also in chap. 1:2), has been understood by some to tie this passage down to dispensations; if so (as, however, the word "were made," γεγονεναι, might seem to contradict), this passage would then prove, not that the substance of the globe, with its heaven, but that the changes or dispensations upon it, were by the power of God; which, of course, is true also.) That which human wit could never ascertain with certainty [though one may have argued, from creation works, of One first great Cause of all, and written with the clearness of a Paley upon it, and sealed it with his blood, too, though he forgot not, ere he died, to pay his vow of a cock to Aesculapius, and though many may have had traditions of the same, the corrupted reports of that which was truth] God here reveals to us. And He reveals it, not as solving the riddle, "Whence are we?" but, in revealing part of His own glory, as the Creator, to us: that so, knowing what was done, and how it was done, we may see and learn about the God from whom the world proceeded, and consider whether or not we are to Himward now as His glory requires.

It is one thing, to be "creating;" another to be blessing Abram, as he wandered a pilgrim and a stranger, seeking a city which bath foundations whose builder and maker is God, amid a people amongst whom he was as a sojourner; and it is a third thing to take up a people under circumstances of oppression and resourcelessness, and to make them an irresistible and successful people, under relationship to a self-existent Blesser, as was the picture of those whose exodus from Egypt, led to a march through a waste-howling wilderness, into a land flowing with milk and honey. And there were three names for these three displays: "Elohim" (God); "El Shaddai" (God Almighty); and "Jehovah" (Lord).

Surely the variety in the way pursued during the process of originating is observable:-

Ver. 1. "God created the heavens and the earth;" ver. 3. "God said, Let there be light;" and ver. 6. "Let there be a firmament," etc.; and ver. 26. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." In all that bursts into being, while it bespeaks the Eternal power* of its Originator, how do Wisdom and Beneficence likewise find their place of testimony? "He saw that it was good" (vers. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, and 25); "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31);- "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:2-3); -bespeak his goodness; and the little phrase, "and it was so," after his "let there be," was spoken, presses home his power; and the testimony of Wisdom-is it not, as in other things, so in the marvelous oneness of the whole.

(* Power, as in, and from the fountain-spring, before the world was.)

POWER IN ORIGINATING is the first thought* of this Elohim character, of whom are all things. But, then, not only was the plan, the counsel, the originating OF Him, but all also was through him likewise; for no power, save His own, was used, He subserved himself of none that we read of. His Spirit brooded on the face of the waters, and by His word it was-all was through him. And, further, it was all for Himself: "The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun; which is as a

bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof" (Psalms 19:1-6).

(* Read Job 38:1-41; Job 39:1-30 to see how God uses mans' ignorance of the origin of things around him to convict of folly, and how the wisdom and goodness unsearchable of God are to be seen there.)

And, more than this, His sympathies were in His works of creation; and he rested and blessed, and set apart on it, a season for His own honoring; when man, in its weekly return, remembering His joy, rest, and blessing of the earth, might rest in hallowed remembrance of it. " Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." Power, eternal power, displaying itself wisely towards the end sought and beneficently, combined with an exclusion of all power save itself, and having the honor of Him from whom the new scene flowed-is my thought of the name Elohim (God), as derived from this Scripture. I would presently show how this harmonizes with one derivation of the word Elohim, though not the one most commonly, perhaps, adopted. But first I would desire to say a little upon the first verse, more in detail.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (verse 1).

How important a clue, context is in interpretation, may be seen by comparing, "In the beginning," as here found, with the same expression in John 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." In Genesis, "the beginning" is limited by "creation of the heavens and earth;" in John there is no action or thing done to limit, and the "In the beginning" (of John 1:1), refers to the being of the Word. "In the beginning was the Word." The same remark is confirmed by a comparison of Luke 1:2, " from the beginning," with 1 John 1:1, "from the beginning,"-the beginning of Christ's course here below in the former, but in the latter we are out of time, in eternity; out of humanity, in deity. On the word "God" see below: only let me remark here, 1st, that the three persons in the godhead were all engaged in this, as in every other of their works. The plan and counsel may, in the Divine economy, be attributed to One Person; the agency to bring forth that counsel to another; and the accomplishment of the work be ascribed to the agency of the third. The eighth of Proverbs with John 1:3, "all things were made by," (or rather throughδ■ α■το■), refers it to God (even the Father) as to counsel; the -rest of John 1:3, " All things were made by Him: and without Him was not anything made that was made;" and Colossians 1:16, " For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him," attributes it to the second person in the Trinity, and other Scripture to the Holy Spirit; as says Job; " By His Spirit He bath garnished the heavens" (Job 26:13). " By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Psalms 33:6). 2nd. And further, in answer to a question thus put to' me, " Does the plural form of the word Elohim' (the Hebrew word rendered by God) mean the Trinity?" I would make a remark or two.

1. While there may be in Hebrew what is called "a plural of excellence,"* by which the use of a plural form in connection with a subject in the singular number would be justified, such a theory would not, in Genesis 1:1-31, meet the difficulty. Because, while all the verbs, "created," "moved on," "said," "saw," "made," etc., etc., are in the singular number, we have, "Let us make man in our

image, after our likeness" (ver. 26), in the plural number. Now, instances cannot be adduced from Scripture, I think, that royalty or dignity was wont to express itself in the plural by such expressions as, " we will," or " it is our pleasure that," etc. The contrary, I think, is the- ease, viz., dignity loved to individualize itself as much as possible. See Pharaoh in Egypt in the Book of Genesis, and the language of the heads of the Gentile image, in Daniel, or that of Cyrus, 2 Chronicles 36:23, and Ezra 1:1-2, etc.

(* As some may like to look at this "plural of excellence," I present the theory of it, as concisely as I can, from the writings of Moses Stuart. Hebrew Grammar, fourth edition. Oxford, Talboys, 1831, says, p.155, " 437. [Number] (1), The Hebrews often employ nouns singular in a collective sense, especially national denominations; e.g., the Canaanite, 1:e., the inhabitants of Canaan, etc.

(2) For the sake of emphasis, the Hebrews commonly employed most of the words which signify Lord, God, etc., in the plural form, but with the sense of the singular. This is called the pluralis excellentice.

" Examples- Lord, in all the forms of the plural except my masters [as in Genesis 19:2, and perhaps also 19:18 the same, only in pause-En.]; the form is always used, with the sense of the singular, for God. (b) God, in all the forms of the plural. (c) lord, in all its forms. (d) the most Holy One (Hosea 12:1; Proverbs 9:10; Proverbs 30:3; Joshua 24:9). (e) the Almighty, is probably of the plural form, § 325, b. (f) household god, as singular (1 Samuel 19:13; 1 Samuel 19:16). (g) Occasionally, in a few other words, as Job 35:10, God, my Maker '; (Ecclesiastes 12:1) thy Creator.' (See also Isaiah 22:11; Isaiah 42:5; Psalms 149:2; comp. § 484).

(3) The plural, especially in poetry, is not infrequently used where we might expect the singular.

E.g. Job 6:3, 'The sand of the seas'; 1:e., of the sea. Even where only one can possibly be meant, is this the case; as Judges 12:7, he was buried, 'in the towns of Gilead; 1:e., in a town. Genesis 8:4, the ark rested, 'on the mountains of Ararat,' 1:e., on the mountain; Job 21:32, 'the graves,' 1:e., the grave." The references in the above are these:-

1. " § 325, b. [Under unusual forms of the plural], (b)Jeremiah 22:14… which coincides 'with the Chaldee and Syriac plurals.' The word in Jeremiah 22:14, is rendered my windows.'

2. "§ 484, [The article is headed, "Anomalies in the concord of verbs"-Ed.] 1. As to number. The pluralis excellentice commonly, but not always, takes a verb in the singular. § 437, b.

E.g. Genesis 1:1, God created; Exodus 21:29, his owner shall be put to death. But, in a few cases, the pluralis excellentice takes a verb in the plural; e.g., Genesis 20:13; Genesis 31:53; Genesis 35:7; Exodus 32:4; Exodus 32:8; 2 Samuel 7:23." But he adds-

§ 425. Plural nominatives of the feminine gender (which relate to beasts or things, and not to persons, frequently take a verb singular, whether it precedes or follows them."

E.g., Ezekiel 26:2, broken is [are] the gates;Joel 1:20, the beasts cries [cry]; Genesis 49:22; Jeremiah 4:14; Jeremiah 48:41; Jeremiah 51:29; Jeremiah 51:56; Psalms 119:98; Psalms 87:3; Job 27:20, etc."

* This construction of the feminine plural with a verb singular is technically called the pluralis inhuntanis. (Compare, in Greek, the neuter plurals joined with the verbs singular.)

2. To suppose that the Trinity is so alluded to here, as to be legible' without further Scripture, would be to underrate the value of Scripture, and to overrate the measure of illumination vouchsafed by the Spirit to the reader of Scripture. He, the Holy Ghost, had not here revealed that truth, neither was the time come to do so. On the other hand, though this blessing on the word to those that have it, is a secondary blessing, quite distinguishable, and to be kept distinct in our minds, from His grace in giving Scripture, for the written word is the alone perfect standard of truth,-it does seem to me,

3rd. That he so wrote as knowing what is now a matter of revelation to us; namely, that the persons in the Trinity were, though One, yet more than one; and all interested in Creation.

Passages might be adduced, showing the term ■■■■■ used as equivalent to Deity, as contrasted with humanity, or to other beings of a spiritual nature. " Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of' man.; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it" (Deuteronomy 1:17). " There is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me... tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me" (Isaiah 45:6; Isaiah 45:21). "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me" (chap. 46:9). So also I think, that passages may be adduced in which this term is predicated of each of the respective persons in the blessed Trinity. E.g. compare Psalms 45:7, which is quoted in Hebrews 1:9. "God, thy God, anointed thee;" 1:e. the Redeemer spoken of; also Psalms 78:56, with 1 Corinthians 10:9, and Exodus 6:1-30; and 2 Samuel 23:2, with 3. To some minds a reference to the New Testament uses of the term God, in the highest sense, may be a help here. It is used as of Deity,--(John 4:24) God is a Spirit." And the Father is God,-(Ephesians 1:3) "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus:" the Son is God. (John 1:1), "the word was God:" and the Holy Ghost is God (Acts 5:3-4). While, if I may with reverence say it, officially the Father is God, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit-that is, God, Lord, and Spirit are the distinctive names, as connected with redemption to the church, of the three persons in the Godhead (see 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Corinthians 12:4). This may be a good place for me to advertise the mere English reader, that in all the places in the English Bible where he finds "God," he would not, if he turned to a Hebrew Bible, find the word I am now speaking of-Elohim. Part III. of the Englishman's Hebrew Concordance will show him, page 1543:- 1st. That there are three, four, or more Hebrew words rendered "God;"* and

(* For the occurrences of Elohim, see page 79 "English Hebrew Concordance." The other words may be considered hereafter.)

2ndly. That the idioms of the two languages so far differ, that there are expressions in English which contain the word God, the equivalent expressions to which do not contain any such word in Hebrew, e.g. "God forbid" in Hebrew ■■■■■profanity (ad profana 1:e. absit) rendered "far be it" (Genesis 18:25 : 1 Samuel 2:30). Compare Romans 3:4. μη γενοιτο (may it not be so) "God forbid!" As to the word Created:

Observe: 1st, that it is not the order or circumstances of the heavens and the earth--but the heavens and the earth themselves, which were spoken of as created.

Secondly, in Hebrew there are three verbs which appear to be synonymous in meaning, 1. ■■■yatzahr, 2. ■■■ahsah, and this verb 3. ■■■barah. That is, in some contexts they might be interchanged; but yet each has a meaning distinctively peculiar to itself-1. would mean to make or "to mold like a potter," 2. to make or "fashion," as one's beard in trimming, etc. 3. to make or "create." This third verb is sometimes confounded with another in which the last letter is ■ (signifying to cut out) and not ■. That there are some verbs the third or last letter of which may be ■ or ■, I do not dispute, but I doubt whether this is the case here. Be this as it may in other occurrences of this verb ■■■,-to state that in this passage it means to cut out (so implying that Genesis 1:1-31 is not the account of creation, properly so called, but of a remodeling of an old thing) seems to me nonsense. It is contrary to Scriptures before adduced; contrary to the old Hebrew school of lexicography; and to my mind savors of a love of novelty worthy of the neologian German school whence it came the Jews, in their new translation of Genesis, (sold at Bagsters', Paternoster Row), have this note on the word in question: "Create, to produce something out of nothing." If it ever means to "cut," then Joshua 17:15; Joshua 17:18; Ezekiel 21:19 (24); 23:47, Piel, are the ensamples: and so our translators, perhaps, thought. But I see not why in Joshua 17:15; Joshua 17:18, "cut down" the wood should not be rendered " make it (your portion)." And Ezekiel 21:19 (24), "choose thou a place, choose (it)," I should read "make" and Ezekiel 23:47, "the company [of the righteous men] shall stone them with stones and dispatch them [Query, why not make them (scil. for a booty and a spoil)?] with their swords." In the same way, I should have rendered 1 Samuel 2:29, not "to make yourselves fat," but "to make yourselves;" but this others must judge. That there is peculiar force in the word ■■■ in many passages, seems to me obvious; take for instance Numbers 16:30, " created a new thing," the earth swallowing Korah, etc.; so, in Jer. mod. 22, "a woman compassing a man;" and Isaiah 4:5, " a cloud and a smoke by day"; and Isaiah 41:20, " trees in incongruous places"; and " a clean heart." Psalms 51:10 (12).

Lastly. With regard to the meaning, by derivation from the root of the word Elohim; the clue to its meaning being taken from the Scriptures, which relate, as I judge, to the scene chosen for its first display as to man, I have no difficulty in supposing it derived from ■■■ or ■■■ bearing, as many derivatives do, from some such word a sense of Power. *

(* Since writing the above, I see the Jews in their new translation of Genesis, give the same idea; (Genesis 1:1), ■■■■■ God; ■■■ derived from ■■ power, comp. 2 Kings 24:15, a pluralis excellentice applied to God as the concentration of all powers, " Omnipotent.")

Vol 02 - Exodus

Exodus In the book of Exodus, we have, as the general and characteristic subject, the deliverance and redemption of the people of God, and their establishment as a people before Him-whether under the law or under the government of God in long-suffering, who provided for his unfaithful people a way of access to Himself, although they had failed. God's relationship with the people had at first been in grace; but this did not continue, and the people never entered thereinto with intelligence, neither did they understand this grace like persons who stood in need of it as sinners. We shall proceed to examine a little the course of these divine instructions.

(* Genesis, Vol. I, No. XII. p. 215, was printed from a paper forwarded by the Author,-his own version, in English, of one written by him in French for the " Tomoignage." This (on Exodus) is a translation from his MS, but since corrected by himself.-Ed.)

First, we have the historical circumstances which relate to the captivity of Israel-the persecutions which this people had to endure, and the providential superintendence of God answering the faith of the parents, and thus accomplishing the counsels of His grace, which not only preserved the life of Moses, but placed him in an elevated position in the court of Pharaoh.

But, although Providence responds to faith, and acts in order to accomplish God's purposes and control the walk of His children, it is not the guide of faith, although it is made so sometimes by believers who are wanting in clearness of light. Moses's faith is seen in his giving up all the advantages of the position in which God had set him in His providence. This faith acted through affections which attached him to God, and consequently to 1 the people of God in their distress, and manifested itself, not in the helps or reliefs which his position could well have enabled him to give to them, but in inducing him to identify himself with that people because it was God's people. Faith attaches itself to God, and to the bond that exists between God and His people; and thus it thinks not of patronizing from above, as if the world had authority over the people of God, or was able to be a blessing to them; but it has the feeling of the strength of this bond: it feels (because it is faith) that God loves His people; that His people are precious to Him; His own on the earth; and faith sets itself thus through very affection, in the position where His people find themselves. This is what Christ did. Faith does but follow Him in His career of love, however great the distance at which it walks. How many reasons might have induced Moses to remain in the position where he was; and this even under the pretext of being able to do more for the people; but this would have been leaning on the power of Pharaoh, instead of recognizing the bond between the people and God: it might have resulted in a relief which the world would have granted, but not in a deliverance by God, accomplished in His love and in His power. Moses would have been spared, but dishonored; Pharaoh flattered, and his authority over the people of God recognized; and Israel would have remained in captivity, leaning on Pharaoh, instead of recognizing God in the precious and even glorious relationship of His people with Him. God would not have been glorified. Yet all human reasoning, and all reasoning connected with providential ways, would have induced Moses to remain in his position: faith made him give it up.

Moses then identifies himself with the people of God. A certain natural activity, and some consciousness of a strength which was not purely from on high, accompanied him, perhaps; • however, it is this first devotedness which is pointed out by the Holy Ghost* as the good and acceptable fruit of faith. But it ought to have been more entirely subject to God, and to have its starting-point in Him alone, and in obedience to His expressed will. Thus the Lord acts often. The earnest energy of faithfulness is manifested, but the instrument is put aside for a moment sometimes, in order that the service may depend directly and entirely upon God. There was something analogous even in Jesus, save that there was not in Him either false reckoning, or error, or external providences, in consequence, to deliver Him from them; but the perfection of the energy of life within, acted always in the knowledge of who His Father was, and at the same time submitted to His will in the circumstances in which He had morally placed Him. Moses, fearful even amid faithfulness, and dreading the power which lent him, unconsciously perhaps, a certain habit of energy (for one is afraid of that from which one draws one’s strength), and repulsed by the unbelief of those towards whom his love and his faithfulness carried him, for " they understood him not," fled to the desert, a type of the Lord Jesus rejected by the people whom He loved.

(* Hebrews 11:24-26.)

There is a difference between this type and that of Joseph. Joseph takes the position (as put to death) of Jesus raised to the right hand of the supreme throne amongst the Gentiles, in the end receiving his brethren, from whom he had been separated. His children are to him a testimony of his blessing at that time. He calls them Manasseh ("because God," says he," has made me forget all my labors, and all the house of my father "), and Ephraim (" because God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction"). Moses presents to us Christ separated from his brethren; and although Zipporah might be considered as a type of the Church (as well as Joseph’s wife), as the bride of the rejected Deliverer, during his separation from Israel, yet, as to what regards his heart, his feelings (which are expressed in the names that he gives to his children), are governed by the thought of being separated from the people of Israel: his fraternal affections are there -his thoughts are there-his rest and his country are there. He is a stranger every where else. Moses is the type of Jesus as the deliverer of Israel. He calls his son Gershom, that is to say, a " stranger there"; " for (says he) I have sojourned in a strange land." Jethro presents to us the Gentiles among whom Christ and His glory were driven when He was rejected by the Jews. But at last, God looks upon His people; and He will have not only the faith that identifies itself with His people, but the power which delivers them; and that Moses, who was rejected as a prince and a judge, must appear in the midst of Israel and of the world, as a prince and a deliverer.

Stephen made use of these two examples, in order to convict the consciences of the Sanhedrim of their similar and still greater sin in the case of Christ.

God-who to appearance had left Moses in the power of his enemies, without recognizing his faith-manifests Himself now to him when alone, in order to send him to deliver Israel and to judge the world.

Considered as a practical history, God shows Himself to us here as destroying the hope of the flesh, and humbling its strength; and He makes a shepherd, under the protection of a stranger, of the adopted son of the house of the king; and this during forty years, in order that the work might be a work of obedience, and that the strength may be that of God.

God manifests Himself under the name of Jehovah. He had put Himself in relation with the Fathers under the name of God Almighty. That was what they wanted, and this was His glory in their pilgrimage. Now He takes a name in relationship with His people, which implies constant relationship with Him; and in which, being established with Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, He accomplishes in faithfulness what He has begun in grace, all the while showing what He is in patience and in holiness in His government in the midst of His people. For us, Ha calls Himself Father, and acts towards us according to the power of that blessed name to our souls.* But this name of Jehovah is not the first which he gives Himself in His communications with the people through the mediation of Moses. He at first presents Himself as one interested in them for their fathers' sakes, whose God He was. He tells them that their cry had come up to Him; that He had seen their affliction, and that He was come down to deliver them. Touching expression of the grace of God! Upon this, He sends Moses to Pharaoh, in order to lead them up out of Egypt.

(* Compare Matthew 5:1-48 and John 17:1-26.)

But, alas! obedience, when there is only that, and when carnal energy does not mix itself with it, is but a poor thing. And Moses raises difficulties. God gives thereupon a sign, in token that He will be with him, but a sign which was to be fulfilled after the obedience of Moses, and was to strengthen him and to rejoice him when he had already obeyed. Moses still makes difficulties, to which God answers until they cease to be weakness, and become rather unbelief. God declares His name " I am." At the same time, while declaring that He is that He is, He takes forever, as His name upon the earth, the name of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.

God foretells that Pharaoh will not let the people go; but takes clearly the ground of His authority and of His right over His people, and of authoritative demand upon Pharaoh that he should recognize them. Upon his refusal to do so, he would be judged by the power of God.

Moses still raises difficulties, and God gives him again signs, remarkable signs. They seem to me, in their character, types of sin and of its healing; of power having become Satanic, and being reclaimed and become the rod of God; and then of the presence of that which refreshes, coming from God, having become judgment and death. Yet Moses refuses still, and the wrath of God is kindled against him, and He joins with him Aaron his brother, whom He had already prepared for that, and who had come out of Egypt to meet him; for the folly of His children, while it is to their shame and to their loss, accomplishes the purposes of God.

Whatever may be the power of Him that delivers, it is necessary that circumcision should be found in him who is interested in, and who is used as an instrument, for the Savior - God is a God of holiness; it is in holiness, and in judging sin that He delivers; and, acting in, holiness, He does not suffer sin in those who are His coworkers, with whom He is in contact; for He comes out of His place in judgment. For us, the question is of being dead to sin, the true circumcision, our Moses is a bloody husband to her who has to do with him. God cannot use the flesh in fighting against Satan. He cannot suffer it Himself, for He is in His place in judgment. Satan also would have power over it, and of right; God therefore puts it to death Himself, and He wills that this should be done on our part also. This is true of the Church; but she can reckon herself dead. It will be true in one way, more evidently, in judgment at the last day, when the Lord pleads with all flesh, and identifies Himself with those who have not taken part, spiritually, in the sufferings of Christ. At the news of the goodness of God, the people adore Him: but the struggle against the power of evil is

another matter. Satan will not let the people go, and God permits this resistance, for the exercise of faith, and for the discipline of His people, and for the brilliant display of His power where Satan had reigned.

Before the deliverance, when the hopes of the people are awakened, the oppression becomes heavier than ever, and the people would have preferred being left quiet in their slavery. But the rights and counsels of God are in question. The people must be thoroughly detached from these Gentiles who are now become their torment. Moses works signs. The magicians imitate them by the power of Satan, in order to harden Pharaoh's heart. But when the question is of creating life, they are forced to recognize the hand of God. At last, God executes His judgments, taking the firstborn as representatives of all the people. We have thereon two parts in the deliverance of the people; in one, God appears as Judge-in the other, He manifests Himself as Deliverer. Up to this last, the people is still in Egypt. In the first, the expiatory blood of redemption bars the way to Him as Judge, and it does it infallibly, but He does not enter within-that is its value. The people, their loins girded, having eaten in haste, with the bitter herbs of repentance, begin their journey, but they do so in Egypt; yet now God can be, and He is, with them. Here it is well to distinguish these two judgments-that of the first-born, and that of the Red Sea-as matters of chastisement; the one was the first-fruits of the other, and ought to have deterred Pharaoh from his rash pursuit. But the blood which kept the people from God's judgment, meant something far deeper and far more serious that even the Red Sea. What happened at the Red Sea was, it is true, the manifestation of the illustrious power of God, who destroyed, with the breath of His mouth, the enemy who stood in rebellion against Him-final and destructive judgment in its character, no doubt, and which effected the deliverance of His people by His power. But the blood signified the moral judgment of God, and the full and entire satisfaction of all that was in His Being. God, such as He was, in His justice, His holiness, and His truth, could not touch those who were sheltered by that blood. Was there sin? His love towards His people had found the means of satisfying the requirements of His justice; and at the sight of that blood which answered everything that was perfect in His Being, He passed over it consistently with His justice and even His truth. Nevertheless, God is seen there as Judge; thus likewise so long as the soul is there, its peace is uncertain-its way in Egypt-being all the while truly converted; for God is still Judge, and the power of the enemy is still there. At the Red Sea, God acts in power according to the purposes of His love; consequently, the enemy, who was closely pursuing His people, is destroyed without resource. This is what will happen to the people at the last day, already, in reality-to the eye of God-sheltered through the blood. As to the moral type, it is evidently the death and resurrection of Jesus, and of His people in Him; God acting in it, in order to bring them out of death, where He had brought them in Christ, and consequently beyond the possibility of being reached by the enemy. We are made partakers of it already, through faith. Sheltered from the judgment of God by the blood, we are delivered, by His power which acts for us, from the power of Satan, the prince of this world. The blood keeping us from the judgment of God was the beginning. The power which raised us with Christ, has made us free from the whole power of Satan, who followed us, and from all his attacks. The world who will follow that way, is swallowed up in it.

Considered as the historical type of God's ways towards Israel, the Red Sea terminates the sequel of events; as a moral type, it is the beginning of the Christian path, properly so called-that is to say, of the soul made free.

Hereupon, we enter the desert. They sing (chap. 15) the song of triumph. God has led them by His power to His holy habitation. He will lead them into the place which He has made, which His hands have established. Their enemies shall be unable to oppose themselves to this. There is a third thing which is found in this beautiful song-the desire to build a tabernacle for Jehovah. But what they sing, is the deliverance effected by the power of God, and the hope of entering into the sanctuary which the hands of Jehovah have made. The deliverance, then, of the people is accompanied by a full and entire joy, which having the consciousness of this complete deliverance by the power of God, grasps the whole extent of His intentions towards them, and knows how to apply this same power to the difficulties of the way.

Afterward, those difficulties arrive. They travel three days without water-a sad effect, in appearance, of such a deliverance-and then the water is bitter. If death has delivered them from the power of the enemy, it must become known in its application to themselves; bitter to the soul, it is true, but, through grace, refreshment and life, for in all these things is the life of the Spirit; it is death and resurrection in practice, after the deliverance; thereupon we have the twelve wells and the seventy palm trees-types, it seems to me, of those living springs and of that shelter which have been provided through instruments chosen of God for the consolation of His people.

Here we have the responsibility of the people put, as a condition of their well being, under God’s government. Still, however, it is always grace. The sabbath-rest of the people-is established in connection with Christ, the true bread of life, who gives it Himself. Then comes the Spirit-living waters which come out of the rock; but with the presence of the Holy Ghost comes conflict, and not rest. Yet Christ places Himself spiritually at the head of His people, typified here by Joshua, of whom mention is now made for the first time.

However sure of victory they may be in fighting the Lord’s battles, the entire dependance of the people, at every moment, on the divine blessing is presented to us in this -that if Moses (who with the rod of God represents to us His authority on high), if Moses, I say, keeps not his hands lifted up, the people are beaten down by their enemies. Nevertheless, Aaron the high priest, and Hur (purity?), maintain the blessing, and Israel prevails; the cause was a hidden one; sincerity, valiant efforts, the fact that the battle was God’s battle, were of no avail-all depended upon God’s blessing from on high. One would have thought, indeed, that if God made war, and unfurled the banner, it would soon be over; but no: from generation to generation, He would make war upon Amalek. For, if it was the war of God, it was in the midst of His people.

Up to this, all was grace. The murmurs of the people had only served to skew the riches of the grace of God. who displayed his sovereignty in giving them all they could desire; which appears so much the more striking, because afterward the same desires, under the law, brought very bitter chastisements. At length, after this reign of grace, follows (chap. 18) the millennium where the king in Jeshurun judges in righteousness, establishes order and government. The Gentiles eat and offer sacrifices with Israel, and acknowledge that the God of the Jews is exalted above all gods.

During the days of the deliverance of Israel, Moses’s wife had been sent back; but now she appears again upon the scene, and we have not only Gershom "a pilgrim in a foreign land," but a second son, Eliezer; for Moses said "the God of my father was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh,"-the application of which to the future deliverance of Israel is too evident to require any lengthened explanation. But having thus terminated the course of grace, the scene

changes entirely. They do not keep the feast on the mountain, whither God, as He had promised, had led them-had "brought them to Himself." He proposes a condition to them: if they obey His voice, they shall be His people. The people, instead of knowing themselves, and saying, "We dare not place ourselves under such a condition, and risk our blessing, yea, even make sure of losing it," undertake to do all that the Lord had spoken. The people, however, are not permitted to approach God, who hid Himself in the darkness. In fact, they undertook obedience far from God, in a state in which they could not approach Him in that majesty to which obedience was due. Nevertheless, God gave all possible solemnity to the communication of His law; and sees it good that the people should fear before Him; but what can fear do towards giving power at a distance from Him. It may, perhaps, be proper; but it is not proper to undertake to obey in such a state. Moses, when God had spoken to the people, and the people dared no more to hearken, drew near to the thick darkness, and received the instructions of God for the people-moral and general instructions, relating to their possession of the land, in case they should enter upon it according to the covenant of the law. Two things are pointed out as to worship-the work of man, and his order in which his nakedness will certainly be made manifest; and they are equally and together prohibited by God. We have (as we may observe by the way) a beautiful type (chap. 21:) of the devotedness of Christ to the Church and to His Father. Having served faithfully during His life-time, He would remain a servant even in death for the sake of the Father, the Church, and His people. He made Himself a servant forever (compare Luke 12:1-59 even for glory, and 1 Corinthians 15:1-58.). This covenant, made on condition of the obedience of the people, was confirmed by blood (chap. 24). The blood being shed, death having thus come in as God’s judgment, the elders go up to enter into relationship with God. They see His glory, and continue their human and terrestrial life: they eat and drink. But Moses is called near to God, to see the patterns of things far more excellent; of heavenly things-of things which, while making provision for the faults and the failures of God’s people, reveal to them the perfection and varied glories of Him to whom they approach as His people. And in fact, the glories in every way of Christ the Mediator are presented in the tabernacle; not precisely, as yet, the unity of His people, considered as His body, but in every manner in which the ways and the perfections of God are manifested through Him, whether in the full extent of the creation, the glory of His people, or in His person. The scene of the manifestation of the glory of God-His house-His domain, in which He displays His Being (in so far as it can be seen);-the riches of His grace and glory;-and His relationship in Christ with us-poor and feeble creatures, but who draw nigh unto Him-are unfolded to us in it.

Thus the tabernacle had two aspects-the glory which was proper to Himself, and the means of the relationship of God with His people. This is what is true of the Lord Jesus. I can view His cross in its absolute perfectness, according to the thoughts and the heart of God; I can find there, that which answers all my wants and failures. It would lead me too far to enter into the details of the construction of the tabernacle and its utensils, but I will make some general remarks. There is a certain appearance of disorder in the description, in that it is interrupted by the description of the vesture and of the order of consecration of Aaron. But this arises from what I have just said. There are things which are the manifestation of God, others which refer to the presentation of man to God; these things are linked together, for there are some manifestations of God which are the points and means of the approach of man, as the cross; but, while being the point at which man draws nigh, there is something there besides the act of drawing near, or even of serving God. The description of the tabernacle presents to us, first, the things in which God manifests Himself, as

the object however of the spiritual knowledge of human intelligence (by faith, of course), and then the priesthood and that which man does in drawing near to Him who thus reveals Himself.

First, then, there are the things which are found in the Holy of Holies, and the holy place. The ark of the covenant; the table of the show-bread, and the candlestick with seven branches. This is what God had established for the manifestation of Himself inside, where those who enter into His presence could have communion with Him. Then we have the, arrangement of the place of the tabernacle which enclosed all these things, and which divided it into two parts. And then the altar of burnt-offerings, and the court where it stood, to the end of the 19th verse of chap. 27. We will consider these things first. It is there the first part ends. In that which follows there is what regards the action of man therein -of the priests-and God orders certain things to be brought in for that: this it is which introduces the priesthood which acted in it, and which alone could, in fact, so act. The ark of the covenant was the throne where God manifested Himself in His holiness, and as the Sovereign to whom every living man was responsible-the God of the whole earth. However, it was the throne of relationship with His people. The law-the testimony of what He required of men-was to be placed there. Over it was the mercy-seat which covered it in, which formed the throne, or rather the basis of the throne, and the Cherubim (formed of the same piece), which were its supporters -its sides. The Cherubim throughout the Old Testament, where-ever they act, are connected with the judicial power of God, or are the executors of that power, and in the Apocalypse they are generally connected with providential judgments, and belong to the throne. Here, then, God manifested Himself as the Supreme God in His moral Being, armed with power to enforce respect to His laws, and to keep account of all that was done. This also is why the blood-witness of all that had been done for those who were thus responsible; and satisfying all the moral nature of Him who sat there-was put upon the mercy-seat. It was not exactly there that God was in connection with His people; but thence came forth the communications which were to be made to them, " and there will I meet with thee," said God to Moses, "and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two Cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all the things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."-Moses, who receives the thoughts of God for the people, was there to have his intercourse with Jehovah, and that without veil. It was, then, the most intimate and most immediate manifestation of God, and that which came nearest to His very nature, which does not manifest itself. But it was a manifestation of Himself in judgment and in government; it was not in man, neither according to man, but within the veil. In Christ, we find Him thus, and then in grace. Outside the veil was the table with its twelve loaves and the golden candlestick. Twelve, is administrative perfection in man - Seven, spiritual perfection, whether in good or evil. The two are found outside the veil, inside which was the most immediate manifestation of God-the Supreme-but who hid Himself, as it were, yet in darkness. Here was light and nourishment. God in union with humanity, and God giving the light of the Holy Ghost. Therefore it is, that we have twelve apostles attached to the Lord in the flesh, and seven Churches for Him who has the seven spirits of God. The twelve tribes were, for the time being, that which answered externally to this manifestation. It is found in the new Jerusalem. The primary idea was the ’manifestation of God in man and by the Spirit.

Next, we have the Tabernacle itself which was one, though separated into two parts. There were (as the Word teaches us) two meanings in the form of the Tabernacle - the heavens, God’s

tabernacle; and the person of Christ, God's dwelling. The heavenly places themselves, says the Apostle, had to be purified with better sacrifices. The veil was, we know, on the same divine authority, the flesh of Christ which concealed God in His holiness of judgment-in His perfectness as sovereign justice itself. The Tabernacle itself was formed of the same things as the veil; figurative, I doubt not, of the essential purity of Christ as a man, and of all the divine graces embroidered, as it were, thereon. It seems to me that the other coverings point to Him also: that of the goat-skins to His positive purity, or rather to that severity of separation from the evil that was around Him, which gave Him the character of prophet; severity not in His ways towards poor sinners, but in separation from sinners-the uncompromisingness as to Himself which kept Him apart and gave Him immense authority -that moral cloth of hair which distinguished the Prophet. The ram-skins died red point to His perfect devotedness to God-His consecration to God (may God enable us to imitate Him!) and the badger-skin is that vigilant holiness both of walk and in external relationship, which preserved Him, and perfectly so, from the evil that surrounded Him. "By the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." Besides what may be called His person these things correspond to the new nature (in Christ-we can say new only by analogy, being born of the Holy Ghost, at His birth in the flesh); but I speak of the thing itself in practice, or what is produced by the Spirit in us, and by the Word. In the court, God meets the world (it is not the world itself that was the desert), but it is where the world draws near to God, where His people (not as priests or as saints but as sinful men) draw near to Him. But in coming out of the world, it is an enclosure of God's who is known only to those who enter therein. There the altar of burnt offerings was found, God manifested in justice in his relationship with men, in the midst of them, such as they were; true,-it was the judgment of sin, for, without this, God could not be in relation with men, but yet it was Christ in the perfection of the Spirit of God who offered Himself a sacrifice, according to that justice, for sin; and who thus puts sinners in relation with God.

He has been lifted up from the earth. Upon earth, the question was as to the possibility of men's relationship with Him who is holy and living,-that could not be. He is lifted up from the earth, rejected;-nevertheless He does not enter into heaven: upon the cross Christ has been raised from this world,-has left it; but He still remains the object of it, as the full satisfaction to the justice of God, as well as the witness of His love, of the love at least of Him who has glorified the justice of God in this act. He is the object still I say to the eyes of the world, if, through grace, one goes there and separates from this world, while God in justice (for where has that been glorified as in the cross of Jesus) can receive according to His glory, and even be glorified there, by the most wretched of sinners.

It is here then that the altar of burnt-offerings is found, the brazen altar. God manifested in righteousness, meeting, however, the sinner in love by the sacrifice of Christ: -not in His being-spiritual and sovereign object of the adoration of saints, but in His relationship with sinners according to His righteousness; but where sinners present themselves to Him by that work in which by the mighty operation of the Holy Ghost Christ has offered Himself without spot unto Him, has satisfied all the demands of His righteousness and has become that sweet smelling savor* (of sacrifice) in which in coming out of the world we draw near to God, and to God in relation with the sinners who draw near to Him. It was not the sacrifice for sin burnt outside the camp: there no one approached. Christ was made sin by God, and all passed between God and Him; but here we

draw near unto God.

(* It is interesting to know that the word burn is not at all the same in Hebrew for the sacrifice for sin and for the burnt-offering; in the case of the latter it is the same as for the burning of incense. I add here a word upon the sacrifices. In the sacrifice for sin outside the camp, God came out of His place to punish, to take vengeance for sin. Christ has put Himself in our place. In the sacrifice for sin His blood was shed. But this blood, infinitely precious, has been carried by the High Priest inside the Holiest, and put upon the Mercy-seat; and thus the sure foundation of all our relationship with God has been laid; since, as to him that comes, sin exists no longer in the sight of God. But it is not only that God has fully reached sin in judgment, in the shedding of the blood of Christ,-but the work of Christ which He has accomplished has been perfectly agreeable to God. "I have glorified Thee on the earth." "God is glorified in Him." And God owed it, in justice to Christ, to glorify Him with His own self. The very being of God, in righteousness and in love, had been fully glorified (publicly before the universe), and this righteousness was to place Christ in a position that corresponded to the work. The love of God towards Him, certainly, did not turn from this. Thus it was not only that the holiness which took vengeance had already done so, in the death of Jesus, and had nothing more to do, but (for him who knows that in his Adam-nature there is no resource, and still less in the law) there is, by grace, through the faith of Jesus, the righteousness of God Himself-a justifying righteousness. We are made acceptable in the Beloved. God must raise Christ in consideration of that which He had done) and place Him at His right hand and (since He has carried His blood there) we also-objects of that work-are, in virtue of it, to be accepted in the same way. Thus then the sinner believing in God draws near to the brazen altar (the way being open to him by the blood), and draws near unto God manifested in Holiness, but according to the sweet-smelling savor of the sacrifice of. Christ, an expression inapplicable to the sacrifice for sin, burnt outside the camp (there he was made sin), according to all the sweet-smelling savor of the devotedness and obedience of Christ upon the cross, that is to say unto death. Notice that. Besides this, the priests drew near as priests, and even into the holy place-but of this more hereafter.)

All the manifestations of God thus arranged, we come now to the services that were rendered to Him in the courts, and in the places where He manifested Himself (27:20). The priests were to take care that the light of the candlestick should be always shining outside the veil, which hid the testimony inside, and during the night; it was the light of the grace and of the power of God by the Spirit, that manifested God spiritually. It was not Himself upon the throne, where His Sovereign Being was keeping the treasure of His righteousness, that Christ alone, in His person and in His nature could be Himself; nor was it righteousness in His relationship with sinful man outside the holy place, but it was a light, through which he manifested Himself in the power of His grace, but which applied itself to His relationship with man viewed as holy, or set apart, for service to Him, all the while that it was the manifestation of God. Essentially it was the Holy Ghost. This we see in the Apocalypse, but it might rest upon Christ as man, and that without measure. Or it might act as from Him and by His grace in others, either as the spirit of Prophecy, or in some other way more abundant and complete, as was the case after His resurrection, when the Holy Ghost Himself came down. But whatever these manifestations in men may have been in action, the thing itself was there before God to manifest Him in the energy of the Spirit Himself; but the Priesthood was essential here, in order to maintain this relation between the energy of the Holy Ghost and the

service of men in whom He manifested Himself in order that the light might shine. We find, therefore, immediately afterward, the ordinance for the establishment of the Priesthood. The garments were composed of everything that is connected with the person of Christ in this character of Priesthood. The breast-plate, the ephod, the robe, the broidered coat, the curious girdle, and the miter. The ephod was, par excellence, the priestly garment; made of the same things as the veil; it was also the essential purity and the graces of Christ. The girdle was the sign of service. He bore the names of the people of God in the fullness of their order before God; upon His shoulders, the weight of their government, and upon the breast-plate on his heart: breast-plate which was inseparable from the ephod, that is to say from his priesthood and appearing before God. He also bare, according to the light and the perfections of God, their judgment before Him. He maintained them in judgment before God according to these things. They therefore looked for answers through these same Urim and Thummim; for the wisdom of our conduct is to be according to this position before God. Upon the hem of the robe of the ephod there was the desirable fruit, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost, which depended on the Priesthood. I think that Christ, in entering heaven, made Himself heard through the Holy Ghost in His people-hem of His garments (compare Psalms 133:1-3); and He will make Himself heard through His gifts when He comes out also. Meanwhile He bears also within, the iniquity of the holy things, in holiness before the eternal God (this holiness is upon His very forehead). They are presented according to the divine Holiness in Him. The sons of Aaron were also clothed. Their natural nakedness was not to appear, but the glory and the honor with which God clothed them. The girdle of service also distinguished them. For their consecration they were all washed. Aaron and his sons together always represent the church, not as gathered in a body (a thing hidden in the Old Testament), but in varied positions sustained individually before God. There is only one sanctification for all. In His nature Christ is the spring and the expression of it. We are made partakers of it, but it is one.* Aaron is anointed separately without sacrifice, without blood. But His sons are sprinkled with blood upon the ear, the thumb of the right hand, the great toe of the right foot. Obedience, action, and walk, being measured, guarded, both through the price and through the perfection of the blood of Christ. And then they were sprinkled with blood and with the oil of consecration, that is to say, set apart by the blood and by the unction of the Holy Ghost.

(* Aaron is always united to his sons in such types, for Christ cannot be separated from His own, or they would become naught. But He had been anointed personally, without blood, a thing that has been verified in His history. He was anointed while on earth: His disciples after His death. He received the Spirit for the Church in a new way (Acts 2:33), when He was risen from among the dead by the blood of the eternal covenant, for it is according to the efficacy of that blood in behalf of His people that He has been raised as the Head of it.)

All the sacrifices were offered. That for sin, the burnt-offering of a sweet-smelling savor, the ram of consecration (which had the character of a peace-offering), accompanied by the meat-offering. These sacrifices have been explained elsewhere, and I only recall their import. Christ made sin for us, first need of the soul. Christ obedient unto death, devoting Himself to the glory of His Father, and to us as belonging to the Father. The communion of God, of the Savior, of the worshipper, and of the whole church-and Christ devoted in holiness of life upon the earth. It is to be observed, that when Aaron and his sons were anointed, the sons and their garments were anointed with him, not with them. Everything is connected with the Head. Aaron and his sons eat the things with which

the atonement had been made. Then, connected with this priesthood, comes the perpetual sweet-smelling savor of the burnt-offering, in which the people present themselves before God-sweet-smelling savor which is found there, as it were in the midst of the people, according to the efficacy of which they stand in His presence round about. There God met the people. With the Mediator He met above the ark without veil, and gave him commandment for the people according to His own perfection. Here He puts Himself on a level with the people, though speaking with the Mediator. The dwelling of God in the midst of the people is sanctified by His glory. The tabernacle, the altar, the priests, are sanctified, and He dwells in the midst of the people surrounding Him: for this purpose had He brought them up out of Egypt.

Having thus established the priesthood, and the relationship of the people with God, who dwelt in the midst of them; the intercession of Christ, in grace; all that was in Him, ascending as a sweet savor to the Lord is presented; and His service in making the manifestation of God in Spirit shine forth. The people were identified with this service through redemption. They could neither be there, nor serve; but they were all represented as redeemed. We then have the laver between the brazen altar and the tabernacle. Purification* for communion with God, and for service to Him therein: first, the whole body, then the hands and feet (for us only the feet, as our walk alone is concerned), every time they took part in it. Finally, we have the oil and the incense; the fragrant oil which was for priests only: the nature of man, as man, could not partake of it. The incense typifies the precious perfume of the graces of Christ, He alone answers to it. The Sabbath was added to the tabernacle of the congregation, as a sign, as it had been to every form of relationship between God and His people: for to be made partakers of God’s rest is what distinguishes His people. In fine, God gave Moses the two tables of the law.

(* It was the washing of water by the Word: the purification of the worshipper, that is, of the heart, to constitute him one-in nature first, and then in practice-if he had failed in it; for communion requires not only the acceptance, but the purification of the person. Without that, the presence of God acts on the conscience, not in giving communion, but in showing the defilement. Christ, even as a man, was that by nature, and He kept Himself by the words of God’s lips. With us, it is received from Him; and we must also use it to purify ourselves. The idea and measure of the purity are the same for Christ and for us-" he that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked," -" to purify himself, even as He is pure." For the ordinary relationship of the people, looked at as worshippers, it was the red heifer (Numbers 19:1-22), the ashes of which were put into running water; that is, the Holy Spirit applied, by the Word, to the heart and conscience, the sufferings of Christ for sin to purify man: sufferings which could have all their moral and purifying power, since the remembrance chewed forth that sin had been consumed in the sacrifice of Christ Himself for sin, as to imputation, by the fire of the judgment of God. The blood of the heifer had been sprinkled seven times before the door of the tabernacle-the place where we have just seen, God met the people.)

Whilst God was thus preparing the precious things connected with His relationship with His people,* the people only thinking of what they saw in their deliverer, completely abandoned the Lord: a sad and early, but sure fruit of having undertaken obedience to the law as a condition, in order to the enjoyment of the promises. Aaron falls with them.

(* The tabernacle had a double character. It was the manifestation of the glory of the heavenly things, and a provision for a sinful people to be brought near again to God there. It is interesting to consider the tabernacle under another aspect; for, as a pattern of heavenly things, it is of the highest interest. First, it signifies the heavens themselves; for Christ is not entered into the tabernacle, but into heaven itself. In a certain sense, even the universe is the house of God; but moreover, the unity of the Church as a heavenly building is presented by it: we are His house, the tabernacle of God in Spirit. It is the body of Christ. These two meanings are closely connected in the beginning of the third chapter of Hebrews. Christ, God, has built all things, and we are His house. He fills all in all, but He dwells in the Church; it is a concentric circle, although quite different in its nature. Compare the prayer in Ephesians 3:1-21 which also connects these two things. In another point of view, the person and the fullness of Christ Himself are there; for God was in Him, and thus the rending of the veil is applied by the Apostle to the flesh of Christ, or, if you please, the veil itself, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. It is evident, that the dwelling-place of God is the central idea of these things, just as a man lives in his house, in his property, etc.)

Such being the state of the people, God tells Moses to go down; and now everything begins to be put on another footing. God, in His counsels of grace, has not only seen the people when they were in affliction, but in their ways. They were a stiff-necked people. He tells Moses to let Him alone, and that He would destroy them, and make of Moses a great nation. Moses takes the place of mediator, and, true to his love for the people, as God’s people, and to the glory of God in them, with a self-denial which savored of this glory, sacrificing every thought of self, intercedes in that magnificent pleading which appeals to what that glory necessitates, and to the unconditional promises made to the fathers.* And the Lord repented. The character of Moses shines in all its beauty here, and is remarkable amongst those which the Holy Ghost has taken pleasure in delineating, according to the precious grace of God, who loves to describe the exploits of His people, and the fruit they have borne, though He Himself is the source of them.

(* "This is a universal principle. Solomon, Nehemiah, and Daniel only go back to Moses-an important remark as to the fulfillment of God’s ways towards Israel.) But it was all over with the covenant of the law; the first link-that of having no other gods-was broken on the part of the people. They had made a complete separation between themselves and God. Moses, who had not asked God what was to be done with the law, comes down. His exercised ear, quick to discern how matters stood with the people, hears their profane and light joy: soon after, he sees the golden calf; which had even preceded the tabernacle of God in the camp, and he breaks the tables at the foot of the mount; and, zealous for the people towards God, because of His glory, he is zealous for God towards the people, because of that same glory. And Levi, responding to his call, says to his brethren, the children of his mother," I have not known you," and consecrates himself to the Lord. Moses now, full of zeal, not according to knowledge, but which was permitted of God for our instruction, proposes to the people his going up, and "peradventure" he shall make an atonement for this sin. And he asks God to blot him out of His book, rather than that the people should not be forgiven. God refuses him; and, while sparing them through his mediation, and placing them under the government of His patience and long-suffering, puts each one of them under responsibility to Himself-that is, under the law. Thus the mediation of Moses was available for forgiveness, as regards government, and to put them under a government, the principles of

which we shall see by-and-bye; but it was useless as regards the atonement which would protect them from the effect of their sin, and withdraw them from under the judgment of the law.* God commands Moses to lead the people to the place of which He had spoken, and His angel should go before him.

(* Hence it is, that this revelation of God, though the character proclaimed be so abundant in goodness, is called by the Apostle the ministration of death and condemnation. For if the people were still under the law, the more gracious God was, the more guilty they were.)

What a contrast do we here remark, in passing, with the work of our precious Savior. He, coming down from above-from His dwelling-place in the bosom of the Father-to do His will; and, while keeping the law (instead of destroying the signs of this covenant, the requirements of which, man was unable to meet), He Himself' bears the penalty of its infringement; and, having accomplished the atonement before returning above, instead of going up with a cheerless " peradventure " in His mouth, which the holiness of God instantly nullified, He ascends with the sign of the accomplishment of the atonement, and of the confirmation of the new covenant, with His precious blood, the value of which was anything but doubtful to that God before whom He presented it. Alas! the Church has but too faithfully reflected the con: duct of Israel during the absence of the true Moses, and attributed to Providence what she had fashioned with her own hands, because she would see something. We have now to examine a little what was taking place among the people, and on Moses' part, the faithful and zealous witness, as a servant of God in His house: for we shall find a new mediation going on peacefully, if one may so speak, and holily weighing, by faith, these relationships where the mercy and the justice of God meet. It is not the indignation of holy wrath, which had indeed its place at the sight of the evil, while it knew not what to do-for, How put the law of God beside the golden calf? The Lord says that He will send an angel, and that He will not go in the midst of the people, seeing it is stiff-necked, lest He should destroy them by the way. But I will state succinctly, the facts connected with this new intercession, which are of touching interest.

God had said that He would come up in a moment in the midst of them, to destroy them; that Israel should put off their ornaments, that the Lord might know what to do unto them. Holy grace of God! who, if He sees the insolence of sin before His eyes, must strike, but wills that the people should at least strip themselves of that, and that He may have time (to speak the language of men) to reflect as to what He should do with the sin of a people now humbled for having forsaken Him. However, God does not forsake the people. Moses enters holily, and by the just judgment of conscience, into the mind of God by the Spirit; and before the tabernacle of the congregation was pitched, he entirely leaves the camp, and makes a place for God outside the camp, afar Off from the camp which had put a false god in His place, and changed their glory into the similitude of an ox which eateth grass. He calls it the tabernacle of the congregation-the meeting-place between God and those who sought Him. This name is in itself important, because it is no longer simply God in the midst of a recognized assembly, which was one of the characters we have already observed connected with the tabernacle.* Moses being outside the camp, God now declares that He will not go up in the midst of them, lest He should destroy them by the way, as He had threatened. Moses begins his intercession, having taken an individual position, the only one now of faithfulness to God; but his connection with the people being so much the stronger, by his being nearer to God, more separated unto Him. This is the effect of faithful separation when it is for God's glory, and

one is brought near to God in it. It must be remarked here, that God had taken the people at their word: they had said, acting according to their faith, or rather their want of faith, " This Moses that brought us up out of Egypt." God says, "thy people, which thou broughtest out of Egypt have corrupted themselves." Hence God says to Moses "thou," addressing Himself to the mediator. Moses says "Thy people " (32:1, 7, 12-34). Afterward, however, the people having stripped themselves of their ornaments and Moses being in the position of mediator, God says (33:1), " Thou and the people which thou hast brought up." Everything now hangs upon the mediator. Moses having taken his place outside the camp, God reveals Himself to him as He never had done before. The people see God standing at the door of the tabernacle which Moses had pitched; and they worship, every man at his tent door. The Lord speaks unto Moses face to face as a man speaks unto his friend. We shall see that it is to these communications that God alludes when He speaks of the glory of Moses (Numbers 12:8), and not to those on Mount Sinai. Moses, as mediator in the way of testimony, goes into the camp, but Joshua, the Spiritual chief of the people (Christ in Spirit) does not depart out of the tabernacle. Moses now recognizes what God had told him, to bring up the people; he is there as the mediator on whom everything depends. But He dares not entertain the thought of going up alone, of going up without knowing who would be with him. God has acknowledged him in grace, and he desires to know who will go before him. He therefore asks, since he has found grace, that he may know His way, the way of God, not only to have a way for him (Moses) to get to Canaan, but "thy way," thus will he know God, and in the way will find grace in His sight. God replies that His presence shall go, and that He will give rest to Moses: the two things he perfectly needed as crossing the wilderness.

Moses then brings in the people, and says, "Carry us not up hence," and that " we have found grace, I and thy people." This also is granted of the Lord; and now he desires for himself to see the glory of the Lord; but that face which is to go and lead Moses and the people, God cannot spew unto Moses. He will hide him while He passes by, and Moses shall see His back parts. We cannot meet God on His way as independent of Him. After he has passed by, one sees all the beauty of His ways. Who could have been before-hand in proposing such a thing as the Cross? After God of Himself has done it, then all the perfectness of God in it overflows the heart. God then lays down two principles: His sovereignty, which allows Him to act in goodness towards the wicked, for in justice He would have cut off the whole people-and the conditions of. His government under which He was putting the people, His character such as it is manifested in His ways towards them. Hid whilst he passes by, Moses bows down at the voice of God who proclaims His name and reveals what He is as JEHOVAH. These words give the principles contained in the character of God Himself in connection with the Jewish people-- principles which form the basis of His government. I t is not at all the name of His relationship with the sinner for his justification, but with Israel for His government. Mercy, holiness, and patience mark His ways with them. Moses, ever bearing the people of God on his heart, beseeches God, according to the favor in which he stands as mediator, that the Lord, thus revealed, may go up in their midst; and that because they were a stiff-necked people. The relationship between Moses personally and God was fully established, so that he could present the people, such as they were, because of his (Moses' own) position, and consequently make of the difficulty and sin of the people a reason for the presence of God, according to the character He had revealed. It is the proper effect of mediation; but it is beautiful to see, grace having thus come in, the reason God had given for the destruction of the people, or at least for His absence, becoming a motive for His presence. It no doubt supposed forgiveness as

well. This Moses asks for, and adds, in the consciousness of the blessing of the name and being of God, " Take us for thine inheritance." In answer to this prayer, God establishes a new covenant with the people. The basis of it is complete separation from the nations which God was going to drive out from before the people.

It supposes the entrance of the people into Canaan in virtue of the mediation of Moses, and the presence of God with the people consequent upon his intercession. He is commanded to maintain their relationship with Him in the solemn feasts under the blessing and safeguard of God. I have rather enlarged upon these conversations of Moses with the people, because (and it is very important to remark it) Israel never entered the land under the Sinai covenant, it had been immediately broken: it is under the mediation of Moses that they were able to find again the way of entering it. However they are placed again under the law, but the government of patience and grace is added to it. In Deuteronomy 10:1, we see there is no longer question of introducing the law openly into the camp where God had been dishonored. It was to be put into the ark according to the pre-determined plans of God,** arranged to enable the people, miserable as they were, to draw near unto Him. Moses abides there with the Lord. There was enough in the contemplation of what God was, as He had revealed Himself, to occupy him; he had not now to be occupied with the instructions God was giving him on the details of the tabernacle, but with God according to the revelation He had made of Himself, he neither eat nor drank; he was in a state above nature, where the flesh could not intermeddle, in some sort apart from humanity.*** The Lord writes His law anew on the tables which Moses had prepared. But the effect of this communion with God was manifest; the skin of his face shone when he came down. However, here it was a glory, as it were external and legal, not like that of the Lord Himself in the person of Jesus. Thus Israel could not behold it. We are in quite a different position; for us, there is no longer a veil; and we behold with open face the glory of the Lord. We are rather (in this point of view) in the position of Moses when he entered into the most holy place. Besides the separation of Israel from the inhabitants of the land wherein they were to dwell, which is found chap. 34 there is in chap. 35 another part of the instructions of Moses, which he gave when he came down. It is not now the certainty of entering, and the conduct suited to those who have found grace, to abstain from all that might tend to bring sin back when they were enjoying the privileges of grace; Moses speaks to them of the portion of the people under the influence of that communication which the Mediator, as Head of grace, had established. The Sabbath**** is appointed; and moreover, His people (grace thus manifested) are encouraged to show their good-will and their liberality in everything that concerned the service of God. Consequently, we find the manifestation of the spirit of wisdom and of gift in service. God calling specially by name those He designed more particularly for the work. This was done liberally; they brought more than was sufficient, and every wise-hearted man worked, each the things for which he was gifted; and Moses blessed them. Thus was the tabernacle set up, and everything put into its place, according to the commandment of God. Therefore (what we might have remarked be-tore) the whole is anointed with oil. Christ was thus consecrated, anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power; and moreover, Christ must, after having made peace by His blood, having all things to reconcile (being the one who first descended, and afterward ascended, to fill all things with His presence, according to the power of redemption in righteousness and love divine); I say that the unction of the Holy Ghost must carry the efficacy of this power in redemption everywhere. Therefore had the tabernacle been sprinkled with blood. It is the power of the presence of the Holy Ghost, not regeneration. God takes possession of the tabernacle by His

glory, and the cloud of His presence and of His protection, becomes the guide of the people (now forgiven), happy and so greatly blessed in being under the government and guidance of God, and at the same time His habitation and His inheritance.

(* He anticipates by faith, jealous of God's glory, the tabernacle which was to be set up according to the thoughts and commandments of God, which he had seen in communion with the Lord. That was indeed the principal thing; but it was without the camp, and a sort of disorder in the eyes of men, and was without the ornaments and the forms commanded of God in the tabernacle; and there was not one express word of God for it to be done. Nevertheless, the presence of God was there, and the main thing for faith was there; that is, a tent where God was seen, and where He might be sought even in a manner in which faith was more manifest than when the tabernacle was regularly set up.)

(** Thus Christ was in reserve, though at the same time foreordained, even from eternity: he was only manifested as the true propitiation when the law had been presented, and man had failed under it; its only existence now is as giving great recognized principles of justice, but hidden and buried in Him who gives His character to the throne of God. But it was necessary to break or hide those tables (terrible to man) of the perfect, but inflexible law of God.)

(*** Here, however, is seen the excellency of the Lord Jesus, who, in all things, must have the pre-eminence. Moses, naturally far off, is separated from his natural state, in order to draw near unto God. Christ was naturally near there, and more than near; He separates Himself from nature, to meet the adversary on the behalf of man.)

(**** The Sabbath is again found whenever there is any principle whatever of relationship established between the people and God; it is the result of every relation between God and His people;- they enter into His rest.)

Vol 02 - Extracts

Extracts

"In the Lord’s table we see not only the remembrance of His death, but the results of it-Life, Unity, and Glory-’till He come.’ It is communion essentially, and testimony only as a consequence. We dwell in the land of unwalled villages-a pasture of faith-even liable to invasion. We can only count on Him who is a wall of fire round about us; and glory in our midst. O that we might realize it so, despite of circumstances." S.

"All things are possible to him that believeth. Faith never stumbles at difficulties or trials; but always looks to where God is, which is the bright side of everything. Godward trials are bread for Faith. Paul knew this well -Christ knew it- may we know it also!"

S.

Vol 02 - Faint Yet Pursuing

Faint Yet Pursuing

"And Gideon came to Jordan and passed over, he and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing." The opening of a campaign, the carrying on of the struggle, with. endurance to the end, are all included in Paul’s memorable summary - " I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day" (2 Timothy 4:7-8). A ship may be making little progress and yet answer her helm; ready to take advantage of a favorable breeze. Delays unlooked for may occur: yet her log-book of the course she kept, with the winds that blew, may justify the master and crew in the eyes of her owners that all had been done that could be accomplished. In our Christian career unlooked for difficulties may arise (and necessarily so for the trial of our faith). We may have to encounter opposition where we looked for assistance. We may have to suffer most from those with whom we once held sweet fellowship. It may be our lot to have bitter experience of the words in Psalms 55:12 : " For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me, then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide and mine acquaintance, we took sweet counsel together and walked to the house of God in company," How little, after all, have we been prepared. for it; how impatient under it! What scope has been given to the exercise of reason: how little for the exercise of faith? We have held truth in the head, and it could not meet the necessities or trials of the heart. And it is gracious of the Lord to skew this to us, and to bring us to acknowledge it before him, and to have bowels of sympathy for those who entered into conflict without tried weapons of war (1 Samuel 17:9).

Yet, let us not be misunderstood. Strength to pursue a course depends upon the course being right. The right object attracts forward, has propelling power in it, because it is right. Hence the momentous importance of truth simply as truth. How well does it repay any real regard for it. What provision for necessities, what charges it undertakes! In Proverbs 4:1-27 "Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee..... Exalt her and she shall promote thee to excellent honor." And what is here advanced of Wisdom is true also of the Lord Jesus. A due regard to His glory and His honor is the charge of His people’s safety. The precept given by Him, "No man goeth a warfare at his own charges," is made good in His service. He amply provides for every emergency. It is true wisdom to apprehend this. And here the simplicity of faith enters. The doctrine of justification by faith may be peremptorily insisted upon and Scripture ransacked in support of it; yet the very ablest advocates of this truth, and convinced, too, of its being true, may break down in the sister fact, that we must walk by faith, put on faith; -have faith in God, and whatever we enter upon or undertake, perform it in dependance upon God.

What mistakes arise from forgetfulness of this! How men plunge into the Lord’s battles with their own weapons: bringing their own artillery to play upon their antagonists, and exposing, in their censure of other men’s motives, the whereabouts of their own. But the Lord hath no need of this.

The dignity of the truth is above this. Faith will act the part of a general who makes his observations before entering into the melee, and disposes his forces for the attack, and continues his plans unmoved by the din of conflict, or the clouds of smoke and dust. Combatants there will be in the ranks who fight on for fighting's sake. Without principle to lead them into action, and having no energy but their self-will to maintain them there; and if this be crossed, and their own importance interfered with, are forward to throw aside their weapons in disgust, or discharge them, when retreating, in the faces of those who had been companions in service. Alas! how sorrowful is all this to the heart quickened of Jesus to have sympathy with Him. The triumph of the truth swallows up in its grandeur, the individual share in promoting the victory. So the fall of an opponent in such a struggle gives no room for self-exultation, but rather for commiseration. Victory is hallowed by tears of regret for those who, from love of ease, carnal security, carelessness of walk, error in judgment, or weakness of faith, were led into a position where they were sure to be vanquished.

Still, while it is the privilege of faith to anticipate the end, ever assured of blessing from God, yet the way is weary, and often the hands are heavy, the spirits droop, and then the trial of constancy of purpose comes on; and, though faint, yet to be found pursuing, is the precursor of blessing and triumph. And this is the turning point of the career. Unbelief sheers off when difficulty threatens. Faith escapes none of these trials, yet holds on her course " though faint, yet pursuing." Let us beware of misjudging our condition by our feelings or perceptions; of putting our enjoyment in the service, in the place of the service itself; and so, contrariwise, of confounding our trials, which necessarily arise from it, with the end in view. It is easy to do this. How many are the ways by which men delude themselves into supineness. It is the cause of a controversy which justifies one. It is at all times unpleasant in itself, but still it may be imperative duty to engage in it. The plea of the evil of it, as such, may be made an excuse of by same. Its tendency to lead bystanders to mock at the truth, the apology of others. Yet if it comes in the way of duty, we cannot avoid it. To everything there is a season; " a time of war, and a time of peace" (Ecclesiastes 3:8), but servants have no right to be choosers, much less to refrain from action, when the service is arduous and attended with difficulty, seeking into the future for excuses for inertness, instead of being earnest and zealous in the work of to day. The book of Judges gives the history of man's un, faithfulness in the very place of blessing, sinning in the very face of the bounty and grace which had put him there. It gives also the dealings of God with His people, in chastisement and repeated deliverance. Such was His love and regard, that He pitied them in their sufferings, which their own sin brought upon them. " Yea, many a time turned- He His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath" (Psalms 78:38). The sixth chapter of Judges opens with a renewed account of Israel's iniquity, and the consequences of it. "The hand of Midian prevailed against Israel,... and Israel was greatly impoverished... and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." How gracious His ways! He sent a prophet unto them, to remind them of His goodness, how He had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all them that oppressed them, and gave them their land. "And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice." The testimony to their evil is recorded. The bounty of His grace is unfolded to meet it. Gideon is appointed a deliverer. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, " The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." And Gideon said unto him, " If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?" It is hard, in the

midst of the chastening for departure from God, to realize that it is because relationship had existed that this had befallen them. To recognize His hand, was the germ of faith; to see His deliverance in purpose, the growth of it. " If the Lord be with us, why then has all this befallen us?" When he was grieved with their sins, and insulted by the setting up of false gods, He left them to reap, as they had sown, confusion and strife-to be scattered and peeled. Yes, He noticed them in chastening, because they were His. And Gideon said, "O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And the Lord said unto him, surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." And it is just here that the spring of confidence rises,-"I will be with thee." It was so with Moses of old. If the Lord be not with me, carry us not up hence. The starting point of faith is " God with us." Without this, all contest is in vain and worthless. He met them as they were, and acted on His faithfulness to His promise to their fathers, passing by in marvelous grace their own sinfulness and unbelief. But how should Gideon be assured of this? The Lord would accept of his offering; and so little did Gideon apprehend his ways, that the seal of his acceptance was regarded by him as the knell of his death; for he said, "Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face." And the Lord answered him. "Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die." And Gideon built an altar there. His soul is awakened for his work. There is struggle for establishment, and the Lord condescends to his weakness, and submits to be proved, that his servant might trust him (verses 36 to 40). He has evidence of His favor, and starts on his career. What wretched confusion was around! What prospect of remedy! How hopeless, to reason, the task! Yet faith laughs at impossibilities, for they exist not before Him with whom we have to do. Omnipotence sees hills as the plains, and water in the flinty rock. Now Gideon had got hold of a great principle-the Lord with his people in chastening them, and therefore His hand in deliverance. Being His, they were sure of the former, and equally safe for the latter. Looking at troubles amongst saints apart from the Lord's hand in permitting them, the eye discerns no remedy; the heart is overwhelmed with consternation. Fear enters; and that which in communion would have been the precursor of blessings, becomes to unbelief the harbinger of defeat. But, blessed be God! it is not so, the name of the Lord invoked, the two or three assembled together in that name, the Holy Ghost recognized in the body, surely the Lord will show He acknowledges us by chastening when needed, that He may bless us the more. "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord and shall not we receive evil." But, as was before stated, this is the trial of faith, it is a step in the right direction to discern the Lord's dealings with His people. "The Lord with them " becomes recovered strength to Gideon; and accordingly as this was discerned, there was blessing in his career. How his faith sought encouragement, and how the Lord dealt graciously towards him, the scripture records.

How pride should be hid from man, and salvation of the Lord fully manifested, the sequel discloses - three hundred only of the many thousands of Israel, and with such weapons of war as appeared very folly in the eyes of the world. But the deliverance would be more manifestly of God, and the hearts of the people brought back to Him; for this was the object, not the triumph of a party but the blessing of the whole people of Israel. -We lose sight of this. We are apt to narrow our views to our localities. The blessing we have enjoyed belonged to the body, we sought to keep it in our own hands, hedging ourselves in, and stipulating conditions of access which the Lord had not imposed upon us. Now the pulling down of our fences and tearing up of our stakes, creates no little consternation among us; but what if the Lord's purpose (as surely it is) is only that our area may be enlarged, our charity widened, our affections called forth for the church as a whole? Surely there is

encouragement for faith from the very fact of our chastening. Let us beware of writing (as has before been observed) the sentence of death upon our position and privileges instead of upon ourselves. To recognize the hand of our Father and to acknowledge the needs be, is the first step towards recovery. This was attained to by Gideon. The Lord's hand was seen in permitting the chastisement; the Lord's hand made bare to faith in working deliverance. But the position of faith is the path of trial, and that, too, because it is the one of faith. We have forgotten this in our folly. We have asked, with Gideon, if it be so, why, then, has all this befallen us? And, instead of the language of Nehemiah, "Should such an one as I flee?" (Nehemiah 6:11), "we have run every man into his own house," whilst the Lord's house lay waste (Haggai 1:9). Trial by the way, is no excuse for getting out of the way; failure in man, no reason for quarreling with God. But the rather, our every discomfiture should quicken our feet to our hiding-place. "Thou art my hiding-place" (Psalms 119:14). But the path of faith is one of trial. Service for God can only be sustained in the power of God. There is danger whilst working ostensibly for Him, of ceasing to abide in Him; and then leanness of soul enters, and the heart, unsustained by communion, shrinks under trials which, in a healthy condition, would have had no pressure upon us. Now, Gideon had eminent service, and consequently trials in it. He had wrought a victory in the energy of the Spirit of God, and this exposed him to the envy of Ephraim (ch. 8). He came to Jordan and passed over, he and the three hundred men that were with him, "faint, yet pursuing." And he asked bread of the men of Succoth and he was mocked of them; the princes of Succoth saw nothing imposing in the small band of the faithful so wearied and famished, for whom unbelief had no sympathy, and less of discernment, when acting for God. And he passed on to Penuel, where a like reception awaited him. There are few allies for faith, and few spirits to lead on a forlorn hope into conflict. Yet pursuing God's enemies, and employed in His service, though faint, He sustains them. "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increases strength." The hosts of Zeba and Zalmunna are defeated in Karkor, and the two kings taken (chap. 8:11) and slain; the elders of Succoth taught with thorns and briers in the wilderness (verse 16); the men of the city of Penuel slain, and their tower beaten down (verse 17), and all this by a feeble few, "faint, yet pursuing."

What comfort and encouragement is here! Have faith in God. How imperative the precept! How certain the results! The Lord strengthen the hands that hang down! May the good of His church be the object of pursuit, the truth of His presence where two or three are gathered, the testimony borne; and though Ephraim wax wroth in the spirit of envy, and Succoth and Penuel will furnish no sustenance, yet onwards is the word,-"Speak to the people that they go forward." May the Lord encourage us that we may be found though "faint, yet pursuing."

Vol 02 - Fellowship and Its Responsibilities

Fellowship and Its Responsibilities The principle of fellowship is one of exceeding importance to us. And if we ask what the unity or fellowship of the church is, it is I believe answered in that one word-"the unity of the Spirit"- "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit." (Ephesians 4:1-32)

We have too much, I think, looked on unity as our unity, instead of the unity of the Spirit. The two things are very different. Our unity would indeed be a rope of sand, as many have supposed it to be; yet had it something durable in it, because, though not seeing, perhaps, our full strength, it was held as to God. But, as I say, we want a bond, and that bond is the Spirit.*

(* I take the opportunity, and beg leave to press upon attention a tract which may be familiar to some, and to others perhaps will not be so, called "Letter to the Saints in London as to the Presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church." I did not see it until writing this; but it contains a statement of that truth more full than I hitherto remember to have seen, and in a way calculated to warm and gladden the heart of every right-minded saint.)

What then is the position-the unity-of the church in the world? It is "the temple, the habitation of God by the Spirit." The position of the Church, as it should he in the world, is this,-it is the one body of Christ animated and guided by the Spirit. The promise of Christ, in departing from His Church* was, "I will send you another Comforter [which I should be much more inclined to render " another guardian"] that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth." And His care for the Church, in guarding and guiding them, may be nicely suggested, I think, by those words " He shall guide (■δηγησει) you into all the truth." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the children of God." This shows it is our privilege to be led by Him. Thus it is therefore with the whole Church (if it would allow it), and thus it is with every assembly gathered upon true ground, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God;" it is, under the guardian hand, and care of the Holy Ghost, the indwelling Spirit, "the habitation of God by the Spirit."

(* I use the word prospectively.) And let me say, we shall find the benefit, the necessity, in these last times, of standing for the whole truth, the full truth. Let us not be deterred by the charge of presumption. We are either that, or nothing, Our choice is between God’s foundation and man’s expediency.

I will resume, by adding, in reference to what I said just above, that, if gathered upon true ground, though not the Church, yet are we upon the ground of the Church, and therefore in a position to act upon the principles and to receive the full blessing of the Church. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Alas! one has to reassert every principle which we once held.

Further, I remark, I fear it is the thought and language of many now, that it is impossible to carry out the unity of the Church now. To which I reply simply, Is it the truth? Because if it is so, it is simply unbelief to talk of its being impossible to carry it out. It is saying, the Lord is not able to help us to carry out the truth. Let us look at it in its undisguised form. But I say, this is the very ark for

us, that must be carried through, though it be through fire and water. I would suggest, What promise or prospect is there of security from evil and delusion apart from the unity of the body? I see (Ephesians 4:4) "there is one body, and one Spirit." I believe from that passage taken in connection with ver. 3, and from other passages, that God has been pleased to connect the Spirit with the Body here on earth. And we cannot have the fullest power and guidance of the Spirit apart from the Body. This may seem delicate ground: it is so; we ought to feel it; yet it is nevertheless true. And let me say such will be the working of evil in these last days, that we shall find we have nothing to spare to meet it. "Except those days were shortened for the elect's sake, no flesh should be saved," true of Israel's remnant literally hereafter, has distinctly, I believe, its moral application for us now. But to talk about not carrying it out now; how beautifully does the language of the Israel-remnant contrast with this in the time of their trouble, which with regard to personal suffering in one sense, will be infinitely more trying than ours. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the heart of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake at the swelling thereof." (Psalms 46:1-11) "They shall glorify God in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel." Yea, instead of being discouraged, "they shall lift up their voice, and shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea."

I simply add, in conclusion, that to give up the unity of the Church, is, in plain terms, in consonance with what has been said before, to give up the field to the devil.

Now, then the question arises, Why when evil comes into a body, and is not judged, will not be judged, why do we separate from all, why do we refuse fellowship to any? For this reason-that the Spirit is grieved in the Body, yea, is sent away-he is no longer the Animator, the RULER. For when evil is tolerated, there He cannot dwell. "In many things we all offend," whether individually, or collectively. But our infirmities and sins in that way are one thing, and the deliberate refusal to judge and put away our evils is quite a different thing. Tender truly is that Spirit, so that even corrupt communication (Paul tells us in Ephes.) grieves." that holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed;" but as to the other, willful evil, truly it is of the character spoken of in (Hebrews 10:1-39); it is "doing despite unto the Spirit of grace."

If then, I say, the body refuse His guardianship, if it reject Him thus, what follows?

Why it is no longer His fellowship, the unity of the Spirit. To the question, then, "Why do you separate from all?" I answer, Because we have no security about any. They are no longer under the care of the guardianship, the hand of the Spirit, that other Guardian - they have refused it. We cannot own whom He does not-those who do not own Him.

I will not dwell upon the truth, that surely the wolf will catch and scatter those who are thus defenseless-on the truth that a little leaven leavens the whole lump-this shows there is no security. I confine myself to the present thought-but I add, that where the Spirit is not the animating guiding One, it is the solemn fact that Satan does get that place. He becomes the animator.

This, I think, is decidedly shown in Babylon, 1:e. the professing Church. That is how it ends. "Babylon the great," says the word, "is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." That from which God goes out, Satan enters. John 13:27 may be very instructive as compared with verse 2: See also 1

Samuel 16:14; 1 Samuel 18:9-10. This may perhaps be slow, and imperceptible save to the really spiritual eye. But this, I think, should make the saint the more careful of meddling with it; for such a beginning yet leads surely onward, and blinds to its own progress. And here let me observe, the great danger one has of letting natural feelings and thoughts come in to lead him to any such compromise or meddling. It is, I judge, the enemy's plan, when resistance has been successfully offered, to soften by kindness. Look at the prophet at Bethel. Jeroboam, when the testimony had. been given with power, next says (1 Kings 13:7), "Come home, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward." What a change! What apparent kindness! But his thought, I judge, simply was to soften the prophet's testimony, to screen his own conscience, to persuade himself that it would not be so bad after all as the prophet had said-in short, to bribe God in the person of His prophet. Such very likely too was the motive of the old prophet, to bolster himself up in a false position. (Compare 2 Chronicles 11:13; 2 Chronicles 11:16.)*

(* I would remark, in conjunction with this reference, his dwelling at Bethel, I think, would be instructive. He dwelt where the altar was the fixed proof of Israel's sin. He could not therefore, we would judge, have had much real zeal respecting the abomination. It is no use testifying against Sodom, if one voluntarily chooses their lot there. "This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge." They could quickly perceive that. The Lord would not, we would judge, employ this one therefore to give his testimony against the altar there. Very instructive too, perhaps, that the one is called "a man of God," whilst the other is called "an old prophet;" the latter denoting the mere official character, the other perhaps the tone of soul that accompanied his work.)

I may add, by way of analogy, that I think we find the same principle shown in Israel; for when Achan sinned (Joshua 7:1), "the Lord said, Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed," etc.; "neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you." They are all called "accursed" in the 12th verse. For unity is always God's truth, and responsibility consequent upon unity. So also Joshua 22:31. And I will add, I suppose Joshua, with Acts 5:1-42, will give us the important thought, that the more entirely God is at work Himself, the more thoroughly will He have holiness amongst His people, the " fellow-laborers."

Let me suggest, in accordance with what has been now said, that it is a serious thing to acknowledge, and accredit any assembly as in real fellowship, where there is not thus full liberty for the Spirit and His rule. It may be getting to ourselves a point of weakness, "opening our side to the countries."

One word I would say as to the seven churches: I have heard it said there was evil there- and there was no command to separate. I observe any one who has had to contend much with evil has probably before this had to spew that a negative argument often is no argument. For instance, there is a positive direction. (1 Corinthians 5:11-13.) But one may say I find evil spoken of (Php 3:18-19), but there is no command to put them away. And so forth. But I would say, the Lord says at Ephesus, where there was no positive evil, but the whole thing decaying, love departing (Revelation 2:4), where read " I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first love," instead of-"Nevertheless I have somewhat," the Lord says, "Except thou repent, I will remove thy candlestick." I say, if, faith had perceived that the candlestick was removed (which however, probably, the general declension of the Church together would prevent), would it have staid there? I judge not. Surely it is the living God we have to do with. Though of course only in great wisdom

and carefulness could such a thing have been done. It is not, let me further remark, the Lord’s way to force things upon us. He gives enough for the willing mind to see and act upon. So constantly, when on earth, He commanded them not to make Him known.

I now commend these thoughts to the consideration of brethren. It may be, such like truths are being brought before us just in time; for abounding evil will surely characterize " the day approaching " (1 John 2:18); but there is light present and in prospect to cheer us through. (Jude 1:24.)

G.

Vol 02 - Fragment: Escaping Babylon and Egypt

Fragment: Escaping Babylon and Egypt

" God has not forgotten the Church which He gave to Christ; neither has the Lord forgotten it, nor yet the Holy Ghost.

If Satan decked the flesh in worldliness once, and made a counterfeit of this church, in Romanism, - God owned it not as His Church. And if by actings of God in providence, and of the Spirit by the word, many have been delivered, through grace, from the counterfeit-have they got into the enjoyment of the privileges and position God has reserved for them while still on the earth, as thus escaped? Protestantism, if it presents the proof that God is redeeming from Babylon, nowhere presents the redeemed in their proper scriptural position together as such.

If escaped from Babylon, let them look to it that they are not in Egypt, like Sarai in Pharaoh’s house; and if consciously seeking the Lord’s glory, let them not think they have escaped while on earth from the enmity and malice of the adversary. He hates them still, because he hates their Lord and all that is His. Hinder their coming into the glory he cannot; but he will do all he can to hinder their abundant entrance into it, and to mar the present testimony of the Lord for Himself, in and through them while on earth as an escaped few."

Vol 02 - Fragment: God's Present Will

Fragment: God’s Present Will

" Surely, it is as much of God that our lot is cast in these days, as that Paul’s lot was cast in his days. And the works prepared for us to do are as much prepared of God, as were the works prepared for Paul. Let us take heart; strengthen ourselves in God, and do His present will."-I.

Vol 02 - Fragment: Love to the Church

Fragment: Love to the Church

"One thing is evident: God is now working in the last days. Dissolution is, on all sides, not only going on, but felt to be going on. If we are faithful, and have sufficient power to blend largeheartedness with faithfulness, we shall be the first of blessings in this state of things. Otherwise, except for a certain individual blessing and faithfulness (which is always something), we shall be naught. But we ought to love the church (the beloved Bride of Christ), and seek its good; surely, more than a David, or godly Israelite, or Jew, could, or did, that of Jerusalem; and seek its good for Christ's sake."

Vol 02 - Fragment: The Church in Conflict With Satan

Fragment: The Church in Conflict With Satan

"The warfare in Ephesians 6:1-24 really supposes an elevated position of the saints, themselves delivered and raised up to a heavenly position with God,-they have to contend with Satan there, for he is not yet cast down nor bruised under their feet:. No doubt, being in such a conflict, the fullest vigilance and the spirit of dependance is needed not to succumb; internal, practical truth being first called for,-and then, power; but, whatever the diligence called for, the position is one of entire deliverance and enlistment on God’s side, - brought into heavenly questions and standing. I judge there is a different measure in the deliverance from Satan, according to the different character of the epistles in Peter, Colossians, and Ephesians. He is roaring about as a lion, on earth, in Peter, where the saints are pilgrims; triumphed over, in the cross, in Colossians, where they were in danger of not holding the head; and led away captive in Ephesians, where the heavenly place of the saints is given, but then the combat, practically, has not ceased, but we are in God’s army with His armor, in a heavenly warfare."

Vol 02 - Fragment: The Kingdom of God

Fragment: The Kingdom of God

"When we look up from amid the present confusion and wreck to GOD-the living God, let us remember, that He who set up at Pentecost, a new arena, in which He proposed to man to have Himself as the One who should reign and rule, is the same God, who is leading on believers now home to the scene where all rule flows from the throne of GOD and the Lamb. If the kingdom has failed in its subjects-if in their corporate standing they have not owned Him alone, and have owned another (and He therefore has ceased to own them in that position), still to faith there is but one GOD and one Lord, even as there is but one Spirit; and the kingdom, set up at Pentecost, which failed in the subject, stands in the Head, and in the end will be displayed before all among the faithful. For when we come to the new Jerusalem, the throne is the throne of GOD and the Lamb: and faith owns it to be so wow." THE WARNING.

"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them."-1 Thessalonians 5:3.

Speak not of "The good time coming;"

Say not, "Happy times draw nigh."

Lo! The clouds with terror looming, Darken o’er the future sky!

Undeceive thyself, O mortal! To the winds such dreaming give!

Think upon the fearful purging That the earth must first receive!

Luke 17:26; Luke 17:30.

2 Timothy 3:1.

Revelation 1:7.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

2 Timothy 3:13.

Ecclesiastes 5:7.

Matthew 13:40-41.

Matthew 13:43.

Rather tell of wrath and vengeance, Pending o’er this guilty race; In its shame still glorying - boasting;

Deaf to all the calls of grace - God forgetting - God dishonoring - Guilty world, thy doom is nigh!

Fear unknown will seize upon thee, When He shakes the earth and sky!

Isaiah 13:9.

Jude 1:14-15.

Php 3:19.

Luke 14:16-24.

Romans 3:10-23.

Romans 2:5.

Proverbs 1:24-30.

Haggai 2:6-7.

Sodom’s fall but faintly pictures, What thy awful lot will be;

It had not so many warnings, As the Lord hath sent to thee.

Grace refus’d, makes judgment sorer - O what grace has thou refused!

Guilty world, they judgments hover, All escape for thee is closed!

Jude 1:7.

Luke 10:12.

Matthew 24:39.

Mark 16:15.

Proverbs 29:1.

John 3:16.

2 Peter 3:7.

1 Thessalonians 5:3.

Yet, as in the case of Sodom, Lot departed ere it fell;

So, the Lord will come from heaven, Take His church with Him to dwell, Ere destruction’s work commences, On this Sodom’s guilty ones:

They, the salt, alone preserve it - They removed - the judgment comes.

2 Peter 2:6.

Genesis 19:29.

John 14:3.

1 Thessalonians 4:17.

2 Thessalonians 1:7.

Revelation 11:8.

Matthew 5:13.

Luke 17:29-30. To the Ark and from destruction All who'd be preserved, then, haste!

Christ's alone the Ark of safety - Come - and full salvation taste:

Tarry not for reformation - (Sinners - Jesus died to save), Art thou lost? He came to find thee;

Thou, believing, life shalt have.

Genesis 7:1.

2 Peter 3:9.

Acts 4:12.

Revelation 22:17.

Romans 4:5.

Mark 2:17.

Matthew 18:11.

Acts 16:31.

Then, amid the coming glory, Which the Church with Christ shall share;

Thou shalt have they happy portion, Bride of His - His image bear - Then, His earthly people gathered, Earth made clean, and Satan bound;

Thou shalt, with thy Savior, reigning O'er a happy world be found!

Revelation 20:4.

1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Ephesians 2:6-7.

1 John 3:2.

Ezekiel 37:24-28.

Revelation 20:2.

Revelation 5:10.

Revelation 11:15.

A. M.

Vol 02 - Fragment: Unity of the Body

Fragment: Unity of the Body

"The unity of the body is so great a truth, and is connected collaterally with so Many other truths of deep and vital moment, that we need not wonder (in a day of so much ignorance of Scripture and worldliness as the present) if the Enemy should succeed in leading many to deny and pervert it. "A holy unity in the Spirit," and such it is, can be denied in more ways than one. Readiness of separation, may mark, in some the self-will of the flesh, which can never apprehend either the holiness or the unity of the Church of God, or the Spirit's presence with the body. Worldliness in others may appreciate union, for according to the world's motto (and motto for the day) "Union is strength:" but the largeness of its tolerance will, before God, amount to Unholiness; and the presence of the Spirit it must, surely, practically deny, for it sees Him not, nor knows Him. If Satan be more immediately at work, there will be a holiness according to the letter of Scripture, perhaps, admitted; but unity will be so put as to shut out grace, or truth, or the Holy Ghost. A basket of good fruit, however, precious, is not the emblem by which the church's unity could be illustrated; but the branch-a fruit-bearing-is rather the picture. In vain will man essay to make that: God and God alone can do it

Vol 02 - Fragment: What the Church Is

Fragment: What the Church Is

If, after examining the Scriptures to see what they call "the church" (set up at Pentecost), we turn to that which man calls "the church" now-a-days, what a contrast! and how searching to one's own soul the differences! 'Tis well to take heed-for the power of circumstances-mighty, whether for good or for evil, upon man-is mighty, in proportion as a man fails in practical self-judgment, and in discernment (according to God), of that which is around him.

" The church" was a body called out from the world, and from under him that is the god of this world (Satan). GOD, the Holy Ghost, was the mighty Power of energy, in every way, in it; the Lord Jesus, gone on high for it, was its Head-Securer and Revealer in the glory of its charta of privileges, as His life here below was its ensample; and GOD, even the Father, was at once its Object and its Counselor. And the theory was practically exhibited in living men, spite of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

What men now honor in its place, whether endowed or only tolerated by the State-is it a something separated from this present evil world? Is it a place where self is crucified? Is it that in which Satan is detected and judged? Alas! Is it not rather.... but no, I will leave to conscience and to faith the question of whether man's church, or churches, approximate most in energy, character and objects, to the Bride of Christ, or to the Whore that sitteth upon many waters.

Then a man had more especially to give himself up to the energy, plans and objects, which pertained to that which was a habitation of God through the Spirit; now he has more especially to keep himself from the energy, plans, and objects of that which boasts of being the temple of the Lord, but is fast rolling on toward that confederacy which is the perfection of man's apostasy from God, both in civil government and in worship.

Vol 02 - Gift Inalienable From the Church

Gift Inalienable From the Church In the controversy that arose respecting the abiding of gift, properly so called, in the Church now, I do not know that I saw the Scripture truth put in the same naked, singularly simple light, in which it appears to me to stand in the Word. Scripturally speaking, we may say that the existence of gift in the Church rests on the basis of another truth, which can never be altered; viz., "that there is one body, and many members." If you can shake the one, you may shake the other; but with it it will stand. The scriptural evidence of this we shall find, I think, remarkably distinct. In Romans 12:4, etc., we first find it. "For, as in one body we have many members, and all the members have not the same office, so, we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having, THEN, gifts (χαρισματα) differing according to the grace that is given us whether," etc. Here, I think, we might say with truth, speaking in a general way (though strictly it would not, I judge, admit of being carried out), that gift was the πραξις, the action of the different members of the body. In 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, you have it just on the same footing, equally plain: "But all these worketh that one, and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." (That is, dividing gifts (χαρισματα), see verse 9, "gifts of healing.") "FOR, as the body is one, and bath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. FOR by one Spirit have we all been baptized into one body; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many." In Ephesians 4:1-32 we get just the same teaching in spirit. First, we get the one body-one in its common privileges, 4’ to 6; then the different gifts as necessary for the welfare of that one body: " But unto every one of us (perhaps the nearest English translation would be, " to us individually," ■νι δε ■καστω ■μ■ν) is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." And the word prophets, ver. 11, would clearly identify the thought here as the same with 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, where, verse 10, "prophecy;" in one case it being spoken of as the gift (δομα) of Christ, in the other the χαρισμα of the Spirit; both for the same object, in part, " the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12; Ephesians 4:16). And I might ask here, if we see "pastors and teachers" (verse 11) now, to take the lowest view, which unquestionably we do in different bodies of Christians, where does it come from? I say, from the gift of Christ now as much as ever, though that gift be much dishonored by human additions.

"Till we all come (the passage proceeds in Eph.) unto the unity of the faith,.... unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," which I would say is clearly not the mere filling up of revelation, or the written word, no more than 1 Corinthians 13:10, which is degraded thus (see verse 12); but rather, I judge, the Church formed even here on earth, in principle, into fitness for Christ (Php 3:14-15; Php 3:13; Ephesians 5:26, the that at the commencement of verse 27 showing the connection of the two) (John 15:15; Revelation 19:7).

1 Peter 4:10, I think, conveys the same thought: "Stewards of the manifold grace of God." χαρισμα is there used. These are, I think, quite the leading passages of the Word. And from these passages it is quite clear to my own mind, that gift abiding in the Church stands on a most sure footing, which can never be shaken; it is connected with the very nature of the Church.

It might perhaps appear to some, "Why revert to a past thing? the thing is pretty clear to us." But I would remark, that the question of gift is a vital one to the Church; a vital one. And why? It is, in other words, the question of the SPIRIT acting in the Church. And strongly am I persuaded, that, where it is not maintained, the question really acted on of the Spirit in the Church, in the Assembly, it will bring in weakness, and may end in death. Nothing can compensate for it-no ministry. The Assembly is not the place where man should be honored, but God. Observe, I am not speaking of mere fleshly liberty, but of the true acknowledgment of the Spirit. There is enough to sober the flesh in 1 Corinthians 3:12 to end.

Experience may have warned us of this, that in every failure of faith or truth, there will be also a break-down of this.

It is, I apprehend, a chosen jewel of God, if rightly, graciously used. The "manifold grace, manifold wisdom of God," exhibited on earth; God Himself manifested (1 Corinthians 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:28). In answer to the objection-" I do not see it. I do not see gift in the Church now." One might remark, That is scarcely the ground of faith. It is better to question our own preception, than the faithfulness of God. There is, however, a blessed faculty imparted to the saint, which would enable him to discern it, I believe, though it might be mixed up and obscured. " Ye have an unction," says John, " from the Holy One, and know all things. The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you." And let me ask, What is the object, the subject of gift, the best gift? Is it not the knowledge of God, and of Christ? And is there less fullness now in God, or in Christ, for the Church? Is there less of spiritual blessing (Greek) in heavenly places in Christ? less treasures of wisdom and knowledge? Has, or can apostasy change our relations to Christ (John 15:15); or the boundless store which the Spirit has to unfold? (16:14, 15). Therefore, I suppose, I might fairly ask, why gift, the best gift (1 Corinthians 14:2-3; 1 Corinthians 14:5), should not be the same now, though modified by circumstances? If God is the same, and the Agent of instruction, the Spirit (1 Corinthians 10:1-33) the same, why should gift be changed? O no! it is ever God’s word to His own: " I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of Egypt; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." With regard to the external gifts, miracles, etc., we might perhaps make this observation, that whilst God’s principle abides the same, it remains with Him to apply that principle. He cannot, perhaps, own us in apostasy in testimony by power before the world; but He must always own Himself in love to the Church in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 4:12-13). For himself, the writer can record, that, in his own experience, every attempt at outward power has, to his apprehension, been decidedly counter-met by God; and this, I judge, according to His own principle in wisdom: for why should we exalt ourselves out of the ruin which we have made, and thus, perhaps, forget the very God from whom we have received it, instead of sinking low before Him in the consciousness of the entire ruin we have made; and there, in that position, received from Him every blessing that a loving hand can give? (John 13:8; John 13:5). And let me say here, that there is perhaps no more advantageous game that Satan can start, than to set saints looking out for external power and gifts. The fleshly mind is excited, the enthusiasm wrought up in looking out for the outward power; whilst Satan, unperceived, brings in any desperate delusion he may. There is something very solemn, I think, in the teaching of Exodus 30:38, respecting the holy perfume, the " sweet incense," as I suppose, for the altar of incense, etc.: "Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people." It is very possible to get intoxicated with God’s incense. Yea, I think these last times have shown us awful specimens of it, using the

praises and excitement connected with God’s truth and service for ourselves, until the law, the truth of God, is rejected: and what wisdom is in them? Compare Ezekiel 28:14-15.

Especially I would say, there would be the danger of being diverted thereby from that which is our immediate and special hope, the return of the blessed Bridegroom Himself. We know the tendency there has been in the Church to rest in the Spirit, if 1 may so speak, instead of in Christ; and great danger would there be now for the Church, sunken, but not sufficiently humbled, to rest in its own endowments, instead of awaiting the return of its Lord. Not without reason, I think, has that blessed testimony of John Baptist been given us: "He that path. the Bride is the BRIDEGROOM." We are too apt to mistake the friend of the Bridegroom for the Bridegroom Himself. It may be self in another shape.

I only suggest, further, when Israel returned from Babylon, was it with outward power in testimony, or God’s almighty power and grace, supporting, helping, and cheering them in weakness?

G.

Vol 02 - Hag_2:1-23

Haggai 2:1-23

I have regarded this second, and indeed first chapter of Haggai, as deeply instructive, mainly as showing God's blessing and power towards a remnant. The work of building the house of the Lord was now begun. The word of the Lord had come to them before, reproving them, that though they could find time to dwell in their veiled houses (verse 4), and did not suffer any trifle or difficulty to interfere in the way of erecting them, yet if they met with any difficulty in endeavoring to raise the Lord's house, they immediately gave that up,-" The time was not come that the Lord's house should be built." Happily this reproof of the prophet had stirred up the minds of the people, they did begin to build; and immediately the word of the Lord came to them to encourage them:-" I am with you, saith the Lord." The building proceeds; and now, in this second chapter, the word of the Lord comes to speak with them concerning this building. It tells them the LORD had not despised "the day of small things." Man might, but God did not. " Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison as nothing?" But what then? " Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord.... And be strong, all ye people of the Lord, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts." For he adds, "According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not." And if the Spirit remained among them, was not that all they needed? Is He not the Author of all power, of all wisdom, of all grace? Moving on the face of the waters at the beginning for creation; the Author of all power in judges or in prophets. And if that was true in its sense (for the Spirit indwelling was not yet given, John 7:39) to the remnant in an earthly dispensation at its close, shall it be less true in a heavenly spiritual one, when " the Spirit abiding" (John 14:16) is one of the great glories of the dispensation? Shall God be more faithful to the covenant of Moses than of Christ? respect more the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and. Jacob than those " Yea and Amen " in Him? The Spirit, therefore, remaineth with the faithful remnant of God's people, to guide them, to lead on, to give them wisdom and strength amidst difficulties and enemies. "Yea," says the Lord, " I will shake great kingdoms for your sake." For when the Lord takes up the cause of His people; He lets nothing stand in the way. "Since thou wast precious in my sight thou wast honorable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life" (Isaiah 43:4).

"When He His people's cause defends, Who then can do them harm?"

" And the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with my glory."

Remark, how beautiful the hope of God's people in apostasy, and the close of their dispensation is, not in their temple becoming equal to the former temple (though seeking themselves to stand in all God's will), but in the blessed better hope of the coming of Him, who is Himself the temple and glory. Then shall all be put straight.

" The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former." If inclined to murmur now about small things, I would say it shows we are out of communion with the Lord's mind. It is out of the small things that He brings His greater glory. Is not this the principle enunciated by Christ in 2 Corinthians 12:9.-" My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness;" and so blessedly accepted by Paul in the same verse. "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory," etc. If, therefore, we despise small things, we are judging after the flesh, the outward appearance, not in communion with the Lord's mind about it. The word of the Lord comes further upon the matter in ver. 10. It seems to speak of man's inability by himself to good, and of his ability only to evil; they could not sanctify anything indifferent in itself by their touch according to the law, but could only defile it; showing that man defileth, by his own corruption, even the work of the Lord that is in his hands:-" So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the Lord; and so is every work of their hands: And that which they offer there is unclean." But why is this said? Is it to degrade? Oh no, it is only to humble; it is only that in the deep consciousness of our own insufficiency, of our own defilement of such holy work, we may carry on the Lord's service. Yet, thus carried on, God can and will accept it. It is that, like Paul, we may serve the Lord in all humility of mind, with many tears, etc. (Acts 20:12). And this, I fear, we much fail in. Yet, as was said, grace can accept the sincere, though feeble desire of obedience. There had been nothing but leanness before-leanness, because they had departed from the living God, with whom alone is the riches and fatness of the olive-tree;-and the harvest was not yet brought into the barn: the vine, the fig-tree, and the pomegranate had not yet brought forth their fruit: Yet, from this day will I bless you, saith the Lord. Peace and blessing are both here recorded for them (verses 9 to 19).

Yet again the Lord has another word for them; for as I said-and the great point that I think is brought out in this prophet is that-God's almighty strength is connected even with the weakness of His people: "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying," etc. The Lord said He would overthrow even " the throne of kingdoms " for their sake, to deliver them: He would "destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations:" He would "overthrow the chariots, and those that rode in them; and the horses and riders should come down, every one by the side of his brother" (see what was noticed on verse 6).

Let this thought therefore dwell on our hearts, dear brethren, that the least remnant of God's people, as more especially standing in the communion of His mind, is connected with all His power; in the day of their greatest weakness they stand as a connecting link with all His mighty purposes, which are soon to be manifested: God could not, so to speak, do without that link: He could not in His grace do without a remnant according to the election of grace. And they have only to know His mind in faithfulness, in order to stand connected with that power soon to be revealed. It may be said, perhaps, that all this dispensation has been a connecting link, a final dispensation as to the consummation of all things- " Upon us the ends of the ages have come" (τ■ τ■λη τ■ν α■■νων,1 Corinthians 10:11). How much more upon us who stand even in the end of such an age; upon us, to whom more especially the cry has gone forth, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet him." May we indeed, dear brethren, stand "having our loins girded about, and our lamps burning." The much entering into that truth, will indeed, under the Lord's blessing, give power to our souls: it will connect us with all the power and blessing of that day (Malachi 3:10, etc.), will tell us, whether the Lord, even in the last closing days of a dispensation, when failure,

and nothing but failure, has been proved to the uttermost, will be deficient, or less than ever He was (compare verse 6) in real blessing to His people: "I will give you a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." The next verse (23) of this chapter of Haggai; tells us, I think, of blessed nearness to the faithful-nearness in that day. " I will make thee as a signet" (Song of Solomon 8:6); even as Revelation 3:20, tells us of the same even in Laodicea. Can apostasy, then, rob us of nearness to Christ, that chiefest of all things? Oh no; it should only drive us nearer. The Lord give us hearts to value such blessings: grace, and faithfulness to seek them in His appointed way (Malachi 3:7).

G.

2 Corinthians 12:9.-" My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."-Ed.

Vol 02 - Hebrew Proper Names

Hebrew Proper Names

It is almost impossible to study the writings of the Prophets without observing how the meaning of the name of the writer coincides with the drift of his writings.

Let us see this in a few of the more studied and better-known books. The name EZRA means "help of Jah "; his book gives a specimen of the "Lord's help," namely, His gracious aid to a little remnant to return from captivity and re-build the temple.

NEHEMIAH means "the comfort of Jah "; his book describes how a remnant having been made willing to seek the things of the Lord first (read Haggai), the Lord gave to them the comfort of their own things; and so the city and the wall were re-built.

ISAIAH means "the salvation of Jah." What book has as its objects the exposition of salvation and its principles more manifestly than this? Proof of this may be seen in the way it is constantly the hand-book (not only of the Jew in his conversion, but) to the Roman Catholic when seeking an answer to " What is Truth?" and to the Protestant when seeking life.

JEREMIAH means "the Lord will raise "; the history is that of the upholding, by the Lord, of a poor servant, and the principles thereof. Type of something far deeper-he is humbled and broken, through the evil all around, yet sustained as set a witness for the Lord. 'Tis the book of those, now-a-days, who are in the battles of the Lord.

EZEKIEL, means "the strengthening of God." His testimony is indeed a wondrous epitome of the ways, resources, and end of God, in removing obstacles to blessing and in strengthening the people of his love.

DANIEL signifies "Judgment of God." His narrative is of the setting up of the Gentile dynasty in judgment against Israel, and then the judgment upon the Gentiles for the abuse of their privileges. The same is true with the rest of the Prophets' names and writings.

Chapter 52

Vol 02 - Illustration of Two Acrostic Psa_111:1-10; Psa_112:1-10

Illustration of Two AcrosticPsalms 111:1-10;Psalms 112:1-10

Anything illustrative of Scripture is most precious to the Christian: it is the chart he sails by. I desire to add a mite; and will not be deterred by the feeling of either its littleness or my want of competency to present the subject in a way worthy of itself. In Hebrew, the 111th and 112th Psalms are acrostic; and there is this singularity about them, that each of them has twenty-two clauses in ten verses, and each of these clauses begins with a letter of the alphabet. I have sought to translate them as verbally as possible, and thus, so far as possible, according to my power, to present to the eye of the mere English reader the appearance they have in Hebrew -retaining the acrostic memorial. I am not aware of having forced the sense at all. That they are remarkably connected together cannot be doubted. They correspond in subject, or are responsive: and to the eye they are the one like to the other, as are a pair of wings in a bird, though the coloring may differ [Perhaps the fanciful pairs of wings of George Herbert's day were borrowed hence;-shape being added by the poet.] All I seek is to present to the mere English reader the sense of the Hebrew in such form as that his eye may have the same benefit as has the eye which peruses them in Hebrew.

Observe and compare verses 3 in both; also verses 4. Are the character of Jehovah in a certain aspect, and the character of His servant, the two subjects? The Reader is advised to turn back to Volume One, pages fifty and three hundred and twenty. There he will find reference to the two Psalms, now under consideration, in the observations made concerning First:-The Titles of the Psalms.

Secondly:-The Acrostics. And Thirdly:-The Orphans.

Psalms 111:1-10. Hallelu-Yah.

Ver.

Aleph

■

A

(Aye), I will praise Jehovah whole-heartedly:

1

Beth

■

B

Before the counsel of the upright and the congregation.

Gimel

■

G

Great (are) the works of Jehovah:

2

Daleth

■

D

Diligently sought of all that delight therein.

Heh

■

H

Honorable and glorious His work:

3

Vau

■

V

Verily* His righteousness stands forever.

Zain

■

Z

Zealous remembrance made He for His wonders:

4

Cheth

■

Ch

Charitable and compassionate (is) Jehovah.

Teth

■

T

To his fearers he gave the prey:

5

Yod

■

Y

(Yet) He remembers forever His covenant.

Caph

■

C

Caused He to declare to His people the might of His deeds:

6

Lamed

■

L

(Looking) to give them the heritage of the Gentiles.

Mem

■

M

Made things of His hands truth and judgment:

7

Nun

■

N

Nourished [or nursed up] all His appointments.

Samech

■

S

Standing fast forever and ever:

8

Ayin

■

,

Acted in truth and uprightness.

Peh**

■

Ph

Freedom he sent to His people;

9

Tzadee

■

Tz

’Tis He commanded forever His covenant:

Cooph

■

C

Consecrated and fearful His name.

Ersh

■

R

Ruling in wisdom is the fear of Jehovah;

10

Sin

■

S

Success [or sense or skilfulness] have all that do them:

Tav

■

T

The praise of Him stands forever.

(* "Verily," lit. "and.")

(** Or Pheh.)

Psalms 112:1-10. Hallelu-Yah.

Ver.

Aleph

■

A

A man that fears Jehovah is blest:

1

Beth

■

B

By his commandments greatly delighting.

Gimel

■

G

Grand in the earth shall be his seed:

2

Daleth

■

D

Descendants of the upright shall be blest.

Heh

■

H

(He has) riches and wealth in his house:

3

Vau

■

V

Verily his righteousness (is) standing forever.

Zain

■

Z

(Zest)* to the upright, light rises in darkness:

4

Cheth

■

Ch

Charitable (is he), merciful, and righteous.

Teth

■

T

The good man is charitable and lends:

5

Yod

■

Y

In judgment he will accomplish his matters.

Caph

■

C

Certainly forever not shall he be moved:

6

Lamed

■

L

Lasting shall be the remembrance of the righteous.**

Mem

■

M

Malicious [lit. evil] report not shall he fear:

7

Nun

■

N

(Now) established his heart, trusting in the Lord.

Samech

■

S

Stablished his heart, not shall he fear:

8

Ayin

■

’

’Until he look (down) on his enemies.

Peh

■

Ph

Portioning out, he gave to the needy;

9

Tzadee

■

Tz

('Tis) his righteousness (is) standing forever:

Cooph

■

C

(Known) his horn is exalted in honor.

Ersh

■

R

Rages the wicked when he sees it;

10

Sin

■

S

Surely with his teeth he will gnash and melt away.

Tav

■

T

The desire of the wicked shall perish.

(* I have put in Zest.) (** Lit. For a remembrance of eternity shall be the righteous.) I give now the Hebrew of these Psalms, with the translations.

1 Praise ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly 2 of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the Lord are great, sought 3 out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honorable and glorious:

4 and his righteousness endureth forever. He bath made his wonderful works to be 5 remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat

6 unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant. He hath showed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.

7 The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure,

8 9 They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and

10 reverend is his name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth forever.

1 Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth 2 greatly in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the genera- 3 tion of the upright shall be blessed. Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and 4 his righteousness endureth forever. Unto the upright there ariseth light in the 5 darkness: he is gracious and full of compassion, and righteous. A good man

6 showeth favor, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion. Surely he shall not be removed forever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

8 His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he sees his desire upon his 9 enemies. He hath dispersed; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth

10 forever: his horn shall be exalted with honor. The wicked shall see it, and be grieved: he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

Vol 02 - Joh_14:1-31

John 14:1-31 How sweet, dear Lord, to hear thy voice Invite our children near;

Well may a parent’s heart rejoice, That such to thee are dear.

How full thy love; how kind, how warm, Thine invitation free:

"Forbid them not," Thy word’s a charm, To draw them unto Thee. No mother’s smile could win so well, Their simple guileless love; No other voice than Thine could tell, Their destined home above.

Hushed were the children, calm and still They hung about Thy breast;

Thy presence soothed their playful will, They could but feel at rest.

How cherub-like their infant smile!

How winning was Thy way! The love that glistened in Thine eye, Enchanted them to stay.

These gracious words our hearts incline To bring them unto Thee;

We pray, dear Lord, they may be Thine, From sin and death set free.

Thou, who a parent’s love could’st feel, A parent’s prayer will hear; Our children, Lord, we ask Thee seal, For mansions bright and clear.

Vol 02 - Launch Thy Bark, Mariner

Launch Thy Bark, Mariner The two following little pieces, though not new, may be welcome to some who have not seen them before.

Launch thy bark, mariner, Christian, God speed thee, Let loose the rudder bands, Good angels lead thee.

Set the sails warily, Tempests will come, Steer thy course steadily, Christian, steer home.

Look to the weather-bow, Breakers are round thee;

Let fall the plummet now, Shallows may ground thee.

Reef in the foresail there, Hold the helm fast, So let the vessel wear;

There swept the blast!

What of the night, watchman, What of the night?

Cloudy, all quiet - No land yet - all’s right. Be wakeful, be vigilant,

Danger may be At an hour when all seemeth Securest to thee.

How gains the leak so fast?

Clear out the hold;

Hoist out the merchandise, Heave out the gold.

There, let the ingots go:

Now the ship rights;

Hurray! The harbor’s near, Lo! The red lights.

Slacken not sail yet, At inlet or island;

Straight for the beacon steer, Straight for the high land.

Crowd all thy canvass on, Cut through the foam;

Christian, cast anchor now, Heaven is thy home.

Mrs. Southey.

Vol 02 - Moses' Song

Moses’ Song

There is a whole system of divine lyrics in the word of God; and the one theme of them, I think I may state to be- God in connection with his people. They vary as to the degree in which different points of them are put forward in prominence; but the highest order is where God is dwelt upon more fully in His own glories and worthy praises. I do not mean God abstractedly; with that I think the scripture has little indeed to do. But perhaps we should find this thought characterize such Psalms as I refer to-God in His own greatness and glories, yet still the covenant-God of His people. For this reason, I think I should put such Psalms as 1 Chronicles 16:1-43, Psalms 105:1-45, and the song of Moses (Psalms 145:1-21 is something of this character, though scarcely of the kind now spoken of) among "the high places" of the word. I will take an example to illustrate: very glorious is the strain of triumph in which Moses says, by faith, in Exodus 15:1-27, "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them in Thy strength to Thy holy habitation." And very beautiful is it in Balaam’s song (which is more akin to the subject now in hand), the aspect which Israel holds in the divine mind; "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob; thy tabernacles, O Israel" (Numbers 24:1-25) But higher still are the thoughts when God is dwelt on, and gloried in by his people, for his own glories and worthiness (1 Chronicles 16:10), " Glory ye in His holy name, let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord: seek the Lord, and His strength; seek His face continually. Remember His marvelous works, and the judgments of his mouth." And ver. 27, "Glory and honor are in His presence; strength and gladness are in His place." We should not value God, if I may so speak, only for what we can get from him (I mean as to our wants, etc.); it is our privilege to feed upon the wondrous manifestation which He has made of Himself. In its highest sense, it is indeed "eternal life, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent."

Yet, let me add, it is wonderful too, to see in what terms the Spirit of God, the true Psalmist, speaking by his people, hath set forth what God has done for us personally, in the riches of His grace. " He lifteth up," Hannah says (1 Samuel 2:1-36), " the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." How true this is every way: we, the beggars from the dunghill (may we keep it more before our eyes!) are indeed raised up with Christ, and shall indeed, according to His own promise, " sit down with Him in His throne." But to come now to this song of Moses. -In sweet and blessed numbers truly is it introduced to us. " My doctrine shall distil as the dew; BECAUSE I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness to our God." Because; aye, that’s what gives sweetness and power to His people’s song. It is not singing about themselves, but Him-" He is the Rock; His work is perfect." The great object of the song "seems to be this; to vindicate God, to show that His work is perfect, though in connection with an evil rebellious people, the people of His choice. " Are not My ways equal, are not your ways unequal, saith the Lord?" And with what strong shining does the character of God, and that of His people stand out here in contrast! Of God he says, "All His ways are judgment," etc.; but of His people, the first word we get is, "They have corrupted themselves." They have corrupted

themselves! And is that all about man? That's all, "He hath corrupted himself." "They have turned aside quickly out of the way," says the Lord (Exodus 32:8), "they have corrupted themselves." And is that true of the Church too! Yes. Men, blind as bats talk of the succession in the Church: but how was it when Paul was permitted of God to take a look into the dark future of the Church? I KNOW that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in" (Acts 20:1-38) "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse." "In the last days perilous times shall come."

None ought surely, so deeply to have learned this lesson of man's corruption, inherent and proved, as we who stand in the close of our dispensation. It is an unvarying truth; and let me say, it is the most important lesson we can learn for our guidance and stability in every way. It is, indeed essential. Forget it, and we are gone, " Be not high-minded, but fear; thou standest by faith;" was written on the very forehead of our dispensation. But truly recognized, while it opens out to us the abyss of iniquity into which the Church has fallen, yet does it open to us deeper joys; for they are not in circumstances, but in God.

He then begins the history-the unchanging truth, God's obligation and man's responsibility, "' Is not he thy father," etc. He begins it from the beginning, where God began with them; as in Ephesians, for us (to which part indeed this song is very similar). He begins with God's foreknowledge -His predestination for His people, He had been ever thinking of them, " For when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, He set the bounds of the peoples, according to the number of the children of Israel." -Just as I think we get in Ephesians 3:9, that the Church was in God's view and deliberation, when he created all things by Jesus Christ, see also chap. 1. ver. 11. How sweetly that "for" comes in (ver. 9)! it says to our faith (and why should not God think thus of His people?) "for the Lord's portion is His people: Jacob is the lot of His 'inheritance." So in Ephesians 1:1-23, we have to learn what is " the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saint's." Then do we get some of His dealings with this chosen one. " He found him in a desert land," etc., where He found us too; but He delivered us out of it by the cross of Christ (Galatians 1:4). Then their education, " He led them about, He instructed him." Then what incomparable beauty in that description, "As an eagle," etc. So it is with us; the Lord flutters over us, so to speak, when the child of grace is being born. With what care does He watch over our first starting forth; as I think that word tells us so beautifully (Hosea 11:3), " I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms." How does He teach us to fly! Many awkward attempts, perhaps, we may make, and come down; sometimes failing through the weakness of the flesh; or having overflown ourselves through the strength of the flesh; but still the Lord leads onwards; He takes us on His own wings! Such, I have read, is the actual practice of these birds. Blessed position to be in! This is our security; He will teach us to fly! Thus do we indeed learn, waiting on the Lord, to mount up with wings as eagles. Joshua (chap. 10:24), after the capture of the five kings, called for Israel and their captains, to come near; the captains to put their feet upon the necks of the kings. Our Captain will have us associated with Him in His victorious strength-" The Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." For that is one condition that the Lord always makes when He is dealing with His people, that He alone shall have to do with them (Psalms 81:8), "O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me, there shall be no strange god in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god." We then find the rich place into which the Lord brought him. "He made him ride on the high places of the earth; He gave him butter of kine," etc. All these are the good things into which the Lord brought His people. And let me say, there are two great principles attached to the people of

God in His word-the narrow door through which we enter; but then the boundless field into which we are introduced!

Rest first, and then blessing: so with Joseph. His two children he called, first Manasseh. "For God," said he, "hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house." Here was rest, and then comes blessing-Ephraim. " For God," said he, " hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction"(Genesis 41:52). So also 1st Corinthians, we get in chapter 1 the narrow door, even the cross, by which we enter, leaving behind all our own wisdom, all our own righteousness. Then in chap. we get the boundless field into which we are brought in the Spirit.-" Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what good things God hath prepared for them that love Him." All scripture bears witness to this boundless place, into which we are brought, when once introduced in the love of Christ.

" Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep, whereof every one bears twins, and none is barren amongst them" (Song of Solomon 4:2; Genesis 49:11). John 16:15, teaches us this as positive matter of doctrine. May we thirst and drink more deeply!

I will just notice, to maintain the parallel between Israel and the church, that as they were made to ride on the high places of the earth, feeding on butter of kine, etc.; so our essential standing is, " blessed with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ." And what are we called upon to do, but like them, "to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called" (Ephesians 4:1-32)? But then comes man's part in it. Though thus set of God, yet trusting in himself, forgetting that by faith he stood, he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. Yea, more than that, (for evil can never be merely negative) " they provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they Him to anger.' For when we forsake the fountain of living waters, we are sure to hew out to ourselves broken cisterns that can contain no water. "To gods that came newly up" (ver. 17). Aye, men may boast as they like of antiquity, antiquity in faith and worship; but when God and His word are departed from, it is but after all to "gods newly come up " that men are turned. Antiquity and tradition, it should be noticed, will ever be on the side of evil, not of good; for, alas! in man's history, good is the exception, but evil is the rule. A simple reference to God's word carried the returning remnant of the captivity over the heads of all antiquity to the days of Joshua, the son of Nun (Nehemiah 8:14-17), the first time when it could have been observed probably, as being a feast for the land. There were men of antiquity and tradition in the time of our Lord, " the true Witness." But what does He tell them? "IN VAIN do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:1-39).

Then comes the Lord's visitation upon all this evil; for we know that He is a God who takes vengeance upon their inventions, though He forgives His people. And what does all the midnight darkness of popery, darkness such as could be felt; what does all the distress of His people since; the distress of the truly awakened, because they are looking endlessly into an evil heart for peace, and racking their consciences for evidences there instead of looking to the finished work, the blood of Christ, that speaks peace,-what does all this, with all our present and necessary trials in the church, that have been and shall be, tell us, but that God has been chastening His church with its own rod? " They that observe lying vanities;" says Jonah, when restored, " forsake their own mercy." It is a pithy lesson but a deep one. Still God has been mindful of His people, and will be. He will surely honor them that honor Him; He does not forget (ver. 27) that they are His people,

and that He has linked His name with them. " The Lord will not," says Samuel, in those blessed words of comfort (1 Samuel 22:1-23) " forsake His people for His great name's sake; because it bath pleased the Lord to make you His people." " The Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up and left." So that our wisdom is clearly to acknowledge fully our ruin and helplessness, that we may have His power put forth for us.

How worthily does the song end! " Rejoice, O ye nations with His people." We find, I believe, apostasy proved both in the nations (the Gentiles) and His people (ver. 32. and ver. 37), yet in the end both are called on to rejoice together. According to that word in Romans 11:33, "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. He hath concluded them all in unbelief [or disobedience] that He might have MERCY upon all.' And it is blessed indeed to know, that through all the manifold painful history of man's evil, God will yet finally get glory to Himself, and will manifest Himself to the very uttermost worthy alone to be praised; God over all, blessed for evermore! He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. " Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee." He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are judgment. A God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He.

G.

Vol 02 - Num_6:1-27

Numbers 6:1-27 Sinning by the dead and atonement made; or, the Nazarite defiled and restored. The 6th of Numbers is here presented arranged in this manner, followed by a brief explanation thereof, in order to show its typical application to the WHOLE ELECT FAMILY - to those destined for Heaven, in the first place; and next, to those for whom earthly blessing is prepared in the kingdom. The Threefold Vow of Separation.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord" (verses 1, 2).

●Abstinence From Wine.

He shall separate himself from WINE and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk" (verses 3, 4).

●The Hair Suffered To Grow.

"All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head; until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the Lord, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the HAIR OF HIS HEAD GROW" (verse 5).

●Separation From the Dead.

"All the days that he separateth himself unto the Lord, he shall come at NO DEAD BODY. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die; because the consecration of his God is upon his head (ver. 6, 7). All the days of his separation he is HOLY UNTO THE LORD" (ver. 6-8).

●The Days of Separation. An undefined period, according to the Nazarite’s choice, during which he keeps his vow, as above.

●The Nazarite Defiled - His Cleansing.

"And if any MAN DIE VERY SUDDENLY BY HIM, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he (having been unclean seven days see Numbers 19:19), shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing (namely, by the ashes of the red heifer, with the water of separation, see Numbers 19:12), on the SEVENTH DAY SHALL HE SHAVE IT" (verse 9).

●Seven Days of Uncleanness. The Days of Separation Begin Afresh.

"And on the EIGHTH DAY he shall bring TWO TURTLES, or TWO YOUNG PIGEONS, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the priest shall offer the one for a sin

offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he SINNED BY THE DEAD, and shall hallow his head (as in verse 5), that same day. And he shall CONSECRATE UNTO THE LORD THE DAYS OF HIS SEPARATION (as in verse 8), and shall bring a LAMB of the first year for a trespass offering: but THE DAYS THAT WERE BEFORE SHALL BE LOST (see verse 8), because his separation was defiled" (verses 10-12).

●The Days of Separation.

Repeated, an unlimited period as at first, during which the threefold vow is again observed. The Offering at the End.

"And this is the law of the Nazarite when THE DAYS OF HIS SEPARATION ARE FULFILLED: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and he shall offer his offering unto the Lord, one HE LAMB of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one EWE LAMB of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one RAM without blemish for peace offerings, and a BASKET OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, (namely) CAKES of fine flour mingled with oil, and WAFERS of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their MEAT offering, and their DRINK offerings. And the priest shall bring them before the Lord, and shall offer his sin offering [the ewe lamb] and his burnt offering [the he lamb]: and he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the Lord, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering and his drink offering" (verses 13-17).

●His Hair Dedicated.

" And the Nazarite Shall SHAVE THE HEAD OF HIS SEPARATION at the door of the (tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the PEACE OFFERINGS " (verse 18).

●Wave And Heave Offerings.

" And the priest shall take the sodden SHOULDER OF THE RAM [namely, the peace offering, verse 14] and one unleavened CAKE out of the basket, and one unleavened WAFER, and shall put them upon THE HANDS OF THE NAZARITE, after the hair of his separation is shaven; and the priest shall wave them for a WAVE OFFERING before the Lord: this is holy for the priest, with the WAVE BREAST AND HEAVE SHOULDER [both of them belonging to the ram of the peace offering. See Leviticus 7:30; Leviticus 7:32], and after that THE NAZARITE MAY DRINK WINE" (verses 19, 20).

●A Brief Summary Of The Above.

" This is the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed (see verses 3-8), and of his offering unto the Lord for his separation (see verses 10-17), beside that that his hand shall get (see verses 19, 20) according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation" (verse 21).

●The Blessing.

" And the Lord spite unto Moses, saying, Speak unto AARON, and unto HIS SONS, saying, On this wise ye shall BLESS THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, saying unto them, THE LORD bless thee, and keep thee: THE LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: THE LORD

lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace " (ver. 24-26).

" And they [AARON AND HIS SONS] shall PUT MY NAME UPON THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL; AND I WILL BLESS THEM " (verse 27).

●Explanation Of The Foregoing Chapter. THE object of throwing this 6th of Numbers into the foregoing form, accompanied by the following brief explanation thereof, is to show that the Nazarite, as he is here represented, under three distinct aspects-namely, devoting himself to the Lord; then becoming defiled by the dead; and lastly, after seven days of uncleanness (the number seven denoting his perfect defilement), shaving his head, beginning his vow over again, and then with sacrifices, and so on, bringing all to a close-presents, in his single person, a type of all the elect, through the whole course of their history upon earth, from the entrance of sin to their ascension to heaven, and the times of restitution of all things.

Renunciation of the world, power in the Spirit, and moral separation from death, here shown by the threefold Nazarite vow as to abstinence from wine, the growth of the hair, and not touching the dead, were ever the great leading characteristics of touching people of God. The world at the fall became wholly defiled; hence, though outwardly linked with an earthly order of things, such as the Jewish dispensation especially was, the saints all the while were not of the world, they were a Nazarite people set apart for the service and glory of God, their hope and their home being in heaven. An hour however arrived, when the whole of this elect family found themselves suddenly and unexpectedly defiled; when they, together with others, became involved in a sin of the deepest atrocity-even the sin of PUTTING JESUS TO DEATH! Human nature in that solemn moment was tested, and fearfully failed: hence they were not exempt from the general guilt. They took no part, it is true, in that act; personally they were innocent; but having a nature in common with those who were willfully guilty, besides being nationally one, or connected, as the Gentile proselytes were, with that apostate race who impiously said, " His blood be on us, and on our children," the sin of that deed was imputed to them. Nazarites though they were in heart and affection, devoted to Him whom their people had killed, they, in the typical terms of this chapter, "SINNED BY THE DEAD." Hard as it is to realize this of the beloved disciple, of the devoted, Mary, and others whom we could name, it was not the less true,-all in that dark hour of this world’s history, all, in a sense, stood on one level.

Hence they had to be cleansed, and to begin all over again. And This they did at the feast of Pentecost-seven weeks after Christ had been slain. Then on this " eighth day," for such it literally was, the day of resurrection-life to the saints (the link of connection between the old and the new dispensations) the Spirit being given, the saints by his power were drawn out of association with a world defiled by the blood of " the just one," as well as with the outcast nation of Israel, and brought into a new, a nearer relation to God. And this we believe to be all expressed in this chapter. The Nazarite, as we here read, having defiled the head of his consecration, having come in contact with death, and passed through a perfect period, a full week of uncleanness, shaves his head in token of his renunciation of all his past work, and begins the days of his separation afresh-the time before being lost; and in doing so, gives us a glimpse of the great mystery hidden from ages and generations-even THE CALLING OUT OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN THIS AGE-Of that heavenly people who are one, both in spirit and in hope, with that blessed one whom the world bath slain. Thus, then, in a figure, the new dispensation commences; the sacrifices, here

offered at the beginning of these days being expressive of our present apprehension by faith of the value of Christ; while those at the end, on the other hand, mark our future communion with him, declare our joy in his person and work, after the days of our separation are ended, after we are translated to heaven. And here we may notice two instances in Scripture which bear on this point.

1st. When St. Paul undertook the Nazarite vow (Acts 18:18; Acts 21:23-27), he did not begin, in the regular way, by letting his hair grow, but, on the contrary, by shaving his head. He commenced at that point here contemplated in the Nazarite's course, after he had contracted defilement, and was purified again. And this, it would seem, he advisedly did,* because, according to the explanation, here given, this was the point in the ordinance wherein, the position and calling of the Church of God in this dispensation, of which St. Paul himself was the apostle,. was foreshown. This, on his part, was, as it were, the recognition of himself as a Nazarite, morally speaking, belonging to the present, and not to the past dispensation.

2ndly. We have an eminent instance of Nazarite faithfulness in Jeremiah 35:1-19, where Jaazaniah, his brethren, his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites, refuse to drink wine in the temple, rewarded, as we find, with an especial promise on the part of the Lord, that Jonadab the son of Rechab should not want a man to stand before him forever. A promise which doubtless is fulfilled to this day, not only as to the literal preservation of this family, but also as to the favor of God, in a spiritual way, to these children of Rechab. Many a true Nazarite, unknown now as such upon earth, will perhaps in the end be found to have sprung from his loins.

Now, then, returning to our chapter, we find the Nazarite quite in the spirit of liberty, seeing that the period is left to his own choice, keeping his vow, abstaining from wine, letting his hair grow, and avoiding the dead, as before, and then, the days of his separation being fulfilled, bringing his offerings - namely, two lambs and a ram, for sin, for burnt, and for peace offerings, together with a basket of unleavened bread, all expressive, as before said, of our full unhindered apprehension of the value of Christ in the glory.

(* Whether St. Paul was right in separating himself as a Nazarite at all, may be a question. One thing is to be considered, namely, that in Acts 18:18, we find that he had "shorn his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow," which vow he fulfilled on his arrival at Jerusalem in company with four men who had a similar vow on them. Thus then it is clear, that his undertaking it in the first instance, was not the result of the enmity of the Jews, "zealous of the law," but of his own choice altogether.)

After which, as we read, the Nazarite shaves the hair of his head (the symbol of power in the Spirit), and devotes it, together with the peace-offerings (the especial type of communion) to God. This is most blessed. It shows the saints in the kingdom rendering all praise, all honor, all glory, to Him to whom alone it is due, casting their crowns at His feet, the language of their hearts being, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory!" And here, as to the hair being expressive of spiritual power, the instance of Samson may be taken. As soon as he was shorn of his locks, seeing that his strength lay in his hair, he was utterly powerless, the helpless victim of others. This, in his case, was miraculous, herein he differed, from the common order of Nazarites this, however, with regard to the ordinance in general, showed that the hair, as here stated, was the symbol of strength in the Lord; While shaving the head, after he had been defiled by the dead, on the contrary, denoted weakness, prostration, humiliation, on the part of the Nazarite. Different

from this altogether was the same act at the end; there, shaving the hair, and burning it under the sacrifice of the peace offerings, being expressive of praise, of the Church in resurrection hereafter giving the whole glory to Christ, and saying, " All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given thee " (1 Chronicles 29:14).

Then again the priest, having presented the wave breast and heave shoulder, one being, it appears, expressive of the love, the other of the power of Christ, as apprehended by the saints in resurrection, the separate one at length tastes the juice of the grape, " THE NAZARITE MAY DRINK WINE," the symbol of earthly joy and of earthly communion. So it will be in the kingdom, this world being then the abode of the visible glory of Christ, being redeemed by that blood which defiles it at present, the reproach having passed away from the land of Judea where Jesus was crucified, the Church of God, though in Heaven, will have association therewith, will rejoice in its deliverance from the power of the spoiler, and so take the lead in the mingling chorus of Heaven and earth in that day. And here, in connection with this, we may turn to notice the case of Jesus Himself He when on earth in heart was a Nazarite of course; a heavenly stranger in the midst of a corrupt generation. Ostensibly, however, he was not so, unlike John, who both ceremonially and in spirit was such, he "came eating and drinking " (Matthew 11:19), offering earthly joy, as the heir of the throne of Judah, to Israel. Now, however, His grace being rejected, He is morally such, in the full sense of the word, having taken upon Him His vow, when, on the night of His betrayal, He said to His disciples, " I will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom " (Matthew 26:29). This marks the calling of the saints in this dispensation, namely, that of a separate people, waiting like Christ, with whom they are one, whose elect body they form, for the day when they, together with Him, "may drink wine, may take that joy in this earth, which because of its defilement, it denies them at present.

Then lastly, at the close of this chapter, shifting our view of the subject a little, we see in AARON AND HIS SONS, another type of the Church. Here Christ and His people appear as Nazarites no more-no longer as strangers and pilgrims on earth, but as exalted to heaven, and there (like Melchizedec, the king and the priest, greeting Abraham in the day of his victory) pronouncing a blessing on Israel. Thus, in this beautiful figure, we see that as the elect nation of Israel hereafter will be made to minister blessing to the rest of the world, so the elect Church, on the other hand, the Bride, the Lamb’s Wife, one in spirit with Him who is the Fountain-head of life to His people, will wait in that day on her blessed ministry of love to the earthly people of God. The above is the more enlarged view of this subject, embracing, as it does, the whole elect family, from the days of Adam to the catching up of the Church. In which case the seven days of uncleanness (see verse 9; Numbers 19:11), correspond with the brief interval between the crucifixion of Christ and the descent of the Spirit (also, be it remembered, a sevenfold period, of forty-nine days-one of perfect defilement). But if, on the other hand, restricting our view to one nation alone, this type be regarded as more especially Jewish, as relating, in the first place, to the imputed transgression of the faithful remnant of old, and next to the quickening and blessing of the remnant hereafter, then these seven days would denote the present period of Israel’s estrangement from God; while the rest of the chapter (with the exception of verses 22-29, wherein the house of Aaron, as in the other case expresses the Church) traces the course of the elect seed from the point when they will repent and believe, to the time of their full acceptance with God as a nation.

Thus in the same way that as, on applying the microscope to some object in nature-to an insect or flower, for instance-we discover wonders and beauties therein which the naked eye _could never have seen; so, in this chapter, which, superficially viewed, merely presents us with an ancient Levitical ordinance, we are surprised and delighted to discover secrets of grace for which we were little prepared. "Few there are," it has been observed, "who make it their business to search the Scriptures for unheeded prophecies, overlooked mysteries, and strange harmonies;"* and this chapter is a proof, that were we more diligent in this way than we are, our search would be amply repaid; seeing that herein we trace our own history-yea, the upward path of the saints from this death-defiled world into the very sanctuary of God. Thus the Lord takes delight in tracing His ways for our instruction and comfort. Thus he teaches us, however deep and hopeless our defilement by nature may be, that there is, in the atonement of Christ, far more than a remedy. Here we learn that His is not merely a sin offering, but also a burnt offering, yea, a peace offering, even the communion of the Church, by the Spirit, with the Father and the Son; and that the day is at hand when we shall fully enter into, and rejoice in the value of all that He is, and of all that He has done for His people. The Lord give us grace more and more to feel a oneness of spirit with the Nazarite of old when he devoted his hair to the Lord, and together with him and also the sweet psalmist of Israel, to cry, " Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth’s sake. E. D.

(* Robert Boyle.)

Vol 02 - Php_1:1-7

Php 1:1-7 "Not all the blood of beasts, On Jewish altars slain, Can give my guilty conscience peace, Or wash away my stain."

"What things were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss.... and dung," etc. He himself rejoiced in Christ; and his joy in the Philippians was their fellowship in that.' And now, how sweet is that fellowship souls find in the gospel. Our communion is not in sentiments and views, because, on this point, or on that, we see eye to eye, but as the redeemed of the Lord, as those who can unite to sing, " Thou wart slain, and halt redeemed us to God by Thy blood." So whatever mars the gospel, will disturb fellowship. "What communion hath light with darkness?" Harassed as the Apostle had been by trials and failures, his heart found its joy in turning to the Philippians; and it was because of their abiding fellowship in the gospel. This led to that earnest contention for the faith which characterized them. " Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all partakers with me of grace." That soul that knows most fully the value of the gospel of Jesus Christ, whose only rest is under the shelter of the cross, will be the last to dishonor His precious name; the first to maintain His glory. It was not in the power of persecution to turn away the Philippians from the gospel, to rob their hearts of the joy they had therein. The feeling the Apostle had- "None of these things move me" - was responded to by them. Was he ready not to be bound only, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus?-so were they. 'Tis wonderful to see what sympathy this happy company had in all the Apostle was engaged in-their full reception of his gospel at the first, their continuance therein, their service to him in communicating to his wants while bearing that gospel to others, proving the value they set on it, and the love they had to him as the Lord's messenger, and lastly, as the prisoner of the Lord. They realized that it was given to them in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake. The day is coming which will try every man's religion of what sort it is. Indeed, the trial has set in; and only those will stand witnesses for God, and witnesses for Christ, who, by His own blessed Spirit, have had their hearts opened to receive Christ, and are " kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places."

Vol 02 - Principles and Persons

Principles and Persons

Peter was an Apostle-the Apostle of the circumcision; he was also a most fervent disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ; one dear to the whole church in his day, as one able to exhort the elders, himself an elder, to feed the flock of GOD-not as being lords over the heritage, but as being ensamples to the flock.

Paul-he, too, was an Apostle-the Apostle of the Uncircumcision. What a character of his discipleship and service do we find in the Second Epistle to Corinth.

While the Spirit was walked in, by both, and the truth of the gospel (Galatians 2:14) honored-though each of them might have a line and a measure peculiar to himself-there was no conflict between them. But what if either of them put his apostleship, and the personal influence which attended God’s grace and gifts in him, to a use, which neither grace nor righteousness, even in the feeblest saint, could justify-and even turned all that attached to himself, as an individual, against God, the Lord, and the Spirit-so destroying the foundation on which poor sinners (saved by grace alone) were resting? What then? "Impossible," many would say: alas! it was possible then, and similar things must therefore be possible now. Peter did so at Antioch, and Paul withstood him. Faith must act as God acts in such eases; and disavow the acts and oppose the course: such a conflict may fairly be said to be one between God and Satan. Yet I may remark, that though the real question was really one of PRINCIPLES, and not of persons, then, as at every time when the flock of God is in danger, principles are exhibited in and illustrated by men: and so Paul became at Antioch, through grace, the vindicator of grace against the human righteousness, which another lent the sanction of his name to. The question always is, " Where is God, and Christ, and the Spirit in this controversy?"

Vol 02 - Prophecy, Israel's Encouragement to Build the Temple: Comparison of Ezra, Haggai, and Ze...

Prophecy, Israel’s Encouragement to Build the Temple: Comparison of Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah The peculiarity of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah is, that they present, especially, the Lord’s recognition of a remnant in Judah, who were delivered from the Babylonish captivity, under Zerubbabel, and whose history is given in the early chapters of the book of Ezra,* so far as it is connected with these prophecies.

(* It should be observed that the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah related only to the period of Zerubbabel’s governorship; the history of which concludes with the account of the dedication of the house of God in the sixth chapter of Ezra according to the prediction of Zechariah; " The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands also shall finish it." The mission of Ezra, which is recorded in the seventh chapter, to the end, introduces us to a much later period;-perhaps near eighty years after the decree of Cyrus; and Nehemiah’s coming to Jerusalem was a few years later. Malachi presents us with the last inspired glimpse of this remnant which the Old Testament affords.) The decree of Cyrus which gave the occasion, and the authority, for this movement on the part of the Jews is thus strikingly given in the words of the Persian conqueror. "Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth: and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is the God) which is in Jerusalem." This decree became a test of the moral condition of the people: for it presented, in the foremost place, an object attractive only to the heart that was in alliance with God; and could therefore esteem its own ease and comfort as nothing in comparison with His glory. The language of the decree was, " Who is there among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, which is in Jerusalem." This was the specific object for which deliverance was proclaimed for these captives:-and the result was, that the majority of the people preferred to remain in the ameliorated circumstances of an ignoble captivity in Babylon to going up to Jerusalem, for this at least, afforded them the means of present ease and comfort; which outweighed, in their esteem, all the honor and credit of building the house of God, amidst circumstances of trial and difficulty. This had its attraction only to the eye of faith. It required the spirit of Ezra to say, "Our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem." "A wall in Judah and Jerusalem" is estimated as a greater proof of God’s mercy than a palace in Babylon. The first movements of this remnant might be in weakness and indistinctness of apprehension regarding the purposes of the Lord;-as we see in the sorrow of the ancient men when the foundation of the house was laid-so inferior was it in their eyes to the glory of the former house:-nor did the joy of those that shouted arise from a clearer view of its being again the resting-place of the divine glory. But when the light of prophecy and divine revelation began to

shed its beams upon their undertaking, it was found that this feeble movement was connected with all God’s future purposes relating to Israel’s final blessing and glory.

"Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? [says the Lord by the prophet] and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land. saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts. According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall he greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts."-Haggai 2:3-9.

There was one special object, which was to hold the foremost place in returning to the land of their fathers:- it was "to build the house of God at Jerusalem." This is alike marked in the decree which opened the door of their captivity, and in the prophecy which afterward roused their spirit to the work. Upon this hung all their fortunes; and as it was prosecuted or neglected, their prosperity ebbed or flowed. This is only in accordance with what Moses at the Red Sea, in prospect of Israel’s entrance into Canaan, sang, " The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation; He is my God, and I will prepare him a habitation." And now, on their return from captivity, which was a chastisement for their sins, the Lord says, " build the house, and I will take pleasure in it." However, it was not on -their immediate return from Babylon that the direct encouragement of prophecy was given. This came in several years after the opposition of their enemies had caused them to relinquish the work which the Spirit of the Lord had led them to commence, but which their faith was not sufficient to continue. For it will be seen-as is ever the case-when the light of God shines in, that it was the failure of faith, and not the power of the enemy, that led to the discontinuance of this work, which had so directly His sanction. His secret power had been with them, as captives in Babylon, when " they hanged their harps on the willows," and refused to sing " the Lord’s song in a strange land." And it was his hand that led them forth on their return from captivity, however weak their condition, and contemptible their numbers. This was their strength. And it is said, on the passing of the decree, Ezra 1:5. "Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem."

It is only by the power of God that even his people’s hearts are turned from the pursuit of their own selfish objects, to be occupied in that which He can take pleasure in. Every true revival, in every age, must be traced up to GOD, and not to man; and it should be ever remembered, that it was said of Christians, and not of the world, "All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ’s." As to this remnant, it may be said, the Word of the Lord was their guide in what they did, and they were marked by the spirit of dependence upon the Lord:-the invariable characteristics which accompany a work of God -though, as it afterward appears, they failed to apprehend how fully His presence was with them in the work. Their first act when they reached Jerusalem, all unprotected as they were, was to "set the altar upon his bases (for fear was upon them because, of the people of’ those countries), and they offered burnt-offerings thereon unto the Lord." "And they kept also

the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and they offered the daily burnt-offerings by number," etc. " Their altar [as one has said] was to them in the place of walls." And surely the presence of God was their only adequate protection; though with that they might well be raised above the reach of fear. As afterward, it was said, though their circumstances were unchanged, " Be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord."

Still, when opposition presented itself, their faith did not rise high enough. They refused, it is true, to be confederated in building with those (whatever their pretensions) who were the "adversaries of Judah and Benjamin;" but through fear of their power and opposition, the work at length was caused to cease. Their faith gave way under the storm, which the spirit of separation had raised. The same opposition was again roused, when, fourteen years afterward, the work was recommenced; but then though the power of their adversaries, and their hatred of the work was the same, yet the sense of the Lord’s presence rose far higher. And they answered with boldness to the challenge of their enemies, "We are THE SERVANTS OF THE GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up!" Here their commission is derived from its true source, and this was everything as to-their success. Formerly their answer only recognized the authority of the king: -" Zerubbabel, and Joshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God: but we ourselves will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia commanded us." Faith in God’s presence will alone carry His people through the opposition which is at all times raised against the prosecution of God’s objects. But when faith fails, everything as to the work of God fails. Our own objects may be pursued without it, but farewell to all those with which God can connect His name and power. The very end for which this remnant was delivered from Babylon, and brought to Jerusalem, was in abeyance when the building of the house of God ceased; and yet they could be occupied in "running every man to his own house," and were found dwelling in their ceiled houses, while the house of the Lord was lying waste. The enemy’s opposition is always directed against what is done for the name of the Lord; and if this be set aside, we may occupy ourselves without hindrance in schemes and efforts for our own glory and ease. A few years were sufficient in these circumstances to cause this remnant practically to forget the very object for which they came out of Babylon; or at least, if they had other thoughts, to silence them with the ready answer, "the time is not come, the time that the LORD’S house should be built." But when, in the mercy of the Lord, the voice of the prophet is sent to rouse them from their lethargy, every excuse vanishes, and it is found that a lack of faith, and the natural love of ease, were the real grounds of the cessation of the building, and the cause of their backwardness in resuming their labor. But the history does not present this. It only presents their adversaries, in the reign of Artaxerxes, causing them to cease by force and power (Ezra 4:23). So important is it, for the practical use of Scripture, to connect the light of prophecy with the events narrated in the histories of the divine word. Prophecy generally brings out the moral condition of the people, and lays open the springs of action from which the events of history take their character and bearing in the sight of God. In comparing these prophecies with the history (for our present object), the first in order is the book of Haggai. The characteristic difference between the two seems to be this, that Haggai encourages the people to build the temple, by the assurance of the Lord’s presence with them in the work, and Zechariah unfolds what the glory of the house would be. In Haggai the great principle enforced, and reiterated, is, that God was with the people,

in the work. This was the whole secret of their strength. Every external circumstance seemed to contradict it; still, amidst all their weakness and apparent failing, the prophet is commanded to assure them of this truth, "I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts." Faith alone could discern this; but that is only in character with all the present dealings of the Lord with His people. By and by, it will be different; and it will be said, "The Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth." But it is not so now. "We walk by faith, and not by sight." This is a universal principle, and has its special illustration in the path of a remnant seeking to walk with the Lord. Their enemies might conclude that the work could, not be of God, as there were no proofs of His manifested power; and their brethren in Babylon might conclude,, in favor of their own wisdom in not quitting Babylon; when they saw the work stopped by the adversaries, and the people discouraged at the thought of its further prosecution. But God has a lesson to teach His people, which faith only can learn, that "it is not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Where this is learned, it will be felt that it is better (in the language of men) to fail with God, than to succeed by ourselves. But, indeed, this is impossible. Those who are acting for God, and with God, however feebly, cannot fail. And this, is the great lesson which Zechariah brings out. For it is manifestly the object of the prophecy, to show that the work of this poor remnant, in building the house, was-so in a line with God’s counsels, that he could connect it with all those blessed pictures of hope which gleam through the vista of prophecy, and point to the time when the enemies of Israel shall all be overthrown, and the glory of Messiah’s reign will fill the whole earth with blessing, as well as Jerusalem with praise. The moral lessons that are interwoven with the prophecies, both of Haggai and Zechariah, are most instructive, and are plainly not of secondary importance in the mind of the Lord.

Before encouragement is given in the’ work, the people are called to consider their ways (chap. 1 ver. 5, and also ver. 7), and the Lord declares that a secret blight had been upon all their labors in consequence of their neglect of what he could take pleasure in, while they had been employing their efforts to promote their own ease and comfort. "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes....Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands" (chap. 1 ver. 6, 9, 10, 11). This is no obsolete principle in the Lord’s dealings. There is not a more effectual way of defeating our own ends than to be intent, only upon our own personal comfort or advancement. While in the case of the Apostle Paul, who utterly lost himself, in his zeal for Christ and his service of the church, we see a man daily " comforted of God," on his way; and living in the unclouded brightness of coming glory. In the midst of all his labors and weariness, he could give the exhortation, "Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." In the plenitude of power and wealth, and in the enjoyment of unbroken peace, Solomon labored in building the house of the Lord at first; but now a poor remnant in poverty and weakness, and beset by the opposition of enemies, are called to engage in the same work. Nor is this without instruction. For it shows that their resources must alone be in

God. The contrast of circumstances might be painful to their minds-as now, when contrasting the altered circumstances of laborers in the church of God with those of Apostolic days-but the Lord encourages their hearts by saying (ver. 8), " Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified." While in chap. 2 ver. 3, he graciously takes notice of these thoughts of discouragement, and says, " Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts" (ver. 3, 4). And how graciously does he speak in like manner to the church at Philadelphia, in Revelation 3:8-12, saying, " I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength; and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hest kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven-from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

Here the encouragement does not rest in the promise of present help and sustainment, but goes on to the final issues of all service in conjunction with the glory of the Lord. So in the prophecy of Haggai, the Lord does not allow the minds of the remnant to rest in the work in which they were engaged; though he was with them in it, and he delighted to own it; but he carries them forward to the time when his own power would give peace to Israel, and permanence to the house, and establishment to the glory. " For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." And again in ver. 21, 22, 23, " Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts."

There is one point, in this encouragement to the remnant to build the house, which is deserving of special notice. In addition to the inspiring word, "I am with, you, saith the Lord of Hosts;" there is the declaration (chap. 2:5), " According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear not."

Amidst the most entirely altered circumstances, the presence of the Spirit with this remnant is associated with Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, where "He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up; and He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness."

There was nothing in their outward condition corresponding to the displays of His power in His first leading forth the chosen tribes; yet is He present in undiminished energy, and, according to all which He then displayed, were they now encouraged to count on his sufficiency for every emergency. There is no cloud, it is true, to guide them, nor rod of power to protect them, and to plague and overthrow their enemies; neither is there any ark to precede their march, nor manna to fall around their tents these were all gone; they had been sinned away, and their absence told of departure from the Lord; yet in divine mercy the Spirit remained,-the same Spirit, and with the same power, that led them forth from Egypt! Outward tokens of strength there were none; but there was a secret divine energy in their midst revealed to faith, and available wherever there was faith, and a heart to care for the glory of the Lord. Outward tokens of strength could not be given where the purpose of the Lord was to witness against departure from Himself. In such a case the people must be "stripped of their ornaments," and God’s holiness must be vindicated, even when He acts in grace. Moreover, in His dealing with a remnant in the midst of apostasy, His purpose is to draw out their faith; and consequently He takes away all that the flesh can rest upon, which has been the occasion of the evil he would correct. With such, "the joy of the Lord is their strength;" and the acting of Ezra by " the river of Ahava," will give a sample of their ways: he says "Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of Him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him; but His power and His wrath is against all them that forsake Him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and He was intreated of us" (Ezra 8:21-23). This was like the proving of Gideon’s army; for the Lord’s ways are at all times equal; and it is His mercy, if He at any time makes the external circumstances of His people a test of faith, where the power of holiness has not been sufficient to keep out the spirit of the world.

If we for a moment think of the ulterior history of this remnant, and of the fate of the house which they builded, it seems wonderful that their work should be thus acknowledged of the Lord. But then, it was not what the work was in their hands, but what it would be in the hands of Him " whose name is the BRANCH:" for HE shall build the temple of the Lord: even He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne." The Temple had been once builded, and the city had been once established, though both were now in ruins; and it was in the counsels of the Lord to build the house again, and to fill it with His glory; and to establish Jerusalem again, and to make her a joy and praise in the whole earth; and between these points in the Lord’s counsels, this remnant is encouraged by the voice of prophecy to act. The church, also, has been once manifested on earth in grace; it has failed to maintain its position; but it is the final purpose of the Lord to exhibit it gathered in glory. Christians, now, like this remnant, live in the middle history; and what should be their aim? The counsel of the Lord is clear. The word of Haggai, by which the remnant of Israel was encouraged to build the house, is now incorporated with an epistle in the New Testament; and in Hebrews 12:26-27, the word is addressed to us, " But now hath He promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

It is consequently of the last importance for us to ascertain, whether our efforts and aims are coincident with the purposes of the Lord. For if they are not, disappointment and failure must, in the very mercy of the Lord, be the issue. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." The "more sure word of prophecy," is to us -as the prophet's to this remnant- "a light that shineth in a dark place." There may be said to be a "former and a latter glory" of the church as well as of the temple; though the one will be exhibited according to its character in heaven, while the other is displayed on earth. In Zechariah, as in Haggai, the first note of the prophet's message is to call the minds of the remnant to a recognition of the hand of the Lord in their present ruin; while, at the same moment, he is commissioned to assure them of the unchangeableness of the divine counsels. These two things are invariably connected with every revival of the work of the Lord amongst His people.

Accordingly, chap. 1 presents a review of the moral condition of Israel, and connects their present dispersion with the threatenings of the Lord by the former prophets; for though their fathers were gone, and the prophets did not live forever, yet the words and statutes of the Lord, which He commanded by the former prophets, "took hold of their fathers:" They were not vain threats; though their fathers had said, " Let Him make speed, and hasten His work, that we may see it, and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!" So may it be said now, "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," in spite of all the scornful questionings of "the last days," saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" His "words and statutes" will "take hold"; and men will be compelled to say, "Like as the Lord of Hosts thought to do unto us according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath He dealt with us!" In like manner also shall His word be accomplished concerning His poor remnant, "Yet setteth He the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock. The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth." The vision of " the horses" among the "myrtle-trees," presents the condition of the whole earth as contemplated by the active intelligence of God; and shows that his heart is not indifferent to the report of the riders, that " all the earth sitteth still and is at rest;"-while Jerusalem, the city his habitation, is desolate, and his people are in captivity and oppression amongst the heathen! Nothing can be more touching than the answer of the Lord to the cry of intercession on the part of the angel of the Lord, saying, "O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? And the Lord answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words. So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalemand for Zion with great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Therefore thus saith the Lord, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem!" What a scene is here opened to the faith of this poor despised remnant! To the eye of man, everything betokened Israel's being forsaken by the Lord, while he had turned an unobstructed tide of prosperity on their oppressors. But "the Lord seeth not as man seeth." "Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me"-but the affecting answer is, "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." There is one who stands on the part of Israel, indicated here by the angel that intercedes, of whom it is said, " in all their afflictions he was

afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." God's thoughts are not like man's thoughts: and mistake and discouragement always result from scanning His ways by the eye of sense. In the midst of Israel's deepest sorrow-and while the iron hand of Nebuchadnezzar held them fast-in captivity, Jeremiah, the prophet of their calamity, is commanded to say, " I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end." The instruments which he uses for the correction of His people do not enter into his counsels; but they are nevertheless subject to his control. Of the Assyrian he says, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few" (Isaiah 10:5-7). Also ver. 12, "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks." And again, ver. 24, 25, " Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction." The deliverance and establishment of Israel which the prophet is commanded to announce, in verse 17, "Saying, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem" make way for the vision of the "horns of the Gentiles" (verse 18-21). It is necessary that these should be set aside, in order to the accomplishment of the promises of God concerning Israel's portion in the earth. The final blessing of Israel is incompatible with power remaining in the hands of their Gentile oppressors. And in this is manifested the wonderful harmony and clearness of the great outline of prophecy, which relates to God's actings in the earth; and it shows the final pointing of the predictions by which this poor remnant were encouraged. As in Haggai, the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophet, could not stop short of the " shaking of the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land," and the shaking- " of all nations," which Hebrews 12:1-29 shows to be yet future, though his present purpose was only to encourage them in the building of the house, which was so soon to be overthrown; so the same spirit in Zechariah necessarily predicts the "fraying and casting out the horns of the Gentiles," when he speaks of God's final mercy to Israel, though his present purpose is only to show them the glory of the house. For this is Zion's final position in the earth; "the nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, these nations shall be utterly wasted." So also the whole of Isaiah 60:1-22. "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever!" In this brief but impressive vision, therefore, the four oppressive powers of the Gentiles are seen in their whole course as "horns," and their destruction is shown, that the measuring, line may again be "stretched forth upon Jerusalem." Thus, within the compass of these four verses, we find a summary of Daniel's vision of the "four beasts," with their extinction, in order to the establishment of the Son of Man's kingdom; and also of the image of Nebuchadnezzar, whose smiting on the feet, with the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, is the token that " the God of heaven [is about to] set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." The second chapter but expands the promises of the "measuring line," when the Lord shall inherit Judah, his portion in the Holy Land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. And

O how expressive is that word with which the chapter closes! And how does it teach us, that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation"! "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for He is raised up out of His holy habitation!" Let the whole chapter be read, that the pleasant picture of hope may be before the mind, with which the Lord strengthened the hearts of His poor remnant in their feebleness, while they were called to labor in building the house. And let not the hearts that may labor and sigh now over the church's desolations, forget what are the predictions of her glory. "We are saved by hope!" If in feebleness I care for Christ's church now, I am caring for that which engages the affections of the heart of Christ, and in which His glory shall soon "be made to center." "Come hither (says the voice of prophecy), and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (see Revelation 21:9, to the end).

Let it not be forgotten, that all this unfolding of the glory, when " the Lord is raised up out of his holy habitation," and "all flesh is commanded to be silent before Him," is connected with the poor movements of the remnant that came out of Babylon. But when we look at them in their weakness and reproach, and in the feebleness of their faith, and then consider that the temple they were now building was again to be overthrown by the Romans, and lie in ruins for so many ages, it seems hard to think that these were the means to the accomplishment of the magnificent heralding of the prophet! But the solution is easy. God "sees the end from the beginning;" and this poor movement was so in a line with His ultimate counsels, that he could spread out the whole panorama of Israel's glory before those connected with it, and use it for their present encouragement. Just as He can say now, when pointing to the resurrection-glory, "forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Chapter 3 gives a vivid and lovely picture of God's dealings in grace with a poor sinner through Christ; and as a picture, or an illustration, every feature of it is stamped with preciousness and beauty. But the immediate and proper object of the vision, is to display the way of the divine mercy to Israel. It shows the Lord's cleansing of Israel; and thus presents their moral preparation for, the blessing, and for the sustainment of the glory, which is to be established among them by the Lord's presence in their midst. The means by which He will bring in the final blessing is, we know from other Scriptures, by priesthood. As Aaron, in the type, was to bear the iniquity of the children of Israel, and they were to be accepted through him-so we have here Joshua, in his filthy garments, as the type of the moral condition of the people; as it is said m Haggai, " so is this people, and so is this nation before me; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean." But there is one to plead, in the presence of the Lord, for Joshua against Satan; and his "filthy garments" are taken from him, and he is " clothed with change of raiment;" and " a fair miter is set on his head;" and the judgment of the Lord's house, and the keeping of his courts, is promised on condition of obedience. But all this is only the type of Israel's cleansing, as " a brand plucked out of the fire;" as is seen in the word of the Lord to Joshua, " I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment," connected with verse 9, f For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes; behold I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of THAT LAND in one day." But the power by which this is actually accomplished is seen in the declaration, " Behold, I will bring forth my servant, the BRANCH;" and the " stone that was laid before Joshua," with " the seven eyes," points to the foundation which God would lay in Zion, and marks out the person of Him on whom Israel's and the church's salvation and glory rest. " I beheld, and, lo, in the

midst of the throne a lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Revelation 5:6). When this "stone" is owned by Israel, and the engraving of "the seven eyes" upon it, is discerned to be the engraving of the Lord, "the iniquity of the land will be removed in one day." Just as in Psalms 118:1-29, when the "stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner," and is so discerned by Israel, the confession follows, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will be glad, and rejoice in it." So it is added, in the last verse of this chapter, "In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine, and under his fig-tree." Peace shall then be upon Israel.

After the cleansing of Israel, which makes Jerusalem the place of peace, and " a quiet habitation," through the presence of the Lord, the fourth chapter presents " the vision of the golden candlestick " and the " two olive trees," through which it is supplied with oil. This vision appears to be the presentation of Israel in the position of divine testimony and order, through the outpouring of the Spirit, in millennial times. There is a significance in this vision, indicated by the question of the angel, when it is first presented to the prophet: ver. 1, " What seest thou?" and in the subsequent inquiries of the prophet, as to its meaning in ver. 4: " What are these, my Lord?" and again, ver. 12: "I answered again, and said to him, What are these two olive branches?" etc. There is, also, to be noticed the way in which the vision is introduced: ver. 1, "The angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep." The same thing occurs in Jeremiah 31:26, connected also with Israel's restoration under the hand of the Lord: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul. Upon this I awaked, and beheld, and my sleep was sweet unto me" (Jeremiah 31:23-26). In both these cases, the action seems to be expressive of what takes place with regard to the nation when the divine mercy is turned fully toward them. This accords with Daniel 12:2 : "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake," etc.; and also, with Isaiah 26:19 : " Thy dead men shall live, 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 the dead." The answer to the prophet's question about the meaning of the candlestick and the two olive trees, as to its present force, is given in ver. 6: "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord of hosts." But its full bearing is alone seen in chap. 6:9-15, in connection with "the man whose name is the BRANCH;" and with Israel's position in the latter day. For the Spirit, even in his ulterior and most glorious actings in the latter day, is identified with the power which was working in the time of Zerubbabel; and the plummet in his hand was made effectual in the building of the house " with these seven; they are the eyes of the Lord which run to and fro through the whole earth." Yet Jerusalem, in a fuller sense by far, is to become " the place of the throne of the Lord;" and " the man whose name is the BRANCH..... even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory." And moreover, as the place of testimony, " out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." In the vision of this fourth chapter, we see the beautiful order of this testimony, and the power by which it is to be sustained. It was " not by might nor by power," that aught was accomplished at this time, when there was a danger of men's "despising the day of small things;" it will not be "by might nor

by power," but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts that Jerusalem's glory will be finally established, when her sons " shall be named the priests of the Lord, and men shall call them the ministers of our God:" "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: because the palaces shall be forsaken: the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens forever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field" (Isaiah 32:13-16). But when this is accomplished, the fullness of the Spirit in testimony is connected with the two great offices of Christ-his kingly and priestly power and glory. As the great Melchizedec, he will sustain all the mediatorial blessings of Israel and the nations of that coming age. This seems to be presented especially in a fuller degree in chap. 6 ver. 12, 13. In chap. 3 which presented Israel's cleansing, it was Joshua, the priest alone, like Aaron, clothed anew and a "fair miter set upon his head." Here it is said, "Take silver and gold and make crowns and set them upon the head of Joshua [still] the son of Josedech the high priest:" and the substantiation of all is presented in that which follows, "and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: even lie shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zechariah 6:12-13).

Christ is here seated on his throne, in Melchizedec glory; and "the counsel of peace between them both," seems to be, between the king and the priest now united in the person of him who is Israel's hope.

These two great offices, now attaching to the person of the Lord, I take to be the "two olive-trees," or "sons of oil," which supply the oil, as from its true source or fountain, to the golden candlestick, of which the Spirit is declared to be the power. But it is the Spirit then connected with the manifestation of this supreme exaltation of Christ as Israel's Messiah, as He is now the witness of His hidden glory to the church. The connection of this with Revelation 11:1-19, in the testimony of the witnesses is interesting, inasmuch as the testimony of the witnesses is to the kingly and priestly rights of Christ, invaded by Antichrist, and by his usurpations sought to be set aside. But in the book of Revelation this testimony is not in order, there are no "golden-pipes," etc., but merely "two olive-trees and two candlesticks which stand before the God of the earth." The sources of the testimony are there, in the "olive-trees;" but it is not a testimony established in peace and in glory, as in Zechariah, by the presence and glory of Him before whom all opposition must bow. But all this it should be observed again is connected with Zerubbabel. The plummet in the hand of this weak man is the index to point the hearts of this poor remnant onward to all this glory! "Who hath despised the day of "all things?"

Chapter 5 seems to go back and to trace the progress of evil which will be the subject of judgment in the latter day. It appears to be a parenthetic interruption to bring in the moral character of that evil which is to be judged and set aside by the Lord's appearing, when "He will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." The secret working and the disclosed character of the evil are indicated, by the closed-ephah and the building of it a house and its establishment on its own base in the land of Shinar. The mystery of iniquity must be closed in judgment before the glory of the Lord can be established in the earth.

Chapters 7 and 8 hang almost entirely upon the question of Sherezer and Regem-melech, "Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself as I have done these so many years?" And through the seventh chapter, the Lord teaches them the moral judgment they should form of themselves, and shows them the path of blessing for their souls. His ways are brought before them, that they may learn in their circumstances to acknowledge His hand. In chap. 8, "the fasts" become pleasant " feasts" to Israel; and, again, the glory of Jerusalem as a holy nation is portrayed to encourage their hearts; and it concludes by the animating prediction, " Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take, hold of the skirt of:um that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." I do not pursue the comparison of this prophecy any further; as its bearing on the remnant, in the remainder of the book, is not apparent: and it has been questioned whether the remaining chapters are not rather the prophecies of Jeremiah, suggested by the quotation in Matthew 21:9-10, which are from the eleventh chapter of Zechariah 12:1-14 th and 13th verses. But how wonderful is it, and,, beyond all ale poor thoughts of man, that the blessed and stupendous events of the full display of the Messiah’s glory and Israel’s blessing, should be brought to bear upon the despicable (in any other light) movements of these forlorn men, whose highest praise, almost, was that they had preferred Jerusalem in its ruins, to ease and comfort in Babylon, where God’s Spirit, and God’s Temple were not! "Who hath despised the day of small things?" How striking are the words of chap. 8: 9-12, to men in their circumstances, and how comforting to the heart of all who in their feebleness make the Lord’s glory their aim. " Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Let your hands be strong ye that hear in these days these words by the mouth of the prophets which were in the day that the foundation of the house of the Lord of Hosts was laid, that the temple might be built For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things" (chap. 8: 9, 12). Amongst many others, there is especially one practical lesson resulting from this comparison of the ways of the Lord; viz., that it is a point of the last importance to be able to recognize the present tokens of the Lord’s hand in living power; and amidst our actual circumstances, at any given time, to be able to understand the leading of His Spirit. This is essential, both for the effective service and for the quiet rest of soul of the servant of the Lord. For surely it is but the language of atheism to say, " God hath forsaken the earth;" or to question whether there is a present application of the exhortation, " Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

Many a cloud and perplexity may hang over the pathway of a saint, through not " walking in the light, as he is in the light;" and the dimming effect of present things on the spiritual sight may be to be deplored; still, nothing is more important to be maintained than the truth, " the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."

It is no difficult think for mere natural men to acknowledge God in the past, or to confess Him in the future, for this gives no trouble to conscience; but it is the part of faith and divine illumination alone to discern the present tokens of His hand. This can only result from present association with Him in His ways. The Jews could say, "We know that God spake unto Moses;" but of Christ, present with them, they added, "As for this fellow, we know not whence he is." So the woman of Samaria could say, in vagueness, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ; when He is come, He will tell us all things;" but it was the part of Christ to say to her, "I that speak unto thee am He."

There is no doubt that the Lord acts in grace in leading His people far beyond the measure of their spiritual intelligence; still Abraham's communion with the Lord, who said, " Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" is what His people should seek, rather than be contented with the position of Lot, a righteous man too, who only " vexed his righteous soul from day to day with the unlawful deeds of the wicked," but was a stranger to the counsels of the Lord. The secret spring of Israel's departure from the Lord in the wilderness is disclosed in the expression, " It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known My ways." While in the history before us it was the discernment of the Lord's hand in their captivity, in the circumstances of a common exile, which marked and developed the remnant that were thus prepared to quit the place of their captivity, and to repair to Jerusalem, when the hour of their deliverance came.

Josiah And Jehoiakim. 2 Kings 22:1-20; Jeremiah 36:1-32

It was when Israel mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and misused His prophets, that the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy. Josiah and Jehoiakim reigned over Judah just before the Babylonish captivity. The judgments of God were at the door; and we have, in the history of these two kings, the "important contrast" in the way each received the testimony given to them. In Josiah we have the subjection of heart which God always honors: in Jehoiakim that insubjection which he always judges. The history of man proves, that, whether God speaks in the way of commandment, or in the way of threatening, or in mercy, that His words are despised. There are, indeed, many exceptions, as the case of Josiah, the inhabitants of Nineveh, etc.; but generally rebellion is the course he takes. This has been, from the beginning, continues to be so, and will continue so long as the god of this world blinds the minds of men. There is something deeply interesting in the whole of Josiah's reign; but especially so, when the message was conveyed to him that the Book of the Law was found in the House of the Lord. " Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law that he rent his clothes." His heart was not unmoved; he trembled at God's word. In that light, what were his circumstances? That law made manifest Israel's rebellion, brought to light their guilt, revealed the judgment of God against sin, and filled Josiah's heart with sadness. Whither could he flee for help? Only to God. And blessed it is, that when the heart is thus made truly sensible of its condition by seeing light in God's light, there is a refuge in God. "There is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared... Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption." (Psalms 130:4-7). Josiah sends to inquire of the Lord and receives this answer, "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the Book which the king of Judah hath read… But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, as touching the words which thou hast heard; Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake

against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the Lord, Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place." Such is the grace of our God! The bruised reed He will not break. He giveth grace to the humble, "Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust!" Josiah might use the language of the Psalmist, " He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings, and he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

Painful, indeed, is the contrast in turning to the history of Josiah's son. Of him it may be said, " Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, that trusted in the abundance of his riches and strengthened himself in his wickedness." The 36th chap. of Jeremiah opens with the goodness of God towards His poor rebellious people. He presses upon their attention the solemn condition they were in, causes a roll to be written containing all the words Jeremiah had spoken against Israel, saying, " It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin." This roll of a book reaches the ears of Jehoiakim (21st verse). "So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber: and Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king. Now the king sat in the winter-house in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth. Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words."

How solemn is all this, after seeing the tenderness of heart in Josiah. Jehoiakim rushes from the sound of God's word into the darkness of infidelity. He supposes to escape the judgment of God, by disbelieving the testimony concerning it. This is where Satan is fast leading the world into open rejection of the word of God. There may attend it what Jehoiakim realized. He was not afraid, nor rent his garments. " Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Jehoiakim had quietness, but it was not that peace which Josiah knew, of condemnation put away, sins forgiven. There is a message for him. "Therefore, thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim king of Judah, He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him, and his seed, and his servants, for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not." Pride and unbelief shut out from all blessing, and leave their victims exposed to the wrath of God. "Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (see Jeremiah 17:5-8). The only place of blessing is that Josiah took. There the Lord ceases to have a controversy. He knows the claims of His own truth. He will not relinquish them. "He has magnified His word above all His name." Saul sought to uphold his own integrity when the word of God was against him. His heart bowed not before the truth: the Lord cast him off. It is a vain thing to strive with God. May the Lord guard His children in this day of evil! Give us tenderness of heart to "all" his truth, so that we may hold our proper place of testimony for him. M.

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Rudiments of the World

" Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man bath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." The Lord Jesus, in his conversation with Nicodemus, assumes his own singular place, as the authoritative teacher, and at the same time as the great doctrine of God. These are inseparable, and we may almost say reciprocal truths. The knowledge of Him as the great doctrine of God, necessarily leads to the acknowledgment of His authority as a teacher; and if he really be owned as a teacher come from God, then, as a necessary consequence, He will be owned as the grand comprehensive doctrine of God. It is thus that the Apostle speaks, " But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be ye have heard him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus, etc." The Lord, as the teacher, teaches Himself, and he that hath an ear hears Him, and by faith receives Him into the heart. He is the truth. Reality is only to be found in Him. " Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie; to be laid in the balance, they are altogether vanity." " Verily, every man in his best estate is altogether vanity."*

(* Psalms 39:5. The note of Bythner on this passage is interesting-"τα συμπαντα ματαιοτης. Sept: quoad omnia vanitas, ita ut vanitas et miseria, gum per alias creaturas frustatim spargitur, in uno homine aggregata videatur: sicque homo evadit compendium <minium vanitatum, gum in creaturis extant. Cum inanimis, subjacet mutationi, corruptioni; cum animatis, alterationi, morti; cum sensilibus, lmtitiae, mcerori; cum angelis (qui non servarunt suam originem, sed reliquerun t suum domicilium) inconstantim, etc. Sicque in barathrum peccatorum ruit." Blessed contrast-"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever!") In death we learn the reality of man. "In Adam all die." But so emphatically is Jesus "the truth," that the only blessed knowledge of God is obtained by knowing Him. He is the reality of God to us, especially to us as sinners. " God manifested in the flesh." "Immanuel, God with us." And the only one who ever stood in personal acceptance with God as man is the same Jesus-" This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Church is set by God as "the pillar and ground of the truth." It knows the mysteries on which it is founded from the Incarnation to the Cross; from the. Cross to the Ascension at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. By this knowledge, the Church is enabled to judge things in the light in which they are regarded by God. When the Light came into the world, it cast its rays upon " every man," and showed what he was in the sight of God; and when " the truth" came, it superseded those things which were merely its shadows. Gracious and interesting indeed were the ordinances of Israel. They were rightly cherished by them; the fathers might, in the fear of God, recount their origin to their children;* the spirit of Nationalism was found in these ordinances, and it was in them a godly spirit. But when the reality came, even Jesus, " the truth," then, to maintain these ordinances against Him, the substance of them, was not only a proof of their blind infatuation, but was also the deepest insult to God. How touching is the word of Christ by the Spirit. " Israel would none of me."

" He came to His own, and His own received Him not." But He goes on in the world as the Light of the world, casting His own light on one object and another as He meets with them. " As long as I am in the world I am the Light of the world." How interesting it is to trace Him displacing one highly prized ordinance after another, by presenting Himself; and in one instance, at least, superseding a venerated tradition. John the Baptist gracefully retires, in order to render Jesus the prominent object, bearing witness to Him as the Lamb of God, the Son of God, and the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost. He owns Him to be the Bridegroom whose voice cheered him, and he took indeed an honored but retired place, as the friend of the Bridegroom. When Jesus enters ’on His own ministry, after allowing His own glory to show itself in Cana of Galilee, and casting out from His Father’s house the buyers and sellers, he sets aside the ancient ordinance of the Brazen Serpent by taking its place Himself. In the close of their wilderness history, the Brazen Serpent stands forth as the gracious intervention of God on behalf of a disobedient and gainsaying people, and under the shelter of which, they had entered Canaan. But Jesus connecting the Brazen Serpent with His own proper person, presents it in a wider range than to Israel, even to all the world, that " Whosoever believed in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

(* Exodus 12:26-27.) As He goes on, He comes to Jacob’s well, a place hallowed by the most interesting traditions; but how do they all vanish before Him who is "the Fountain of life," and by the knowledge of Himself communicating a well of living waters to others. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Israel’s God had not forgotten his ancient name. " I am the Lord that healeth thee;" although Israel had by their disobedience forfeited such a relationship. The Pool of Bethesda from time to time proved to " the disobedient and gainsaying people " that Jehovah remembered that name; whilst the waiting and ofttimes disappointed "impotent folk" too plainly proved to them their broken relationship with the Lord in this character. But the time was now come for their God again to present Himself, as " I am the Lord that healeth thee." He appears at the Pool of Bethesda, and says not as of old, " If thou wilt diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon thee; which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee;" but in the consciousness of His own healing and life-giving power, " Wilt thou be made whole?" Thus He sets aside the Pool of Bethesda, by presenting Himself in His own abounding grace as the Healer, not only of bodily malady, but of that as a palpable demonstration that there was in Him and in Him alone, healing virtue against the deeper ills of death and judgment; and as the reality of the Pool of Bethesda he complains, " Ye/will not come to me that ye might have life." At the feast of the Passover, and in the wilderness, in the sixth chapter of John, Jehovah Jesus has to do with the same unbelieving people as He had to bear with long before His manifestation in the flesh, forty years in the wilderness. They boasted of the manna on which their fathers fed, but forgot that their fathers had loathed it, as they did now in His person, "the true bread which had come down from heaven." In His flesh and blood there was to be recognized the true Passover, and that which answered to the flesh and water given in answer to the murmurings of their fathers in the wilderness. But when in Himself he took up all these interesting ordinances, and presented Himself as their reality, " This is the bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever "-it. only served to call out from the Jews the same "murmuring" and "striving" as in their fathers of old.

"Massah" and "Meribah" were acted over again. The Feast of Tabernacles, the joy of the land enhanced by the remembrance of the wilderness, is also taken up by Jesus, and displaced by Him. It is the knowledge of Him by Israel which in due time will enable them to have real joy and gladness in their own land, when penitent, converted, and restored, they will "see Him and believe." And it is the knowledge of Him now by faith, which can alone bring the joy of heaven to cheer the tedium of the wilderness. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified)."

It is the knowledge of Jesus as the truth, which alone manifests the character of rudiments or elements of the world. The expression is applied by the Apostle Paul to ordinances instituted by God Himself, as well as to the current philosophical dogmas or ordinances. As elements or rudiments simply, it is applied by the same Apostle in the Hebrews, to that measure of the knowledge of Christ, great and blessed as it was, which might have been gathered from the ancient oracles of God, but which fell amazingly below the fullness of that gospel, preached "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." The very expression "rudiments of the world," until Jesus cast His own light upon it, could have had no intelligible meaning. There is a suitable reverence in speaking of the things of God by inspired men; and the difference is great whether they be spoken of absolutely or relatively, as regarded according to their original institution, or as superseded by Christ. Jew and Gentile without any minor subdivision, are regarded as "all the world" by God. The first stood in a distinct covenant relation with God. Jehovah was the God of Israel. The Gentiles stood only in natural relationship to God, "that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him." Christ is ushered in as "a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel."

Nothing can be more solemn than the giving of the law on the part of Jehovah, or its reception by the people by the hand of Moses. But after the people had corrupted themselves, how gracious as well as solemn are the ordinances given by Jehovah to Moses "out of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Leviticus 1:1). It was by these ordinances that they were separated from other people to be the people of Jehovah. The observance of these ordinances was their holiness. "Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean; and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast or fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean, and ye shall be holy unto me; for I the Lord am holy and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine." Their holiness consisted "in meats and drinks." The distribution of the law into moral and ceremonial, will not account for the Apostle speaking in so disparaging a tone of the ordinances of God; because the jealousy of Jehovah was especially manifested in vindicating the sanctity of the ceremonial law. "Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not, and there came out fire from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." The soundness of the distinction between the moral* and ceremonial law is questionable in itself; for so far as access to God was opened to Israel, it was through the ceremonial law; and it was by this law also that the blessed truth of " righteousness without law " was most prominently witnessed (Romans 3:21). But God is to be sanctified in them who come nigh Him; and it is for Him

alone to prescribe the way. To neglect that way, or to attempt another, is the highest insult to God. The " holy ointment," and "the perfume," were both most minutely ordered, and so solemnly sanctioned, that the imitation of either of them was to be visited with the sentence,. " He shall be cut off from his people" (Exodus 30:22; Exodus 30:28).

(* That the end of the commandment is charity, perfect love to God and to man, is a truth recognized alike by the Law and the Gospel. But the Law lacked power to enforce the carrying out of its own commandments. It was "weak through the flesh." It could not "give life," which was the thing needed. The Gospel is "the Lam, of the Spirit of Life;" so that there is, in every believer, that life communicated by the Spirit, which has in it the principle of perfect love to God and to man; and when the time comes for deliverance from the flesh, and actual conformity to Him unto whose image the Saints are predestinated to be conformed, the practice will be co-extensive with the principle, and not only as now will " the righteousness of the law be fulfilled in us," but by us also. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.") The knowledge of the glory of the person of Christ casts such a light on the ancient ordinances of God, as to make the things which in themselves were a burdensome yoke, to be viewed by faith as lively pictures. There were typical persons, and typical acts, which foreshadowed Christ in his offices and acts. But no typical person, could properly foreshadow the person of Christ. The revelation of the glory of the person of the Son by the Father was the one thing needed. All was enigmatical till He came, of whom it was written in the volume of the book, " Lo! I come to do thy will, 0 God." " The Light," even Jesus, throwing its rays on Jewish ordinances turned bondage into liberty; but the converse is solemnly true-the. removal of the eye from Christ, and recurrence even to the ancient ordinances of God, was not merely turning back from liberty to bondage-but, it was a nullifying of the grace of God, making the `Sacrifice of Christ needless, and an insult to the Holy Ghost. Such has ever been and is still the principle of making "religious duties" supplemental to man’s defective righteousness. It is this principle which calls forth the most cutting reproof from the Apostle, and at the same time leads him to speak in terms so disparaging of the ancient ordinances of God.

Again all the ancient ordinances failed, except in the faintest shadow, to convey the idea of the reality of the sacrifice of Christ. These ordinances testified aloud the purifying power of blood, and that "without shedding of blood is no remission;" but their repetition testified their own inefficacy-the victims commanded to be offered could never remove guilt from the conscience; for there was no real transfer of guilt to the head of the victim. Let but " the One to come" appear, covering all these sacrifices by his one sacrifice, and forbidding repetition by such a sacrifice as his own being needed only once to be offered, and what an interpretation is afforded of the Jewish ritual I The soul is almost lost `in contemplating the reality of the Holy One become the sin-bearer, bearing it in his own body on the tree; bearing it in his innermost soul under the waves and billows of the Wrath of God, when it pleased God to make his soul an offering for sin. When shall we learn the truth, the reality of the sacrifice of Christ? What is it that hinders our having continually before our eyes Jesus Christ evidently set forth crucified among us! Is there a shade of suspicion as to His proper personal glory as the Son? such a suspicion subverts the truth. Is the thought harbored that He did "need" something to be done on His own account? then is the very idea of His suffering for us nullified. Is it that the anguish of His soul under the stripes of divine justice is overlooked in contemplating His exquisite bodily torture on the cross? then will there be hesitancy in the soul as

to the actual removal of the guilt of sin by the offering of Christ. Is it hard to receive the truth that every sacrifice and offering was answered and covered, and therefore set aside by the act of Christ offering HIMSELF once on the cross? then the dignity of the Sufferer is feebly apprehended. Is it that there is backwardness in the soul to regard the one offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all as the only answer to God for all and every sin? then is the doctrine of God inverted; and the sacrifice of Christ is made to be the remembrancer of sin, instead of being the speaking testimony of God to the conscience, as that by which sin is forever put away. Is it that we take our own instead of the estimate of God as to the perfection of Christ's sacrifice? then are we off the ground of faith, and peace is morally impossible.

Israel, comparing itself with the nations, might well glory in their advantages, "their civil and religious privileges," as men say; but the moment the glory of Christ bursts on the soul, then that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. The attempt to re-introduce the past and fading glory is characterized by the conclave of the Apostles, "as subverting the soul" (Acts 15:1-41). The Apostle Peter speaks of his Jewish privileges as " a yoke, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear," and at the same time testified unto one power alone of purifying the heart, even faith in Jesus presented by God himself as the substance of all sacrifices. Peter and his fellow Apostles had all stood in a certain relationship to God, although they might little understand what the relationship really was - but it was a relationship of nearness to God compared with that of Gentiles; as the Apostle testifies -" and came and preached peace, unto you which were far off, and to them which were nigh." But when one like Peter had seen " the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," then was the discovery made to the soul, that however well adapted were these ordinances to man as in the flesh and in the world, they were entirely destitute of any efficacy to meet his case as a condemned sinner, or to bring him in his own conscience into real nearness to God. He became conscious that he needed redemption out of that very religious standing in which he had gloried. Peter addresses the abiding principle announced in Leviticus-" Be ye holy, for I am holy "-but with what an intensity of meaning to believers in Jesus; "forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers-but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." In strict keeping with the statements of Peter as to the light in which the holy ordinances of God are regarded by one who "knew the Lord,"-even "a yoke,"-"vain traditionary conversation,"-we find Paul writing to the Galatians. He speaks of such ordinances as infantine "even so we, when we were children (infants) were in bondage under the elements (or rudiments) of the world, but when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." It is in this passage that first in order we find the expression " elements (or rudiments) of the world," applied to the law, and there are several very significant statements in it. First we have the same idea of "bondage" (as Peter had expressed by yoke) amplified by the idea of utter incapacity to rise above the spirit of a servant. A person might be a son and heir under the law, but by the very fact of being under the law, he was hindered from acting as well as from having the spirit of the one or the other. Again these very ordinances bound down the spirit to the world; they were a hindrance instead of a help to the soul's rising above the world into direct intercourse with God. The Apostle is here illustrating great leading principles-he is showing what the principle of ordinances is. He was correcting those who were tempted to go back from " the liberty which they had in Christ to be again entangled in.

the yoke of bondage." The peculiar force of the temptation was, that it appeared to reverence God by engrafting the ancient institutions of God on faith in Christ: This he sternly resisted. With Christ before his eyes as the blessed reality of all these institutions, he hesitates not to speak of them as infantine and slavish, as hindering access to the Father and preventing intercourse with heaven. He is not speaking of them absolutely, for they were beautiful in their time, and place (1:e. the world). But God was now bringing out heavenly and eternal realities. God had sent forth his Son to redeem them that were under the law. In order to this, it needed that Christ himself be made a curse. Everything from such a real redemption, deriving its efficacy from the real glory of Hint who was made a curse. Such a redemption delivered from the curse of the law, and from out of the world, into the real liberty of children in the actual presence of God as their Father. The slightest recurrence to the old institutions would mar the reality of all these blessings. This stands out in stronger relief, when the Apostle rebukes the Galatians, for observing " days, and months and times and years." These in themselves were holy joyous and solemn seasons to Israel (see Leviticus 23:1-44). But the fullness of time had come-God had sent forth his Son, and in virtue of His Person, the blessings which flowed forth from his redemption were eternal; " eternal redemption," " everlasting righteousness," "eternal inheritance," " eternal life,"-in a word eternal relationship with God-sons-now crying " Abba-Father," and waiting for the manifestation, of Jesus to be like Him. After the light brought in by the Son, and his work on the cross, and the reception of the Holy Ghost in consequence of that work, by faith in Him, and not by works of the law, we discover the reason of the Apostle’s using language so depreciatory in speaking of the law itself. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of Him, how turn ye again [back] to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?"

God is pleased to profane his own ordinances when his people have polluted them (Ezekiel 24:21); but he often uses this profanation to set forth the excellent glory of his Son. When men, however, turn back to ordinances they profane the Son-to uphold them is to tread under foot the Son of God " (Hebrews 10:29). In writing to the Colossians, the Apostle classes Jewish ordinances and Gentile philosophical dogmas under the same category, " rudiments of the world. But he does so in the way of contrast with that which is immeasurably higher. It is not needful for Christians to ascertain the measure of influence exercised on the moral condition of the Gentiles by the philosophical schools. It is difficult to believe that such an accumulation of wisdom was of no real benefit to mankind (Romans 1:32), but the difficulty lies a great deal more in the offensiveness of such a statement to the pride of intellect, than in want of evidence as to the fact. The Apostle, however, had not to discuss the question as to the influence of philosophy, but to state the humiliating result. " For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The introduction of human wisdom into the church was regarded by the Apostle as a foreign element, the tendency of which was to degrade the church of God, and to reduce divine certainties to ’the level of human speculation. " Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ, for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete [filled to the full] in him." It is through philosophy, that Christ, as the great doctrine of God, Christ, as the infallible teacher, teaching that which none other could teach or even guess at, " for no man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven," has been dragged down from His lofty eminence; and the saints themselves spoiled of their choice blessings and high study; "all the

treasures of wisdom and knowledge being hid in Christ." Christianity, as it passes in the world, is regarded as one among many systems for the benefit of mankind. It has a place given to it among various moral and philosophical schemes, as "a rudiment of the world." But its very grandeur, which makes it so comprehensive and at the same time so exclusive, is either unseen or disputed.

It was the dignity of the Head, and consequent dignity of relation to the Head, which so occupied the soul of the Apostle, that made him fear the introduction of that which was most prized in the world, as loss and degradation. Men value (as they say) practical Christianity, because it is beneficial to man; but they know it not, as respects the dignity of Christ, and the great purpose of God with respect to Him. Is the soul resting on a single object, the heart's affections drawn out to that object, the mind intently bent on the study of that object-even Christ? Is that practical Christianity in man's estimation? Is the fullness of Christ as the Head in which everything centers, "wisdom and knowledge," "principality and power," so sublime a thought, that every' other subject of study becomes secondary? Is it possible that after the revelation of Him, " in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," that the only science of which men are contentedly ignorant, should be the science of eternal life? "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou halt sent." Alas philosophy and vain deceit have indeed "spoiled" Christians. These "rudiments of the world," received at first as an aid, have displaced Christ and degraded Christianity. It is not needful to speak disparagingly of the power of the human mind, or of the wonders achieved by these powers, when we speak of them absolutely. But in speaking of them relatively, that is "according to Christ," what have they effected? Have they led man into the path of happiness? Have they discovered "the truth?" or does not the problem remain to this day to be solved, so far as the human mind is concerned,-" What is truth?" It was man's reasoning which led him to "change the truth of God into a lie." (Romans 1:21; Romans 1:25). And if the attempt has been made in more recent times to reclaim man from superstition by the mere powers of the human mind, it has only led to skepticism, infidelity, or practical atheism. "God," says the preacher, "made man upright, and he has sought out many inventions." But none of his inventions serve to deliver him out of the actual condition in which he is as man. Death and judgment are still before him, and He remediless against both the one and the other. When the soul once grasps the meaning of "not after Christ," many a profitless speculation is dismissed, and much prying curiosity prevented. It is not the haughty "superciliousness of ignorance under the garb of wisdom, which causes us to see on what level the highest powers of the human mind necessarily stand, but the consciousness of divine teaching respecting the Son of God, His work and His fullness, so far beyond the reach of any stretch of the human intellect, which causes the Saint to regard many things of intellectual interest as " rudiments of the world." We do not attain the end of showing the vanity of man by degrading him, and denying his powers; but by contrast between man in his best estate, and Christ risen and glorified. It is not by any induction of facts, although that might go a great way, that we prove the utter disappointment of man with the result of his own efforts; but by bringing the coming glory of the Lord Jesus to shed its truthful light upon them. " Behold, it is not of the Lord of Hosts that the people shall labor in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity; for the earth shall be filled with the know.. ledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." But there is no disappointment to faith. "He that trusteth in the Lord shall never be ashamed." Faith is conversant with the blessed result of the wisdom of God in redemption, and thus by the power of "things which are not, brings to naught things which are." The Apostle is led from warning against Gentile philosophy, to warn against the

more plausible seduction of Jewish ordinances; by showing the reality to be in Christ of that of which those ordinances were only shadows (Colossians 2:17). It is a strange phenomenon to see how the wise and prudent in the things of this world grasp at that which is solid, but in the things of God they grasp the shadow and reject the substance. With Christ before him as the substance, the Apostle classes the Jewish ordinances and Gentile dogmas together, as alike vain and profitless. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." There was no more life even in the ordinances of God Himself, than in the philosophical dogmas. They alike barred access to God; so far from being helpful, they were discovered by the light of Christ, to be against and contrary to the Saint. The very things which man has called in as aids, are discovered by the light of Christ to be hindrances to the exercise of spiritual life. They bind down to the world; "truth alone makes free indeed." Herein is the misery of many real Christians-their souls are occupied with rudiments of the world, instead of the heavenly realities which are in Christ. Are "we dead to sin" through Christ, in that "he died unto sin once." Blessed truth! But do our souls know the equally important and connected truth, that we are " dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world," and are introduced as risen with Him into the realities, "which are above?" Then "why" (asks the Apostle), "as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" Rites, ceremonies, decency, and order, as men insist, and the philosophy of the schools, are, in the Apostolic sense, " rudiments of the world," to which the believer has died, in order that he may " hold the Head," and draw from Him in whom " dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"-all that pertains to life and godliness. The passage (Hebrews 5:12) may be reviewed in connection with the preceding passages. " For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat." We have net actually the expression "rudiments of the world," but there is substantially the same thought. The great danger to which believing Hebrews were exposed was relapse into their old forms, justly indeed venerated by them, until superseded by the glorious person of the "Son." They were in danger of bringing Him down to the level of their hereditary thoughts of Messiah; and adjusting their worship accordingly. The grandeur of the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews, at once defines its object. An Israelite instructed in his own privileges, "much every way," could only forego them by the apprehension of a dignity proceeding from the same God immensely higher than that which he already possessed. Such a dignity the Apostle presents as held out by the God of his fathers in the person of "the Son," one in whom there was essential glory. By how much He excelled in his own person angels, Moses, or Aaron, by so much is there a dignity and efficacy in his ministry, work, and offices, in every respect above all which was to be found in their own ordinances. Others had been dignified by the glory set on them, it was his sole prerogative to throw his own proper glory into all that which he undertook. This consideration explains the awful solemnity of the warnings found in the 6th and 10th chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, warnings so awful that hardly a saint in one stage or other of his experience has escaped being exercised by them. And well it is that it should be so, for how readily is Christ displaced from his rightful supremacy in the heart. If He be, as assuredly He is, the grand ordinance of God, the recurrence to the ancient ordinances of God Himself; which in their highest sense, were bare shadows of a wondrous reality, must be deeply offensive to God. It was really "drawing back unto perdition;" turning aside from Him, who in

Himself and by what He has wrought, is the salvation of God, to "dead works" which have no power "to purge the conscience." How much the solemnity of these warnings was needed, let the downward course of the Church testify, boasting of its temples, priesthood, rituals, and ceremonies, things which when viewed in the light Of these warnings plainly declare "a falling away."

These warnings admit of a pointed application to our own consciences. They present to us a great principle, viz. the great danger of resting in those truths which are common to believers under every dispensation, to the neglect of those which are characteristic of our own dispensation. The result of neglecting the truths which, are special and characteristic, is uncertainty even as to the truths which are common to all dispensations. "Repentance from dead works, faith towards God, the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment," are presented by the apostle as " the principles of the doctrine of Christ" (or as in the margin, " the word of the beginning of Christ") such truths as a believer, before the manifestation of the glory of the Son, and of his accomplished work, might fully have recognized. These are the truths from which, as a basis, the apostle would lead them on to perfection, so as to instruct them in the new and higher order of priesthood, in order to sustain and refresh their souls in the course of struggle, temptation, and conflict. Besides this, the knowledge of this priesthood would actually lead their souls into the same order of worship on earth, as they would more happily know in heaven. It would be their alone power of deliverance from "the rudiments of the world." Actually we do find a large portion of those really quickened by the Spirit, in much uncertainty as to the peace of their souls. They have not " gone on to perfection," so as to realize the present priestly service of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven, as the gracious provision of God to maintain their souls in realized nearness to Himself, even in that very nearness into which they are brought by Christ, who " suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust to bring us to God." It is an undeniable truth, that we cannot learn in heaven itself a deeper truth than the cross of Christ; but it is by following on to know the Lord in all His present gracious ministry-a ministry, the value of which unfolds itself, in proportion as we are learning experimentally what we are in ourselves, and where we are, that our souls alone enter into the depths of the cross. On the other hand, the very liberty of entering " into the holiest of all," only magnifies the wondrous power of that cross, as being the path which leads us into so privileged a place. But in fault of "going on to perfection," the soul becomes busied about many circumstantials, which the Spirit characterizes as " rudiments of the world," and instead of enjoying and living in the power of heavenly realities, has need to be taught what be " the first principles of the oracles of God."

Such, alas, is the fascinating power of "rudiments of the world," that at the present moment it appears the peculiar danger of the church. Wherever they are introduced, it is truly sorrowful to witness in those who are really Christ’s, the manifest decline of spirituality. Such expressions as, " Beware lest any man spoil you,"-" Let no man beguile you," become pregnant with meaning. The real point at issue is now, as it ever has been, whether the world civilized, or even Christianized, or Christ himself is the object of our hearts. Are we content with perfection in Christ? or do we seek something besides what we are, and what we have in Him? The arduous ministry of the apostle was to present " every man perfect in Christ Jesus," by not allowing any foreign element, which, pretending to embellish, would in reality obscure the dignity of the believer in Christ. If we are desirous of attainment, and 0 that it may be so! may it be according to the tenor of the apostle’s

prayer, " That we might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good word, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

PRESBUTES.

Note, page 179. Hebrews 13:8. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever:"-How blessed a contrast is this to "All things are vanity," as to every man-LXX. Psalms 39:5, on which Bythner thus remarks:-

" Every man is all vanity;" as all is vanity, so the vanity and misery which are scattered piecemeal among other creatures, seem in man alone to be collected together. And thus man stands forth as the compendium. of all the vanities, which exist in creatures. With inanimate, he is subject to change-corruption; with animate, to alteration-death; with those which have feelings, to joy and grief; with angels (who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation), to inconstancy, etc.; and thus he rushes into the sinners' abyss.

Vol 02 - Scraps

Scraps ●The Testimony.

"I would put it to your conscience whether it must not be so, that God has 'a testimony for to-day,' even today. I mean not merely that He bears witness by His servants both to those general truths which the being of a God, and such a One as He is, and the present fallen state of man necessitate, and to the blessed truths of grace and glory as displayed in the Gospel;-but this rather, that the grace of God vouchsafes to apply, by the Spirit, a word to things as they are; and the Lord thus gives by His servants a present testimony. This supposes neither a new revelation nor any addition to the perfected standard of truth-the Scripture, but only wisdom from on High to see how the written word bears upon things around us, and power to set this forth: but that God has a distinctive, and in some respects, peculiar application of the word of His grace to the passing hour conscientious conviction. Faith is wanted and faithfulness."

●Hope Still In God.

"Perplexed oft as to my steps, amid the anarchy around, through want of more singleness of eye with-: in,-yet this is my comfort, 'I am part of the Bride the Lamb's wife, and I must, therefore, be, brought there where His glory requires the presence of the Bride in her perfectness.' Faithful is, "He who has called, who will also perform. Yet a little while (how little a while!), and I and we shall all appear in His glory - shown out, loved even as He is loved."

Chapter 62

Vol 02 - Second Part to a Hymn in Volume 1, Page 478

Second Part to a Hymn in Volume 1, Page 478 O Thou, who this earth as a lone pilgrim trod, Thy Father our Father, and Thy God our God; To Thee we behold the bright Seraphim bow- Lord Jesus! all glory doth rest on Thee now!

And, Jesus, we know God’s deep purpose to be To empty -then fill us, with glory from Thee; And now Thou dost wait Thy full wealth to impart, That "day of espousals," the Joy of Thy heart.

Now, moment by moment, to answer our needs, Thy blood, Precious Victim! in righteousness pleads;

And, shielded by that, how secure and how calm Our souls, on God’s bosom, are folded from harm!

We see Thee, Lord Jesus, with great glory crown’d;

And, waiting Thy coming, in peace would be found.

Thy visions of glory have turn’d all to dross;

Then give us, for Thee, to count all things but loss.

G.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and bath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."-James 5:7-8.

Chapter 63

Vol 02 - Some Thoughts on Reading the Opening Chapters of Acts

Some Thoughts on Reading the Opening Chapters of Acts Might not this part of the Divine Testimony-The Acts of the Apostles-be called the Actings of the Holy Ghost? What interest this Book is clothed with as opening to us the dispensation or economy of the Lord the Spirit - which we may term the dispensation of resurrection in contrast with the dispensation of the flesh which preceded it. Man is wholly set aside as to any capacity or good thing in him. The name of Jesus, wonderful and mighty, and the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, are the absorbing themes. God is thus exalted, and becomes all in all. In fine, it may be said, that to the Saints-to the Church-the Divine Name (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) is duly proclaimed; and the mysteries of the faith (now alas! so lost or forgotten) are revealed. Our Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples of the operations of this blessed Spirit-the " other Comforter," as told to us in John's Gospel-and of further development of the Spirit's power and acting, which the few weak ones around Him could not then bear (John 16:12-13), but which the day of Pentecost and its results made manifest. He had spoken to Nicodemus (John 3:1-36) of the regenerating power of the Spirit, connected even with Jewish or earthly things, in contrast with heavenly things (see. ver. 12). He had declared to the poor Samaritan sinner at the well (4:10, 14), that He was the Giver of living water, which was to be, in those who received it, " a well of water springing up into everlasting life." But He revealed further and deeper truth, when He spoke by promise of a future thing connected with His glorification (7:37), "If any man- thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Here we find not only the well springing up to refresh and cleanse, but further, its streams flowing out for the benefit of others; the Divine thought and arrangement evidently as to ministry during this dispensation, by the power of the Holy Ghost acting down here through the members of the body, witnessing to them, as He does, the resurrection, Lordship, and glory of Jesus, as the Head at the right hand of God. The Lord unfolded more still to the disciples, as we well know, in chapters 14 to 16 of this Gospel; and two points might be mentioned in passing on:-One (which, indeed, we are learning our need of), that blessed declaration and promise, that the other Comforter would " abide with them forever," notwithstanding all the failure and ruin which, as in everything entrusted to man, shortly began. Compare Haggai 2:5 -a precious word spoken in that low state of Israel, " According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not." And let us heartily justify God, and say, " Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; that Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and be clear when Thou judgest " (Romans 3:4). The other truth, which may be alluded to is practical (compare John 16:7; John 16:11 with Acts 2:1-47, 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, Ephesians 4:1-32). If it was expedient that Jesus should go away, that the Paraclete, the other Comforter, might come to form, and dwell personally in, the Church, and to in-dwell in each member of the body; and being there, to be the power to convince the world of sin, it is very manifest, that the objects of this amazing care and blessing, or believers in the Lord Jesus, ought to have a conscience void of offense. The Saints truly are responsible to walk in the

Spirit, because they have got the Spirit; and to maintain a good conscience, as Paul insists upon, both for himself, and as exhorting and beseeching others.* In Acts 1:1-26 we read the parting words of the Lord Jesus, before "a cloud received Him out of their sight." It seems to be quite clear, that the baptism of the Holy Ghost, of which He spoke (ver. 5), " the power of the Holy Ghost" coming upon them (see margin, ver. 8) was the descent of that Blessed Spirit on the day of Pentecost (chap. 2.) when the disciples were all " filled with the Holy Ghost," " the promise of the Father" (ver. 33) as testified by Peter, who now had understanding- the Church formed (though doubtless it was not till after Paul's conversion, the disciples fully knew Church-place, specialty, real standing and glory), and God Himself in the midst. From this, we have a gradual but wonderful development of truth, until it becomes wide and deep indeed; and bearing this mark-the largeness of God's heart and goodnessy_And this seen the more as contrasted here and there with-man's narrow and contracted measure. After the descentof the Holy Ghost, with what energy does He testify by.Teter (compare 1 Peter 1:12) when "three thousand being pricked to the heart, believed." With what boldness does Peter (who before denied Christ, and forsook Him) now charge these blood-stained men with the murder of Jesus; the Lord, in His amazing grace, having directed that the first proffer of mercy should be made here; " beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47), and these three thousand having gladly received the good news, that there was remission of sins in His name, are at once baptized, and introduced into the fellowship; and continue steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer. Chapter 3 shows us the testimony of the Holy Ghost to Israel yet to repent, with offers that Jesus would come-for that Lord who delighteth in mercy, to whom judgment is " strange work," who wept over Jerusalem "in the days of his flesh," lingers as loth to leave the ancient people. But Israel, the wicked generation, resist the Holy Ghost; and consummate this resistance by stoning Stephen, the protomartyr. Still many believed (4: 4.) till about five thousand were inside; when Satan stirred up people, priests, (religion so called, being always the bitter enemy of Christ), and the Sadducees against them: and in this trial. and Der secution, the power of the " name of thy holy child Jesus," and their faith in that name is manifested. The place was shaken where they prayed, and all, filled with the Holy Ghost, spake the word of God with boldness. " And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all" (ver. 33). We see the Church standing for a time in corporate integrity; producing the blessed fruits of the Spirit, and obeying that word: " Ye are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25). " By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). But failure in measure sets in, in chap. 5:, where we find the manifested power and presence of God in the assembly, when He avenges, by judgment, the insult offered to His present Majesty. "Thou past not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:4). Let it be remarked, in this place, that these truths of God are not altered by man's failure and folly. The unbelief of believers in Christ, does not impair truth a whit; and when the Holy Ghost does bring these things in His own vivid power to the consciences and hearts of saints,-when He is pleased to work with energy in any little company of His own,-there will always be the effects-surely something of them all we read of in chap. 2: 42-47,-even in this day of weakness, confusion, and failure; the family scene -the mutual care of the members-the pleasant fruit of love (loving with the powers of eternal life)-the fruits of the Spirit will surely appear. So likewise, when real faith is at work (not the quantity so much as the quality of faith) as to the presence of God-as to walking with, and serving the Living God, and waiting for His Son from Heaven; when there is true abiding in Jesus, and communion in and by Him-surely just in

proportion will that word be reverenced: " Holiness becometh Thy house forever." The Church, or assembly of Saints-the habitation of God by the Spirit-will be a place of discipline and godly care. Nothing would or could be allowed, no, not for an hour, in doctrine or walk-much less in doctrine-which would dishonor God, and lower the standard of His Truth. The name and glory of Jesus-the presence of the Spirit-the genius of the dispensation-the grace in which we stand-the real welfare of God's people-the word of God-all cry out with many tongues, against the allowance of any evil thing whatsoever-any leaven, which if allowed " leaveneth the whole lump," for " ye are unleavened " (24/.4oc,1 Corinthians 5:7.) God's thought about the people-without leaven-therefore suffer it not to come in and defile. When found, put it away; and if the case need such truth as this, walk in obedience to it-" from such turn away." "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use" (2 Timothy 2:21). " Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly " (2 Thessalonians 3:6). The sad and perpetual tendency of our hearts, is just,t6 slip out of the sense of grace and the Lord's presence. The lively living apprehension of our standing and \of Him who called us with a " heavenly calling," soon May be lost or forgotten. Then, in an hour of difficulty and of Satan's power-natural feeling, expediency and policy- the unjudged flesh begins to work-wheel within wheel, difficulty, perplexity-men, and what is of man, are found getting between the conscience and Christ; and then Christian men, under the plea of Christ's honor and the good of His people, really are opposed to godly discipline and order. But sad and woeful is the condition, the low sunk-down state, when souls object to dealing with evil in the house of God, and prefer in reality their own things (Paul's sorrow in Php 2:21, " For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's") to the things of God.** "Buy the truth, and sell it not," said the wise man in Proverbs. Those who stand in God's truth, and are contented to abide with him, though many go back, may find a still darker, and (to others) more confused time. But the Jude-position, ver. 20-25, is a very good one, and throws one at once on the only wise God, our Savior, " to whom be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen."***

(* Should the reader wish to follow this subject, he can consult, amongst many passages of Scripture, Acts 20:17, etc.; 24:16.; Romans 12:1-21; 1 Corinthians 9:20-27; 2 Corinthians 1:12; Ephesians 4:1-3; and chap. 5.)

(** in recent sorrow and trial amongst the saints, when many have been perplexed, and objected to discipline, and averred that no scripture warranted separation from bodies or assemblies where evil was allowed,-there seems strange forgetfulness that there is a present living God, whose Spirit teaches and leads the Saint to apply precept and word to the circumstances he is in, whatever they may be. In a day of apostasy and ruin as to Church order, or any corporate integrity, there may be difficulty in acting, throwing a saint upon God for wisdom and guidance. He cannot find in the word the exact order for the exact circumstances; but there is the obedience of faith and spiritual intelligence, where literal order or command there is none-(supposing it to be so), surely the Holy Ghost will apply where there is faith and a single eye, truth suited to the position. In recent sorrow, I believe there is precept, warning, doctrine, various scripture, either direct or by just inference, bearing on this point, separation from evil, if thousands of saints allow it. If men in Christ say, "We cannot see it; chew us the exact words to meet the exact state," we must pray for such: faith is wanting, spiritual discernment, teachable aptness; they are not in the position assumed for saints in God's word.)

(*** Two or three only gathered together really in His name, have the power of worship and the power of discipline. It is by faith, the energy of which is the very characteristic of the risen man. "We walk by faith and not by sight.") In chap. 7 we find a great advance in truth. The heavens opened; and Jesus "received" by a cloud "out of their sight" in (1:9) is seen by His faithful servant and martyr Stephen (ver. 55); "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; and said, Behold I see the Heavens opened," etc. Israel, utterly rejecting the testimony of the Holy Ghost by Stephen, proceed to stone him: "he fell asleep" (ver. 60). And, therefore, instead of the Lord Jesus coming down to them, as offered in chap. 3 (noticed above), we here see that Holy One ("who, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high") standing to receive, as it would appear, the spirit of His martyred servant. In chap. 8, let it be noted, that, in the largeness of God's heart, He could not have the waters of life pent up as it were in Jerusalem. He therefore permits persecution (He may have seen His chosen ones inclined to nestle together) that the streams of salvation may flow out. The nation reject, but God will follow the individuals. O what a God is our God! Saul of Tarsus made havoc of the Church;" the one who soon becomes a special witness and illustrious vessel of mercy, not only to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and that faith which he destroyed (as far as he could), but to be specially the Church's minister or servant (see Colossians 1:24-25), "Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the word" (ver. 4). These holy fugitives carried the lamp of truth into dark places, and the Spirit tells us of them (chap. 11:19-21), they preached unto the Jews only, and " the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord."* In chap. 9 we advance into still deeper truth. Saul of Tarsus breathing out slaughter, in his mad career, is arrested by seeing Jesus, the Heavenly Son of Man, from whose face streamed down the glory of God, and that light-too effulgent for human sight (Saul is blind for a season)-shines into his heart (compare 2 Corinthians 4:6). He sees the Lord of Glory, who begins/to unfold to him the great mystery (το μυστηριον μεγα, the great mystery, not a great, as translated, Ephesians 5:32, but the mystery, of which Adam and Eve in the garden were a type), that He had a Bride, the Bride of the Lamb-a glorified body, whose members Saul was persecuting, but whose union with. the Heavenly Head was so complete and indissoluble (Paul's great theme afterward), and marked by such living sympathy, that whoso touched them, touched the apple of his eye; whoso served them even with a cup of cold water, served Him.

We can at once perceive the difference of revelation made to Peter and to Paul. Peter knew the Lord Jesus in the flesh; the One of promise and prophecy; who by suffering entered into glory. Paul knows not Jesus after the flesh at all. He beholds the Lord of glory, and straightway preaches that Jesus is the Son of God, not before preached. It is a fuller, clearer revelation of the Divine Person of the Lord, and of the result of His work, it was Redemption-glory. Peter could testify of the sufferings of Christ, and the glories after these [sufferings] see Greek, 1 Peter 1:11. (Note, not glory, as translated, but glories, for Our Lord Jesus will be crowned with many, many diadems of glory; He will bear all the glory-glory connected with each dispensation). But Paul sees Jesus as the One who had completed His work-who was at once the foundation, deeper than Hades and Hell-for His own-the Head, the center, " Christ is all and in all,"-who had reconciled all to God, and upheld His body, the Church, before God, in His own righteousness, beauty, glory, and strength. "I am Jesus," was the electrifying word to reach, quicken, and search Saul's heart and conscience. 'And I have a body, whose members struggling through the wilderness, are yet so identified with

me, that in hurting them, thou persecutest me.’ It was this full revelation of Jesus, which, while it crushed Paul’s flesh, through the working of the Holy Ghost in his soul, gave him that strong grasp of faith for all saints, enabled him to endure the petulance of some, while he could not bear any doctrine which touched the gospel, the work of Christ, as we see in Galatians; led him through such sufferings (2 Corinthians 11:23, etc.); qualified him to be a minister of the Church (see Colossians 1:23, et seq). Peter did indeed confess to Christ (Matthew 16:1-28), His divine glory as Son of God; but in his testimony we never see more than Jesus as the glorified Head. The saints risen were as pilgrims and strangers scattered abroad," looking for a heavenly inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled. Paul had a key, given to him to open the mystery, not before known, of an elect heavenly bride-Jew and Gentile in one-the Church-the Body of Christ--the fullness of Him "who filleth all in all,"-and it may be observed, how, to the end of his course, we find him speaking of our gospel, my gospel, -"The glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God."- "My gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest" (Romans 16:25).

It would seem to be clear indeed, that after, Paul’s conversion and preaching Jesus to be the Son of God, deeper instruction is given to the saints, and we read, "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Antioch seems to have been the scene of work from which Paul started with a fuller revelation, and more glorious gospel: and though I ought now to look at chap. 10, which was the limit proposed in this paper, I would just follow Paul on to two eventful epochs in his course, as shown in the Acts, in which one traces what he got from this glorious gospel, how strikingly we find displayed in him the power, conscious ease with God, joy in deep trial, and real standing in the dignity put upon him by virtue of his union with Christ" (Acts 16:1-40; Acts 26:1-32). In the former, we read of the commencement (in Lydia and the Jailer), "according to the grace of God given to Paul as a wise master builder" (1 Corinthians 3:10), of the Church at Philippi, so endeared to the apostle, as we find in his epistle to them. Satan strives to weaken and nullify the testimony of the apostle (ver. 16, 17), as if he was in league with the apostle, and approved of the preaching of the way of salvation; and Paul being grieved, commands the evil spirit to come out in the name of the Lord Jesus. Satan changes his opposition to violent persecution. The apostles are, as far as bodily trial went, in wretched plight; the stocks, according to historians, were high, and Paul and Silas it would appear, must have been lying on their flayed backs, with their clothes rent off, but God is present. They prayed and sang praises, and the Lord answers as it were with a voice of thunder (ver. 26), symbolical truly of that mighty gospel of Christ, which " Brings out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house " (Isaiah 42:1-25). In chap. 26, how vividly and blessedly Paul spews out what was in his heart and soul: he stands in chains, a prisoner before the mightiest monarch of the world, and all the state surrounding him. Yet Paul evidently is the one possessed of conscious dignity and ease and happiness.

He can afford to wish that all that heard him were " almost and altogether such as he was, except these bonds." What joy in God, what blessedness Paul stood in, as having simple faith in that of which Festus spoke, " Of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive" (25:19). In chap. 10 Peter also sees " Heaven opened." God works a miracle to meet the prejudice of his narrow heart! The "great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth," in a lively manner represents the heavenly calling of the Church,-its heavenly origin (though filled with unclean creatures in themselves)-its having no resting-place on earth-but moved about, waved, as

a bough of a tree, as it were, is received up again into heaven. Another has suggested whether the expression, "Knit at the four corners," may not be delicately significant of the heavenly calling of the saints, inasmuch as those inside the sheet, whose corners were thus knit, could not possibly look down on the ground. They must look up, and that of necessity. Such is the Church's standing and portion. How soon "we which are, alive!" (1 Thessalonians 4:15) may be caught up, solemn yet joyful thought-" to be forever with the Lord!" Observe in this and the preceding chapter of Acts, man's narrowness, God's largeness. Ananias (9:13) pleads with God against the reception of so bad a man as Saul of Tarsus-" But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me." In this chapter Peter evidently does not like that the unclean Gentiles should enter the kingdom (compare ver. 14, and 28). The Divine answer is -O what mercy for our poor souls!- " What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

(* May it not be inquired whether at present, as to the testimony of the gospel of God's grace, there be not too much abiding in one place, building, locality, when the word of command is, "Go ye out into all the world." Centralization belonged to Israel, aggressive inroad on dark places seems to become the Church and the Saints who may have any evangelizing gift. In the former, Israel, the light, was stationary, those seeking light must come to the fixed place. In the latter, would it not appear to be the contrary? Go ye out, "preach the gospel to every creature." One would not wish to define or place limits, far from it; certain classes of people, now for instance, can only be addressed and reached in certain places, but it does demand serious inquiry from those who would evangelize, and desire to please God,, whether the heralding of the good news, testing men's consciences in every place, as Paul seems to have done, and striving to reach a multitude, would not seem to be more in accordance with the genius of " the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God." Out-door preaching, or heralding, seems very scriptural-a more excellent way, when possible. However, the Lord the Spirit, alone can direct, as He alone can open any heart to receive the message-" Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.")

There is nothing new in these thoughts beloved reader, but there is old truth, which we cannot meditate on too much (read 2 Peter 1:12), and never more than in such a day as this is. As the Lord spoke to Jeremiah (6:16), "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and ask for Me old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein; and ye shall find rest for your souls." " Surely I am coming quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all." Amen.

A.

Vol 02 - The Administration of the Fullness of Times

The Administration of the Fullness of Times

Christ is the true and only center of the purposes of God, as it is only by Him the Holy Ghost reveals them. Hence it is, and must be in the proportion of our Spirit-taught acquaintance with Christ, that the divine plans are understood and appreciated. When He is not steadily kept before the soul, what becomes of the study of scripture itself? It is no longer truth which sanctifies, but a barren theology which puffs up. And why has prophecy been perverted to unfruitful and injurious speculation? Because God's grand object has been lost sight of (" that in all things he might have the preeminence;" one might perhaps apply here); and thereby the Spirit has been grieved, and has blown upon the busy exercises of man's mind. " He shall glorify ME," said the Lord, " for He shall take of MINE and skew it unto you" (John 16:14). The moment the view of the glory of Christ is supplanted by researches into providence, for instance, important as that may be in its place, the temple of prophecy degenerates into a counting-house of human intellect; and the tables of those who traffic in mere erudition crowd its courts, until, by the just judgment of God, it is left desolate. But by His grace a better sanctuary is opened for these who have ears to hear and eyes to see Jesus crowned with glory and honor in the heavens. May we have grace to draw near through the rent veil, and there by our Master's side, with unshod feet and worshipping hearts, follow. His eye and finger as they rest upon the spheres of His varied but harmonious glory!

" Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither bath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him." There the Jewish prophet necessarily stopped. " But," says the Apostle (1 Corinthians 2:1-16), taking up the words, " God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." " We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world [or the ages] unto our glory." How often we hear a member of the body of Christ quoting the words,' " eye hath not seen, nor ear heard it," to justify an ignorance which the Spirit of God takes pains to chew us is no longer excusable. The things which God hath prepared for them that love Him are now disclosed. Our position is the contrast of that of the Jews'. God hath revealed them UNTO US by His Spirit: for His Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. True, these things are not the things of man, and are therefore undiscoverable by human ken. But a Christian is called no longer to walk nor to think κατ■ ■νθρωπον: if he seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." And what is that to the Christian? Everything. " For we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. We have the mind (νο■ν) of Christ." So in Ephesians, God " hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence: having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He had purposed in Himself for the administration of the fullness of times, to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in the heaven, and which are on the earth, even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose," etc. The great and precious revelations of the Old Testament, as Moses told the Jews (Deut. 30:29) belong,

in an emphatic sense, unto them and their children. Jehovah their God had reserved the secret things unto Himself. Hence the force and importance of the verses just cited from this epistle. His grace has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. He has made know unto us the secret of His will, according to the good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself for the administration of the accomplishment of the set times. And what is this purpose of God? It is to gather in one Head, in Christ, all things which are in heaven, and which are on earth; in Him in whom also we have obtained an inheritance. That is, the mystery of God's will consists of two great parts: first, Christ is to be the Head of all things heavenly and earthly; and secondly, the Church is to be associated with Him in that inheritance. And so the apostle, having treated of the design of God to re-head all things in Christ, turns also at once to the collateral purpose of joining the Church as heir with Him, first alluding to the Jewish saints brought into this relationship and then to the Ephesians themselves, the Gentile saints whom he was actually addressing:-" that we [1:e. the Jews now believing] should be to the praise of His glory who are pre-trusters in Christ; in whom ye also" [1:e. Gentile believers], etc. In the closing verses of this chapter, we have the same two-fold truth, with this difference, that it is not in connection with God's future purpose respecting the heading up of all things in Christ, when the appointed times are completed, but with Christ's present exaltation at the right hand of God. Nevertheless, here as before, is seen the double glory of Christ. God hath given Him as head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all; and thereupon chapter 2: enters into the manner of God's display of His grace in His kindness towards Jew and Gentile through Christ Jesus.

If we turn to Acts 3:1-26, it is clear, that the times of refreshing and the restoring of all things were no secret of God's will. Peter speaks of this restitution of all things as the familiar hope of the Jewish nation. God had spoken of them by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began. This therefore must be a distinct thing, however closely connected with the mystery of Ephesians 1:9-11. Let us take one of these prophetic testimonies, and the difference will be plain.

" Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst, of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God, I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I

will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am the LORD " (Ezekiel 36:22-38). This citation is the more observable, because it is the one doubtless that the Lord had in view in his conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1-36). Jesus had laid down the necessity of regeneration as the condition of seeing the Kingdom of God; and to the questions of the Jewish ruler, answered, that except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter that kingdom. Flesh and Spirit admit of no modification in the nature of each, which remains unchanged and distinct: and so Nicodemus was not to marvel if Jews must be born again in order to have part in God’s kingdom, for the question is about the kingdom, and not salvation merely. When then Nicodemus still inquires, "How can these things be?" the Lord says, " Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?" Thus it is clear, that when the Lord spoke of the need of the new birth, a Jewish teacher ought to have understood; for so had the prophet Ezekiel shown. Before Israel enjoys the earthly blessings in the promised land, Israel will be born again. Israel will be sprinkled with clean water, and will have a new spirit put within them. It is afterward they have the earthly things of the kingdom of God. "I will also save you from all your uncleannesses; and I will call for the corn, and will increase it," etc. "And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden." The important thing to notice, is, that in all this the Lord had not gone beyond the earthly things, or what was essential to their enjoyment, 1:e. the new birth. Of course to have blessings in heavenly places, a man must a fortiori be born again; but even the Jewish people, as we have seen, must be regenerate to have the earthly promises in God’s kingdom. In speaking of regeneration, He had not gone beyond the range of earthly things and what a Jew ought to have learned from the prophets. " If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not; how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" On the latter, the Lord does not touch further than to intimate the lifting up of the Son of man, and the gift of the Son of God in His love not to the Jews only but to the world; which things involve, as we know, the exaltation of the Lord into glory on high, and the union of the church with Him there, as the fullness of that Heavenly man. The lifting up of the Son of man, was, so far as man’s responsibility is concerned, the demolition (though in the marvelous wisdom of God the security) of all the earthly hopes of the Jews. In Christ all the promises of God found their meeting-place; and if He had been received, all would have been made good to His earthly people. But He was rejected. Wherefore God also highly exalted Him. The promises remain to be accomplished, based as they are upon the blood of the Mediator; but before that accomplishment takes place, a new and extraordinary work goes on; namely, the formation of a body to share the dominion of Christ, when God’s purpose is fulfilled, of gathering all things, heavenly and earthly, under the headship of Christ, the Church sharing that inheritance with Him. This, then, was the mystery of the will of God: not the kingdom of God, not regeneration, indispensable even for its

earthly promises. Of these the Prophets had spoken; but they were silent on the purpose of God which destined Christ and the Church to rule over all things in the heavens and on the earth. The restitution of all things was not in any sense a mystery; but this was.

Let me observe by the way, that 1 Peter 10-12 does not at all refer to this mystery, but to other privileges which formed the burden of many a prophetic strain. The salvation of souls was certainly no hidden secret-" of which salvation the prophets," etc. They searched, no doubt, what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify; but it is manifest that the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow, testified before-hand by the ancient prophets, cannot be the mystery which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:1-21). Here were things testified before-hand, ministered unto us, and not unto themselves; for it was so revealed to them, but clearly these previously revealed privileges are totally different from another sphere of blessing which from the beginning of the world was kept hid in God; nor do the epistles of Peter once allude to our fellowship with Christ as His body. The mystery is nowhere introduced. We are regarded " as begotten again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled... kept by the power of God," etc., and exhorted to diligence, sobriety, confident hope, and obedient holiness, and withal to pass the time of our sojourning in fear, knowing our redemption with the precious blood of Christ,. It is not doubted that the persons whom Peter addressed were members of Christ's body; but it is certain, that the Spirit here dwells upon the blessings which spring from the resurrection of Christ- our new and incorruptible life, holy and royal priesthood, pilgrim-calling, and the like, but never upon our union with Christ in heaven. Hence also, when the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven is referred to, it is as the power of preaching the Gospel unto us, never as the One who constitutes us, Jew and Gentile, God's habitation (Ephesians 2:1-22), or baptizes us into one body (1 Corinthians 12:1-31). In other words, the mystery is not treated in the Epistles of Peter, whereas it is the main subject of Ephesians. The administration, we have seen, awaits " the fullness of times," or the expiry of the various periods appointed by Divine Wisdom. All things are out of course, and waxing worse and worse, until Christ takes the reins. The only Righteous One is still an outcast from the world, though known to the Church as crowned with glory and honor in heaven, and those who love the Lord of glory suffer here below. God's favored earthly people is a proverb and a by-word among all nations, and driven out from a country of which God delighted to be the landlord. And what has been, what is the history of that people and land? Their oppressors, the Gentiles, have they walked in abasement or in pride? Have they honored the King of heaven? And how fares creation? Does not the whole of it groan and travail in pain together until now? And where is Satan? Is it on earth merely that he walks about, or is there spiritual wickedness in heavenly places? Well, there is a set time for each of these things; and these times shall have a full term. Satan shall lose his sway over the air and the earth; creation shall be delivered into the liberty of the glory of God's children; the broken Gentile image shall give place to an everlasting kingdom; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit; the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and Christ shall appear and we with Him in glory. This will be the fullness of the times spoken of. When that fullness of times arrives, how great our joy; beloved, to see Him, not only as the Melchizedec blessing God and blessing man, but actual Possessor of heaven and earth, all things therein being headed up in Him who, though He is the most High God, administers as the exalted Man to see Him ourselves so near Him and so truly one with Him, that then we shall at

length forget all save His love and His glory. And yet, O wondrous grace! is it not so now, as regards His love? Are we not here and now members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones? Yet surely we may long for the day when, seeing Him, we shall be forever like Him, according to that working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.

Yes, all things in heaven and earth shall be headed up in Him, and even things under the earth, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Worthily has He won such a place, that blessed One -

" Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Php 2:6-9).

It is false, utterly false, that Jesus took this place when He was born. It is true, that then was the fullness of the time come for God to send forth His Son. The very children were enslaved under the rudiments of the, world, and all were shut up under sin. Man had proved himself competent to ruin himself under the law of God only the more readily, because it was good but he was not. But was God’s business done when the Son came, made of a woman, made under the law? By no means. The incarnation was but a means, not the end. Redemption was the grand point to which God turned. Therefore the Son was thus sent and made " to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye [the Gentiles, who had not been under the law] are sons" (Galatians 4:4-6).

Turning to the higher and larger sphere of Colossians, we hear the same truth. In the Son of God’s love we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins; "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." Is that His highest title? Is this His Divine glory? No; but founded upon it. He is the first-born of every creature, not because He became incarnate, not because He was the holy Man who triumphed over all the consequences of the first Adam’s sin, and conquered him that led the first man captive at his will: in a word, not because He was a creature, be it the most faithful and glorious, but because He was the Creator. He is the first-born of every creature, FOR by Him were all things created. Here is His right to supremacy:-

" For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16-17). His primacy over all creation flows from His Divine creative power. He asserts it as man; but His title flows from another and higher source. But He is more than first-born of every creature. " He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead," which, as we have seen, is the glory especially dwelt on in Ephesians.

Sin was here below. Man, who ought to have been the first, was the lowest of all; and creation itself, by reason of him, was steeped in the bondage of corruption. And those whom God was about to bring into the Church, what were they? Alienated and enemies in their mind by wicked works. Hence though the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, though ALL THE FULLNESS was pleased to dwell in Him, even that could not meet the evil and misery of man, nor the holiness

and the heart of God. The light of God was there, His love was there; in Him was life, and the Life was the light of men. Alas! it was manifest that the Jews, that all, were irreparably blind.

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John 15:22-24).

What was to be done? " Verily, verily," saith the Lord, " except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." His death could alone deliver. But this was ever before the soul of our blessed Master. " I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." " This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood" (1 John 5:1-21). Hence in Colossians 1:20-22.

" And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprovable in his sight. The Church is being reconciled now. To the living members of Christ it can be said, " You hath He reconciled." Creation is not so yet, though the blood of the cross is shed on which the reconciliation is grounded; it will be so in the fullness of the times.*

(* It is almost needless to say that these set times are not yet completed, and that Christ has not yet all things in the heavens and on the earth headed up in Him, and that the Church is not yet reigning joint heir with Him. The translation, which has been supposed to involve one, and which to be consistent ought to involve all of these consequences is a mistake. "That for the dispensation of the fullness of times, He hath headed up for Himself all things in Christ," is a version founded upon a misconception of the force of the aorist infinitive. The infinitive being abstract, ■ανακεφαλαι■σασθαι, is as capable of referring to the future as to the past. You cannot gather the time of actual occurrence from that word in itself. I believe that the authorized version gives the sense quite correctly. The purpose of God was, "that He might together," or "to gather together" etc. The object was not to express the time of the gathering; and this is so true, that usually the aorist infinitive is expressed in Latin and English by the present. Moreover, as here, the infinitive of the aorist is often employed, where we might have expected that of the future, because the action is considered in itself as concluded; and its future occurrence is sufficiently indicated by the governing verb, and the context generally. Besides this, the infin. aorist is generally used if the principal verb is in that tense.) At present, no such administration takes place, though we here learn God’s purpose that it shall. Christ is, no doubt, head of angels, of Jews, of men, of creation. But is He now exercising these rights? Now it is of the administration when the periods are ripe that our verses speak. But none of the things are being yet gathered. On the contrary, there is yet to be a deeper crisis of rebellion than ever. It is now the time when all things are severed from Christ, or if gathered, gathered only in the ruin and wretchedness which the guile and power of Satan, have introduced. It is the time of another gathering, the gathering of the joint heirs who shall be glorified with Christ. But this is the gathering of Ephesians 2:1-22,* not of Ephesians 1:1-23. It is the gathering of the members of His body, not of the subjects of His rule.

(* I might add also, that it is the gathering of the scattered children of God, in virtue of Christ’s death referred to in John 11:1-57.)

Some, I know, have conceived that by " all things in heaven and earth" is meant the Church. But first of all the expression " all things," etc., forbids the thought. The Church never was and never will be " all things." And though now the calling is being effected on earth, it is not a gathering there, but out of it; and, even when complete and in heaven, still it will not even embrace all things in heaven, where the gathering in Ephesians 1:10, is a gathering, at the same time, of all things that are in the heavens and that are on the earth under the headship of Christ. Again, not only is the Church an elect body, but in verse 11 we have members of it referred as an additional thing to the heading up all things in Christ, " in whom also we have obtained" etc., and in verse 22 we have " all things " again spoken of as put by God under Christ’s feet, who is given as head over all things to the Church, which therefore, far from being merged in all things, enjoys and shares His supremacy, as His body and glorious Bride. And this is entirely confirmed by the verses immediately before and after verse 10; in the one case where the mystery of God’s will is made known touching all things in heaven and on earth, and in the other, because we are spoken of as having the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance. Such is what we have in the mean time: not the actual possession which (comes at the fullness of times, not previously, but the Spirit meanwhile, as the earnest until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory. For when that fullness arrives, it will be glory, His glory, and not as now the dealings and riches of His grace. The Lord hasten the glorious day!

Vol 02 - The Blessings of the Twelve Tribe

The Blessings of the Twelve Tribes

Apostate Israel of old.

Reuben

0

Leah’s Sons.

Simeon

0

Levi

0

Christ at His first coming, and now.

Judah

B B

The dispersed Nation now.

Zebulun

0

Issachar

0

The Antichrist.

Dan ("I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord."*)

00

Son of Rachel’s Handmaid.

The Faithful Remnant hereafter.

Gad

B

Sons of Leah’s Handmaid.

Asher

B

Naphtali

B

Son of Rachel’s Handmaid.

Christ, just before, and at His second coming.

Joseph

B B

Rachel’s Sons.

Benjamin

B B

(* Why this utterance of the Spirit in connection with Dan? The answer appears to be this.-Dan is here seen as the type of that false one whose kingdom will precede the kingdom of Christ; and hence’ at the mention of his name, the hopes of the Patriarch, in reference to the deliverance of Israel, are awakened. Thus, though encompassed with trouble, the remnant hereafter will lift up their heads, because their redemption draweth nigh.)

Vol 02 - The Bride

The Bride

"And the Spirit and the Bride say Come. And let him that heareth say Come. And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." May the present sweet sense, divinely taught, of our privilege as part of the Bride, espoused to Christ-keep our souls enjoying His love for Whom we wait. While some overlook and some discuss, may we enjoy the Church’s bright place-surely fed by, and feeding on, the love of our absent Lord-The Lamb.

Vol 02 - The Dying Believer Bidding Farewell to the Bible

The Dying Believer Bidding Farewell to the Bible O Book life's guide! how shall we part, And thou so long seized of my heart?

Take this last kiss; and let me weep, True thanks to thee before I sleep.

Thou wert the first put in my hand, When yet I could not understand, And daily didst my young eyes lead To letters, till I learned to read; But as rash youths, when once grown strong, Fly from their nurses to the throng, Where they new consorts choose, and stick To those, till either hurt or sick: So with that first light gain'd from thee, Ran I in chase of vanity.

Cried dross fbr gold, and never thought My first cheap book had all I sought.

Long reign'd this vogue; and thou, cast by, With meek dumb looks didst woo mine eye, And oft left open, would'st convey A sudden and most searching ray Into my soul, with whose quick touch, Refusing still, I struggled much. By this mild act of love, at length hou overcam'st my sinful strength; And having brought me home, didst there Show me that pearl I sought elsewhere.

Gladness, and peace, and hope, and love, The secret favors of the Dove; Her quickening kindness, smiles, and kisses, Exalted pleasures, crowning blisses, Fruition, union, glory, life, Thou didst lead to, and still all strife.

Living, thou wert my soul's sure ease, And dying mak'st me go in peace:

Thy next effects no tongue can tell - Farewell, O book of God, farewell! From Silex Scintiilans, or Sacred Poems, by Henry Vaughan.

Vol 02 - The Earth Is the Lord's and the Fullness Thereof

The Earth Is the Lord’s and the Fullness Thereof

It seems an important point of spiritual wisdom, rightly to understand the principle of quotation made by the Spirit from the Old Testament in the New. The Spirit of God can never be less than perfect and infinite (and this, perhaps, is one reason why no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation), but it is no dishonor to the Holy Ghost to say, as scripture says of Him, that He can be grieved, resisted, and, in one sense, quenched.

Now, just as the sin of man may have power to limit the Holy One, so the abounding grace of God may bring out into fuller significance, and more extensive application, the inspired words of the prophets, when they are repeated by the apostles under the new dispensation. I would take, as an instance, the quotation from Psalms 24:1, " The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof." These words, in an Old Testament context, may have an Old Testament meaning; there is a glorious truth legible upon the very surface of the passage; but in Paul’s day Jesus was glorified, the Holy Ghost was sent down, and He was now ready to take out of the Old Testament treasury things new as well as old, but all of them things of Christ, and to minister largely and freely to the necessities of the children of God. We seem to have some confirmation of this view in 1 Peter 1:11-12. It is not that an unholy person sees nothing and a holy person everything in the word, but holy men of old (the very channels and instruments of inspiration) had one measure of intelligence, and another and a fuller measure was now revealed to another class tinder another dispensation, even to the holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit (Ephesians 3:1-21). Accordingly, we may distinguish between three different aspects of Psalms 24:1-10.

1. To the unconverted, the passage, like the rest of Scripture, is without form and void. The letter may convey a meaning, but nothing of interest or of spiritual intelligence.

2. To the godly Jew it spoke of Jehovah’s present rights, and future manifested dominion.

3. But though this was the -very teaching of the Spirit, there was deeper instruction which the Spirit would bring out by the hand of Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. A question had arisen, requiring exquisite dexterity in the answer, concerning meats offered to idols. And the answer is so contrived, in the wisdom of the Spirit, as not merely to solve the particular difficulty the Corinthians were in, a solution that would have been of little use when the emergency was over, but to lay, in the broadest and clearest manner, the deep foundations of gospel truth. The question was, "May I eat meats offered to idols?" "Yes," says Paul, "only with due regard to the conscience of another.’ "For [and this little word has probably occasioned much difficulty to many in the interpretation] the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof." The Spirit in Paul looks abroad over the whole surface of the globe, and sees not one spot that is not the Lord’s. But this is not all; the words themselves require a fuller explanation. The Son might say, as Jehovah, "All the beasts of the forest are mine, and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills." But this would only be the right of the Creator. And so, when sin had found entrance into the world, while Jehovah would retain His rights as Creator, this

very fact would be against man’s liberty. The earth is the Lord’s, and, therefore, man is not free, for on every spot of ground where he can plant his foot he is a trespasser. His very existence upon earth is, in a manner, a trespass; and if he dares to touch any of God’s creatures, instead of a partaker by grace, God only knows him as an intruder upon his ground, as a thief and a robber. The key, then, to the connection of this passage with conscience must be found in the interpretation of the word "Lord." Creation and conscience do not correspond; but conscience and the Lordship of Jesus do, and this is one blessed portion of teaching in the New Testament.

Let us first look at Romans 14:9, "For to this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." Christ, as Jehovah, was Lord from eternity. Christ, as the risen man (and, of course, not merely man), has acquired a lordship, whereby (having by Himself purged our sins) He has power to give us a dispensation to eat freely, asking no question for conscience’ sake. Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving. Had not man been a sinner, the first clause might have been sufficient; every creature of God is good, therefore, I may use it. And thus many an impenitent sinner is apt to justify not only the use but the abuse of God’s creatures. " God," say they, " has given us all things richly to enjoy, therefore, we may enjoy ourselves and forget God." But Paul has not so learned Christ or creation either. He does not say, "Why am I evil spoken of for that which God has made?" but, " Why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks." Here is his warrant. He looks abroad upon the surface of creation, and sees nothing unsanctified by the blood of Christ. Therefore he may use all things. The lordship of Jesus is the liberty of the saint. The blood has cleansed all things to the believer; but the lordship of Him who died, manifested by resurrection and ascension, has pronounced all things clean. A saint will often, in grace, refuse to exercise his liberty, eating no flesh, if need be, while the world stands, lest he cause his brother to offend. But he cannot deny his liberty, for this would be to deny Christ, if it were but concerning the lawfulness of eating one morsel of meat. We seem to have similar teaching in our Lord’s words (Luke 11:41), " But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you." Not that alms-giving could purchase liberty; but it would seem as if our Lord had said, " Act in grace, and so prove you are on the ground of grace; if on that ground, all things are clean unto you." I may add, that, in the two verses of 1 Corinthians 10:31-32, we have, in the clearest light, the largest extent of Christian liberty, combined with the strictest rule of Christian practice. Everything is cleansed to me, if I can use it with thanksgiving. Nothing is allowable that is not done to the glory of God. If we have grace to act on these two principles, we shall neither be Legalists on the one hand nor Antinomians on the other.

I would not conclude this short paper without a few words on the peculiar force of the word "Lord" in this passage. First, the inspired writer of Psalms 24:1-10 has declared, The earth is Jehovah’s. The uninspired authors of the Greek version have rendered the word "Jehovah" by "Lord," as their manner is. But, lastly, the New Testament has pronounced Jesus " Lord’; and now the Spirit in Paul has, as we may say, set to his seal, that those translators were right (in that passage), and that. Jesus who died and rose and revived was Jehovah as well as Lord.

Vol 02 - The Folly of Trusting to Egypt for Help

The Folly of Trusting to Egypt for Help

"Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord."-Isaiah 31:1-3. The importance of Israel's history to the church of God, arises from its peculiar character as a nation, in contrast with the other nations of the world by which it was surrounded, and from which its special glory and privilege was to be separate and distinct.

Israel, as a people, was God's elect nation, of whom He says, " This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise." And, again, " You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Hence their obedience or failures come to be most instructive to God's people now, because they exhibit the effect of God's principles, either in subjection to them, with all its happy issues; or in departure from them, with all its calamitous results.

This, it will be admitted, is true of their history generally; while, in one special part of it, the Scripture expressly, teaches, that " they were types of us."-" All these things happened to them for ensamples;* and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

(* "τυποι," types.) This is the point of importance in Israel's history, that they were a people in connection with God. Their conduct had its main importance in this respect. It had its bearing on their own national welfare, or the reverse; but it had a much higher importance in relation to God, as it exhibited His character and principles before the nations around. " Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." The nations of the world were the witnesses of the power and policy of man, and they exhibited the ways and principles of man; but Israel should have been a witness before the nations of that truth. " Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee."

It is on this ground that Israel and" Egypt" are found, in their national character, so frequently presented in contrast in the Old Testament, just as the church and the world are set in constant opposition in the New. The principles of God had their place in the one, and the principles of man were working in the other, which necessarily placed them in opposition. But Israel had another character besides that which was stamped on them by their connection with God, They were men, and they had, naturally, all the feelings and propensities of men. Hence, whenever their faith failed, and they were left to their own unrestrained action, they invariably displayed nothing but human tendencies, and sought for help in the natural resources of men.

It required the knowledge of God, and the recognition of the special relations he sustained towards them, and an active trust in His power and protection-in a word, faith in Him as God, and their God-to enable Israel to walk on God's principles, and to act in character before the nations. In like

manner, now, it requires faith on the part of the church of God, in all God’s blessed relations toward it, and the sense of His presence, in order to walk with Him, and to exhibit a heavenly character before the world. " They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee "! And what wonders of love and grace are wrapped up in the knowledge of that name! "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." But saints are men, as well as Israel of old, and in that character have been schooled and trained in the world, as Israel was trained in Egypt, and in either case the effect is seen, for the certain result of acting on the principles of the world, is to lose the principles of God. The world is a definite sphere, where the principles of man, under the influence of Satan, "the god of this world," are paramount and in action; while the church is the only sphere in which the principles of God are working. "Egypt" had its wisdom, and policy, and power; but Egypt could be only the oppressor or the corrupter of the people of God. Indeed, there is nothing more affecting in Israel’s history, than their constant hankering after Egypt, after all that they had suffered there, and after all that God had done to deliver them from it. It only yields, in infatuation, to that which has been manifested in the history of the church, in its turning from the grace and presence of a divine Comforter and Guide, to the miserable shifts and appliances of "this present evil world." The earliest mention of Egypt, except in Genesis 10:1-32, in the division of nations, is as the place whence Abram, the child of faith, sought help from the famine which pressed upon him, when a sojourner in " the land of promise." And, indeed, it was the land of earthly plenty. The comforts of this life were there in abundance; but we learn, in Abram’s sojourn there, what a price must be paid by the believer for its " cattle, and silver, and gold," and for the favor of its prince The faith Of the patriarch and his altar belonged not to Egypt, but to the land of Canaan, which he had now left behind..

Egypt was the land of plenty. It was well watered, and the fruitfulness of its river was proverbial. But it did not drink of the "rain of heaven; nor did it enjoy the fertilizing dews from above. It is coupled with Lot’s portion in the plain of Jordan; of which it is said, " it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as thou comest unto Zoar." Still its river bore only "the fatness of the earth;" and in this respect it is contrasted with Israel’s portion, as chosen by the Lord. " The land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot as a garden of herbs: but the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven."

Accordingly, in after times, when their moral corruption was hastening on the sorrows of the Babylonish captivity, the Lord, by His prophet Jeremiah, expostulates with them thus:-" The children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head. Hast thou not procured this unto thyself in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God when He led thee by the way? And now what hast thou to do with Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? Or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?" Israel (had they known how to value it) had their own "fountain of living waters;" and ought never to have been indebted to the streams of Egypt, or the nations around them. As to Egypt, Joseph’s history may indeed cast a halo of glory over it;-as even the world itself will be changed in its character when the humbled One comes to take His power;* still its real character is to be found only in the hard and bitter bondage of Israel. For how often is that word repeated in the books of Moses, " Remember ye were bondmen in Egypt! And their redemption is thus characterized in Deuteronomy 4:20, " The Lord hath taken you, and

brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of inheritance as it is this day."

(* So, in God’s prophetic purposes, there is another destination for Egypt, when Israel under Messiah becomes the head of the Gentiles, and "they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord to Jerusalem." This is presented in Isaiah 19:1-25. "And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt; every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts, which he hath determined against it" (ver. 17). "In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord, in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord" (ver. 19). "And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation" (ver. 20). "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land; whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (ver. 24, 25). The whole chapter is one of the deepest interest in connection with the millennial glory and blessing of the earth.)

It required the plagues of Egypt, and the blood of the Passover, to put God’s captive people and their oppressors, into their true relative position towards each other. And accordingly, God’s relation to Israel, in redemption, is thus expressed, " I am the Lord thy God that brought thee out of Egypt;" while the confession that was connected with the offering of " the basket of first fruits " was designed to be the constant memorial of this. "Thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish, was my father; and he went down to Egypt to sojourn there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous; and the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage; and when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked upon our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression; and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and with wonders; and He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land that floweth with milk and honey." (Deuteronomy 26:1-19)

Still, almost as soon as ever they hadreached the wilderness (the place of earthly destitution, and of heavenly supply), Egypt assumes another character in their eyes than the land of their oppression, and the place of God’s judgment. "The children of Israel said unto them [Moses and Aaron] would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full." And they were not ashamed to say, "it was well with us in Egypt! " The reason of all this is obvious and instructive. To walk with God in a wilderness requires faith, and that spirit of dependence which nothing but faith can give. But to be satisfied with the supplies of Egypt is a thing which is perfectly understood by sense. Thus, whenever the necessities of their condition demanded the exercise of faith-and faith was not there, they, " in their hearts, turned back again into Egypt." And on one occasion, they said, "were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." Nor was this all: their religion was corrupted by Egypt. The worship of "the calf" was Egyptian idolatry; though Israel knew that the Lord had said, " I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the GODS of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the Lord." But, alas! Israel had learned to commit fornication in Egypt; and they practiced the lesson in the wilderness, and ever after. For

when the Lord presents before them their course, in the days of Ezekiel, in the parable of the two lewd women, He says, " they com- mitted whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth." The infidelities of Judah and Israel were multiplied in their after history; but it was only a fruit of their not having left their whoredoms brought from Egypt."*

(* The father of the man that blasphemed the name of the Lord in the camp of Israel was an Egyptian (Leviticus 24:1-23). Hagar also, Abram's bondmaid, was an Egyptian.) On their entrance to the land under the leadership of Joshua, this is noticed though in grace, by the Lord. After the people were circumcised anew, " the Lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day." And nothing but the power of circumcision can keep the heart of the saint separate from the world now; for if the flesh be allowed, the world at once has an open door.

But, in another form, Egypt still was Israel's snare, after their settlement in the land. Outward weakness was the designed characteristic of Israel's polity by Jehovah; that the people might know that " they got not the land in possession by their own sword; neither did their own arm (at any time) save them; but Thy right hand and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favor toward them." And the song should have been ever heard in their midst, " Thou art my King, O God; command deliverances for Jacob. Through Thee will we push down our enemies; through Thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. But Thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us. In GOD we boast all the day long, and praise Thy name forever."

It was for this intent that they were forbidden to multiply horses, and that three times a year their coasts were to be left entirely unguarded; while all their males were brought together in solemn assembly, to Jerusalem, before the Lord. But Egypt was celebrated for its horses and chariots; and this is noticed in the Lord's prohibition to the king, " he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to the end that he should multiply horses; forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you ye shall henceforth return no more that way." Their redemption from Egypt and all its power should have been final; nor should anything have tempted them to return. But, in the reign of Solomon, we find that horses were one chief article of commerce with Egypt. In 1 Kings 10:28-29, it is recorded that Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt:-"And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for an hundred and fifty." While in the days of Isaiah, the Lord complains, amongst other tokens of departure from himself, that "their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots." But in the following chapter of the book of Kings, there is opened a still further effect of Solomon's affinity with Egypt. This wisest of men was corrupted by it. "King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh.....For it came to pass when Solomon was old that his wives turned away his heart after other GODS." How near is the neighborhood, and how subtle the connection of " the flesh," the world, and the devil! And how instructive is the lesson, that as to Israel, the first enemy that invaded their land after the death of Solomon was Shishak king of Egypt! " It came to pass in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem; and he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house: he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of silver and gold which Solomon had made." What force do these historical notices give to that statute of the kingdom (already partly quoted) "he

shall not multiply wives to himself that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold!" And how full is the illustration of a part of the passage which is the subject of the present comment, "Yet he also is wise and will bring evil, and will not callback his words!"

There may be the silver and the gold, and the "tapestry, and carved work, and fine linen of Egypt "-but it is Egypt still! There may be its wisdom, and policy, and power; its horses and chariots--but still the word of the Lord remains in all its force, " Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses and trust in chariots because they are many; and on horsemen because they are very strong;.... now the Egyptians are men and not God; and their horses flesh and not spirit." And as a ground of trust to Israel, Egypt's character is most accurately given by a heathen man. " Now behold thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it; so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to ALL that trust on him." And this judgment is entirely confirmed by the Lord, through Ezekiel, who says, "And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am the Lord, because they have been a staff of reed, to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee by the hand, thou didst break and rend all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou breakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand." Nor should this instructive warning to Israel be allowed to lapse while the saint has this significant note of divine wisdom concerning the world through which he is passing, that it is "the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified! " Heaven-bestowed names and titles are more unchanging, and more significant, than our careless hearts are wont to conceive. But finally, as to Egypt, when God speaks of it in all its glory, he speaks of it only as "the tabernacles of Ham!" lie smote all the first-born of Egypt: the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham!" And it may be said, that the example of Moses gives the only proper action of faith towards it. " By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." He esteemed " the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."

All this recorded testimony to Israel about Egypt gives especial pungency to the denunciation of the prophet;-

" Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord! Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evildoers, and against the help of them that work iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. When the Lord shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down and they all shall fail together" (Isaiah 31:1-3). The special and instructive contrasts here, are "Men" and "God;" and "flesh" and "spirit." Man with his horses, and chariots, and horsemen presenting an array of strength, resistless in the estimation of the natural mind; but " when the LORD shall stretch out his hand both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together." How deep is this infatuation of a people whose privilege and strength is thus presented to the eye of faith, that they should look to Egypt or horses and chariots as their strength!

" There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms:

and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew, Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." (Deuteronomy 33:26-29). This was Israel's folly, to turn from God and his Spirit to trust in Egypt and in an arm of flesh, because they walked as men. But what is this to the church's folly that is associated with her head in heaven, and is blessed with the ever-abiding presence of the Holy Ghost on earth; and has God for her, and the infinite treasures of his grace as her resource; and eternal glory before her; when she is found turning to seek the world's friendship, and practically trusts in the flesh and in carnal wisdom for her guidance and help! The Lord teach our hearts more the force of that word, "If ye then be risen with Christ!" And lead us to beware of following the course of "Demas," of whom the apostle says, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." "If GOD be for us who can be against us." There is nothing more certain than this, that every degree of confidence that is reposed in man by a saint or in himself, is so much of his trust withdrawn from " the living God." "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God." But faith alone can use those weapons; and when faith fails, there is always the practical turning to the world and its strength and wisdom for help. This only is the right position of our souls, " to have the sentence of death in ourselves; that we should not trust in ourselves; but in God that raiseth the dead." And again let it be said; " if GOD be for us who can be against us!" " There is no king saved by the multitude of a host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. A horse is a vain thing for safety; neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.... our soul waiteth for the Lord; he is our help and our shield."

D.

Vol 02 - The Golden Calf

The Golden Calf

However much controversy may be needed for the preservation of the faith once delivered to the saints, it is at best a sorrowful necessity; it not only endangers the spirit of those engaged in it, often clothing self-glorying under the garb of zeal for the Lord, but it extends its influence beyond the immediate actors. The age itself may assume a controversial character, so that everything is viewed through a controversial medium. At the era of our Lord’s ministry, the age was characteristically religious; but at the same time so controversial, that one ignorant as the woman of Samaria had caught the spirit; and the effect on her was to hinder any exercise of conscience before God. The present age presents, too just a parallel to the one mentioned. It is also characteristically a religious age, and at the same time so systematically sectarian, that the truth of God is only viewed through controversy; and it thus fails of reaching the conscience, and hinders very effectually the ascertainment of the state of souls, individually, before God. There is a remarkable impatience of resolving things into their principles, so that some of the most important truths fail to affect the conscience, because that which embodies them is supposed to be attacked; and in this manner a great deal of the most searching truth is deprived of its point. It is even difficult to apply principles to the consciences of Christians so as to avoid the appearance of controversy, for time has sanctioned so much evil which is not suspected to be evil, that principles have never been tested. Now if, as individual Christians, we know that the principle of every manifested evil is to be found in our own hearts, so as to induce the need of self-judgment and constant watchfulness (for grace alone maketh us to differ), so is it equally true that all the corporately manifested evil in Christendom has arisen from some wrong desire working unsuspectedly in the hearts of real Christians; so that there is quite as great need to watch against the working of those principles among Christians corporately, which eventually lead to the worst form of evil, as for an individual Christian to watch against the principle of hatred which, if cherished, might lead to actual murder. The principle embodied in the golden calf is one which most readily insinuates itself among real Christians. It may indeed be recognized when it has received a gross and tangible form, but spiritual wisdom is able to detect the working of the principle before it becomes embodied in form. The golden calf is one of "our figures."-(1 Corinthians 10:6, margin.) Its history has been recorded for "our admonition." Israel, outwardly and typically redeemed, serve to show, in a great variety of ways, those who are eternally redeemed to God through the blood of the Lamb, their peculiar dangers. That which "happened" to Israel is "written for our admonition." And thus their failures become beacons to us, and at the same time "figures" of those forms of error to which, as redeemed, we are liable. It is important, therefore, to seek to ascertain the germinant principle of evil which led to the setting up of the golden calf. The people had sung the song of redemption on the banks of the Red Sea. They had murmured-but their murmurings had only been answered by the grace of God, in supplying their need. They had fought with Amalek, and prevailed through the uplifted hands of Moses. After all this, they receive the law by the "disposition of angels," and by the hand of the Mediator. The covenant between

Jehovah and Israel is solemnly entered on and ratified by blood-the people on their part with one voice saying-" All the words which the Lord hath said will we do." Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu go up to the mount with seventy of the elders of Israel, and were permitted to see the God of Israel on the mount, and to eat and drink; but Moses is called up into the mount of God, with this express injunction to the elders-" Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you; and behold Aaron and Hur are with you; if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them." The people had seen the glory of the Lord at a distance-" and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel." Here we have brought before us the position of the several parties. (See Exodus 24:1-18)

Moses, hidden from the sight of the people, was still occupied with God for the people. He was at that very time receiving instructions from Jehovah for the construction of the beautiful tabernacle, and the ordering of their needed priesthood. He was still blessedly serving them, although they did not see him. The evil commences with the people; but is consummated by means of the very leader, in whose charge they are left, during the absence of Moses. The people do not mean to disown Moses-they fully recognize him as the man who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt-but he was not then present to their sight. This was their need - some present visible prop on which they might cast themselves so’ as to be relieved from dependence on that which was invisible. They said to Aaron, "Up, make us gods which shall go before us." Their desire was urgent, and to be gratified at any cost. Without a murmur they bring their golden ornaments to Aaron. How deeply rooted is this principle in the human-heart; that which men pay for, they think they have title to use for their own ends; and if it promises relief from dependence on God, they will purchase it at any cost. That which the people demanded received its shape and form from Aaron. He received the gold "at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf." It is remarkable, how little definiteness there was in the mind, either of the people or of Aaron, as to what would be the result of their gratified desire. The people said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." How soon is Moses forgotten in this new and present object. At first they only desired gods to go before them, to carry on that which Moses had begun to do, even to complete their deliverance out of Egypt, by leading them into Canaan. But now they regard these gods, and not Moses, as having brought them out of Egypt. How deeply, how solemnly instructive is this. One departure from the fear of God may lead to incalculable mischief. The feelings of Aaron are different from those of the people. "When he saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah." How subtle is sin. Aaron, on being remonstrated with by Moses, excuses himself on the plea of simply humoring the people in what he did. "Thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf." Alas! what amount of evil may not a good man occasion by acting unfaithfully in a case of emergency. Aaron was left in. charge of the people, to meet any difficulty which might arise; but the leader falls in with the desire of the people, and unintentionally leads them into idolatry. He himself had no idolatrous object in that which he did, neither was idolatry the intention of the people. In vain was Aaron’s proclamation, "To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah." The calf, and not Jehovah, had the homage of their hearts. (See Acts 7:41.) "And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings; and the people sat down to

eat and drink, and rose up to play." On this is grounded the solemn warning to us, " Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them." (1 Corinthians 10:7.)

We must now turn to the thoughts and judgment of God Himself on this scene. And at the very outset, we are instructed in a solemn and searching truth-that God does not measure things by the intention of human agents, but by His own glory. The thoughts of God are not as "our thoughts, neither are his ways as our ways." Our simple and plain duty is to acknowledge Him in all our ways. There is no such thing before God as innocence of intention, when any man presumes to prescribe for himself the mode in which he thinks God can be honored, or the work of God can be furthered. In such instances, the means employed are quite as important as the end intended. God is to be honored in the means we use, "for to obey is better than sacrifice." And it is in the acknowledgment of God, by waiting upon Him in His own appointed way, that we shall find the most searching test of our obedience to Him, and the uprightness of our heart before Him. And may it not with truth be asserted, that the deepest corruption, both in Israel and the Church, can alike be traced to some individual or corporate act,* the only fault of which was, that it was unauthorized by God. But this is a fatal fault. It is the introduction of the will and wisdom of man into the very sphere, where the will and wisdom of--God are pre-eminently displayed in carrying out His own work.

(* It would be interesting to trace this from the Scriptures; but here it can only be briefly glanced at. "And Gideon made an ephod thereof [1:e. of his share of the Midianitish spoil], and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house." There is nothing which our hearts will not use to displace God. The brazen serpent itself was so used by Israel. And Hezekiah "brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the Lord God of Israel.")

We must now transfer our thoughts from Aaron and the people, and their feast below, to Moses standing in the presence of Jehovah himself, within the cloud of glory on the top of the mount. And well would it be for us frequently to do this practically, so that we might form a godly judgment of our own ways. We should then be enabled, when inclined to rejoice in the work of our own hands, to detect the danger of secretly departing in our heart from God.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." The desire of the people, the surrender of their gold, the act of Aaron had together ended in corruption. How fearfully instructive. The people of God cannot interfere with the things of God; but they corrupt them and themselves by them. They cast aside their proper glory, and become occupied with that which debases them. That Jehovah was their God was their glory; but they would make to themselves gods. In their after-history, they desired to be as the nations, and to have a king over them, when Jehovah was their King. They corrupted themselves, and lost their distinguishing glory. And when do we find corruption stealthily creeping into the early Church. Is it not in "philosophical wisdom and admiration of teachers"? The glory of the Church is the presence of the Holy Ghost in the midst of her. The gospel needed not the extraneous support of wisdom or

the schools-it came "in demonstration of the spirit and of power." The introduction of human wisdom, admiration of teachers, and all that was most esteemed among men, would virtually displace the Holy Ghost, so that His power, His teaching, His guidance would practically be superseded. " If any man defile [corrupt] the temple of God, him will God destroy [corrupt]." How rapidly it spread. Evil communications speedily corrupted the manners of the Church. And surely it does not require depth of learning, but subjection of mind to the Scriptures and the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the spirit of truth, to trace back to this germinant corruption in the Church, suppressed at the time by apostolical power, the full-blown corruption yet to be manifested, when that day of the Lord God Almighty comes, " that he should destroy those who destroy* the earth." (Revelation 11:18.) Viewed in the light of heaven, and as from heaven, this introduction of human wisdom in the Church was by the Apostle seen to be corruption. Those who would have introduced it, thought it a help and an ornament.

(* Corrupt (see margin).)

"They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them." The rapid inroad of corruption into that which God has set up in purity is remarkable. The people of Israel, awe-struck by the Majesty of God, had heard the solemn words, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." To this they had responded, "All the words which the Lord has said will we do." And yet after the lapse of a few short days, they turn aside out of the way, and make to themselves gods. Does this surprise us? Is it not rather too faithful a history of the ostensible people of God in all ages and in every dispensation? God has not been pleased to record how long man stood in innocency-but the sacred narrative proceeds from his exercise of dominion over every living creature, and his reception of the blessed gift of a help-meet from God, to state his grievous fall. When Noah, who had in the Ark passed safe through the judgment, is set up as head of a new world, how quickly there is his fall into drunkenness recorded!*

(* How strange, how unlike man, that the chosen instruments of God to introduce anything from God, should themselves predict its failure in man’s hands. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers and this people will rise up and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me and break my covenant which I have made with them Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. For I know thy rebellion and thy stiff neck; behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death?" (Deuteronomy 31:16; Deuteronomy 31:25-27.)) And has the latest intervention of God in the revelation of the Gospel of His grace proved an exception to the general rule, of immediate failure on the part of man? If we proceed to the period after the Holy Ghost had come down from heaven-what says the Apostle of that which would be after him? "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." The mystery of iniquity had begun to work in the Apostles’ time, when there was spiritual discernment to detect its beginnings, and infallible authority to meet the evil. But how quickly had the disciples turned out of the way. And this is solemnly important to mark; the worst evils which have arisen in the Church, were detected as secretly working in their principles by the Apostles themselves, so that we dare not go back to any form of the Church as a pattern

subsequent to the days of the Apostles; because the evil which so secretly was at work in their days would only become more formed, when their discernment and authority was no longer present to detect and to resist it. It is indeed a curious feature of the mind of man, that in the things of God, he prefers stopping at secondary authority when access is open to its primary source. Both Jews and Christians have alike resorted to antiquity for their pattern, when the thing needed was to judge antiquity by the light of the Scripture. Jewish antiquity was the tradition of the elders-"vain conversation received by tradition " from their fathers-for this they vehemently contended, even at the expense of nullifying the Scriptures. And so among Christians, the most bitter contention has been for traditionary religion, and "the faith once delivered to the saints" has been little regarded. Christians forget how early was the departure from the faith once delivered to the saints, and propose to themselves as a pattern of excellence some age of the Church in which there must have been deterioration; and thus virtually set aside Scripture and neglect the guidance of the Holy Ghost, to unravel the intricacies of time-honored tradition and enable them to find that path which is pleasing to God. When tested by Scripture, it surprises us to find how much of that to which we have clung will not bear its uncompromising light. But how solemn is the judgment of God on the people -"I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them." But if Moses was in the place of righteous judgment, he was also in the very atmosphere of grace, and there he could take the place of intercession, and prevail because his plea was the honor of the Lord Himself. This must ever be a prevailing plea, because it acknowledges the righteousness of the judgment of God. "For thy name’s sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." Moses can neither excuse or extenuate the sin of the people. It is not the place of intercession to do this, because everything before God must be truthful. What comfort for us to know of Christ that "He is at the right hand of God, and that He also maketh intercession for us." He knows the righteous judgment of God-He knows, too, the evil of our sin, but His intercession is grounded on the way in which He himself has vindicated the righteousness of God in putting away our sin. The intercession of Moses brings out a new feature; viz., the long-suffering of God with His redeemed people-with that (1:e. Israel as now the professing Church) which has the responsibility as well as the privilege of bearing His name. This was shown in the mount, and afterward proclaimed by Jehovah himself to Moses. God had previously shown His long-suffering in bearing with the world for a hundred and twenty years, while the ark was preparing. He had borne with the abominations of the Canaanites four hundred years, "because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full." And now, when He has redeemed to Himself a chosen people out of Egypt, this very people corrupt themselves and become the objects of His long-suffering. And is it not the same in the present time? Is not God now showing forth " the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering " towards man as man, and this only to be scorned and despised, while those who are outwardly by profession His people, and bearing His name, are quite as much the object of His long-suffering as the world? The outward professing body has not continued "in the goodness of God," and all which awaits it is to be " cut off "-to be spued out of his mouth. (Revelation 3:1-22) But we must follow Moses down from the mount to the scene of Israel’s sin. The eye of Jehovah had seen it from heaven, His dwelling-place; there also Moses had heard the report of it, and interceded for the people, and not in vain. But when Moses leaves the immediate sphere of the grace of God, and becomes himself a spectator of Israel’s condition, his feeling is that of indignation and not of intercession. " His anger waxed hot," and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." How had

Moses interceded when the Lord had said "Let me alone that my wrath may wax hot against them." There are deep lessons to be learned here. " God, the Judge of all," who must ever judge according to His own holiness, can at the same time act according to His own grace. He cannot extenuate sin-and "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish," are revealed by Him as " against every soul of man which doeth evil." God has revealed to us how He is both faithful and just in forgiving us our sin. But how different is man from God! The sin which God had seen and pardoned at the intercession of Moses, when Moses himself sees he cannot bear with. Here we may learn the infirmity of the creature, and something beside this-that the saint cannot bear in himself the very sin which God had pardoned • nor will the servant of God tolerate in the people of God the sin of that people. What indignation had the godly part of the Corinthian church evinced against themselves for tolerating sin among them, even after the sin itself had been punished? Indignation is dangerous, because it is so allied to human infirmity, and " the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God"-but indignation is godly when arising from the sense of an insult cast upon God, or the shamelessness of saints as to their condition before God. We dare not think of man, however highly honored of God, above what is written; and we gain deep instruction from Moses in this instance, it may be spewing human infirmity, or from Moses acting as "the servant of the Lord." How constantly do we find the practical truth of that word-" When I would do good, evil is present with me." Honest zeal will often find close by its side, self-satisfaction or self-exaltation. Real kindliness of feeling may readily associate itself with disregard for the honor of Christ. What need of walking in the fear of the Lord, and habitual exercise of soul before him, in order that we may "judge righteous judgment!" In that which follows there is a typical action, embodying deep practical truths. Moses " took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." Their "sin" ("and I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire," Deuteronomy 9:21) thus became inherent in them. It was the "original sin" of the dispensation, and hung over them all the time of their prophets and their kings, and during the whole period they were in the land. They never recovered from its effects. At length, after the lapse of centuries, this original sin was met by due punishment in the Babylonish captivity. (Amos 5:25-27; Acts 7:41-42.)

It has not pleased God ever to reverse an original sin. He allows it to take its course, and during the progress of the development of its effects, he takes occasion to unfold more and more of His purpose in Christ. This is true of the first great original sin, as we are so wonderfully taught (Romans 5:1-21); where we find the important statement that there is no such thing as the reversal of one sin without the reversal of all-no reversal of original sin without the reversal of actual transgression as well. "And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification." It is one of the many ways which human wisdom has devised to nullify redemption, to assign to the work of Christ the reversal of original sin. It is said, that man is placed in a salvable state, so that as to actual salvation it must be uncertain, because salvation is again contingent on conditions to be performed by man. Men use such knowledge as they "naturally" have of Christ, not to see their increased responsibility, but to elevate their own state before God, so that when redemption is preached as a divine certainty to faith, such a testimony invades their self-complacency, and upsets all their theory. Blessed indeed to know that "by Christ all that believe are justified from all things." The position which the Church of God occupies is very remarkable. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends

of the world are come." The ages had all run their course. Under whatever favor of God man had been placed, he had never answered his responsibility. Some fatal sin had invariably occurred at the commencement of the age, and continued throughout its downward course; and the special failures of the typically redeemed people of God, which marked their `downward course, are "written especially for our admonition." But has the Church been admonished? Or, rather, neglecting admonition, has not the Church followed in a course answerable to those very sins by which we are admonished in Israel's history? The apostolic testimony too plainly and painfully proves, that in their days the Church had already taken the downward course. Early in the days of the apostles, there was manifested what may be regarded as the original sin, or original sins of the Church, even when there was power to detect and expose evil, and to obviate also its baneful effects, by the only way opened under such circumstances-the confession of the sin, and faith in the ability of God to bless by His grace for His own name's sake. We find this instruction blessedly set forth in Israel's history. "And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy' God, that we die not; for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart, and turn ye not aside, for then should ye go after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain. For the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you his people." The original sins of the Church have held on their course for eighteen hundred years; and have produced as a result the present actual state of the professing Christian world, in the midst of which the Church of the living God is nevertheless to be found. The full results of these sins seem to be on the eve of manifestation; and when fully manifested, will be met by direct judgment from God, analogously to the judgment of God on Israel's sin in the wilderness, viz. subsequent Gentile domination-a judgment still in actual force against Israel, since their sin also has been fearfully aggravated in again rejecting Jehovah, even Jehovah Jesus, that they might maintain their own traditions. But to return to the scene into which Moses had come from the presence of Jehovah. After making the children of Israel to drink down their own sin, Moses turns to Aaron and asks him-" What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?" In Aaron we find a representation of the fatal principle of expediency, or of man's attempt to manage the things of God: His excuse is, that he thought it best to humor the petulance of the people. He had no intention to make them gods. " Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it me; then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf" And have not the greatest corruptions in the Church originated from the effort of good men to try to consecrate some popular feeling, little thinking what they were really sanctioning; for image-worship itself was "but the calf which came out" of the homage which was rendered to the memory of saints, and which good men tried to turn to good account -but which is idolatry in the sight of God. Human expediency in the things of God speedily turns to discomfort and weakness. Aaron had listened to the people's cry instead of resenting it, and by listening, he had made them "naked to their shame among their enemies." And is it not always so? In every case where the will of man has worked, and worked successfully, it has produced weakness; the desire may be gratified but leanness enters into the soul. But here it is not the discomfiture of enemies; the Lord uses another rod, the most painful and humbling for those who are disciplined by it. The watchword is-"Who is on the Lord's side?" and brother is armed against brother- the commission is, "Slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." He whose name is "Jealous" is a jealous God; and well

indeed is it for us to have a godly jealousy, especially in a day when lukewarmness as to the honor of Christ so generally prevails.

Moses has now but little heart for intercession, when on the mount he breathed the very atmosphere of grace; but now he is in the actual scene of. sin, and sees. it as the Lord had seen it on the mount, when Moses had interceded with Him for the people. But now, nothing but the sin of the people is before Moses. "Ye have sinned a great sin;" he must needs get out of the scene of sin, in order to get into the place of intercession. Blessed instruction for us-such a high priest became us, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens!" Ever able to estimate sin as it must be in the sight of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and at the same time to throw the glory of his own person, and the value of his own work, into his own prevailing intercession. "And now I will go up unto the Lord: peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." Surely Moses the servant of the Lord goes up to the mount dispirited and dismayed. He had not personally sinned the sin; but for that very reason he felt it the deeper. "And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." There was the truthful consciousness in Moses that he could find no plea in himself or in the people to present before the Lord; his only alternative was either to find forgiveness in the Lord’s own grace, or that he himself might be blotted out, so as not to witness the shame of his people. How strongly does this consciousness of worthlessness in Moses bring into relief the dignified consciousness of worth in Jesus-" I have prayed for thee." But the Lord has His own ways: when corporate failure has come in, He can deal with individuals in the midst of it according to His own righteous judgment. "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book" At the same time it is clearly announced, that the corporate sin would in due time be punished corporately; "nevertheless, in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them." These are principles of God of deep and solemn importance. God is pleased to commit to man’s responsibility certain corporate blessings. Such blessings become speedily forfeited through the failure of man. God still bears on in protracted long-suffering, dealing with individuals according to His own grace, but at length the time comes for corporately visiting the failing body. "And the Lord plagued the people because they made the calf which Aaron made." Aaron laid the blame on the people; but it is regarded by God " as with the priest, so with the people." God knows the amount of guilt attached to the several parties, and where they may lay it the one on the other, God charges both alike. The principle embodied in the golden calf was early manifested in the Church; and is in fact the principle of idolatry. " Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play." This admonition was given to those who were "called saints." Is it unneeded now? Are we in no danger of idolatry? We are aware of the fine-drawn distinctions of the Romanist to justify picture and image-worship; and we know also that it is not the meaning which they attach to such homage, but the light in which it is regarded by God, which is the truth. Many also most confidently believe, on the authority of the word of God, that the corruption of Christendom will end in open, gross, and palpable idolatry. Neither the progress of civilization nor the emancipation of the mind of man are any safeguard against gross and palpable idolatry. It was the wisdom of man making the Godhead’ the subject of speculation instead of the object of faith, which originally introduced idolatry. " Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations [reasonings].and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise,

they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Surely man will never find his way back to God, by the very road of his departure from God; and the veneration of ordinances and intellectual rationalism may meet in the end in palpable idolatry. The word of admonition still applies to saints, "Neither be ye idolaters," for the principle of idolatry is some present palpable object between the soul and God, which effectually hinders dependence on God; and this is the principle embodied in the golden calf. We find in the days of the Apostles the original elements of this principle of idolatry under several modifications: and in the progress of declension these elements have received more or less tangible form. The grossest form of the original sin of the Church is found in the Galatian error-an error held up to us as a beacon, but which really has been followed, as a pattern, so as to have been in great measure the formative power of the great professing body. It is the grossest form of the principle of the golden calf, being the natural expression of the feeling of the human heart, as though God was served with man's hands as needing something. It is said of the people when they made the golden calf, " they rejoiced in the work of their own hands," the same in principle as the Galatian error. But how strongly does the Apostle rebuke it. He knew of no middle way between the grace of God in Christ and idolatry. The Galatians had been turned from idolatry to the true God by faith in Christ Jesus. They were now in danger of relapsing in principle into their old idolatry, by adding the law to Christ. " Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods; but now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again [back, marg.] to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have the same principle in another form; the virtual setting aside of the perfectness of the work of Christ on the cross, and His present perfect priestly ministry, by recurrence to Jewish ordinances of worship. It is but the golden calf in another form. "As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." Even so now; Christ, received into the heavens, is forgotten in His ministry there, and early indeed did the Church desire to have some visible and tangible helps to worship, and they took their pattern from the sin of Israel. Stern and solemn is the warning rebuke of the Apostle (Hebrews 6:1-20; Hebrews 10:1-39.), so that scarcely a saint has been unexercised by it; and yet how little has it been aptly applied., These warnings are manifestly against the tendency to relapse into the old form of worship, to go back to the shadow and lose the reality. " It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?"

Judaism christianized, is a large and extensive characteristic of the great professing body; men have assimilated the very things which God has contrasted, and that by putting together such heterogeneous materials Christ has been dishonored, even as He, as Jehovah, was dishonored by Israel setting up visible gods, which really rivaled Jehovah Himself. The principle of the, golden calf was detected by the watchful eye of the Apostle, working among the Colossians in a more subtle form. Such foreign helps as philosophy and asceticism were there intruded; but in reality

they hindered the simplicity of the Gospel, instead of helping the soul to realized union with Christ; such helps took it away from dependence on Christ, so that those who esteemed them, did not "hold the head." This form of the original sin of the Church has worked its way in the downward course of the Church; the fleshly mind has intruded its own conceits into the revelation of God; under the garb of affected humility, or it may be even under the semblance of spiritual aspirations, we find the glory of Christ in His own person, as well as the glory of His work, virtually superseded. It is the exercise of the human mind on the great facts of revelation, instead of staying the soul by faith on these great facts, which especially marks this principle; and it is one which readily insinuates itself. Direct "holding the head" is the only safeguard against it. But by far the most subtle form of the idolatry of the golden calf, is that which we find in the Corinthian church; the " glorying in men " or idolatry of man. Not of man as man, but man as the minister of Christ. How nice the line between esteeming such very highly in love for their works' sake, and putting them between the soul and Christ, according to the desire of Israel to have gods to go before them, when Moses who brought them up out of Egypt was lost to their sight. It is very possible to find this principle lurking where priestcraft is loudly abjured. The desire is deeply rooted in the human heart to have some tangible medium between itself and God, which, while it may be the medium of communicating the truth of God to the soul, is nevertheless used by the soul to hinder its coming into immediate contact with Christ Himself, and to keep it in measured distance from God. Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, the gracious gifts of Christ Himself to the Church, the moment they severally became regarded as the minister of so many persons, were by this very means put between the soul and Christ, they were gloried in as men. This was to their own dishonor, and at the same time to the deep damage of the souls of those who thus set them up over themselves. For by thus misplacing the channel of His grace, Christ Himself as the fountain of all grace is lost sight of. "All are yours." The infinite fullness of Him in whom dwelleth all fullness is little known; because men only regard one, instead of the many channels, by which that fullness is communicated, " All are yours." (1 Corinthians 3:1-23) And thus, virtually, it is not the truth itself which is so much regarded, as the person who testifies to it. The truth is accredited by the person, and not the person by the truth. "And," said ' the Truth' Himself, "because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not." Any dogma of an accredited teacher would have been received; but the truth was unpalatable in itself, and not received because of Him who spoke it. In what little power is the truth which we do know held; because doctrines are received rather on the credit of man than of God. The revealed order of God's dealings with His accredited people shows that, notwithstanding His long-suffering, He allows things to take their course and to work out to their legitimate end; and not only is it positively stated in scripture, but it is confirmed by analogy, that the end will be idolatry. The long-suffering of God affords indeed the occasion for separating that which is essential, and cannot fail from that which, by being entrusted to man's responsibility has failed, but it does not hinder evil principles introduced at the outset of the Church working out to their necessary result. The perversion of the gospel, as among the Galatians, is the almost accredited order. Rituals, formed from Judaism, prove that the Church has fallen into the very form of error against which the apostle so solemnly warns in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Religious sentimentalism, mysticism (and asceticism in measure), the Colossian danger, have well-nigh supplanted "the head;" and the glorying in men, ministers of Christ though they be, tends to eclipse the glory of Christ Himself, and to nullify the great doctrine of the other present Comforter, " the Spirit of truth to guide into all truth."

"Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them." It is a standing, and not a temporary warning. Let us give it a due place in our souls. There is but one safeguard,-the occupancy of the soul immediately with Him "who is the image of the invisible God." Has the person of Christ its due place in our hearts? Has He no rival there? Is there a holy craving to "know Him"? Is the thought of everlasting blessedness associated in our souls with being " ever with the Lord"? What is there lacking which we do not find in Him? Are we lost in the immensity of contemplating the Godhead? "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Do we find the need of a medium of communication between our souls and God? "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Only let us be alive to our danger-our own hearts- our own reasonings-the reasonings of others who combine with Satan himself to intercept the immediate intercourse of our souls with Christ. Even service, apparently done to Him, may distract our souls from Him. We need the exhortation "to continue in the grace of God," and "with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord." We need awakened jealousy for His honor. The duty of upholding the dignity of His person and the perfectness of His work is as incumbent on us as on the apostles. May the unction from the Holy One deeply teach us the words of the beloved disciple-" We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. LITTLE CHILDREN, KEEP YOURSELVES FROM IDOLS. Amen."

PRESBUTES.

Vol 02 - The Good Shepherd

The Good Shepherd The Lord is my Shepherd; no want I need fear;

He guides and attends me with fostering care, And leads me in pastures the world never knows, Beside the still waters of life to repose.

When, vex'd with temptation, I heavily move, My soul he restores with the tenderest love; In plain paths of righteousness still am I found; The malice of Satan, by grace, I confound.

Though through Death's dark valley in sorrow I tread, In this shadow'd world, no affliction I dread; For Thou, Lord, art with me, each step of the road- Thy comforting presence my staff and my rod. With choicest refreshments, my board Thou hast crowned, While foes that revile me in famine are found; The oil of rejoicing on me Thou hast pour'd- My cup runneth over with blessings, dear Lord!

Thy goodness and mercy shall still be my song;

Eternity's raptures Thy praises prolong: In courts of the house of my God I shall dwell, The chorus of heaven in triumph to swell.

G.

" Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."-Ephesians 3:20-21.

Vol 02 - The History of Ahab

The History of Ahab

Each fruit of the Spirit in a saint has its counterfeit in some trait or disposition of the natural man; and when declension has taken place, either in the Church or in the individual saint, there is a great proneness to substitute the counterfeit for the reality, and so deceive ourselves and impose on others. But God is not mocked. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Satan may succeed in leading us to confound them together now; but God has furnished, in His blessed word, unfailing tests whereby the faith that waits on Him and trusts His guidance, can distinguish the one from the other: and the day cometh "when every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." May we have grace to judge ourselves by the word in the light of God's presence now, that there may be the less for the fire of that day to burn up and destroy!

"Easy to be entreated " is one characteristic of the "wisdom that is from above." Precious, lovely, fruit of the grace of Him of whom it is said that He "pleased not Himself." Sweetly was it manifested, too, in Paul, that faithful servant of Christ, who could say," Unto the Jews, I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." But how different was this from the irresoluteness and want of principle which makes a man the sport of every influence which is brought to bear upon him. That Blessed

One who " pleased not Himself," yea, and who had no will of His own to oppose to the wishes of those who surrounded Him; who accordingly was at the bidding of any who asked Him, whether Simon the Pharisee or Matthew the Publican; who, in His childhood and youth, was subject to His mother and Joseph; and who, in after years, could say" Notwithstanding, -lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take and give unto them, for me and thee." That Blessed One was so devoted to the will of His Father, that neither maternal tenderness, nor the entreaties of His disciples, any more than the rage of the enemy or the clamors of the multitude, could turn Him aside. "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" proclaims even at twelve years of age how it was His meat to do the will of Him who sent Him, and to finish His work. "Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come," was His language on another occasion; and when some would have interrupted Him in His work of obedience and love by conveying to Him the message of His mother and His brethren," Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee," how did the depth and intensity of His devotedness to His Father shine out in His reply-"Who is my mother or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about Him, and said, Behold my mother

and my brethren! For Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister and mother." His very yieldingness in all that merely affected Himself without compromising the glory of His Father, was but one result and expression of His entire, unlimited, unalterable devotedness to His Father's will. It was one part of that wondrous life of self-sacrifice by which, in His person, the Father was perfectly displayed and glorified. So also, in his measure with the Apostle. Yielding, easy to be entreated, he could be and was, as we have seen; it was his delight to please every one for his good to edification. But where the glory of his Master, and the foundations of the faith were concerned, he was firm as a rock. What considerateness of those who were in the faith before him-what modesty and humility on the one hand; and yet what unswerving fidelity, what bold uncompromising faithfulness on the other, do we see in the passage where he speaks of his second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion: " Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately [how beautiful I] to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. But neither Titus who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you." And though there were some of high standing and character among those who were enlisted on the side of error, it makes no difference to Paul. As a junior, and one who had been an adversary and blasphemer, he had shown all deference to those who were in the faith before him. He had first communicated privately with them of reputation; but when it came to be a question of the truth of the Gospel continuing with the saints, he sets his face like a flint, and can know no distinction. "But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person; for they who seemed to be somewhat, in conference added nothing to me." Even Peter himself he withstood to the face, because he was to be blamed. Just as our Lord, in a former instance, when Peter would have dissuaded him from pursuing the path of rejection and sorrow on which he had entered, and which was to terminate in the Cross, turned round and said, " Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

There is such a word, brethren, as "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." There is such an exhortation as, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." All this is perfectly compatible with the tender, gracious considerateness of others, and readiness to yield everything to their wishes, in which the glory of God and the honor of His Christ are not involved, which is implied in those words, "Easy to be entreated;" but it is altogether opposed to that pliableness of mind, that unsteadiness of purpose, that want of decision for God, which, alas! so often takes its place. The false tenderness which, under pretense of not giving pain to others, really shrinks from the pain and trouble to ourselves of withstanding others in the cause and service of our Lord, how often is this passed off for the charity and tenderness which the New Testament inculcates I There is surely a solemn warning against self-deception like this in the fact, that one of the worst kings who ever sat on the throne of Israel was not so much an ambitious, cruel, sordid man, as one of easy, pliable disposition; weak, wavering, and irresolute; and thus the fit tool of another's avarice, cruelty, and ambition; the instrument of a woman as energetic and decided in evil, as he was weak and irresolute in that which was good. " But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself

to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel, his wife, stirred up." May the Lord grant us to glean, from the inspired history of this wicked man, those lessons of warning and admonition for which it has been left on record.

It was in the darkest period of Israel's history that. Ahab lived and reigned. The Ten Tribes, which had never rendered hearty submission to the rule of David's house, at last openly revolted, and chose for themselves a king. They had adhered to the house of Saul for years after David was crowned, and reigning in Hebron over Judah. They took the first opportunity of throwing off their allegiance to him, when Absalom raised the standard of rebellion. When Absalom's conspiracy was quashed, and the men of Judah were bringing back the king, the men of Israel said, " We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye: why, then, did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back the king?" and again was the trumpet of rebellion blown, "every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba, the son of Bichri; but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem." And though this new insurrection was soon suppressed, and throughout the short remainder of David's reign, as well as throughout the prosperous, glorious reign of Solomon (blessed type of the kingdom of the true Prince of Peace to be set up ere long), there were no internal broils or dissensions, as soon as he slept with his fathers and Rehoboam reigned in his stead, the Lord let loose on Rehoboam, as chastisement for his father's sin, the suppressed elements of discontent and rebellion, and the Ten Tribes were permanently rent off and became a separate kingdom, Judah being still left to Rehoboam, that the house of David might not be without a light before the Lord in Jerusalem. This new kingdom of Israel, or the Ten Tribes, had hardly been set up, when an entire system of false worship and idolatry was introduced by the king, who thus earned for himself the title which from that point in the history he bears in the word of God-" Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." Of this sin, the kingdom was never purged. Nadab, the son of Jeroboam was slain by Baasha; but he also "did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin." His son Elah is slain by Zimri, one of his captains; he, in his turn, is overthrown by Omri, and self-desperate, shuts himself up in the palace, and burns it over his own head, and dies; while Omri ascends the throne and reigns in his stead. But among all these, there is not one who returns to the Lord, and puts away the idols which Jeroboam had set up. Of Omri, it is said that "he wrought evil in the sight of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him." It was from this stock that Ahab sprang, and of him, the sacred historian says-" And Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger, than all the kings of Israel that were before him." Even Jericho is rebuilt in his days. As though the guilty nation would wipe out every trace of what God had wrought in His ancient mercy to Israel; as though they would make good, in every respect, their return to the ways of the nations which inhabited the land before God gave it to Israel; they rebuild that accursed city of which Joshua had said-" Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." It was in Ahab's day that this cursed deed was done, and the Lord, true to His word, fulfilled the curse by which Joshua thus adjured the people;

"he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun."

Sweet and refreshing it is to the heart, to see how, at this dismal era, the Lord raises up testimony for Himself in the ministry of that distinguished prophet, Elijah the Tishbite. The darker the scene in which lie appears, the more brightly does he shine as a witness for the God of Israel. And it would be well for saints in the present day to weigh this singular fact, that in Israel, where there was such utter darkness, such terrible departure from God, the gloom uninterrupted by the accession to the throne of a single king who truly sought the Lord God of his fathers, or returned to Him, in Israel there was raised up a prophetic testimony unparalleled in its power by anything in Judah, where the national departure from God was not near so awful or complete. May we learn, beloved, to count upon the living God, and to use the darkness of the scene around, not as a source of discouragement or dismay, but as a plea with our God to manifest the more vividly and conspicuously that He is indeed "the living God." The testimony in such a day may be less of an ordered and corporate character, but it will all the more display the sovereign will and living energy of Him who never forgets what is due to His own name and glory, however we may, alas! forget both.

1 Kings 17:1-24. I pass over (precious and inviting as are its contents) as pertaining rather to the history of God’s witness, than to that of the wicked and idolatrous king. Chap. 18 brings the latter again on the scene. We find there, that while Ahab had lent himself to all the wicked purposes of his wife, and was, of course, fully responsible for them, it was she, Jezebel, who was the real authoress of those deeds of blood which had called down the chastisements of God: "For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord" etc. (verse 4). It was no excuse for Adam that Eve was first in the transgression; neither was it any extenuation of Ahab’s sin that the energy which originated it was in Jezebel, not himself. There was in himself no effectual barrier against this evil energy; nay, he willingly lent himself, and the authority of his throne, to the execution of deeds which, though he had not purpose and decision enough to devise, were still in sad unison with the inclinations of his heart, and thus he was in every sense responsible for them. At last he meets the prophet - meets him with the question, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Alas! it is always thus. In the estimate of the doers and upholders of evil, yea, and of the connivers at it too, they who witness and protest against it are the troublers. "I have not troubled Israel," is the prophet’s answer; "but thou and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." He calls upon the king to gather all Israel, with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of the groves, "which eat at Jezebel’s table." And though one might augur well at first sight, from the readiness with which he acts on the prophet’s word, it is no real indication of a change for the better. He is awed by the presence and influence of one of immeasurably greater energy and decision than himself. The hand of God was doubtless in it, too, for his own glory; but, as far as any indication of character in Ahab is concerned, it is but another illustration of that pliableness which was his sin and ruin. In the presence of Elijah, he is for the moment acted on by him, and the circumstances which attend his appearance before him, just as before he had been acted upon by his idolatrous queen. Wondrous indeed is the power with which the Lord endues His servant; king, prophets, people, seem all spell-bound before him; and whatever he prescribes they do, even in the end, after the demonstration before all, and the acknowledgment by all, that "The Lord, He is the God; the Lord,

He is the God," to the destruction of the prophets of Baal, so that not one of them escapes. The glory of the God of Israel thus displayed, His name and authority vindicated, the prophet " prays again," as the apostle James has it, " and the heavens give rain;" and, at the prophet's instance, the king rides and goes to Jezreel; while he, the prophet, the hand of the Lord being upon him, girds up his loins and runs before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. And is Ahab, as the fruit of this marvelous display of the power of God, a new man? Does he stand by what the acclamations of all proclaimed, "The Lord, He is the God," and put away his idolatrous queen, and henceforth worship and serve the Lord alone? Alas! "Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done; and, withal, how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, Lo, let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time." It was Jezebel's message, but it was the fruit of Ahab's conference with her, and it was clothed with the authority of Ahab's throne and scepter. Thus did he, in compliance with his wife's cruel and revengeful wishes, drive out one of the most distinguished among all those, "of whom the world was not worthy."

Chapter 20 affords us a serious lesson indeed. We see there, that while the internal condition of a body of people standing in acknowledged relationship to God may be corrupt in the extreme, and all but ripe for judgment, God, in sovereign goodness, may still use it to humble the pride of his avowed enemies and blasphemers. It is to Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, that a man of God is deputed to say, " Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, the Lord is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys; therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord." And so it was: twice were the Syrians defeated before Israel; and in the second instance, no fewer than "an hundred thousand footmen of the Syrians" were slain in one day. And this was not a deliverance wrought for Israel without their knowledge or any communication between God and them as to it. God uses them as instruments in this overthrow of His enemies; He condescends to send " a prophet" and " a man of God" to Ahab, assuring him beforehand of the victory, and instructing him how to set the battle in array. And it is in compliance with these directions that Ahab gains this glorious victory. Now, would any one in that day have been warranted to conclude that because Israel and Ahab were thus externally owned of God, the internal affairs of the kingdom and the character of the king were such as God approved? The Lord keep us, beloved brethren, from glorying in our success, instead of trying our ways, and judging ourselves in the light of the Lord's presence, by His Spirit and word! Even in this chapter we have further proof of Ahab's characteristic sin. The prophet is driven out in the previous chapter, because Jezebel vows vengeance against him, and Ahab lends himself to be the tool of her wickedness. Now, Benhadad finds the weak point in this unhappy man, and plies him therewith as successfully as Jezebel. He flatters him, crouches to him, teaches even his servants to practice upon him, and in the end effects his escape from the destruction to which he had been doomed. The terrible message which Ahab receives from God in consequence: Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people," sends him home heavy and displeased; and thus, through his sinful pliableness, a day which began in such signal triumph ends in sorrow and in gloom. He is the instrument of his wife's malice in persecuting God's faithful and honored witness; while a little flattery prevails upon him to spare God's sworn enemy, appointed of God too, to utter destruction. Such is the pliableness of mere human nature. Cruel to the saints and servants of the Most High; tender and indulgent to His foes and blasphemers. May

our souls, beloved, tremble at God’s word!

Chapter 21 discloses to us a scene of wickedness surpassing all that have preceded it. Ahab sets his eye and heart on Naboth’s vineyard; and when it is denied him by the godly owner of it, like a spoiled petted child he goes home and lies down upon his bed, turns away his face, and refuses to eat bread. Jezebel receives not disappointments thus. She upbraids him with his weakness, and volunteers to put him in possession of what his heart desired. " Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite." Who can fail to trace here, in bolder relief than in any former instance, the leading traits of each character. It was not Ahab that conceived the horrid plot against Naboth’s life: so far from it, he was pettishly lamenting the apparently unavoidable disappointment of his wishes. A bolder and more determined spirit both conceives and executes the scheme by which his wishes are to be fulfilled. But she " wrote the letters in Ahab’s name, and sealed them with his seal "; and when the vineyard has been procured at the cost of the innocent blood of its owner, Ahab is not loth to avail himself of the fruits of his wife’s cruelty and cunning. How frightful too, the use of God’s name in this transaction. A fast must be proclaimed, and Naboth arraigned before the nobles of his city. All the forms of justice must be mimicked; and for the crime of blaspheming God and the king, falsely laid to his charge by Jezebel’s command, Naboth must be stoned! And what a view we get of the moral degradation of both nobles and people, that such a command should be so unhesitatingly and implicitly obeyed. How analogous to another transaction in which One greater than Naboth became the victim of equal cruelty and cunning, and all under the cloak of judicial forms and high religious pretensions. They, like Jezebel, could suborn false witnesses, and pay the price of innocent blood, even the blood of God’s holy Lamb; but they were too scrupulous to cast it into the treasury of the Lord, or to enter the hall of Pilate, lest they should be defiled!

Successful wickedness is next door to utter destruction. Again is our prophet introduced into the scene. " The word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." Elijah meets him. The guilty king trembles in his presence, and asks not as before, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" No, his conscience makes it much more a personal question than that. "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" "I have found thee," is the prophet’s reply; and he then proceeds with the awful denunciations of wrath and judgment from God against Ahab and Jezebel, and their household. But oh, the grace of our God! Because Ahab, terrified by these predictions, humbles himself and puts on sackcloth, and goes softly, the evil is not to come in his days; but in his son’s days the evil is to be executed on his house. But Ahab, though for the season humbled, is not converted. Of this we have ample and mournful evidence in chap. 22. There we find, that pliable as was this wicked king when in the presence of his wife or Benhadad, Micaiah is as much hated by him as Elijah. And for the same reason. They were not pliable. They had set their faces as a flint, and could yield nothing, no, not an inch or a hair’s-breadth, of the testimony of God entrusted to them. "There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he Both not prophecy good concerning me, but evil." And how sorely was Micaiah’s fidelity tested on this occasion. "The messenger that was gone to call Micaiah, spake unto him, saying, Behold now,

the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth; let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good." As though he had said, in more modern language, "Do not be so morose and eccentric, Micaiah. Do, in this instance at any rate, go with the stream. There are four hundred prophets all of one mind. Do not set up your single voice against so many, as though you were wiser, and knew better than any one besides." "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak." This is all that the prophet can reply. The sequel of the history spews us that Micaiah had been allowed of God to be behind the scenes. He could account for the unanimity of the prophets. It was a lying spirit from the Lord which had put words into their mouths, by which Ahab was to be hardened to go up to battle to his own destruction. The prophet’s testimony, however, is disregarded, and he himself shut up in prison. Ahab, and alas! Jehoshaphat, go up to Ramoth-Gilead. Jehoshaphat is there made the tool of the wily king of Israel. The latter disguises himself, while the former enters the battle in his royal robes, a mark for the arrows of the enemy, who have been instructed to aim only at the king! But God defends Jehoshaphat. He is humbled, yea, disgraced. He has to cry for his life. But God delivers his poor erring, failing child; while all the craft of Ahab avails him nothing. No one can aim at him as the king; his disguise prevents that. But "a certain man drew a bow at a venture," and the arrow, guided by an unseen hand, "smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness." He is borne, wounded and bleeding to Samaria, and he dies; and the dogs lick up his blood, as Elijah had spoken to him by the word of the Lord. The Lord grant us, beloved brethren, Elijah’s and Micaiah’s firmness and decision; and keep us from the yieldingness of the unhappy man who " sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up"!

Vol 02 - The Hope

The Hope "I have waited for thy salvation."

Worthy of homage and of praise;

Worthy by all to be adored:

Exhaustless theme of heavenly lays!

Thou, Thou art worthy, Jesus, Lord.

Now seated on the Father’s throne, The Lamb once slain, in glory bright;

’Tis thence Thou watchest o’er thine own, Guarding us thro’ the deadly light. To Thee, the Lord, our song we raise, The’ mean the tribute now must prove: No mortal tongue can tell Thy ways, So full of life, and light, and love.

Yet, Savior I Thou shalt have full praise, When we have met Thee on the cloud; For when we see Thee face to face, We then shall praise Thee as we would.

Vol 02 - The Manna Despised

The Manna Despised

Twice do we read of Israel despising the provision which God in His grace made for their necessities in the desert. The record of both instances, we have in the book of Numbers-the book of the wilderness. The cases, however, are distinct; and while both exhibit the evil of the flesh, it is in different ways that they develop this; and God’s treatment of the one is distinct from His treatment of the other.

We have the history of the first in Numbers 11:1-35. Israel had not then been long out of Egypt: and it was the recollection of Egypt which induced them to despise the manna. A mixed multitude, as we read in Exodus 12:38, had accompanied them in their journey. Attached to the redeemed nation by the influence of circumstances and the action of motives natural to fallen man, they were strangers to the grace which had chosen Israel from among the nations, and to the hopes which were theirs as the chosen and redeemed of the Lord. To them, Canaan, and the presence and grace of that God who had promised it to His people as their inheritance, were nothing. All they wished, all they hoped, was to better their own condition by attaching themselves to this wonderful people. And when they found that they had but exchanged the indulgences of Egypt for the toil and travail of the wilderness, with provision, to them tasteless and unsatisfying, they regretted what they had done. And it was with them that the dissatisfaction and murmuring began. " And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting." Would that the evil had stopped there! But "the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all beside this manna, before our eyes." They too remembered Egypt. Once, indeed, the hard bondage they suffered there made them think little of the fish and cucumbers and melons. Their chains pressed so heavily that they could only groan for deliverance. Their groanings were heard and God brought them forth with high hand and with out-stretched arm. Then the joy of their deliverance filled their hearts, and they sang the praises of their Deliverer. But now they have forgotten the chains which made their food bitter to them in Egypt, and they have forgotten too, alas, that which at first so filled their hearts with gladness, the grace of their Redeemer and the wonders of their redemption, and they only remember the fish and the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlic which they ate in Egypt freely! Such, alas I is man. Such was Israel; and can we not, beloved brethren, say from our hearts, such have we proved ourselves to be as well? How common is such a process as this. First of all, the world’s pleasures fill and madden the heart and make it insensible to the chains wherewith Satan binds and leads us captive at his will. Light from God breaks in; we become on the one hand conscious of impending judgment; on the other, sensible of the slavery in which Satan holds us. Of ourselves, from ourselves, there is no escape either from the one or from the other. The world’s pleasures cease to entice us. The terrible realities of our condition engross our thoughts and all we can do is to groan for deliverance. That deliverance is vouchsafed. The blood of the slain lamb becomes our refuge from the judgment which hung over

us; and the resurrection of Jesus assures us that the power of the Enemy is set aside forever; that he who had the power of death has no further claim on us. It proclaims, moreover, that God is for us, and enables us triumphantly to ask, Who can be against us. The joy of this takes the place in our hearts which the world once held, and we gladly leave all to follow the pillar of cloud and fire across the desert to the promised land. And there are those who follow to the end without ever so much as looking back. Caleb and Joshua were such in their day. Paul too, in his day was borne onward by an energy of faith which not only counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, when that knowledge first broke in upon his soul, but which enabled him twenty or thirty years after to say, I "do count them but dung that I may win Christ." And in this energy of faith he went forward to the end. But how rare is this. How common the sin and experience of the Israelites in the case under consideration. It may be that in the first place "false brethren" fall a lusting like the mixed multitude who accompanied Israel out of Egypt. But how ready is the flesh in believers to follow the example of those, who, while professing godliness, are strangers to its power. Egypt's chains no longer embitter Egypt's food. The joy of the first apprehensions of Christ and of the redemption He has accomplished no longer satisfy the soul. Some who bear the name of Christ return to this or that worldly compliance or fleshly indulgence; and how ready we all are to follow. We too remember the pleasures from which we have been' weaned; and while the heart craves for these the manna is sure to be despised. " There is nothing at all besides this manna, before our eyes." Time was, when to feed on Christ was all we wished. The first to be thought of in the morning, the last at night, and the only one of our hearts the day through. And all that we then felt needful to complete our joy was to be with Him where He is-not merely enjoying Him through faith by the Spirit, but beholding Him face to face, and dwelling with Him in the embraces of His love forever. But when the world's joys begin to be remembered, how different the estimate of Christ "Nothing at all but this manna before our eyes." But God has his remedy for failure like this in His saints. He has the answer of His grace, too, to the weakness of those who sigh to witness such failure, but lack the faith which would count on His unfailing resources to meet it. Moses sinks under the burden. "Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me." In the people we may see the evil of the flesh, hankering after the indulgences of Egypt, and in Moses, the weakness of the flesh, its incompetency to bear the burdens which it has not faith to cast upon God. How differently does the Lord deal with these two forms of failure. The murmurings of the people are punished by the bestowment of that for which they lusted. "Say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the Lord, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the Lord will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the Lord which is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?" Moses staggered at this word, and spoke of the "SIX hundred thousand footmen," and asked if the "flocks and herds should be slain," or "the fish of the sea gathered together to suffice them."

Even Moses has to be rebuked: "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." And so it was. The lusting of the people was punished, and the unbelief of Moses reproved by the outstretched arm of God. "A wind from the Lord"

brought "quails" which lay upon the ground "two cubits high," and "a day's journey" on either side of the camp. The people gather "all that day, and all that night, and all the next day;" but "while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague." Solemn, indeed, is it when God chastens us by giving us the very things we lust after. Yea, and serious it is when our unbelief needs the reproof addressed to Moses-" Is the Lord's hand waxed short?" But with what condescending kindness was that reproof blended and administered! Moses had said, " I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me." It is true that he added, " And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness." But the Lord passes by this petulance and vexation, and simply relieves His servant of the burden which so oppressed him. He leaves him to learn what his spirit and temper had been in the light of the grace which takes no notice of it, but compassionately provides for his comfort and relief. Seventy men of the elders of the people are to be gathered, and to stand with Moses before the Lord; and "I will take," says the Lord, " of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone." Blessed God! how marvelous and gracious are thy ways! May we all learn to trust and to adore Thee.

We now turn to chap. 21. An interval of eight-and-thirty years has passed since the circumstances we have just reviewed. Eight-and-thirty years has Israel been wandering in the desert, until the generation which came out of Egypt have well nigh all fallen in the wilderness. It was their unbelief, as we know, which occasioned this; and numberless had been the proofs afforded in their conduct throughout this whole period that they were indeed a stiff-necked and disobedient generation. But how precious the display of the unfailing goodness and faithfulness of God. During all these eight-and-thirty years, the manna never ceased. They despised it-they murmured-they rebelled-they believed the false report of the eight-and-thirty spies, rather than the sure testimony of God; they refused to go up into the promised land; they would fain have made them a captain, and have returned to Egypt; they followed in the wake of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and murmured against the Lord, because of their destruction. In these, and alas! in how many ways besides, had they provoked the Lord to anger; but for all these years, every morning when they arose (save on the Sabbath days) their tents were surrounded by the manna from heaven, and they had but to gather and eat, and be strengthened and refreshed. But now, after the lapse of eight-and-thirty years, we again find the manna despised. It is not now, however, the recollection of Egypt. Most of those who now compose the assembly were children when they came forth out of Egypt; they have been brought up in the wilderness, and have known no other mode of life than that of subsistence on the manna, while they have moved from one station to another in the desert. The forty years during which they were to wander are nearly expired, and they are almost at the borders of the promised land. There is only the land of Edom between it and them (see chap. 20.), and if they may but pass direct through Edom, they at once reach the land of their hopes, and the toils and sorrows of the wilderness are at an end. But the king of Edom will not suffer them to pass. Nor are they allowed of God to force a passage. There is no way but to "journey from Mount Hor, by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom." They have to turn again into the wilderness. After wandering for nine-and-thirty years, they find themselves, as it were, beginning their wanderings afresh. They are where they were at starting. "And the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." They could have done with the manna, as

they thought, for the little time required to go direct through Edom; but to turn again to where they began-to begin the wilderness over again-to have all this dreary journey right round the land of Edom; this is more than they can bear: their hearts faint, and they speak against God and against Moses, "for there is no bread," they say, "neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread." What a picture, beloved brethren, of our hearts. We thought the wilderness had been almost passed; there seemed to intervene but one little remaining obstacle; and might we have had our own way with that, as we thought, it might easily have been overcome. But God’s ways are not as ours.

We are not to force a passage through the land of Edom. Patience and subjection to God are to be exercised by passing all round it, though that involves the turning again into the wilderness, and beginning our wanderings, as it were, afresh. And to have all this journey to go over again, and nothing but Christ to feed on and to refresh us by the way-ah, the whole secret comes out there. The state of heart which can say (or feel, where it dares not say), " nothing but Christ!" as though he were not ALL, whether for this world or for the next-that state of heart needed to be brought to light and judged, and hence the having to compass the land of Edom, and enter on the wilderness afresh. We might have taken credit to ourselves for being well satisfied with Christ our heavenly food, had not the mandate to make another circuit of the desert put it to the test. But for this, we had not known that it was in our hearts jo loathe the food from heaven as "light bread," after subsisting on it for so many years. As it is, we have been brought to the painful consciousness of this, and have been cast on God for the remedy. What was His remedy in the case under review? "The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people; and much people of Israel died." They had lost their appetite for the manna, and loathed it as light bread. They had spoken against God and against Moses; but now they come to Moses and entreat him to pray to the Lord to take the serpents from them. But (as another has said) the Lord had other and better thoughts respecting them. Had He simply granted their request, those who were already bitten must inevitably have perished. The people never thought of them. All their anxiety was that the danger which threatened themselves might be removed. "Take away the serpents," was their cry. We all know what the Lord’s gracious provision was. A brazen serpent was erected, to which the wounded and dying ones might look and live. We are all familiar with the use made of this by our blessed Lord. "Like as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." It is the gospel of the grace of God for poor lost sinners. Israel, weary of the wilderness, and impatient of their continuance in it, had despised and loathed the manna. How was their appetite for it to be revived? The Lord sends fiery serpents among them, and they say, "We have sinned," and cry to the Lord. He, better to them than their own requests, does not take away the serpents, but sets up a brazen serpent, that whosoever is bitten may look to it and live. God’s gracious provision for their daily sustenance they despise. Wounds and sorrows are the result, and they become glad of God’s gracious provision for their healing and deliverance. And is not this, beloved brethren, the oft told tale of our declensions and restorations? Christ, as our daily food, our manna from heaven, is despised by us, and treated as light bread. The destroyer is let loose upon us, until we become glad of Christ as he was made known to us at first, God’s Son, and the Gift of His love; but still, the Son of Man lifted up for dying sinners to look to and live. When we have lost our spiritual appetite for Christ, the Bread of heaven, we are made, in one way or another, to feel our need of Him as Savior, and to feel afresh the value of the blood He shed for the remission of our sins. How

precious do we then again find Him to be to our souls Known afresh, in living power, as the Healer of our wounds, as our Savior and our Life, He is no longer esteemed by us as "light bread." How sad, that we should need to learn thus by our falls and by our wounds the preciousness of Him who surely should be above all price to our souls for His own intrinsic excellence, and beauty, and worth. But so, alas, it is; and while nothing becomes us but to hide our heads in the dust, surely we must acknowledge, to the praise of God's infinite grace, that it is better to learn, even by our wounds, to value Christ, the only One, in whom healing virtue resides, than to be suffered to go on, as alas! our wretched hearts would do, lightly esteeming dim. 0 that He might, in very truth, be our only sustenance and joy! But there are depths of mercy and grace in the Lord's dealings with Israel, in this chapter, which we have not yet noticed. How often do our unbelieving hearts seek to limit the Lord's goodness, and measure what may be expected from Him by our own failure, rather than by His infinite grace. How common is the feeling, that when grievous failure has occurred, though there may be healing from the Lord as in the case before us, still no such aboundings of joy, or power in testimony, or victory in conflict, can be looked for, as might have been expected had there been no failure. And what is all this but unbelief? And what an answer to it all we have in the chapter before us. Not only was the manna which Israel had despised continued to them - not only was a brazen serpent set up for the healing of any who were bitten of the fiery flying serpents, but they are conducted by the Pillar which guides them to the place where a springing well refreshes and cheers them, and they surround it with their songs-" Spring up, 0 well; sing ye unto it." How sweetly does this tell of the springs of refreshing wherewith the Lord cheers and gladdens His poor healed and restored ones. His love is not satisfied with healing and feeding those who have despised His goodness, and brought wounds and stripes upon themselves; it is in His heart to refresh, to gladden, to cheer their hearts, and draw forth fresh songs of holy joy and triumph from their lips. Yea, and more than this. They come ere long to the borders of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan. One after the other comes forth to withstand them; and they are not prohibited, as in the case of Edom, from forcing a passage through their territories. And what do we behold? These mighty kings, one of whom was celebrated in proverbs for his prowess, and the other a warrior of gigantic stature and strength, are as nothing before this company of pilgrims. God is on their side, and their enemies are destroyed before them, and they possess the land of their enemies. And all that followed in the wilderness was God's vindication of them by the mouth of him who was hired of Balak to curse them; (their renewed failure, alas! through the cunning of Balaam) but still their overthrow of the Midianites, and the division among the two tribes and a half, of the land of Sihon and of Og. Thus ends the wilderness. It ends in victory and praise. And I would leave it as a question for the consideration of my brethren, why it is we find such frequent mention made afterward of the overthrow of Sihon and of Og? Is it not that the Lord would have this impression of His own grace to be the one left full and fresh upon our hearts by this wondrous history? May it be so by the power of His own Spirit, to the praise and glory of His name!

Chapter 75

Vol 02 - The Offerings Viewed in Connection With Luk_15:1-32

The Offerings Viewed in Connection WithLuke 15:1-32 The evil effect of unbelief in the heart of a saint, will often appear in the being satisfied with a small measure where God offers a large one, or rather where He offers a fullness of blessing without any measure at all. Unbelief will even assume the language of humility, and protesting that a very little is "enough," will readily and confidently disavow any longing for more. But the very word "enough" is ambiguous. In one sense, any, the least, measure is "enough" for sinners, because if they were rewarded according to their iniquities and demerits, destruction itself would be a sufficient portion. But we are not to confound what is enough according to man's deservings, with what is enough according to the grace of God and the fullness of His promises. This would be to confound the merits, or rather the demerits of man with the merits of Christ. Humility will claim nothing as due to itself: faith will reject nothing that God has promised.

I have been led into this train of thought, from observing how low and unworthy are the views which sometimes even true Christians entertain of the Gospel..Gospel-redemption with them is little better than a mere rescue, the plucking of a brand from the burning, which is then, as it were, tossed aside as of no value, as worthless, and as inapplicable to any work as the branches of the vine (Ezekiel 15:1-8), of which men would not even "take a pin to hang any vessel thereon." But such are not God's thoughts. "Let my people go" (not because Egypt is an iron furnace, or a house of bondage, or a place of suffering, but) "that they may serve me."- "This people have I formed for myself, that they may show forth my praise." Speaking according to the language of the Book of Leviticus, we might describe such persons as I have alluded to thus-they are satisfied with the sin-offering, knowing, and caring to know, little of the burnt-offering, and scarcely anything at all of the peace-offering.

Let it be distinctly understood, that this is not the same thing as being unduly or prematurely satisfied with the antitype of the sin-offering. That would be impossible. These offerings have only one antitype. And he that hath the Son hath life. "All things are yours." I speak of an unhappy tendency to separate in imagination, and so to lose the comfort of those things which God in reality has forever joined together. Let us now trace something of the distinction I speak of in the parable of the prodigal son; not that the several offerings are distinctly specified there only; the blessings corresponding to the sin-offering, burnt-offering, and peace-offerings are easily traced. I omit here all reference to the trespass-offering and meat-offering. Of course, if there is reconciliation at all between the father and the son, especially if the father is reconciled to the son, there is the virtue of the sin-offering; 1:e. atonement (reconciliation) has been made; not that atonement, in the sense of expiation, is mentioned in Luke 15:1-32; only as the father of the prodigal is clearly designed to represent God, we may assume the reconciliation was not unholy; and the holiness of God requires, that without shedding of blood there should be no remission. Here, then, it would seem many stop. They need forgiveness, the Gospel gives it-what lack they yet? (If they said, they have forgiveness, therefore they will not lack anything, the Lord being the shepherd of all whom He forgives, the case would be widely different.) I would now, then, by the Lord's help, notice three

blessings, where many seem to see only one; in other words, specify two remaining ones, so powerfully set forth in this interesting chapter. The prodigal, then, has been pardoned-the brand has been plucked from the burning-the blood has put away sin. But this alone, if we could conceive of the sin-offering apart from the burnt-offering (and we may only disjoin them in thought for the purpose of illustration), would be merely a negative advantage. He would not be condemned. Imagine an accused person in our own country, recently a prisoner at the bar, only not found guilty by law-his moral character known to have been positively bad-would the judge or the, prince honor such a one? Would he ask him to dine? But God's ways are not man's ways. The prodigal, then, is not only, forgiven and reconciled, he is accepted. And here comes in the sweet savor of the burnt-offering. Mere forgiveness is negative, acceptance is positive. The father delights in the prodigal. The father will have the servants bring forth, not an apron to cover the beggar's nakedness-not even a coat of skin (token of the sin-offering-not a robe according to the mere need of the half-starved swine-herd, but the best robe in his own wardrobe-something, not to make the, poor prodigal glorious in his own eyes, but something to render him glorious according to the father's thoughts.. Whatever "enough " may signify according to man's dictionary of unbelief, according to God it must be that which will satisfy God Himself. The father knows and. chooses the robe-the son is to be honorably appareled -is to have the ring on his hand, and the shoes on his feet, not for the sake of the son's eyes, but the father's. Here, then, we have the privileges of the burnt-offering -acceptance--sweet savor-perfection; not that we are to be offered up wholly (though it may be well to learn that lesson also by the way; the Lord grant we may learn it more and more!), but that the full acceptance of Jesus, the fire of God having searched Him through: and through, and brought out nothing but a sweet savor, should rest on us. And here it might be said,. Surely this is all. Nay, but the two blessings already noticed are but steps to a third, the crown (in one sense) of all the offerings, just as the killing of beasts, and the mingling of wine, and the furnishing of the table, are but the preliminaries to the feast-and a feast, as the Preacher tells us (Ecclesiastes 10:19), is made for laughter, or joy. Hitherto it might be supposed that mere compassion dictated the dealings of the father with the son, though indeed not according to our view of the burnt-, offering, which we have just stated. And it might have been supposed that compassion, and the natural yearnings of the parent's heart, would lead him to see that his son should be filled as well as warmed, and thus that he should order the servants to provide meat for the hungry one, and strong drink for the lost one who was ready to 'perish, and wine for the relief of his heavy heart. But no-this would be to deny desire in the father, or only to allow it as naturally stirred up by compassion, at the sight of unsatisfied desire in another. But this is not according to God's account of Himself. God has his desire and his joy, of which our poor desires after Him, and our joy in Him, are but the faint reflection. Redemption was not a makeshift, as men say, the last resource of a foiled contriver, but the grand and perfect counterpart of the original design of the mind of God. But to return to the parable;--" And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and" (mark what follows) "let us eat and be merry"-not " Let the prodigal be kept from merely starving ", but " Spread the feast, for I will dine with him, and he with me, many others rejoicing at the same time. Surely there is meaning in that expression in Leviticus, " the food of the Lord's offering;" the. Lord Himself enjoys communion with His recovered people. I would add, that the longing of God for communion with His own is expressed in various parts of the Word, especially Song of Solomon 2:4. How often do Christians dwell with comfort (and rightly, if they do not exclusively) on the Bridegroom's assurance of the spotlessness and beauty of the bride, and on the bride's desire for

the Bridegroom, who, it is to be feared, think little of the Bridegroom’s desire for the presence of the bride.* I would just remark, in conclusion, that the names of the offerings in our English version are easily misunderstood, especially those of the meat-offerings and the peace-offering. The words "meat-offering," convey to modern ears the very opposite of the real meaning, 1:e. it is almost the only offering in which meat, in the usual sense of the word, that is, animal food, or as we say, flesh, was absent. A more appropriate term would be meal-offering, or as the French neatly express it, "le gateau." Again, peace-offering sounds to unlearned ears, as if it were the same as the sin-offering-an offering of atonement, or for making peace. Prosperity-offering, or thank-offering, would be nearer the truth. Perhaps the character of the offering would be well expressed by the name communion-offering, 1:e. an offering, in the partaking of which communion was enjoyed, on the ground of the prosperity which the Lord had granted.

(* See again Song of Solomon 8:13, where the sex of the dweller in the gardens, and consequently the force of the passage, is lost in our English version. It is the Bridegroom longing to hear the bride’s voice (see Heb.))

Vol 02 - The Old Prophet of Bethel

The Old Prophet of Bethel The effect of sin was to separate the heart from God; so the conduct of sinners (Romans 3:18); " There is none that seeketh after God." The natural heart is opposed to God; and the enmity already there, is increased by the subtlety of Satan, in order that he may keep it from Him, whom to know is life and peace. When, in His grace, the soul is quickened and brought nigh by the blood of Christ, the hostility of Satan ceases not. A present God, is present power. The enemy of souls seeks to undermine our dependence upon God, and thus separate us from Film. In the former case, security is pledged; in the latter, endangered. And if life (" because he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself") is certain, yet fruit-bearing ceases, and the Lord is not honored. Whilst rejoicing in the salvation provided for us in the gospel, we must remember the object of it, in that God may be glorified in us. And to this object Satan is opposed. Many are the ways by which he succeeds. Oftentimes by exciting to evil, for the chaff is still in us, and needs but the fuel to ignite. But the believer escapes to his hiding-place (Psalms 32:7). He knows the enemy in this form and avoids him. Or if taken unawares, yet the source of the evil is detected, confessed and forgiven (1 John 1:9). But the enemy is not put down or turned from his purpose. if he cannot work to our injury by things which are evil, he will strive to do it by that which is good. The good which flows from God shall be presented as food for the soul, instead of the God who supplied it. The fruits of faith in God, instead of the God of the fruits. And it is just here where his success has been most eminent. If the bait, in the form of gross evil, is not taken, and his presence detected, yet, transformed into an angel of light, he succeeds. The world and its allurements may be overcome; but that which is good being perverted to raise a reputation for ourselves, instead of bringing glory to God; by that we fall. The precept being regarded-" When ye have done all, say ye are unprofitable servants"- is the state of heart which preserves. But, alas! who is sufficient for these things!

We have, in the subject before us, an instructive lesson. Judgment pronounced upon evil by the prophet of the Lord, and the reception he met with. The opposition of the king, and the power of God supporting his servant. The servant’s faithfulness in obeying the commandment and in refusing a reward; closing with his fall and the occasion of it. He is proof against temptation when presented in the form of evil, and he falls when tempted by apparent good. The voice of a brother, his standing and reputation, are honored above the word of God. He disobeys the former and accredits a lie in the latter. The Holy Ghost is silent as to the sin of the old prophet of Bethel. The sin of the one against his neighbor is clear; but the sin against God in the other’s disobedience is clearer. We are often taken up with that which is an injury to many, regardless of that which is done against God. Many can contend earnestly for love to the brethren, and warmly resent failure in this respect, yet remain unmoved when the truth of God, on which it is based, is sought to be undermined. We cannot hold the truth, without love to the brethren being a consequence. The fruit-bearing which-flows from communion with God is the evidence of it. " Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all things else shall be added unto you." The communion of saints did not spring from their agreement with one another, but their union of heart about God. Taught by His

spirit the virtue and value of the Lord Jesus for them, they rolled themselves in the confidence of love upon His care. That they enjoyed His presence was manifest, in that " great grace was upon them all." In beholding the love of God, they became vessels for transmitting it. " Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord they were changed!" " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." He bestows His gifts on those who love Himself. There is positive declension in the soul, when the gifts are spoken more about than the Given-when saints can be grieved for the lack of right deportment to themselves from their brethren, yet indifferent as to right thoughts about God in Christ. Dishonor to the Lord is less thought about than disrespect to one another. But so it is under every trial: man has proved himself untrue to God; God, in His covenant with Christ, true to man. " He abideth faithful." Blessed that it is so! Most blessed! because He changes not, we have confidence and hope. We must cease from man. We must trust in God. The subject before us so graphically portrayed, is not novel in its occurrence. A saint to day and a prophet then, have features in common. Seeing the one, you recognize the other. The servant of God subduing every outward opposition, and himself subdued by that which was within.

Very weak ones have got the victory over the world outside the church, have overcome its threats, and despised its rewards. Very strong ones have fallen from troubles within. Ostensible evil is easily resisted; when, disguised as good, it subdues. Hence the need of constant dependence upon God, and right thoughts about Him, that He may give us the spirit of dependance upon Him. There was a bond between Job and God, as related in chap. 42, ver. 8. " Ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job." Job had his failings and many of them. But Job had right thoughts of God. We have our failings and many of them, so that no less a Christ than the Christ of God can meet our need. Let us beware of dishonoring Him, and of that which is as bad, if not worse, assuming a neutral attitude. Judging the wrong ways of many who are contending for the right, instead of identifying ourselves with those on the Lord’s side. The sin of Jeroboam provoked the judgment of God, and in the chapter before us is given the prophet’s denunciation against the altar. The course of the prophet to the close of the tenth verse, is marked by steadfastness in the service of his master. He set out on his errand by the word of the Lord. He delivers his message. The king is provoked to wrath, and commands the prophet to be seized. " He put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold of him, and his hand which he put forth against him dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him." The word of the Lord is adhered to, and His strength goes along with it. He identifies Himself with His testimony. The king, smitten, becomes a suppliant. He who stretched out his hand against God cannot draw it back again. And he entreats of the prophet to pray for hill’. What instruction is here The servant, whilst witnessing for God, is supported by Him; and the power of the world is humbled at his feet. And so it should be with the church. Not because she is the called of God, but for His sake who called her Alas, she has used the grace God has bestowed, for her own exaltation, forgetful of His glory. "And the man of God besought the Lord, and the king’s hand was restored him again, and became as it was before." And the king said unto the man of God, " Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward." And the man of God said unto the king, " If thou wilt give me half thine house I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place. For so it was charged me, by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou earnest. So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel."

Thus far the word of the Lord is obeyed-the testimony against the altar delivered. Outward opposition was overcome, and the gifts of the ungodly king rejected. The prophet was not afraid of his threats, and was proof against his rewards. His separateness as God's witness against ungodliness was maintained. Yet, " let not him that putteth on his armor boast as he that taketh it off."

Many trials await us in the wilderness. We cannot raise so much as our helmet (Ephesians 6:17), but we are open to the darts of the foe. The sense of danger should keep us on the alert. It was " whilst men slept that the enemy sowed tares." That which is most apparent, is the least dangerous. The history of the Church elucidates this. Open opposition to God's people drove them to Him for protection. " When Peter saw the wind was boisterous, he was afraid, and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me!" The greatest danger to the Lord's people is from one another. Paul, speaking to the elders of the Church of Ephesus, warns them that grievous wolves should enter in among them-" Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." "Looking diligently, lest any man fall from the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Such portions of the Word healthily digested in the soul, would work wonders in the way of keeping down self-sufficiency amongst saints. None ever wandered so far from the truth, but any of us may go further; none ever dishonored God by sin, however hateful, but we may do worse. We cannot depend upon one another. We cannot confide in one another; and the communion of saints did not consist in leaning upon one another; but each individual trusted in God, and, according to His faith, was in a position to assist his neighbor. If brotherly love could be sustained apart from God, then in just such proportion could we do without God. But "of Him, and to Him, and through Him, are all things." He gives the blessing, and His is the power to sustain it. In honoring Him, we are taught to honor one another. When His glory is our aim, our happiness is His. Exalted conception of the majesty and dignity of the Lord Jesus... and God the father delights to shower down blessing on His people. His happiness is in them, and they find their happiness in Him. Let us beware of unhallowed thoughts of the Son of God. Let us eschew curious disquisition about His person. His name is Wonderful; no man can unravel the mystery. He is presented to us as the object of adoration, not as a subject for inspection. "He smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord." But again to our narrative. We read in verses 11 to 19, " Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. And their father said unto them, What way went he? for his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that earnest from Judah? and he said, I am. Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: for it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou earnest. He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water." Paul, writing to the Galatians in chap. 1:8, says, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have

preached unto you, let him be accursed." The prophet of Judah had delivered his testimony upon the express revelation of God to himself, and it was not said to him " Go to such a person, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." We have a standard in the written Word, and the Spirit of God also to enable us to apprehend it. A revelation discordant with it could not be accredited. The New Testament unfolding the purpose of grace in the Gospel, was but the fulfillment of the promises recorded in the Old. The prophet of Bethel might have much to recommend him to notice. His years would add weight to his words. He came as a brother, and put in his claim to be so regarded because of his brotherhood. The temptation was strong, and succeeds. We shall do well to take heed in our days. A man, in the grace of God, may understand and clearly put forth the grace of the Gospel. A man, in the strength of the Lord, may manifest much of the savor of Christ in his life. God may put honor upon him, and he may deserve to be honored; but God allows no man to usurp His place.

Those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, " and the man in labors more abundant," are alike debtors to grace. What hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Who maketh thee to differ from another? Eminent gifts for the edification of the body, or shining faith for the example of the body, give no pre-eminence over it. God gave them for the service of the Church, and their service is real only as it leads the soul to rely on God. The servant should serve for the Lord’s sake, and the body be grateful for the Lord’s sake. The servant should wait on the body, because it is the Lord’s; and the body should cherish the servant, for the Master’s sake. And when this is the principle of service, it carries over every difficulty, even as with Paul, " The less he was loved the more he loved." They were dear to the Lord, though unfaithful to him; and the single eye as to whose they were, strengthened his purpose in ministry. How full of instruction is the life and career of Paul! How true to his Master; and, therefore, how true to His members! How dear to him the honor of Jesus; and, therefore, the welfare of His Church! He would not have them regard him, but Christ in him, and follow him only as he followed Christ. How this shines forth in his parting scene with the elders at Ephesus! He "commends them to God, and the word of His grace."

Fatal delusion, if the servant of Christ allows the maintenance of his own credit and character to occupy the place of the Lord’s glory and honor! Sad folly, if’ his own wounded feelings distress him more than the

Lord being wounded afresh in the house of his friends"! Our own happiness is secured just so far as the Lord’s glory is our aim. Faithfulness to Him secures devoted love to His people. God in Christ must be the spring of every right action for Him. Diversity of judgment in minor matters will not disturb the peace of a community, where conscience towards God is respected. Whilst praying that we may see eye to eye, we can give God thanks that the eye is directed to Him. The commandment, " This is my beloved Son, hear him! " effectually closes the door to any one less than Him. True teaching sets Christ before the taught. The subject matter conveyed will occupy the heart more than the person who imparts instruction. The object is to bring the soul into obedience to God. The instrument can never take His place, so John in his Epistle writes, " Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God." The prophet of Judah failed in this. "I am a prophet as well as thou art," said the old Prophet of Bethel. God, who gave the calling to both, is displaced. Their character and standing is before them, responsibility to God forgotten. No uncommon occurrence in another light in our day. Brethren in Christ may dispute about their relative qualifications, whilst God, the Giver of them, is little thought of. And this is

Satan’s object. We can be jealous for fruits, and not care about the tree, until the blossom is nipped and blighting winter comes over the soul. Added to this, disobedience to God brings down His judgments. And these things are written for our admonition. The manner of the punishment, also, is characteristic of the offense. If man’s word is regarded before God, then by man shall the sentence of condemnation be inflicted. If saints care more for their own credit with brethren, then obedience to God in His word, and prefer quiet at the sacrifice of a good conscience, they may yet learn, as did the Prophet of Judah, that the very parties for whom they have made shipwreck of faith, will be instruments, in God’s hands for their chastisement.

" And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the Prophet that brought him back: And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord: Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but tamest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place of the which the Lord did say-to thee, Eat no bread and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come into the sepulcher of thy fathers." And so it fell out unto him. And in verses 23, 24, 25, we have the judgment recorded. The Prophet was sent to Jeroboam because the latter had disobeyed the Lord and departed from Him. Now the servant falls himself into the sin of hearkening to man and neglecting God. As was before remarked, he triumphed over the opposition of the world without, and is seduced into unfaithfulness by a brother within. Communion with God is the basis of fellowship with one another. Love to God, from the knowledge of His love to us, produces love to one another. The thoughts of God concerning His people, communicated by His Spirit, form affection towards them. But He is the source of it (Psalms 87:7): " All my springs are in Thee."

Thus John, writing to Gaius, addresses him "whom I love in the truth." Harmony and peace flow from Him. They have no existence apart from Him. Hence, statements of truth propounded for our reception, must be weighed in the sanctuary before Him. No instrumentality, however eminent, releases the saint from responsibility to God. If God, by His Spirit through the Word, sets seal to the communication that it is true, we honor the instrument because God has so used him. To accredit the vessel for transmitting the truth, without inquiring of God as to its being truth, is to honor the creature in the place of the Creator, and set man in the place of God. Thus the Prophet of Judah falls a victim to his folly. It may be he was weary with his work, for he was " found sitting under an oak." It may be the weakness of his flesh sorely tried him. The Apostle warns against such a condition in Hebrews 12:2, when exhorting believers to consider Jesus, "Lest ye be weary and faint in your minds." Again, "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not."

It is manifestly possible for such lassitude, from continued trial, to overpower the believer, that he becomes an easy prey to the devices of the enemy; forgetting that " God giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength" (Isaiah 40:29).

Rest was presented to the eye of the Prophet, and his heart already longed for it. The bait is gilded over by a brother’s reputation; he takes it, and falls. Sad consequences for him, yet full of instruction to us.

It surely was a time of general apostasy and grievous departure from God, when the circumstances detailed in our narrative occurred. Yet, so much the more culpable was the

disobedience of the Prophet of Judah. Just as in our day to acknowledge the ruined condition of the Church, involves responsibility to God, not incurred by those who do not recognize it. In the days of the Prophet Micah, how lamentable the evil by which he was surrounded, how dark the picture: yet how blessed the conclusion to which he was brought! " He could not trust in a friend, or put confidence in a guide." " Therefore (he says) I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me." And so in Malachi 3:16 : "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it." The Prophet of Bethel, who thus led his brother astray, he too has his hour of sorrow. Perhaps he was jealous of the testimony God had confided to the Prophet of Judah, as also of the honor put upon him in the work the Lord had done by him that day in Bethel. Be this as it might, there was a spark in his heart, which needed but the enemy to fan into a flame, and he became a fit instrument for his brother's destruction. Not that he foresaw the consequences, though he was the tool to bring them about. Nor did his sin in tempting, excuse the other in yielding to the temptation. His soul, out of communion with God, devised a lie to deceive, and the soul of the other, out of communion, was easily betrayed. Sad was the fate of the victim, and sorrowful the lamentation of the old Prophet of Bethel (verses 26, 27, 28, 29). " And the old Prophet came to the city to mourn and to bury him. And he laid his carcass in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother! And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulcher wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones: for the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass."

Sorrowful picture of human frailty and its consequences. He mourns the dead he betrayed when living, and accredits the testimony borne by his brother as according to God: seeking consolation for his grief, saying, " When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulcher wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones."

" The Lord give us understanding in all things " (2 Timothy 2:7).

L.

"The path narrows as we near the goal."

Every prop must fall but one.

" Thy rod and thy staff."-Jacob crossed the Jordan with it, and it is beautiful to see him close the scene in worship-"leaning on the top of his staff." May it be ours, too, so to close this earthly pilgrimage, if we are called to die, or patient hold it till the Lord Himself call us hence away-to be "forever with the Lord."-S.

Vol 02 - The Prospect

The Prospect Head of the Church, Thy body, Jesus, our great salvation!

Sweet to Thy saints

It is to think Of all thine exaltation!

All power to Thee ’s committed, All power in earth, and heaven, To thee a name

Above all fame, Above all glory ’s given.

Thy saints with Thee are raised, With thee on high are seated, Poor, sinful now, But soon with thee (Blest thought!) to be completed; For when Thou, Lord, and Savior, Shalt come again in glory, There by Thy side Thy SPOTLESS Bride Shall crown the wondrous story.

Then comes the final Kingdom, No bound, nor end possessing, When Heaven, and earth, Entranced shall lie In universal blessing; No murmuring tongue to sadden, No breath of sin to wither, In earth-on high-- Be naught but joy, And blissful peace forever!

Vol 02 - The Resurrectio

The Resurrection

Second Answer - A Parenthesis (Verses 39-41).

Flesh or Bodies.

All flesh is not the same flesh: But there is one kind of flesh ofmen, Another flesh ofbeasts, Another offishes, And another ofbirds.

Illustration of the following fact.

(So)

There are (or will be) alsocelestial bodies, (1:e.spiritual bodies in heaven), And bodiesterrestrial: 1:e. (natural bodies on earth).

Fact Illustrated above by the varieties offleshamongst men and animals.

Glories.

But

The glory of thecelestial(spiritual body) is one, And the glory of theterrestrial(body) is another.

Fact afterward illustrated by the gradations ofgloryin the planetary system.

(Just as)

There is one glory of thesun, And another glory of themoon, And another glory of thestars; For one star differeth from another star in glory.

Illustration of the above fact.

Vol 02 - The Three Crowns

The Three Crowns "Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory." (Luke 24:26).

Such was the order of the divine counsels. If the Son of God humbled Himself to take the form of a servant, and to be found in fashion as a man, and to become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross-and all this for the wondrous end of displaying the grace of God-His name of humiliation becomes His name of exaltation; and throughout the range of heaven and earth, and even that which is beneath it, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. "For the suffering of death, Jesus is crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God might taste death for every one." It is thus that the worth of the humiliation of Jesus is not only to be estimated as that by which God is glorified; but the worth of His obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross, is also manifested in the royal and priestly dignity, into which those are brought who make confession unto the Crucified One, as Savior and Lord. It is by the blood of Jesus that they are made kings and priests unto God and His Father. They enter into glory upon the sole ground of His precious blood-shedding. To Him as the Lamb they ascribe exclusively their redemption. "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." But besides the common regal and priestly dignity so graciously secured to the believer, we find mention made in the New Testament of specific crowns-" the crown of righteousness," "the crown of life," "the crown of glory." These are held out as encouragements to the saint under special circumstances of trial which meet him in his path; and it will be interesting to trace the connection between the circumstances, and the particular crown held out as an encouragement under them. To be curious where God has been silent, or to attempt to shape divine revelation to human thought, is at all times prejudicial to the soul; but not to weigh the connection of Scripture, or to rest in vague generalities where the word of God is definite and precise, is to deprive ourselves of much comfort, as well as of profitable instruction. At the close of his active and eventful ministry, the Apostle Paul thus expresses himself: " I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Whatever were the hardships and sufferings of his ministry, and the humiliating position in which he was placed by it in the eyes of men, the Apostle felt its true dignity. He was "set for the defense of the Gospel," the noblest service in which it was possible for a man to be engaged; for it was no less than vindicating the honor of Christ. His deep anxiety of soul for the preservation of the faith, as that in which the welfare of the Churches was involved, was in his estimation more than all the pressure from without-" besides that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches." He had no respite from warfare. "The faith" was assailed on every side, and from the most opposite quarters. It was equally endangered by Jewish ordinances and Gentile philosophy, slothful ignorance and prying curiosity. The saints for the most part were not alive to the importance of contending for "the faith." They did not perceive that by so doing they were favoring

the "righteous* cause" of Christ. Such a principle is needed in order to contend heart and soul for the faith once delivered to the saints. But the saints themselves are often impatient of either being roused to activity, or of being disturbed from their ease. Hence the facility with which "the faith" has been corrupted. Some have passively listened to teachers, "whose word will eat as doth a canker." Some would follow in the more liberal school of such teachers as Hymenaeus and Alexander, and "putting away a good conscience, make shipwreck concerning the faith." Some, instead of receiving by faith that which it had pleased God to reveal, were always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Others again openly controverted, and even with bitter animosity, the teaching of the Apostle, as Alexander the copper-smith. The Apostle was as it were the teacher of one single idea-yet how high, how vast, how comprehensive an idea, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." He would not allow this grand idea to be either overlaid or undermined. On the eve of his departure, he was able to say, " I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith." He had allowed no inroad on the faith from any quarter. He dealt with its depravers indeed very differently; but he never allowed the thought of charity to interfere with his most uncompromising defense of "the faith," whether it was endangered by the vacillating conduct of an Apostle, or the avowed opposition of a coppersmith. "The faith," in the estimation of the Apostle, involved something far beyond the question of individual salvation; an invasion on its integrity was an attack on the rights of Christ. It is this which gives its value to "the faith." In human estimate, the welfare of man is the point; but in the estimate of God, and of those who are born of Him, the first and last point is the glory of Christ. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.

(* Psalms 35:27 : "Let them shout for joy, and be glad that favor my righteous cause." Margin, " righteousness.")

What is "the faith" but the present assertion of the dignity of the person of the Son, and all the titles, styles, honors, and offices which belong to Him as "the Christ of God?" The Church is set here as a witness to Him in that which He essentially is, as well as all His given glory. All this will be manifested in due time, and there will be no room for gainsaying them. But the rejection of Christ by the world has raised the question, on the ground of righteousness, whether Christ or the world is right. It is on this ground that we find the crown of righteousness connected with keeping the faith. Christ has been unrighteously deprived of His honor by the world, and His honor has not yet been publicly vindicated by judgment. In the meanwhile, those who are taught of God to know Him, live only for one end as their highest object, and that end is to assert His rights. It may be but in very feeble testimony - it necessarily must be with personal humiliation, and real denying of self; but they only who are living for such an object will be found in the right when Christ is publicly manifested. Such have renounced all that men esteem valuable for Christ, and have asserted His honor when the assertion of His honor brings no present advantage; and this, in God’s estimate, is righteousness. Hence the encouragement to fighting the good fight of faith. When Jesus appears, He will own those who have stood up for His honor as having been on the side of righteousness. The question has been raised by the Lord Jesus Himself, as to whether He or the world is right. It is a question of righteousness. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me." The Father hath vindicated the righteous cause of His Son, by raising Him from the dead, and giving Him glory-leaving the world

(in righteous retribution) under the wicked one, until the rights of the Son are publicly vindicated by judgment on the world. If we take part with Christ, while His rights are actually unvindicated by judgment on the world, we are on the side of righteousness; and the crown of righteousness, when Christ's title shall be fully vindicated, is held out as our encouragement in the confession of Him before men. If we side with the world, then are we classed with those who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. The crown of righteousness is held out to all that "love the appearing" of Jesus; for His appearing makes manifest to all, that which the Holy Ghost has manifested to His disciples now, and which they have confessed unto before men.

There is an interesting connection between this passage of the apostle in his Epistle to Timothy, and the address of the Lord Himself to the Church of Philadelphia. "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." In all its feebleness, this Church had stood up for the honor and dignity of Christ. They did not measure the value of the name of Jesus by their own conscious weakness. This they maintained; and the exhortation to them is, still to maintain it. "Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast; that no man take thy crown." The Lord regarded them as already crowned. They were on the side of righteousness: and the danger was lest the crown should be taken from them by their ceasing to confess the name of Jesus. "Behold, I come quickly;" and then the crown with which He saw them already invested, would be publicly seen by others-a Crown of Righteousness. So the apostle, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me; and not to me only, but to all who love His appearing." Those who keep His word, and deny not His name, may well love His appearing; even as it is said of the faithful remnant of Israel in a yet future day: " Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word: Your brethren that hated and cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed."

"The Crown of Life." "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." This crown is held out as encouragement, under the peculiar and characteristic, temptation to which the saint is exposed by "loving his life in this world." The Lord presents Himself, as knowing His own worth, as the one absorbing object of our affections; on the other hand, the god of this world, either directly or indirectly, presents some present object of advantage or interest. Hence the temptation. Is the present object of Christ most precious to us? It is as though the Lord Himself addressed us individually in the person of Peter, " Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" whatever the object may be. The crown of life is given to those "who love Him," even as the crown of righteousness is given to those who "love His appearing." This line of doctrine of the value of the Lord Jesus Himself as a paramount object, is thus presented to us by the Lord Himself: " If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me; for whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? for the Son of Man shall come in the glory of the Father, with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to his works." The Lord alone is a worthy exchange for the soul; everything else is worthless to give the soul for. How wise, how rich, how blessed is that mans who has exchanged himself for Christ! Man can give nothing in exchange for his soul; but Christ presents Himself to be received, in the conscious knowledge of His own value. The life which Jesus gives to them who receive Him is a life only nourished by faith in Him, feeding on Him;

who gave it. It finds no aliment from anything in this world; all here is contrary to it, and it has to struggle its way all the time we are here through opposing obstacles. It is endurance unto the end; and this endurance is characteristic. It is alike in contrast with Israel in the land under David and Solomon, and with Israel restored in the millennium under David's Son. In both these instances there is no "patience of hope," but actual possession. But now the life communicated from the risen and glorified Head in heaven, to the individual members on earth, necessitates trial. The life thus communicated does not, as it were, breathe its native air: for this it longs. What freedom, what expansiveness will it have, when Christ who is our life shall appear, and we also appear with Him in glory. But so long as the life so communicated is here, it is characterized by endurance. "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing." "Tribulation worketh patience." "They bring forth fruit with patience." Patience or endurance is, practically, the key-word to us. We have to do with the God of patience; and we are strengthened according to His glorious power unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. There are indeed special temptations to which as individuals we are liable, but present circumstances of themselves become a trial to the saint, because he is a saint. We are in the world, and the world is under the Wicked One; and we know very experimentally the difference between quietly floating down the stream, and being set against its course. All of the world which once we thought to be for us, is now felt to be against us. The world, and all in it-whether conventionally bad or good, moral or immoral, religious or irreligious-was set against Jesus, because He was not of it, and this, His living testimony against it that its deeds were evil, was acutely felt by it. His gracious word to His disciples is, "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed me." It is with respect to temptations of this kind that we are exhorted to run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, who for the joy set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame. All the temptations of the blessed Jesus arose from the contrariety of that which was around Him, to that which He was in Himself. "The Prince of this world came, and had nothing in Him." " He was tempted like as we are, yet without sin." All the pressure of circumstances was let loose against Him, and He suffered under the pressure; but nothing ever turned Him aside from dependence on God, or made Him swerve from His purpose of doing the will of God. He carried His obedience to death, even the death of the Cross; He endured the Cross, "and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God." In Him we see what life crowned really is, and He holds out to us the crown of life to cheer us in running with patience the race set before us.

" Without sin"-one difference; but an amazing one. "In Him was no sin"-no lust to correspond with the cunningly-devised temptation. Pressure of all circumstances from without must necessarily cause the saint suffering. Such a character of temptation is acutely felt, because of its contrariety to that which the saint is as born of God; but, alas! they know painfully the amazing difference between themselves and Jesus in this very respect-they cannot say " without sin." They know to their sorrow that there is that in them which is ever ready to correspond with the temptation, from whatever quarter it comes. " Every man is tempted when he is drawn aside of his own lust and enticed." The life communicated by the Spirit is thus subject to constant pressure, and exposed to constant hindrances; but even then it turns to us for a testimony that the life is there, by reason of the temptations being so sorely felt. We naturally desire the removal of the temptation, but it pleases the Lord to allow it, in order to show the sufficiency of His own grace. The temptation may increase upon us, so as almost to shut us up in hopelessness, but it only tends to prove the

faithfulness of God. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." In every temptation the turning point will be, whether the Lord or ourselves is the object nearest to our hearts. This is the point which the Lord regards. " Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive," etc. " When he is tried" surely means after having endured the temptation, without yielding to it. What a blessed difference between life suffering and struggling for its very existence, and life crowned, and in that sphere where its energies have unhindered scope, and where there is nothing to distract its affections from the one object which at once draws them forth and satisfies them.

We find the like connection between the crown of life and present trial in the message of the Lord Himself to the Church in Smyrna "I know thy tribulation." "Behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown, of life."

" The Crown of Glory." "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock; and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." There is something exceedingly touching in this, coming as it does through one now matured in the school of Christ. God has His heritage here, and it is exposed to waste. God has His flock here, and it is exposed to present danger. It is very difficult indeed for us to get our thoughts into the channel of God’s thoughts, so as to become interested in that which belongs to Him, because it belongs to Him. It is a thought too large for selfish man to entertain, to be interested in the flock of God, so that the elders themselves were in danger of falling back on the littleness of their own hearts, so as to care for the sheep, not because they belonged to God, but as though they belonged to themselves. Hence the danger of lording it over God’s heritage. The actual state of the Church painfully proves the total disregard of the Apostolic admonition. There is a present reward in taking the oversight, or feeding the sheep of Christ as a congregation. It tends to produce much reciprocity of kindness and sympathy. But the human element so predominates, justified as it is supposed by necessity, and unquestioned from its generality, that the accidents of locality and of congregations have become the essentials of pastoral care; so that even the thought of caring for the flock of God is scarcely entertained. We are all great losers by this. The attempt to care for Christians as the flock of God appears almost hopeless and chimerical; so much so, that if a servant of God is led of the Spirit to act simply for the flock of God, he is regarded either as a suspected person or a disturber of peace and order. The flock of God has ever been " a little flock." It is of little consequence in the estimation of men, and, has its only claim to be cared for, that it belongs to God. But what a claim this is; and how happy, as well as honorable, any service rendered to "the poor of the flock" on such a claim. It is the thought of the value and preciousness of the flock to the chief Shepherd which gives such an interest to any present care of them. Who can estimate the sheep as He does, who says, they are "my sheep"; "I lay down my life for the sheep"-"My Father gave them me"? He is responsible for bringing every sheep safe to the Father; and among His many crowns, His Shepherd crown will not be the least, when He shall say-“ Of those which thou gavest me, I have lost none." It will be His crown of joy

and glory too, that not one of the feeblest of the flock-not one of the most erring, has, through His vigilant and tender care, been plucked out of His hand. True pastoral care may perhaps appear more rare than it actually is, because its exercise is often most unobtrusive. There are, however, occasions when the watchful Shepherd sees the wolf coming, when the sheep are unsuspecting, and even dislike to be alarmed. Nothing short of the deep persuasion that the sheep of Christ are to be cared for because they are His, and because His affections and interests are occupied with them, can lead either to efficient oversight or diligent feeding. It is the lack of this essential element-namely, responsibility to Christ, in caring for that which belongs to Christ-which so enfeebles pastoral ministry in our day. The true genius of such ministry is that the flock of God is of more consequence than the individual who tends it. The present glory of the Christian Shepherd is thus expressed: "Your servant for Jesus' sake." To watch over the flock, to warn of coming danger, and if the wolf is coming boldly to meet him, is not to lord it over God's heritage, but to act in duty to Christ. The glory of Christ personally, and care for the sheep as being His, are inseparably connected; but when the thought of man having propriety in the sheep is introduced, so that they are regarded as " his flock ' or " his people," the glory of Christ often becomes secondary to the desire of keeping the flock together, and Christ's own sheep are cast out. When the Shepherd of Israel Himself visited His people, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and "were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." The shepherds of that day "fed themselves, and not the flock." "They had trodden down the pastures and fouled the waters. ' When one sheep heard the voice of the chief Shepherd and followed Jesus, the accredited shepherds " cast him out" (John 9:1-41) It is a mournful spectacle when the honor of Christ is sacrificed professedly for' the care of the flock; for true care for the flock of God cannot exist without a paramount regard to the honor of Christ Himself., Jesus was forced to lead out " His own sheep" from that fold which was maintained against His own honor, and to set up a new fold in heaven, because the old earthly fold afforded no any security for His sheep (John 10:1-42) In heaven He is now known, as " the great Shepherd of the sheep brought again from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant "; and His own sheep on earth own Him in the same blessed title. He not only exercises His Shepherdly care and oversight, as risen and glorified, but as having laid down His life for the sheep, the sheep being thus His own by purchase, as well as by distinct gift of the Father. What deep interest, what loving care must He necessarily take in the sheep; and now, as "seen of angels," what glory must be His, in not losing sight of the feeblest saint, and in counteracting all the power and wiles of the adversary. Faith now owns Him as "the good" and "the great Shepherd," and will He not be manifested as the crowned Shepherd? And Israel will then know their rejected Shepherd, whose heart yearned with compassion over the multitudes, as the only true Shepherd-King. "Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

How perfect is the order of divine teaching! It is Peter the Elder who speaks to the elders. He had been a witness of the sufferings of Christ, when He laid down His life for the sheep. He duly estimated the value of those sufferings, and could speak with divine certainty on such a ground, as about himself to partake of the glory to be revealed. But he knew how closely connected that glory was with the flock of God. It was after he had witnessed the sufferings of Christ, and had seen the Lord alive from the dead, that he had learned how dear to the heart of Christ were His sheep.

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? he saith unto Him; Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto Him, Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And He said unto Him, Lord, thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." Peter thus learned the value and preciousness of the sheep of Christ to Christ Himself. He could very feelingly associate the flock with the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow; and how suitable for him who had received the thrice repeated commission to feed the flock, to say to the elders with his own eye on the glory, "Feed the flock of God." How suitable, also, for him, in the deep knowledge of the value of the sheep to Christ Himself, to connect the humble service of tending the flock with the crown of glory! It was the shepherd lad whom his father thought not of bringing before the prophet, on whom the Lord had set his eye. " He chose David, also, his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands." The humble office of tending the flock was the suited preparation for the crown of royalty. David, the shepherd, becomes the Lord’s anointed king,-true picture of the great and good Shepherd King I And where can the varied grace of Christ be so deeply learned as in tending the sheep of Christ? No trial, no sorrow, no temptation, no feebleness has escaped His forethought; and tending the flock is the application of the manifold grace of God in Christ, to the manifold need of His sheep. Such ministry may be very unobtrusive, and one which brings no present honor its proper sphere is by no means necessarily one of publicity. Public ministry has its honored place; but tending the flock will lead a great deal more into private and individual ministry. An elder physically disabled for the active ministry of public testimony, may still find an honorable retirement in watching over the flock of God; warning of coming danger, comforting the feeble-minded, restraining the impatience of youth, rectifying disproportioned truth. If an elder be indeed "a father," he knows "Him that was from the beginning;" having learned, by long experience, his own need of all that Christ is, he will be jealously alive to His glory, and will often see a danger unperceived by others, of some passing subject of interest displacing Christ. How many once absorbing objects, even in the Church of God, have passed away; how many fond expectations have been disappointed. The interest in Christ’s sheep, in that which they were to the elder himself, has been superseded by the more healthful interest in them as belonging to Christ; and the crown of glory which fadeth not away is held out as an encouragement. A pet-lamb often grows to be mischievous, whilst the flock, which has had the common care of the shepherd, are gentle and docile. Christians have been injured almost as much by being petted as by neglect. They often think of their pastor, to the practical forgetfulness of Christ Himself being the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, and that His under-shepherds are responsible to Him for the care of His sheep. For the most part, pastoral care has too much in it of the human element; personal regard for the man himself is more prominent than esteem for his work’s sake. Hence pastoral care has often much present reward-so as not to render needful the encouragement of the crown of glory. If pastoral care is bestowed on Christ’s sheep, because they belong to Christ, it will feel and value such a blessed encouragement.

It is interesting to notice how inseparably these crowns are associated with the appearing of Jesus Himself. He is the Giver of the crown; and what would any crown be if it was not His gift, that we

might wear it or cast it down in His own immediate presence? Does the apostle speak of a crown of Righteousness? he says, " which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day, arid not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." It is said, "he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him." "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." And, lastly, it is written, "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away. ' The thought of personal or official glory can never displace in the soul the more blessed thought of seeing Jesus as He is, being like Him, and enjoying His immediate presence forever. "Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." PRESBUTES.

EXODUS.-The word Exodus (■ξοδος* way out), would find its solution, as the LXX name of the book, in chapter 12. The Hebrew name ■■■■■■■■these are the names, or more usually ■■■■, names, is taken from the first verse of the book, and is perhaps merely a technical guide to it.

(* See its use in Luke 9:31 -as interesting and peculiar-applied to the Lord’s death.)

Vol 02 - The Worthiness of the Lamb

The Worthiness of the Lamb

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living-ones 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 IP receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."-Revelation 5:11-12.

RICH and blessed as are the associations in the mind of every saint of God connected with Christ's title of "the Lamb," it may be questioned whether that which stamps it, in the mind of Heaven, with its peculiar significance, has, so fully as it ought, its place and bearing in the soul. The emphatic exclamation of the Baptist, " Behold the Lamb of God!" indicates the grace and beauty and lowly virtues of Him who bears this name, and marks His title to the adoring worship of our hearts. But this title, as borne by the same blessed One, on high, unfolded in the book of Revelation, brings us associated with other glories and other scenes than those that, it is likely, met the holy musings of John, when he gazed on the blessed Jesus walking by the banks of Jordan, and said, " Behold the Lamb of God!" This title, familiar as it is to our hearts, is almost exclusively connected with the book of Revelation; and is unquestionably designed to indicate the special character in which the bearer of it is there presented. The observance of this may present no unuseful key to the understanding of that wondrous book, which may be " called the book of the rights of the Lamb;" for, certainly, it may be affirmed, that the whole of the details and principles of the prophetic part of it are knit up with this title; while, on its first occurrence in the book, we see heaven, earth, and all redeemed creation, roused by it in joy to accord to Him who bears it, this seven-fold ascription of praise: "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." He alone is declared worthy to receive the whole tribute of the universe and to become the center of its universal praise.

There is, doubtless, a marked difference in the presentation of "the Lamb slain" in this book, and in his presentation by the same title in John 1:29; John 1:36, the only other place in scripture in which as a title it occurs.*

(* Nowhere else, indeed, is the exact expression for in John 1:29; John 1:36, it is " ■ ■μν■ς;" but in the Revelation throughout, it is "τ■ ■ρν■ον."Acts 8:32, and 1 Peter 1:19, are comparisons, expressive of a blessed moral truth, but not applied by way of title.) In the expressions of John, " Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" we see the person of the Lord Jesus, as God's Lamb, presented to the eye of faith, as the substantiation of all that had been prefigured in the way of atonement. He is here pointed out as the full and perfect provision of God for man's need as a sinner, and the only basis on which the mercy of a holy God can restore the guilt-stricken and polluted to his presence. This, there can be no doubt, was the immediate bearing of John's pointing to Jesus, as "the Lamb of God." But in the breadth of the terms, "that taketh

away the sin of the world," it seems as if the Spirit would lead us on beyond the specialty of individual redemption, to the ultimate purpose of the manifestation of the Son of God-in the destruction of the works of the devil-to that point in the counsels of God, in which the blessed stream of redemption reaches its limit; and creation, brought back from subjection "to vanity," is again made capable of receiving and reflecting back the rays of its Creator's goodness and glory, rejoicing in " the glorious liberty of the sons Of God." The Lamb slain in sacrifice, from Abel downward, had declared on the part of the righteous holiness of God, that "Without shedding of blood is no remission;" and on the part of the love of God, the spotlessness of the victim and, its being as a burnt offering " A sweet savor unto the Lord," declared as fully His delight in the perfectness of Jesus-that "Lamb without blemish and without spot "-and of His satisfaction in His wondrous, perfected, atoning work. "Christ hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savor." "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." But in the Revelation, the "Lamb slain" is not presented so much as God's provision of love to meet a sinner's need, or as the perfect Doer of His Father's will, as He is shown, by His rejection and suffering on earth, to have gained a title in heaven to universal homage, and to be the holder of universal power. In the revelations of God to His church, things in reference to Jesus have passed beyond the limit of grace and atonement now; and we are called to contemplate what are the righteous claims of this suffering and rejected victim, as recognized on high. It is true that the heart of a saint knows Him still as " the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The cross abides still in all its wondrous mystery of love, as the attractive point of mercy to meet a sinner's heart. "Pentecost," as the pledge and seal of the resurrection and ascension-glory of the church's Head, tells, by the presence of the abiding "Comforter," of present union, and of coming glory as the portion of the church. But beyond what the gospels reveal of incarnation and suffering; and the epistles unfold of grace untold, flowing down as the church's present portion, from her head in glory, and presenting the brightness of her hope in being "forever with the Lord,"-we have, in this book, the lifting up of a curtain, and sheaving things beyond the Spirit's direct testimony in the church. First, Jesus is shown in the position of rebuke and chastening, through the hour of the church's decadence, as His witness in the world, until rejection comes of that which was wholly unworthy of His care. And then, in the prophetic part, it is not so much the Spirit down here testifying of Christ, as seen on high, in close connection with " the Lamb," who is in the midst of the throne; and as the spirit of prophecy telling indeed of the progress of things here on earth; but that not so much in regard to the events themselves, as in connection with heavenly counsels, which result in the vindication of the claims of " the Lamb." The progress of evil is noticed; but it is noticed only as giving occasion to the introduction of the hand of power by which " the mystery of God " is finished. The opening of the seals, and the sounding of the trumpets, and the pouring out of the vials-whatever may be their effects on earth-have for their one central object, either the declaration or the enforcing by the hand of Divine Power, of the claims of the Lamb. It is, in a word, the blessed accomplishment, in power, of that word in Philippians, "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father." Though there is this difference in the aspect in which this result of the Lord's humiliation and death are presented-here it is the reward of Christ's perfect obedience to the Father's will. In the revelation it is the

vindication, on the part of God, of the claims of Him, who, as to man, had been but a suffering victim-" led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearers, so He opened not His mouth." Therefore, necessarily, judgment, in this vindication, falls on the world that had inflicted His injuries, and still resists His claims. The most cursory study of the book of Revelation must teach us that its object is not so much to unfold the character and fruits of redemption in relation to those who are its happy subjects, as to present the rights and claims of Him by whom redemption was, in " the travail of His soul," accomplished-His right, through redemption, to "inherit all things." And therefore it is, throughout, that Christ, as "the Lamb," in the midst of the throne, and the actings of the throne itself, are in connection with the earth and creation, rather than directly with the church. The fifth chapter, in which this worthiness of the. Lamb is proclaimed, appears to give the entire outline of the prophetic part of the book. Nothing, as it seems, in accomplishment, can go beyond this. Heaven, earth, and all redeemed creation, in this anticipative song, recognize the full claims of Christ's mediatorial glory, as the "Lamb that was slain;" and, in accomplishment, we are brought by it down to the point, "When He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power;" and when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. "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, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." In the challenge which brings the Lamb upon the scene, however symbolic the action, there seems to be but little difficulty in ascertaining the simple truth conveyed. The question-" Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" is designed to present, in strong relief, and in contrast with the hopelessness that springs from all besides, the worthiness and the power of Christ to enter into, and declare the whole mystery of God concerning the course of evil in this world, and its final\redemption from its power. And more than this, to show, on whose behalf it is, and on account of whose worthiness it is, that Creation shall be delivered from the thrall of Satan, and the tribute of its praise be restored to Him whose right it is.

" No man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." The redemption of God's inheritance from the power of Satan, is no work for man. Neither is it in the creature's power to declare through what appliances of power and wisdom the whole craft and power of Satan should be set aside. But there is one and one only found, to accept this challenge; and thus is relieved the oppressive sorrow that hung upon the prophet's heart. "I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon; and one of the Elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

" And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living ones, and in the midst of the Elders, stood a LAMB as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God Sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne." Here the mystery is solved. In redemption Christ has obtained a title to be the whole creation's LORD, as well as the church's blessed Head. As the suffering, meek, and unresisting Victim, Heaven accords to Him the title to universal power and praise. Already -though hidden in the throne-He is manifested to the eye of faith, as being possessed of the perfection of power--" having seven horns "- and also of the controlling, all-pervading energy of God's universal Spirit --" having seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of

God, sent forth into all the earth." Here, therefore, there is One equal to solve this problem; unsolvable by all besides; and to accept a challenge that must be declined by all besides. For who can undertake to save the rights of the eternal God, and to bring back a sin-stained universe to His favor? And who can expel the power of evil by which the scattering and dissevering from God of His creation had been achieved? Before this can be, sin must be atoned, and death undone, and Satan bound. But all this power and worthiness is found in Him who was David's Son and David's Lord. " The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." In death, this title of Redeemer has been sealed as the Lamb's; and in redemption-power will all God's glory, in connection with the creature, eventually stand. The tribute of the universe must be paid alone to Him, who to the death asserted the glory of God in a world of evil; and who, in the administration of the affluence of His power and glory, will turn every stream of creature-good back to the Creator's praise.

Happy is it for the saint, thus instructed in the mind of heaven, to rest in the love and grace of Him who is in the midst of the throne; and happier still, in seeking now to uphold the honor of His name, to count on His power alone, who has the "seven horns and the seven eyes." For how surely is His power and grace directed to sustain the heart that counts on His goodness in seeking in a world of evil to do His will. Soon that power, which now secretly sustains, controls, and overrules; amidst the confusion of Satan's power, will be openly displayed. And how is the heart's joy augmented by the thought, that then the worthiness of the Lamb will not be a secret carried feebly in the bosom of the saint, and contradicted and gainsaid on every hand besides; but evil being removed by the hand of Power, every eye shall gaze upon His beauty, and every heart shall own His claims, and every voice re-echo his worthy praise! And O how soon will this bright scene of glory burst upon our dim anticipations! "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." " And He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." But there is another side of the picture. Heaven's counsels about the Lamb, alas I are fraught alone with sorrow for great Babylon in her luxurious glory, and for the thoughtless dwellers on the earth IN When power Divine shall be put forth to vindicate the claims of earth's reject. ted Victim, what but dismay and displacement can be the result to those who despise His name, and will at last be found in martial array to resist His claims. " These shall make war with the LAMB, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is King of kings, and Lord of lords!" But before this hour arrives what a picture of the world's dismay does the Lamb's opening of the sixth seal present! " And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the LAMB: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

It would be too wide a field, to comment in succession on each instance in this book in which, in different aspects and varied connections, we are brought into contact with the Lamb. In tracing

through, from the fifth chapter to the end, "the Lamb" is ever in the ascendancy. The song of Heaven is, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" (5:6-13.) It is from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, that the men of this world seek to hide themselves in fear (6:15, 16). The palm-bearing multitude, before the throne, have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:9-14). It is the Lamb that feeds them and leads them (as a shepherd) "to living fountains of waters" (7:17). It is the blood of the Lamb that answers all the accusations of Satan, as the accuser of the brethren day and night, on high (12:10, 11). It is in the book of life of the Lamb slain, that the names of the faithful are found written amidst the corruptions of the beast (13:8). It is the Lamb, also, on Mount Zion with the sealed-ones, whose honor and privilege it is, to " follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth " (14:1-4). Again, whoever worships the beast or his image, and receives his mark in his forehead or in his hand, will be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb (14:9, 10). It is the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, that is sung with the "harps of God," by those who, in victory over the beast, stand on " the sea of glass" (15:2-4). It is against the Lamb, that the beast and the ten kings make war; and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (17:12-14). It is the marriage of the Lamb, that strikes the note of joy in heaven; and to be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, is the mark of honor and blessing then (19:7-9). And, after the seals are loosed, and the trumpets are blown, and the vials poured out, when Satan is bound and the clangor of earth’s judgment is hushed, it is " the bride the Lamb’s wife," that is the wondrously glorious spectacle on which the Apostle is called to gaze (21:9). They are the twelve apostles of the Lamb, whose names are in the twelve foundations of the " holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (21:14). Of this city the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple, and " the Lamb is the light thereof" (21:22, 23). There is to be no inhabitant in this glorious city "whose name is not written in the Lamb’s book of life " (21:27). And, onwards, "the river of the water of life " flows out of " the throne of God and the Lamb (22:1). And finally, there is to be no more curse, because the throne of God and of the Lamb are to be there (22:3, 4, 5).

These are but brief and desultory notices of the wondrous character and claims of Him who in heaven is seen as "the Lamb." A suffering victim here on earth, now hid for a season in heaven, but about to be brought forth in full investiture of heaven’s glory; and in vindication of His claims, no place to be allowed for any that refuse to bow in homage to His name. "I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living-ones, 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 honor, and glory, and blessing. 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, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." The scattering and confusion, and sorrow, and death, that sin has brought into the universe of God, admit of no remedy but in redemption. And accordingly the Lamb’s title to the glory and praise of restored creation is founded in this. "They sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." This estimate of Heaven of the Lamb’s worthiness and the preparations on high to enforce His claims, cast a dreadful shadow over the ease, and glory, and power, and security of the world! "Redemption"-alas! the world knows not the meaning of the word! And as to "the Lamb," its whole peace hangs only on the abeyance of His claims!

While the main subject of this book is the presentation and enforcement of the claims of Christ to universal homage, and to universal power, as the suffering Lamb, there is that which gleams forth, as it were incidentally in the vindication of His glory. Far away from the scene of conflict, and before the Lamb comes forth sitting on "the white horse," as "King of kings, and Lord of lords, in righteousness to judge and to make war," there is seen in the peaceful courts of heaven, "the marriage of the Lamb," and, it is added "his wife hath made herself' ready!" For his glory cannot be asserted, and another not be with him in the scene. That "we may be glorified together," is the strange word of scripture! The joy must begin on high, before the glory is displayed below. From heaven the Lamb comes forth to redeem the inheritance, and to take possession of His glory; and "when Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory." And how does this teach the heart of one who knows the espousal of the church to Christ, how little it has to do with' all the busy aims of men; and how little reason it has to covet the world's wisdom, power, or glory, which are but the usurped rights of Christ; while another Lord and Prince is owned. It is not the earth in the power of redemption yet, and yielding its willing homage to the Lamb; but it is the world which made the Lamb a suffering Victim, and still retains its opposition to His claims. D.

Vol 02 - The Wreck

The Wreck

" God is a living and a present God. If His people on earth (where alone they can) have forgotten God, even the Father in heaven, and ceased to walk in the light of a risen and ascended Lord-so owning the gracious presence of the Spirit-they may, as men, have wrecked themselves and their circumstances in time; but God is God still, and in Him is their hope.

"And here (I take it) a question arises, 'How are we to get on in this state of things?' We cannot walk as though there had been no wreck: the vessel, if not in atoms, or gone even into the separate pieces of which it was formed, is not what it was, or what God made it at first; neither would it become us, as those connected with the sin of marring it, to deny this. Moreover, God is not now walking in that path. His testimony is not now in the unshattered church of Pentecost; but it is in grace and mercy, shown in a people preserved, spite, and in the midst, of the wreck. To make the wreck, or the perception of it, the centralizing point, were madness and sin. If the mercy of God in preserving in Christ Jesus, and entire separation from the sin (moral and spiritual) around, are our solace -' The obedience of faith' will solve all our difficulties."

B.

Chapter 82

Vol 02 - Then Will I Make This House Like Shiloh

Then Will I Make This House Like Shiloh The question, I apprehend, which is troubling many minds now, is suggested in this denunciation of the prophet Jeremiah. The breaking up of formal unity, the breaking up of a testimony really coming in great measure from God, troubles saints. They are not prepared for it. They count it a strange thing. Yet let us look at God’s ways, He guiding us. The general truth of the failure of every dispensation in man’s hands used -to be very familiar with us: we begin with the first, "man made upright;" and we find (Genesis 6:6), "And it repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart " (because of man’s corruption). And then comes the flood. But without going into the great outlines of dispensation, let us look more intimately into the record that Israel affords us. In Numbers 14:1-45 we find that, God, having brought up Israel out of Egypt, next year orders spies to be sent up to search the land. They are to have definitely before them, what is the nature of the land they are going to possess. Ours is a reasonable hope. God likes us to know what we are laboring for (Hebrews 4:1-16). They do learn this: it is a good land, but they despise it. They deliberately turn back in heart into Egypt. Well, God says (verse 28), " As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you. Doubtless ye shall not come into the land: your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness:…and ye shall know (verse 34) my breach of promise." So then, there is such a thing as breach of promise with God. In one sense, we know with joy, "His gifts and calling are without repentance." But as to testimony and blessing upon earth, there is such a thing as those entirely failing to whom that testimony and blessing is committed, and God committing it to others, that His purposes may be accomplished. " Your little ones, they shall know the land which ye have despised;" and by them was God’s promise really fulfilled.

Look onward, as to Eli: the question, I suppose, of priesthood. What says the Lord? (1 Samuel 2:30). "The Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me forever; but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me: for them that honor me I will honor; but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." And mark how searching is that question of honoring. "Thou honourest thy sons above me," etc. The Lord’s quarrel was " against the iniquity which he [Eli] knoweth: because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." He did speak, and speak very solemnly to them. He said (2:25), " If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?" Still he did not use the proper means and authority which God had given to him as a father, and a priest, to put down the evil, which he knew, which was deeply dishonoring God. God will be dealt with in a true, bond fide way. Words, even felt in some measure, will not do when actions are called for. We may make light of sin; but He never does. In this breach of promise, we see again God’s substitution, to carry on his own testimony, etc. etc. (verse 35). " And I will raise me up is faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart, and in my mind."

Heavily, therefore, I apprehend, would this denunciation come upon the ears of Israel by the prophet Jeremiah "Except ye repent, I will make this house like Shiloh;" Song of Solomon 7:12-13. It was a national witness to them, that whilst they were resting in the external thing, as though it

was theirs by right,-clinging to their land, though but a waste, and saying, as man ever does, " Abraham was on and he inherited the land, but we are many; the lam is given to us for inheritance" (Ezekiel 33:24), say, it was a witness to them that God had once before given up His own house, " the tent which He placed among men," affecting thought!); He had given up His own glory apparently because of the iniquity of those to whom it was committed. They might send, in bold and unprecedented self-confidence, for the Lord's ark from Shiloh; but "the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God." This is the Spirit's record; and a preparation for all that followed. "The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain, for the wicked are not plucked away" (Jeremiah 6:29).

How unaccountable, doubtless, has it often appeared to many souls, that God can so let His name be dishonored by His own people, who should testify for Him. And yet so it is. God would rather give up His own glory for the present, and give up His strength into captivity, in the words of Psalms 78:61, than His children should go on unrebuked, and suffer damage. He loves their profit better than His own present glory, though all will finally be to His glory. In passing on to our own dispensation, I only remark, that our standing is simply and entirely that of faith. We have no other. We are Gentiles-the wild olive-tree. The moment that we begin to think that we have a standing-place, apart from faith, we forget the fundamental principles of our calling. "Thou standest by faith," Paul said at the first to the church. And so the first word that Jesus said to the church, when he came to visit it at Ephesus, and found it declining from first love, was, "Repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." The candlestick, the glory, could not stand apart from faith. In conclusion, I would just say, Let these things speak for themselves. Alas for us, if we will not let God's word speak to us simply, nakedly, and by its own power! Only one thing I would say- surely it says to all; "Be not high-minded, but fear." However free we may be, by grace, from the present condemnation of such truth, still the lesson will surely be of little value to us, if we affix it upon others and neglect to apply it to ourselves. Sweet to be driven from "confidence in the flesh," yet know who to look to in the sustainment of our responsibility (Romans 16:25). And yet one word further. Whilst thus seeing the incompatibility of God's presence and blessing with evil, let not these things make us careless about separation. Separation is never the thing that God loves, unless it be forced upon Him by man's evil. Especially is it needful to dwell upon this now; because Satan's aim always is whatever truth God is working upon, to throw us into the extreme of it. I doubt not this is an invariable wile, and one just now to be guarded against. Let us not forget, that though faithfulness must be used when called for, yet love still has its own indispensable place in the church. It is the cement of God's habitation by the Spirit. We may mistake a quick finding-out of others' faults and weaknesses for spirituality. It is not so, Love still " hopeth all things, believeth all things; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth.' Love will still cover a multitude of sins, though it will not cloak any.

I say these things. Yet let the solemn passages adduced leave that thought upon the mind, that there can be no trifling with positive evil. May we still maintain our true standing as unleavened in connection with the Paschal Lamb. May we still eat with it the bitter herbs, and thus know all the better the pure joy and blessedness of that Paschal feast, until the day dawn, and the shadows flee away.

Abergele.

Chapter 83

Vol 02 - Where Is the Lord God of Elijah?

Where Is the Lord God of Elijah? The chapter under consideration is replete with instruction. The communion of saints and the object of it is unfolded. Two eminent servants of God are introduced to us in circumstances unequaled in interest: the one on the eve of his rapture to God in His glory: the other thirsting for a double portion of God’s presence and power upon earth. How glorious the destiny of the one, how perfect the aim of the other - God, the object of fruition to each. Blessed was their fellowship with one another, thrice blessed the bond of their union. On the eve of separation in time, yet bound up in the bundle of life for eternity.

How striking the grace of God in His dealings with the people of Israel. He would not leave Himself without a witness. When His worship was corrupted, the priesthood defiled, the place of His holiness set at naught; when darkness, gross darkness, covered the land, how suddenly is Elijah introduced on the scene. When darkness was upon the face of the deep, God said, "Let there be light." And now in the worse than Egyptian gloom which hid Him from the eyes of the people, His witness is prepared in the secret of His presence, and burst upon the nation with words of power, and the spirit of power, " As the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand;" He was to the nation as one forgotten. They had thought He was as a dead man, out of sight. The testimony of Elijah was to the living God, in opposition to the formality of ordinances or their superstitious idolatry. So Paul to the Thessalonians, commends them that they had turned from idols to serve the living God. So, writing to Timothy, he exhorts them that are sick to trust in the living God. An age of apostasy can have much of the spew of religion. " Having the form of godliness, but denying the power." Such is prophetically announced in the New Testament as the sign of the last times. But, blessed be God, "when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him." So it was in the work of Elijah, "A man of like passions as we are," yet endued with the Spirit from on high, he stood alone in his testimony borne up in the strength of the Almighty, a swift witness against the evil around him; yet bearing a marvelous testimony to God’s grace and faithfulness to a remnant amongst it. "He abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself." Happy resting-place for his poor distracted people! The darkness which covered the earth, served but to display the light of His holiness more strikingly. " The Lord hath made all things for Himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." (Proverbs 16:4.) The path of Elijah in service is not the object of this paper. He was introduced abruptly on the scene of his labors, and makes his exit in a manner equally striking. His mission was in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. His course is fulfilled, and the version of His service attained. Our chapter briefly announces his departure. " And it came to pass, when the Lord would take away Elijah into Heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel: And the sons of the Prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace." (4, 5, and 6.) The conduct of Elisha is the subject of our meditation. Perseverance in the pursuit of an object is

laudable, or the contrary, according to the character of that which is sought. Just as all the praise of union is in the subject; if good, it is commendable; if sinful, it is of the Devil. Whenever unity is pleaded for, and the truth of God made to bend to it, instead of IT to the truth of God, there is sin. The course of Elisha is striking; The rapture of his master was at hand, and he knew it. God had communicated it to His prophets; they were expecting the event. " Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal; and Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel." And Elisha resolutely persisted in bearing him company. Attachment to his master would vindicate his refusal to leave him. This is beautiful in its place. But Elisha was eager to learn more of Elijah's Master. He had dwelt with the servant of God, and rejoiced in the Grace and Power bestowed upon him, but his desires were quickened after the Lord God of Elijah. If such beauty and power was seen in the measure of God's gift to him, how earnestly might he desire a double portion! To "covet earnestly the best gifts" is enjoined as a precept, as well as to be "zealously affected in a good cause." This pre-eminently characterizes Elisha. There are these trials of his constancy at Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho; but he was proof against the most urgent entreaties. "And now they reach Jordan, and Elijah took his mantle and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that the two went over on dry ground." The goal is reached; his faith shall be rewarded. " And it came to pass when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask, what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." The secret of his heart is discovered; first led to desire, then encouraged to expect, he asks largely, as assured of the power and goodness of God to dispense freely. "Elijah said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked." What a picture is this, and yet how interesting, on the verge of separation yet eternally united. Their topic upon Earth, the communion of Heaven. Their conversation in Time, the theme of Eternity, God, the blessed union of both. "They still went on and talking"- how faith exalts poor humanity into calm, quiet dignity of deportment. Since the time of Enoch, had it not happened that one alive in the body was caught up into Heaven; Yet great as was the event, and large as was their expectation, communion with God lifted them above it. They "still went on and talked." So it is, expectations from God find their answer in Him. The consciousness of being nobody, leaves the soul free to act above Circumstances, and, leaning upon God to do away with human weakness. The one who could thus hold fellowship with his companion, on the eve of such a change, was the only man fit for it. Man has hard to struggle, to acquire equanimity of soul in seasons of excitement; the power of God bestows it. "Behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." And he saw him no more: yet, how stable his soul, how steadfast his purpose! -" and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan. And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither; and Elisha went over."

How well he understood the word, "that in God's favor is life, and his loving-kindness is better than life." How eager to ascertain that he was the possessor of that. He was not content with the cloak of Elijah, his office and ministry; as the hart panted after the waterbrook, so his soul thirsted after

God, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" It was the presence of God in the midst of His saints, which brought about that excellent beauty and order which we read of in the Acts of the Apostles, "Great grace was upon them all, and the multitude of them than were of one heart and of one soul." "The kingdom of God is not in word only, but in deed and in power." "The Gospel was preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

Alas! Lord, how are our expectations to-day? How far short are we from honoring God by expecting largely from Him. Not so with Elisha. He asked for a double portion of God's Spirit, and his faith is rewarded. Endued with powers from on high, he enters on his ministry; having received gifts, he is eager to dispense them. How, with many, the character and the credit which arise from it, are the objects sought after! The form of godliness has no cross attached to it. The power of godliness, whilst leading into trial, yet gives strength to endure it. "Partakers of the sufferings, so also of the consolation." We lose sight of this.

Far different was the conduct of the sons of the Prophets. It is written in verse 7, "And fifty men of the sons of the Prophets went and stood to view AFAR OFF, and these two stood by Jordan." Confidence in God brings His servants to draw nigh unto Him. If the sick and afflicted participated in the blessing, they must draw near to Jesus. "Then drew near publicans and sinners for to hear Him." (Luke 15:1-32)

" But the sons of the Prophets stood to view afar off. Faith honors God, and is bestowed that we may honor Him. Faith apprehends His resources, and is encouraged to apply to Him. We can gather the state of heart of these sons of the Prophets, by their unbelieving request, as recorded in the 16th verse. " Lest, peradventure, the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send; and when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not; and when they came again to him (for he tarried at Jericho) he said unto them, Did not I say unto you, Go not? "Unbelief led them to stand afar off when Elijah was taken to God; and unbelief led them to search for him after his rapture. And now we have Elisha in Jericho. We read, in 1 Kings, chap. 16 and verse 34, " In his days [Ahab's] did Hiel, the Bethelite, build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram, his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which He spake by Joshua the son of Nun." Thus marked was the presumption of Abiram with the indignation of God, on his rebuilding Jericho. "Yet where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rahab, the harlot, found favor of God, and was spared on the general destruction of Jericho. (Joshua 6:1-27) The city was raised from its ruins in the presumption of man, and again should be a landmark of the grace of God to poor sinners. How blessed His ways, how past finding out! Elisha, endued with a double portion of God's Spirit, is residing at Jericho. There was need in the city: there is grace and power to meet it. "And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of the city is pleasant, as my lord seeth; but the water is naught, and the ground barren." How the soil of the human heart answers to this. God made man in His own image. "How is the fine gold become dim!" "The water is naught, and the ground of the human heart barren." "The imagination of a man's heart is only evil, and that continually." "All flesh has corrupted its way." But there is help in Israel concerning this thing. Our Lord Jesus said to the woman of Samaria by the well of Sychar, "Whosoever shall drink of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into

everlasting life." There is bitterness in the cup of human existence. Very "smooth" do men find the ways of the world; vanity also, and vexation of spirit. The water is naught, and the ground "causeth to miscarry." (See margin.) Whatever is right in purpose is resisted by the will. Blessed announcement- "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:6.)

"And [Elisha] said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake."

He had received blessings, which he lives to dispense. He desired a double portion of God's Spirit, and now he makes use of it. His ways are the ways of God-how ignorant we are of Him. "Our foolish hearts are darkened. Professing ourselves to be wise, we become fools." Yet "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" hath shined in Jesus. Blessed heralds or His coming were such witnesses as Elisha. Blessed proofs do they give us of His ways. Alas! how sin has defaced our apprehension, and blinded our judgment. Oh for the faith of Elisha in the goodness of God, to bestow upon us all that we need 1 "He is able to supply all our need out of his fullness in Jesus." It is to be desired for its own sake, but far more for the blessing of others. God, happy in giving,-would have His children like-minded. He would fill us, that we might overflow to others, according to that word in John 7:38, "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The inhabitants of Jericho accredit God's servant, and bring their need before him. The presence of God is with His servant; and their wants are supplied. " The waters were healed." Very different the reception he met with at Bethel. Unbelief had hardened their hearts. The form of godliness was attached to the place. It was in Bethel that Abraham had raised up an altar. It was there that Jacob renewed his vows unto the Lord. Luz (departure) was its name at the first, Bethel "the house of God" it was now called. But now, with the latter name still attached to it, its former character is sustained, " the form of godliness denying the power." " Jesus came to His own, and His own received Him not." So it was with Elisha: we read, "And he went up from thence into Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head."

Alas! if these children could thus treat the aged, what character had their parents? Double infamy attaches to them. God's prophet despised, God's word set at naught-how certain the consequences! " He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." There was blessing for the inhabitants of Jericho; there is wailing, lamentation, and woe for the dwellers in Bethel. The mouths of the children were full of cursing and bitterness. The tenderest of hearts once bid them welcome--"Suffer little children to come unto me." How bitter the sorrow to behold such hardened in sin, the living epistles of their parents' iniquity. "God is not mocked." "As a man soweth, so shall he reap." In Leviticus 26:21, it is written, " And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me, I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children." The witness for God's grace was also the witness of righteousness; " and Elisha turned back and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tore forty and two children of them. And he went from thence to Mount Carmel, and from thence he returned unto Samaria:" "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,

for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16.)

Vol 02 - Yet a Very Little While

Yet a Very Little While "Yet a little while,"-the Lord Thus hath promis’d in His word, Christ, the Lord, shall come again, Take His ransom’d ones-and reign!

Yet a little while-shall come What to each must fix their doom, Give to saints eternal bliss, Sinners, endless wretchedness.

Yet a little-saints of God, Have ye heard the solemn word?

Bride of Christ, art thou awake, Waiting, watching for his sake? As the children of the day, Do ye tread your heav’nly way;

Girded loins, and lamps of fire, Showing still your soul’s desire?

O! abide in Him, be wise, Flee the world, avoid its ways, So, His coming, saint, shall be, Only* joy, and peace to thee!

(* 1 John 2:25.)

Vol 03 - A Prayer

A Prayer Accept, O Lord, the simple prayer, Which in Thine ear we pour;

Behold! it is our souls' desire To know Thee more and more!

We know that we are Thine, O Lord, Redeem'd with Thine own blood;

We know that we shall shortly be Forever with our God. But we would prove our fellowship, E'en here, from hour to hour; Would catch the Spirit's "Abba" cry, And taste His heav'nly power. So should our souls with holy love, And deepest peace abound, And we shine forth, O Lord, and yield A light to all around!

G.

Vol 03 - Abba, Father

Abba, Father ■ββ■ (Abba) occurs but three times in the New Testament.

"And he said, Abba, Father," Mark 14:36.

"whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Romans 8:15.

"into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Galatians 4:6. In all three of which occurrences, it is, evidently, an invocation, and has the Greek word which is equivalent to it placed immediately after it. The passage in Mark is in the narration of the agony in the garden: "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." The citation from Romans 8:1-39 is from the epitome of Christian privileges presented in that blessed portion: "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption (υ■οθεσ■ας), whereby we cry, Abba, Father." The third occurrence is in the labored argument of the apostle to recover certain Galatians from error. After urging, Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (chap. 3:26, [1:e. the present standing of acceptance in the family of God to all that have faith]), he goes on to show the result of this in them; for there was, "I in you" to those to whom "ye in me " (of John 14:1-31) was made good; and so he says, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

It is a blessed truth, that our " Lord and God," who has called us "Brethren," as the sons, by adoption, of God, thus puts into our hearts (as in Galatians) the power which leads us in daily habitual communion (as in Romans) towards His Father; according to the title, Abba, even that by which He, the only begotten Son, addressed Him. The word Abba is not Greek, nor Hebrew, but appears to be Chaldee, and to be in what is called the status emphaticus. In the little Chaldee which exists in the Bible, we do not meet with it; but it exists in the Talmud (Furst says) frequently ■■■■■■. It may be as well to observe, that while each of the occurrences is an invocation, the vocative vccrep is not the form which is used after it, but δ πατ■ρ, that is, the nominative.

W.

Vol 03 - Abba, Father

Abba, Father

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6).

Father! by that dear name my heart is stirred, And child-like homage renders at the word; No other name can give such sweet repose, So full a solace for our many woes. With joy unspeakable I hear Thy voice, Which says, " At all times in My love rejoice."

I need not bring Thee words-"My Son, thy heart," Is Thy demand. And often, when apart In sorrow, brooding o’er some heavy care, ’Tis soothing and relief to feel Thee near; And though in broken tones my utterance be, Father! I call, and Thou dost answer me.

Draw me! I will run after Thee, will seek To hear obediently what Thou wilt speak; And step by step the blessed path would trace Of Thy beloved-full of truth and grace.

Thou hast but One who ever pleas’d Thee well, Of Him we love to hear, and Thou to tell. Our deep desire, our highest aim to grow Into His likeness-all His grace to know. The grace that brought Him from Thy bosom, where The Fount of Life is, and all pleasures are, To gain a name, our hearts adoring own The name of Jesus-and a royal crown. His and our Father! O the depth and height, The love surpassing knowledge, ’tis too bright.

Faith nearly staggers at the mysteries- The mystery of love: yet though o’erpower’d, Our trembling hearts can trust Thy faithful word, The Spirit with our spirit witnesses, Children we are, and He our Father is!

Vol 03 - Acrostic Psalms

Acrostic Psalms 1.-Psalms 130:1-8 Each of the verses 1-8 begins with■Aleph.

1. *ALL blessings for the perfect in the way, who walk in the law of the Jehovah.

2. **All blessings for those that keep His testimonies, they shall seek Him with the whole heart.

3. Also they do no iniquity; they walk in his ways.

4. A command thou hast given, diligently to keep thy precepts.

5. Ah! that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes!

6. Ashamed I shall not be, when I have respect to all Thy commandments.

7. As learning Thy righteous judgments, I will praise Thee with uprightness of heart.

8. Ah! forsake me not utterly, I will keep Thy statutes.

(* lit. Blessedness of the perfect.) (** lit. Blessedness of the keeper.)

Vol 03 - Acrostic Psalms

Acrostic Psalms Each of the verses from 17-24, begins with a■Gimel.

Ver. 17 - Grant favor unto thy servant, That I may live and keep Thy Word;

Ver. 18 - Give the opening of the eyes that I may behold- Wonderful things out of Thy law;

Ver. 19 - Greatly am I estranged from the world;

Hide not Thy commandments from me;

Ver. 20 - Grievously my soul breaks - For the longing it hath for Thy judgments at all times;

Ver. 21 - Going astray from Thy commandments- The proud are cursed and rebuked by Thee;

Ver. 22 - Grant that reproach and contempt may be removed- For I have kept Thy testimonies;

Ver. 23 - Great men (lit. princes) did set and speak against me; But Thy servant did meditate in Thy statutes;

Ver. 24 - Greatly delightful and instructive Are Thy testimonies.

Vol 03 - Biblical Researches: or Occasional Criticisms Upon Various Subjects, Texts, Words, Etc.,...

Biblical Researches: or Occasional Criticisms Upon Various Subjects, Texts, Words, Etc., in Scripture

Introduction.

"Familiar acquaintance" and " thorough knowledge," though akin, are different; they may sometimes even be contrasted the one to the other. Thus, few persons have a thorough knowledge of their native tongue or language, although they have, of course, familiar acquaintance with it. As to the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek languages, I pretend not to either " familiar acquaintance " or to " thorough knowledge "-properly so called. Yet, having long felt that it was a needless dishonor to myself, when God had put into my hand a revelation, from and of Himself, written therein, not to know these tongues at all, I have sought with some diligence, and at least much labor, to use the Scriptures in my private reading as they were written. The Lord, who confounded the language of men, that they should not understand one another's speech,-when the iniquity of the post-diluvian age was ripe enough to combine in independency of Him, has condescended to make his revelation in three languages, vouchsafing also a very good translation of the whole in our mother tongue, and more or less correct translations into the languages current in the various countries of Christendom. I could not be satisfied, where intercourse was frequent, to speak to my brethren in the Lord, or even to men, merely through the medium of an interpreter; much less could I be satisfied to allow a translation of the Bible into my own tongue to stand between me and the Bible as it was written. I thought (and do think still) that a child of God might plead with Him for help to read His WORD as He wrote it; and so, at least, be ready to estimate aright any suggested emendation, and acquire competency to see through the many false glosses, of which ignorance and self-sufficiency are the parents; at all events, enough to detect the want of kindredship between "improvements" and "alterations"; for while every needless alteration, as such, is to be deprecated, doubtless faith and humility may find defects, and, therefore, room for improvement in every translation made by uninspired men. In pursuing this course, one could not divest one's own mind of its previous knowledge of the English authorized version; but then one gained the power to examine its value, and to mark and guard against any bias it might contain. The result has been an increased sense;-1st, Of individual ignorance; 2ndly, of the difficulty of making a good translation of any, but especially of such, a book as the Bible; and, 3rdly, of the value of our English authorized version. In cultivating wisdom-that wisdom which, while it dwells in us and is practical in our walk, consists in the appropriation of Heavenly light by the renewed affections-we ought not either to refuse to weigh a criticism; or, when assured of its value, refuse to communicate it to others. With what measure we mete, it shall he measured to us again. That good measure pressed down and running over, may be measured into my own bosom is my desire. I would, therefore, give freely, yet with reverence, before God, as seeking not to handle the word of God lightly or deceitfully. If I desire that those to

whom I write should, by the word and by the testimony, " prove all things," and hold fast that only which is truth,- I trust, also, that God may vouchsafe so much of light as to produce, on both writer and reader, the feeling of " Who is sufficient for these things? " as contrasted with that feeling of empty conceit which a little light sometimes produces. My object is not display but edification; he who can only read English will find (if God prospers my effort) that which will help him in the Scriptures; and they that have the balances of the sanctuary-the Truth-with them, and know how to use them, may return, in some other form of blessing, that which they read; for there is unity in Scripture; and thus the elucidation of a very little point will often open a very large portion to us; even as, also, ignorance of or misunderstanding of large portions of Scripture grows out of error in some small detail.

Vol 03 - David Serving His Generation

David Serving His Generation "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." Acts 13:36.

It is truly wonderful to mark the controlling power of God over agents the most unconscious and unwilling, so as to render them subservient to the effectuating His own counsel; " howbeit in his heart he thinketh not so." But it is equally important to see, when God has, from time to time, raised up special instruments for the work He has to be done, such instruments have ever manifested that both the wisdom and power they have is derived from God. So long as they have acted in their proper sphere they have succeeded; because they have acted in faith. " The Lord of Hosts is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." Such considerations give great present calmness to the believer: God has given to us " the spirit of a sound mind." We know that God has a counsel, and it shall stand, although he bringeth the counsel of the heathen to naught; we need not feel ourselves as though God could not carry out his own counsel without our plans or assistance. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" In the rich grace wherein God has abounded toward us in redemption, he has " abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." He has left no contingency to be provided for by the wisdom and prudence of his saints: their power of serving him is faith. Hence, says the Apostle, whom his adversaries would charge with acting from policy, " Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." But it is one of the results of the fall that man affects creative power, and rejoices in the works of his hands; but that which he makes is like himself, even without continuance. He may strive to perpetuate that which he vainly conceives he has originated; but God knows the thoughts of man that they are but vain. That only can stand which God both originates and perpetuates. On this point, as well as others touching the pretensions of man, God will come to an issue with man. To those who know redemption, the issue has been already joined, and the result is, that no flesh can glory in His presence; but he that glorieth can only glory in the Lord: 46 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." He alone can "bear the glory," who is able to say, "I am the first and the last," "the Alpha and the Omega," "the beginning and the end." The essential glory of His person is the security for effectuating His work. All real subordinate ministry flows directly from Him. He has ascended up on high, and "he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,"and he still gives them, according to his own sovereign will. He has not left the ministry for the building up of his body to depend upon succession, as the Aaronic priesthood; or on the schools of philosophy, as in ancient times; or on universities or academies, as in our day; or on popular choice, as in the case of the seven deacons recorded in the Acts; but directly on Himself. in giving such gifts of ministry he has not given to them the responsibility of devising means to perpetuate his work: He works in them, and " with them; " and they only work healthfully as they hang upon Him, and fill up that place in the body which he has assigned to them for its

present service. Hence in their ministerial capacity, as well as their capacity as Christians, they alone "stand by faith." The analogy afforded by the history of Israel is very striking. After the death of Joshua, God was pleased to act by the extraordinary ministry of Judges for four hundred years. "Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled, them; and yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them; they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers had walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord, but they did not so. And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them, and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way." When the men of Israel would have perpetuated their blessing after their own thoughts, in the case of Gideon, one of their judges, Gideon, refused their offer. " Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you." Gideon had fulfilled his mission, and served his generation. God had wrought by Gideon to bring Israel to depend on Himself, and Gideon sought to answer the same end. On the other hand, the prominent failure of Samuel, otherwise so remarkably blameless, was the attempt to perpetuate his own mission in his sons: " And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." This led to the people's desire for a king: " Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." Samuel may have seen more distinctly than Gideon that such a request was the rejection of Jehovah himself as their king; yet he had vainly thought to perpetuate good government through his sons, whom God had not called to that ministry.

Among many instructions afforded us in God answering the desire of the people for a king, in giving them Saul, and then removing him, according to the word of the Prophet: " I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath "-the important truth, that perpetuation of blessing rests alone with God, is sufficiently apparent. So that even when God himself " raised up unto them David to be their king, to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, which shall fulfill all my will," the highest honor which God put upon David was to be a type of his own seed, in whom alone blessing can possibly be perpetuated-" Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever." It is in this order that the Holy Ghost himself leads our thoughts by the apostle (Acts 13:1-52), abruptly turning from David to David's seed: "Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus." But David served his own generation, and in doing so did that which he sought to do in another way, even serve posterity. This is an important principle, that in serving our own generation, doing our appointed service in God's way, and in His time, we do really secure the very thing which we attempt to secure by providing for the future by means of our own devising. In trying to act for posterity we retrograde, and oppose a barrier to others carrying on the work which God may have assigned to us to commence. In this manner it would seem that the Reformation was hindered; the reformers were anxious to secure that precious truth which God, through them,

had revived. In doing this they hindered their own progress, and got off the ground of faith. They succeeded in establishing that which they allowed to be imperfect and incomplete; and by this Establishment have hindered to this day the progress of others, because their established imperfection has become the standard to their posterity. Most blessedly did David serve his generation, when the Lord took him as he said, " From the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: and I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth." It was the time of David's " trouble," but it was also the time of his real greatness, and of his most important service, to his generation: David then magnified the Lord, and the Lord magnified David in the sight of all Israel. Walking before the Lord, David could afford to appear vile in the eyes of Michal, and of all who despised him. No two things are morally more opposite, than the Lord making an individual great, and the same person whom the Lord has magnified acting the great man himself. Here truly is found the need of "hind's feet" to tread on our high places. The Lord magnified Moses by his promise, "Certainly I will be with thee." "And the man Moses became very great in the land of Egypt, and in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people." The Lord would not allow any insult to be put on his chosen servant, but promptly resented it. Once only did this chosen servant magnify himself, and it is written for our instruction: "And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice…And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

David had most blessedly served his generation, "when the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies." At this time, "when the king sat in his house," the thought came into his heart that it was not suitable for the ark of the Lord to dwell in curtains, whilst he was dwelling in a house of cedar. David knew well the value of the presence of the Lord, and he sought to secure it in a way which seemed right in his own eyes, and which commended itself also to the judgment of Nathan the prophet. But "who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him." The man after God's own heart, and an inspired prophet, are alike destitute of true counsel when not walking by faith under the immediate guidance of the Spirit of Truth. The thought of David was a pious thought, it was the expression of that desire of the renewed heart for rest, without conflict, in the immediate presence of God: " Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart, notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house." Zeal without knowledge, and piety apart from actual dependence on God, have proved alike dangerous to the truth of God: it has pleased God to spew that He of his own grace delights to "provide some better thing for us," than we should choose for ourselves. Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration, out of a. true heart, said, " It is good for us to be here"; but what better thoughts had the Lord for Peter, that, instead of being under the shelter of the glory, as he then stood, he should be actually in the glory with Jesus, where he had seen Moses and Elias. Had David been allowed to act under the impulse of his own heart, and to build the house which his son built, what a loser had David been: every quickened soul is almost unconsciously drawn to David, and as unconsciously little interested in Solomon. David "in his troubles" finds truer sympathy in our hearts than Solomon in " all his glory." Had David, according to his desire, acted for another

generation, instead of serving God in his own, we are all able to see what he would have lost. Nathan now instructed in the mind of the Lord, is sent to David with the message of the Lord. The first great truth announced is, that the will, even of the saint, is not to take the lead in the things of God; if permitted, the result would be "will-worship," one of the most fearful evils in the Church of God. It is our part to " prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God." So long as God is pleased to "walk in a tent, and in a tabernacle," it is not for any one to build him a house. Solomon, according to the promise of God to David, his father, did, build a house for the Lord; the house was filled with the glory of the Lord, and called by his name; but in due course it becomes the subject of prophetic denunciation (Jeremiah 7:11-14): its history, with brief gleams of relief, is the history of Israel's abomination, till at last the Lord himself suddenly comes to His temple and finds it a den of thieves, and utterly repudiates it; it is no longer a house which he could own as his, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate." The next thing announced by Nathan was the determinate counsel of the Lord, in His own time and way, to give settled rest to his people Israel, according to and far beyond their heart's desire: " Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more." This is the happy theme of many a prophecy, the cheering close to many a heavy burden, " Jehovah-shammah " (Ezekiel 48:35; Jeremiah 3:16-18; Obadiah 1:1; Obadiah 1:21; Luke 1:32-33). But the most blessed part of the announcement still remains to be noticed: "Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house." David would have been content to have built a house for the Lord, but the Lord's thoughts were higher, even for the Lord to build a house for David. This was the word of recovery to David's soul. It brought him before the Lord. He reviews all the gracious dealings of the Lord with him, and becomes suitably impressed with a sense of his own insignificance, " Who am I, O Lord God?" Such was not the thought in David's mind when he sat in his own house, he then looked from himself, but now from the Lord to himself. It is this which ever checks the thought of the consequence of our own service, as well as the attempt of doing that which the Lord has not called us to do: " By the grace of God I am what I am; I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." It is equally a sin to run without being sent, and not to come to the help of the Lord against the mighty when he calls. The Lord can do without us, but we cannot do without him: if he be pleased to use us, sufficient is the honor of being the servants of such a master, but we only really serve him as we do the work of our own generation; the moment we cease to serve by faith, we regard the sphere of service as our own, forgetting that the husbandry and building on which we are occupied is not ours, but belongs to Him whom we serve. Needful is it also in contemplating any service, to retrace the way the Lord has led us "hitherto." But all is "small" now in David's estimation compared with the promise of the Lord of making him a house: David's work of making a house for the Lord is now superseded by the happier thought of God making him a house. If we would happily and healthfully serve our generation, it mu be by giving to the Lord his due preeminence in service as well as in everything else: " I am among you as he that serveth"; and he still serves at the right hand of God, making intercession for us.

" And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God, but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come., And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?" The manner of man is to rejoice in the work of his hands: he seeks to achieve something great to make himself a name. His work will often survive him; but in process of time it falls to decay, to add to the monuments of the vanity of man by the very means he seeks to secure: his greatness. But what

God does he does "forever." David served his generation and fell asleep, but the promise of God to David, when he was disappointing his desire to build a house for the Lord, became the sustainment of faith throughout Israel's dreary history, and will be again, when faith shall be revived in Israel. The multitude looked to the temple; faith in the godly remnant regarded the promise to David. God brought judgment on Israel for their confidence in the house, but he showed mercy for David's sake. David's disappointment has, in the result, proved to be his service to his posterity. Is the house of David threatened with extermination by the confederacy of Israel and Syria in the days of king Ahaz: "It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass." God had made David a house, and this confederacy shall only tend to prove its stability: " Hear ye now, O house of David, is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," David's son and David's Lord. Is Hezekiah sorely beset by the armies of the blasphemous king of Assyria; the cry of Hezekiah to the Lord is answered in mercy, " For I will defend this city to save it for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake." It had not been said in vain, " Also the Lord saith, I will make thee an house." Do the people go into captivity and emerge from it only to be "servants" in their own land unto the kings whom the Lord had set over them because of their sins; how cheering must have been the angelic announcement, " He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David." What a meaning in the words, " I will make thee an house!" " Is not this the Son of David?" and, " O Son of David have mercy on us l" were the expressions of faith during our Lord's own personal ministry. And if either ourselves or Israel look for security of blessing, we are led back to David's disappointment in his service to God (Acts 13:32-34). And David still lives in our memories in Him who, in his closing words of the scripture of truth, announces the fulfillment of all the ancient promises to Israel in announcing himself, " I am the root and the off-spring of David." But how entirely did David's disappointment in his contemplated service turn to the stability of his own soul in the sure grace and faithfulness of God, " Solomon built him an house," and after accomplishing the "magnifical" work, he leaves, as it were, his last words for our instruction: " All is vanity and vexation of spirit." " What hath a man of all his labor, and of the vexation of his heart wherein he hath labored under the sun?" But how different the last words of David, the lesson he teaches is not only happier but deeper: " Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although lie make it not to grow." These are last words indeed, and such will ever be the train of' thought of those who serve their generation. There will be no rejoicing in any result of their own service, for the only satisfying result will be, that which the Lord himself will introduce: our expectations may be disappointed, but there is no disappointment to him whose expectation is from the Lord. If a present palpable result be the object we propose to ourselves, we shall certainly be disappointed; but if it be the honor of Christ, and there be no present result answering the desire of our heart, whilst deeply humbled under the sense of our own imperfection, we may take comfort from the language of th/e only perfect servant, " I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." The apostle Paul served his generation, but he could find no rest in the work of his hands. He had labored more abundantly than all others, yet what profit had he of all his labor under the sun, if he had regarded merely the result. "A great house" had indeed been reared, but it needed purification from within: " All in Asia had turned away from him." But there is no such querulous

thought as that which escaped the prophet before him," " I only am left." His soul rises with the emergency: " Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me his prisoner." " Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure," however tottering the superstructure, the result of his arduous labors, might appear in his own eyes and the eyes of others: his labor was not in vain in the Lord. His house, if Paul regarded the result of his own service, might not be so with God, but the foundation was sure, and it was all his salvation, and all his desire. He was not discouraged by the result, but gives a solemn charge to Timothy, "to preach the word," " to do the work of an evangelist, to make full proof of his ministry," for he had nearly closed his service to his generation. "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at band; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing." Had the " great house" been that which was according to the desire of the heart of the apostle, he might rightfully have rejoiced in the result of his service: but in the wisdom of God it was not so, and the apostle, in serving his own generation, and in finishing his course, has served future generations, even to our own day. Error and evil of every kind were allowed to show themselves in the Church in the days of the Apostles, and the correction of these errors and evils by their inspired writings, supply to us even the place of themselves. Whilst we look to Paul’s labors, and praise God for the grace given to him, we look to his writings for the confutation of the errors of our own day, which the apostle met in serving his generation. True it is that men, and even Christians, look at the "great house," and seek either to support it by their own wisdom, or, turning from it in disgust as a failure, strike out a fresh path for themselves to produce something better. It is thus that many are turned away from the truth to infidelity: but faith regardeth that which faileth not, "the foundation of the Lord," and finds the Scriptures more wonderful and more profitable as corruption deepens.

How shall we then serve our generation? This question must be answered by another. Does it please God to walk still in curtains, or to fix his presence in any special place, so that his people may " dwell in a place of their own and move no more "? Does the Holy Ghost still assert his sovereignty with respect to the servants whom he will use " for the work whereunto he calls them "? (Acts 13:1-52) Does He still appoint the sphere of their labor, as when he "forbad them to preach in Asia"? Does He still show the special objects of his grace as when He opened the heart of Lydia? If it be so, then establishment is not his order, and we shall not be serving our generation by seeking it. Such a thought would take the care and keeping of the Church out of the hands of its Head, and interfere with the prerogative grace of the Holy Ghost.

Union is strength; men find it to be so, and it is characteristic of our age to seek to effect every purpose by combination.* Shall we serve our generation by seeking Christian combination? The Word of God is very pointed here: not only does it say, " Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord;" but " For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread, and He shall be for a sanctuary." To seek even Christian combination would not be to sanctify Jesus, "Jehovah-saboath" in our hearts, and, therefore, would not be to serve our generation.

(* How far the influence of this principle has tended to the dearth of great public men in our day might, morally and socially, be an interesting enigma; that it tends to destroy real independence of mind is sufficiently obvious.)

Let it be fully granted that the unity of the body is a truth, as blessed as it is practical, and if carried out would be the great moral demonstration of Christ's mission (John 17:1-26); yet it is not the truth, and is only valuable as it is subservient to the truth. The unity of the body is not a combination of Christians, such combination neither produces nor promotes it. It is an actual reality resulting from the fact of the redemption of the Church by the finished work of Christ, and by the coming down of the. Holy Ghost in consequence of that finished work. To promote this unity practically, can only be a suitable object of service when the unity itself is regarded as a result of a higher object. The Church is not the object proposed to our faith, but Christ himself. We are not exhorted to hold fast the Church, but to hold fast the Head who holds fast the Church. If we see the result of seeking the unity of the Church to the disregard of the honor and glory of Christ, in the wide-spread abomination of popery, have we judged the principle in ourselves in the readiness of our hearts to maintain, a combination of Christians at the expense of Christ's honor and glory. Unity is, indeed, both good and pleasant; but it is the result of the comeliness which Christ has set upon us; and we must not trust to "our own beauty," but "to Him who has beautified us, who is altogether lovely." To endeavor to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" is the common responsibility of all Christians; but it is much easier to keep the rules of any Christian association than the unity of the Spirit. This last cannot be effected without holding fast the Head, and. it is the only unity which does not interfere with individual faith and conscience: on the contrary, it is really promoted by both being kept in exercise. The essence of all confederacies is, that they hinder the exercise of faith and conscience towards God, and shelter self-will; for if the confederacy be honored, all else is disregarded. If we seek as our object to promote unity, we shall not serve our generation; but if we seek Christ's honor first and singly, we shall serve our generation, and secure the blessings which flow immediately from Him.

Human institutions are soon out-grown by the progress of society, and constantly need remodeling: but there is no such pliancy in the truth of God, and that because it is the truth. When the Soul is once awakened to the recognition of the truth of God, it finds in the truth the standard to measure the declension of Christians and the alone power of recovery, " Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." In the too plainly verified prophetic declarations of the evil of the last days, we find the only remedy propounded by the Apostles to be recurrence to first principles. They are first and last, because embodied in Him who is " the first and the last." When the Apostle Peter portrays the fearful corruption arising from damnable heresies privily brought in " by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of "; there is no remedy but in the Lord himself: " The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." If "scoffers" arise it would be dangerous to answer the fool according to his folly; but how safe in such a time to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Thus that which would apparently alarm the soul only tends to its establishment in the sure grace of God: " Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen."

Jude speaks of very evil days, denial of the Lordship of Jesus, connected with the disowning of all constituted authority, and the "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." The power of safety and of recovery is found in earnest contention for the faith once delivered to the Saints, and in building up ourselves on our most holy faith. There can be no enlargement of our creed to meet the progress of the human mind, no human aids to attain a sanctity which results from faith alone, "our most holy faith." As ministers of Christ we shall best serve our generation by "preaching the word." The Gospel survives, in its blessed simplicity, all the revolutions of empires, and all the errors and controversies of Christians, and still asserts its majesty as the only power which can effectually meet the need of man. It sternly rejects the proffered aid of human advancement. The spirit of the age would "heap teachers to itself according to its own lusts," and seek to give the tone to the Gospel, instead of receiving its impression from it. The Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy looks forward to the full-blown evil of the last perilous days. He describes his Apostleship accordingly: "Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of eternal life which is in Christ Jesus." Eternal life was no where else to be found. In the earlier days of his ministry he had made this profession to the Christians at Rome: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" and now that he is a prisoner at Rome for the Gospel’s sake, as if to appearance his labor had been in vain, he writes to Timothy: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." The gospel which was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed in the name of Jesus, brought with it also to those who believed the power to endure. Some, indeed, thought its cause hopeless, others content to know their own personal security, shrunk from the open confession of Christ, because of the cross it involved, and turned their backs on the zealous Apostle of the Gentiles as if his mission had failed: not so Onesiphorus. Of him says the Apostle, " he was not ashamed of my chain, but when he was in Rome he sought me out diligently and found me." If men think the gospel antiquated, and not adapted to the progress of civilization, ministers of Christ will serve their generation by not being ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. Man has need of the gospel as an instrument for his own advancement; and by this means it has lost its real character, and just in proportion as it has by this abuse elevated the world, it has degraded the church. But the gospel, as the instrument of God, is his "power unto salvation": it is "the word of truth;" it has to do with realities. It maintains the unsurrendered holiness of God, and regards man in his truthful position of sin and helplessness; and then, through the proclamation of the cross, it adjusts the claims of God, and relieves the conscience of the sinner from the guilt of sin, and brings the sinner into peace and nearness with God. This is the truth. The shame may be greater now to " preach the word," because man has made such progress; and it is a strong temptation for ministers of Christ to meet the craving of the age for novelty, talent and learning; but God sets his way in direct contrast with the way of man-" Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The Apostle John speaks to believers generally as to the last days, and many Antichrists, and we shall serve our generation by giving heed to his word: "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning; if that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father: and this is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life." Christian progress essentially differs from the progress of the world, the leading of the Spirit of God from that of the spirit of the age. As the world runs its course, luxuries are turned into necessaries, new wants are created, and inventions multiplied to satisfy

them. The spirit of the age so eminently utilitarian, turns science itself to the account of profit and comfort. It is truly said that you cannot arrest progress; success emboldens enterprise, and nothing seems to be withholden from the daring genius of man. What a contrast to this is Christian progress: " The father in Christ knows Him that is from the beginning." He centralizes everything in one object, even in Christ. The Spirit of God glorifies Christ; and taking of his things and showing them to the soul of the believer satisfies him, " All my springs are in thee." The world leaves the established Christian to himself as one behind the age; but he is in reality before it, having his soul occupied, not with the result of human progress, but with the certain accomplishment of the divine counsel; " All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world, and the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." The Christian will best serve his own generation by maintaining his own proper ground, and asserting the blessedness of the knowledge of Christ at the very moment when man is magnifying himself. It is well, indeed, to be able truthfully to say of Christ, He is " all my salvation "; but how blessed to add, He is " all my desire," and this too in the face of all appearances, " although he maketh not to grow."

Presbutes.

Vol 03 - Deu_32:1-52; Habakkuk; Act_20:29; 2 Timothy; Jude

Deuteronomy 32:1-52; Habakkuk;Acts 20:29; 2 Timothy; Jude

Moses and the Apostle Paul, each in the respective times or dispensation in which he lived, prophetically bore witness to this,/ namely, God's people corrupting their ways. They testify of the apostasy and ruin of that entrusted to man's hands-yet (and seen, may we not say, the brighter because of it?) the unchangeable goodness of God-His glorious Majesty and all the unfailing power of His grace, and love, and tender mercy above the sphere of man's conduct, and whatever failure there may be, though He deal with it, and judge it, for He must judge, in that sense, His people. The prophet Habakkuk establishes and confirms the testimony of Moses. Jude that of Paul. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is established." Others, indeed, as Peter in his second epistle, witness the same. It may be found instructive to examine and compare the Scripture as to this testimony, for where are we? What is God's present testimony to us? Assuredly it is as to His faithfulness and blessedness in spite of failure and corruption. There is witness enough as to the ruin and failure, and, alas! abundant practical proof of our unbelief and folly, but the point which God presses on our consciences is that He is the same. The same God and Father, whose mercy endureth forever. The same God the giver in all His unsearchable riches and inexhaustible fullness. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. The same God the Holy Ghost in all His present living energy and witness, given "that He may abide with you forever." Blessed truth! With this, and having special faith in this, there is a remnant recognized and addressed in the Word, represented in lively way by Habakkuk in his triumph of faith, and specially testified of in Jude, who-in communion with God's thoughts, and walking with and before Him as the living God, and cheered by the promises and truth suited to their circumstances-work on (as those in Ezra) for the building of the House and are sustained in doing so (notwithstanding all the trial and difficulty of the way), by the moral power - the secret divine energy of faith, looking on to the glory itself, not working or building with reference to the scene here only, or so much-as to the time when He will appear, who alone is worthy and able to bear the glory and sit and rule upon His throne. Oh that our hearts could enter into this. That there was given to us the needed confession of sin and failure, the broken and soft heart, and the faith that will work on, not for man or present things, but having respect to the recompense of the reward" and to Him who will dispense crowns of gold and better than that, (Revelation 2:17), hidden manna" and " a white stone and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." But let us glance at the Scriptures quoted. In Deuteronomy 31:29, Moses speaks to the people, the elders and officers " For I know [compare Paul's identical For I know ' to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, Acts 20:29] that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you, and evil will befall you in the latter days:"

It is then on the fore-known failure of the people, and fore-declared corruption of their ways that the magnificent song (chap. 32.) and utterance of the Holy Spirit by Moses proceeds. It is based on man's failure, but oh! what a testimony as to our God. " Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear oh earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech

shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass [and how or why was the doctrine to be such a cleansing, fertilizing, refreshing blessed doctrine?]: because I will publish the Name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He "; and what does he find at man's hands? " They have corrupted themselves," and with what tender and affecting words does Jehovah speak of His dealings with the people, ver. 9, "For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found Him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth; that he might eat the increase of the fields; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." How the very terms and thoughts (the pure grace) are calculated to penetrate our very souls and affect our consciences indeed (if heart and conscience be not as the nether millstone); but what of the people Israel, ver. 15, " But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked," the very exuberance of the grace and manifestation of God's goodness not held in communion with Him, turns them aside. " He forsook God which made him and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." Thus early, ere the dispensation had, well begun, does Moses speak as to man's failure, but utters such a glorious testimony as to the perfectness of the work of the Rock of Ages, and how does Habakkuk witness towards the close of the dispensation? "Although the fig tree shall not blossom" failure and disappointment may be all around, "Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength." He can fall back upon the faithfulness and perfectness of Jehovah the Rock. But the prophet Habakkuk did not get these blessed thoughts without due exercise of soul-yea, deep searchings of heart; surely the three chapters of his prophecy are replete with instruction, and give a very exact picture of the course pursued, and the exercises of conscience of many a saint of late. In the 1st chapter Habakkuk manifestly is not in communion with God as to what is going on around, he is astounded at circumstances and the conduct of many-complains to God Himself, even vexed in spirit at the scene before him. Mark the expressions, ver. 2, "O Lord, how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! 'Why lost thou skew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked and judgment doth never go forth," etc. We see from the entire chapter (see ver. 13 to the end) that the prophet is occupied with the scene below, like a field of battle for Confusion. He does not get above to the pure atmosphere of God's counsels and the needs be for such things, he is taken up with himself and man-expediency and circumstances. What a picture of the condition of many a soul! but the scene changes in chap. 2. The prophet gets into God's presence and mark how, with self-judgment and lowliness and watching, " I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what He will say to me, and what I shall answer, when I am reproved. And the Lord answered me." And what a truth does his God meet him with, ver. 4, "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.' Here is the principle, the secret, which when understood, removes difficulties and accounts for God's dealings with His people ofttimes. They get away from Him. The Lord Jesus loses His due and proper place, as the center of their affections-the object of their faith and service-the eye is not single-worldliness comes in-independency and, presently, haughtiness of

spirit: the soul becomes "lifted up" (just the contrary to the word "learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart"). The Lord judges it and sifts because of His Divine, unceasing, as unchangeable love. This blessed Divine culture and teaching was not lost on Habakkuk, for in chapter 3 we see him fully in the Lord's thoughts. In the power of communion with God he has the vision of the Holy One from Mount Paran, the manifestation and power of the Son of Man, whose glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of His praise. And then, notwithstanding all his exercises, ver. 16, "and disappointment and failure all around," ver. 17, he comes to the blessed Conclusion, that let man or things fail, God is full of grace and truth. "The Lord God is my strength and He will make my feet like hind's feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places." How hard it is for the human heart to give God His place, and to put man in his place! and to walk and abide in the power of such faith!

Thus we see the beginning and end of that time or dispensation marked with this emphatic testimony. And what is witnessed to us in the Word for our own time, or during this dispensation in which the Church is gathered? The same truth. Blessed it is to know that while man fails, God does not fail. He may set aside or close dispensations, but His people "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." The existence of what is entrusted to man's hands will depend upon man's faithfulness. The existence, 1:e. salvation, of the people of God depends on His faithfulness, our unfailing security. And it is good to remember this, for in such a scene as presents to many an eye now, souls may, through unbelief, begin to question God's purpose and grace. Now the Apostle Paul meets this very blessedly in his second letter to Timothy. There he draws a most dark fearful picture (chap. 3) of the last days and perilous times in which our lot is cast. In his description of corrupt Christianity, the reader may remark that many of the terms employed by the Apostle describing the character of those of whom he speaks, are the same terms which are used in Romans 1:1-32 in setting forth the horrible account of the gentile world; but the picture in 2nd Timothy is more fearfully bad, because of that word " having a form of godliness. The name of God is tacked on to the abominations of man. Now in this very letter, giving such an awful, frightful description of the time we are in, how truly precious are the words of comfort, the beacons of light for humble souls, brought into contrast with that which would alarm the soul. Mark the sentences of truth to support the soul cast upon God. We find in chap. 1 that which is to be laid hold of by faith and gloried in, ver. 9, "Who hath saved us." Ver. 14, "The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." In chap. 2 ver. 8, "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel." Ver. 13, "He cannot deny Himself," the only thing our Lord Jesus cannot do! In chap. 3 ver. 16, " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

How good, how beneficent is God! With the sad, awful dark history of such a time. Our God furnishes that truth for humble weak souls who look to Him, which can raise them up, out of, and above all the turmoil, confusion and failure. "What hath God wrought!" Is the soul alarmed and confounded at what is passing? Sweet the assurance of our God "Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling [just what Satan would have us to question and deny] not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality [incorruptibility] to light through the Gospel." Is there a "great house" containing those from whom a man must purge himself, if he be obedient, "a, vessel unto honor sanctified and meet for the master's use"-The faithful man is thrown upon.

Him who cannot deny Himself; he has all Scripture and the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, to lead into all truth. How tender is our God! The witness of Jude is in the same strain. After a hideous picture of apostasy and man’s corruption, the Spirit of God by Jude addresses a remnant out-side professing bodies " building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep your- selves in the love of God." Not their love to God, but their hearts being established in grace, to know God’s love to them,, and all His dealings according to His love and grace and not according to their apprehension of it. The Spirit then inculcates largeheartedness with faithfulness and abhorrence of the evil. " Of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." 0 that such a heart were formed and found in us, because faithful and true to Christ, large towards the brethren (compare Job 42:10, " And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends."). The Holy Ghost then casts, as it were, this feeble remnant on the Lord Jesus Himself. As if He had said, you will be sensible of weakness and failure and your hearts may be sinking within you at times, but here is that which will never fail you (the point of testimony which we set out with). Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen. A.

Vol 03 - Exhibition of Three Hebrew Words in the Psalter

Exhibition of Three Hebrew Words in the Psalter In the Hebrew Psalter, the three following words occur, ■■■, ■■■, ■■, or ■■■. In the-authorized version, these words are somewhat indefinitely rendered, by the words "heathen," "nation," or "people."

It has been attempted, in the present case, to translate the Hebrew more accurately, by rejecting the word "people" altogether, and by substituting "gentiles" for "heathen." The word " people," even when occasionally modified by the plural form to suit the Hebrew plural, is far too indefinite to convey accurately the meaning of the original. "Peoples," indeed, would signify the same, or nearly the same as " nations"; but it is hardly English, nor has it been employed in the authorized version of the Psalms. "People, in the singular number, leaves the reader in the dark as to whether it means:-1. the Jewish people; 2. the Gentiles; 3. all nations, including the Jews: or, lastly, whether it is a generic term for Mankind. The word " heathen" was probably more nearly correct when the authorized version was made than now, it having acquired in our own day a peculiar signification, 1:e. not Gentiles as distinct from Jews, but any nation who does not professedly worship the one true God; in other words, all mankind, except Jews, Christians, and Mahometans. The plan, then, that has been adopted, is:-

1. Always to render the above Hebrew words by "nation" when they occur in the singular, always by "gentiles" when they occur in the plural.

2. As this rule has been universally adopted in the text, the very few cases of exception in which even the word "people" might be preferable, are noticed in the margin.

3. Never to depart from the words of the authorized version, except in the employment of the words "nation" or "gentiles"; or where such a change having been made, the grammar or sense absolutely requires some farther alteration. As the writer’s object has been to furnish a critical help, rather than a new version to supersede the old, he hopes he has in some measure succeeded?

Psalms 2:1. Why- do the gentiles (■pl.) rage, and the gentiles (■pl.) imagine a vain thing?

8. Ask of me, and I will give thee the gentiles (■ pl.) for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

3:6. I will not be afraid for ten thousands of the nation** (■sing.), that have set themselves against me round about.

8. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord; thy blessing is upon thy nation (■sing).

7:7. So shall the congregation of the gentiles (■pl.) compass thee about: for their sakes, therefore, return Thou on high.

8. The Lord shall judge the gentiles (■pl.): judge me, 0 God, according to my righteousness, and according to the integrity that is in me.

9:5. Thou hast rebuked the gentiles (■pl.), thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name forever and ever.

8. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the gentiles in uprightness (■pl.) 11. Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion; declare among the gentiles (■pl.) his doings.

15. The gentiles (■pl.) are sunk down in the pit that they made; in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.

17. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the gentiles*** (■pl.) that forget God.

Psalms 9:19. Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail: let the gentiles (■pl.) be judged in thy sight.

20. Put them in fear, O God; that the gentiles (■pl.) may know themselves to be but men.

10:16. The Lord is king forever and ever; the gentiles (■pl.) are perished out of his land.

14:4. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my nation (■sing.) as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.

7. O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his nation (■sing.), Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

18:27. For thou wilt save the afflicted nation (■sing.); but wilt bring down high looks.

43. Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the nation (■sing.); and thou hest made me the head of the gentiles (■pl.); a nation (■sing.) whom I have not known shall serve me.

47. It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the gentiles (■pl.) under me.

49. Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the gentiles (■pl.), and sing praises unto thy name.

22:6. But I am a worm, and no man: a reproach of men, and despised of the nation (■sing.).

27. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the gentiles (■pl.) shall worship before thee.

28. For the kingdom is the Lord’s, and he is the governor among the gentiles (■pl.).

31. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a nation (■sing.) that shall be born, that he hath done this.

28:9. Save thy nation (■sing.), and bless thine inheritance; feed them also, and lift them up forever.

29:11. The Lord will give strength unto his nation (■sing.); the Lord will bless his nation (■sing.) with peace.

33:10. The Lord bringeth the counsel of the gentiles (■pl.) to naught; he maketh the devices of the gentiles (■pl.) of none effect.

12. Blessed is the nation (■sing.) whose God is the Lord; and the nation (■sing.) whom he has chosen for his own inheritance.

35:18. I will give thee thanks in the great congregation; I will praise thee among a great nation (■sing.).

43:1. Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation (■sing.): O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

44:2. How thou didst drive out the gentiles (■pl.) with thine hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the gentiles (■pl.), and cast them out.

11. Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; thou hast scattered us among the gentiles (■ pl.).

12. Thou sellest thy nation (■sing.) for naught, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.

14. Thou makest us a byword among the gentiles (■pl.), a shaking of the head among the gentiles (■pl.).

Psalms 45:5. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the gentiles (■, pl.) fall under thee.

10. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own nation (■sing.), and thy father's house.

12. And the daughter of Tire shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the nation (■sing.) shall entreat thy favor.

17. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the gentiles (■pl.) praise thee forever and ever.

46:6. The gentiles (■pl.) raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

10. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the gentiles (■pl.), I will be exalted in the earth.

47:1. O clap your hands, all ye gentiles (■pl.); shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

3. He shall subdue the gentiles (■pl.) under us, and the gentiles (■pl) under our feet.

8. God reigneth over the gentiles (■pl.): God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

9. The princes of the gentiles (■pl.) are gathered together, even the nation (■sing.) of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.

49:1. Hear ye this, all ye gentiles (■pl.); give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world.

50:4. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his nation (■sing.).

7. Hear, O my nation (■sing.), and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.

53:4. Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people (■sing.) as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.

6. O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when God bringeth back the captivity of his nation (■sing.), Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

56:7. Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the gentiles (■pl.), O God.

57:9. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the gentiles (■pl); I will sing unto thee amongst the gentiles (■pl.).

59:5. Thou, therefore, O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the gentiles (■pl.): be not merciful to any wicked transgressors.

8. But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the gentiles (■pl.) in derision.

11. Slay them not, lest my nation (■sing.) forget; scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield.

60:3. Thou hast showed thy nation (■sing.) hard things, and thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

62:8. Trust in him at all times; O nation (■sing.), pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.

65:7. Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the gentiles (■pl.).

66:7. He ruleth by his power forever; his eyes behold the gentiles (■pl.): let not the rebellious exalt themselves.

8. O bless our God, ye gentiles (■pl.), and make the voice of his praise to be heard:

Psalms 67:2. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all gentiles (■pl.).

3. Let the gentiles (■pl.) praise thee, O God; let all the gentiles (■pl.) praise thee.

4. O let the gentiles (■pl.) be glad and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the gentiles (■pl.) righteously, and govern the gentiles (■pl.) upon earth.

5. Let the gentiles (■pl.) praise thee, O God; let all the gentiles (■pl.) praise thee.

68:7. O God, when thou wentest forth before thy nation (■sing.), when thou didst march through the wilderness;

22. The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan. I will bring my nation again from the depths of the sea:****

30. Rebuke the company of the spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the gentiles (■pl.) till every one submit himself with pieces of silver; scatter thou the gentiles (■pl.) that delight in war.

35. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places; the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his nation (■sing.).

72: 2. He shall judge thy nation (■sing.) with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. The mountains shall bring peace to the nation (■sing.) and the little hills, by righteousness.

He shall judge the poor of the nation (■sing.), he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

11. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all gentiles (■pl.) shall serve him.

17. His name shall endure forever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all gentiles (■pl) shall call him blessed.

73:10. Therefore his nation (■sing.) return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.

74:14. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the nation (■sing.) inhabiting the wilderness.

18. Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish nation (■sing.) have blasphemed thy name. [77 ver. 14, thou hast declared thy strength among the people (■pl.) Ed.] 77:15. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy nation (■sing.), the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

20. Thou leddest thy nation (■sing.) like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

78:1. Give ear, O my nation (■sing.), to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

20. Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his nation (■sing.)?

52. But made his own nation (■sing.) to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

Psalms 78:55. He cast out the gentiles (■pl.) also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

62. He gave his nation (■sing.) over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.

71. From following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his nation (■sing.), and Israel his inheritance.

79:1. O God, the gentiles (■pl.) are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps.

6. Pour out thy wrath upon the gentiles (■pl.) that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.

10. Wherefore should the gentiles (■pl.) say, Where is their God? let him be known among the gentiles (■pl.) in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed.

13. So we thy nation (■sing.) and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks forever; we will show forth thy praise to all generations.

80:4. O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry with the prayer of thy nation (■sing.)?

8. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the gentiles (■pl.), and planted it.

81:8. Hear, O my nation (■sing.) and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;

11. But my nation (■sing.) would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.

13. O that my nation (■sing.) had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways 82:8. Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all***** gentiles (■pl.).

83:3. They have taken crafty counsel against thy nation (■sing.) and consulted against thy hidden ones.

4. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation (■sing.); that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

85:2. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy nation (■sing.), thou hast covered all their sin.

6. Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy nation (■sing.) may rejoice in thee?

8. I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his nation (■sing.), and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

86:9. All****** gentiles (■pl.) whom thou hest made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.

87:6. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the gentiles******* (■pl.) that this man was born there.

89:15. Blessed is the nation (■sing.) that knoweth the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.

Psalms 89:19. Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the nation******** (■sing.).

50. Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty gentiles (■ pl.);

94:5. They break in pieces thy nation (■sing.), O Lord, and afflict thine heritage.

8. Understand, ye brutish among the nation (■sing.): and ye fools, when will ye be wise?

10. He that chastiseth the gentiles (■pl.), shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?

14. For the Lord will not cast off his nation (■sing.), neither will he forsake his inheritance.

95:7. For he is our God; and we are the nation (■sing.) of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day if ye will hear his voice…

10. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a nation (■sing.) that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

96:3. Declare his glory among the gentiles (■pl.), his wonders among all gentiles (■pl.).

5. For all the gods of the gentiles (■pl.) are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.

7. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the gentiles (■pl.), give unto the Lord glory and strength.

10. Say among the gentiles (■pl.) that the Lord reigneth; the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved; he shall judge the gentiles (■pl.) righteously.

13....before the Lord: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the gentiles (■pl.) with his truth.

97:6. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the gentiles (■pl.) see his glory.

98:2. The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the gentiles (■pl.)

9....before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the gentiles (■ pl.) with equity.

99:1. The Lord reigneth; let the gentiles (■pl.) tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.

2. The Lord is great in Zion; and he is high above all the gentiles (■pl.)

100:3. Snow ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his nation (■sing.), and the sheep of his pasture.

102:15. So the gentiles (■pl.) shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

18. This shall be written for the generation to come: and the nation (■sing.) which shall be created shall praise the Lord.

22. When the gentiles (■pl.) are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.

105:1. O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the gentiles (■pl.).

Psalms 105:13. When they went from one nation (■sing.) to another (■sing.), from one kingdom to another nation (■sing.) 20. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the gentiles (■pl.), and let him go free.

24. And he increased his nation (■sing.) greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.

25. He turned their heart to hate his nation (■sing.), to deal subtly with his servants.

40. The nation********* asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.

43. And he brought forth his (■sing.) nation with joy, and his chosen with gladness.

44. And gave them the lands of the gentiles (■pl.): and they inherited the labor of the gentiles (■pl.);

106:4. Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy nation (■sing.): O visit me with thy salvation;

5. That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation (■sing.), that I may glory with thine inheritance.

27. To overthrow their seed also among the gentiles (■pl.), and to scatter them in the lands.

34. They did not destroy the gentiles (■pl.), concerning whom the Lord commanded them:

35. But were mingled among the gentiles (■pl.), and learned their works.

40. Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his nation (■sing.), insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

41. And he gave them into the hand of the gentiles (■pl.); and they that hated them ruled over them.

47. Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the gentiles (■pl.), to give thanks unto thy holy names and to triumph in thy praise.

48. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the nation (■sing.) say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord.

107:32. Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the nation (■sing.), and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

108: 3. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the gentiles (■pl.); and 108:3. I will sing praises to thee among the gentiles (■pl.)

110:3. Thy nation (■sing.) shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

6. He shall judge among the gentiles (■pl.), he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

111:6. He hath showed his nation (■sing.) the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the gentiles (■pl.).

9. He sent redemption unto his nation (■sing.): he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and reverend is his name.) 113:4. The Lord is high above all gentiles (■pl.), and his glory above the heavens.

8. That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his nation (■sing.).

Psalms 114:1. When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a nation (■sing.) of strange language;

115:2. Wherefore should the gentiles (■pl.) say, Where is now their God?

116:14. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his nation (■sing.).

18. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his nation (■sing.) 117:1. O praise the Lord, all ye gentiles (■pl.): praise him, all ye gentiles.********** 118:10. All gentiles (■pl.) encompassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.

125:2. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his nation (■sing.) from henceforth even forever.

126:2. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the gentiles (■pl.), the Lord hath done great things for them.

135:10. Who smote great gentiles (■pl.), and slew mighty kings.

12. And gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his nation (■sing.) 14. For the Lord will judge his nation (■sing.), and repent himself concerning his servants.

15. The idols of the gentiles (■pl.) are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

136:16. To him who led his nation (■sing.) through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth forever.

144: 2. My goodness and my fortress; my high tower and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my nation (■sing.) under me.

15. Happy is that nation (■sing.) that is in such a case: yea, happy is that nation (■sing.) whose God is the Lord.

147:20. He hath not dealt so with any nation (■sing.): and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.

148:11. Kings of the earth, and all gentiles (■pl.); princes, and all judges of the earth:

14. He also exalteth the horn of his nation (■sing.), the praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel, a nation (■sing.) near unto him. Praise ye the Lord.

149: 4. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his nation (■sing.): he will beautify the meek with salvation.

7. To execute vengeance upon the gentiles (■pl.), and punishments upon the gentiles (■pl.);

(* Having inserted, whilst verifying this paper, for go-i (■sing.), when it was found in the singular number, and (■pl.) when it was found in the plural; and for or, similarly (■sing.) and (■pl.); and for arcs, similarly (■sing.), and (■pl.), I have taken editorial liberty, and allowed them to remain, for the saving of time to those who know Hebrew. The versification is according to the English Bible.-ED.

(** Or "people.") (*** Or nations," including the Jews, but gentiles seem to be specially meant.)

(**** The words "my nation," here, are a supplement of the English translators, and have no equivalent in the text of the Hebrew.-ED.) (***** Or, "nations," including Jews.) (****** Or, " nations," including Jews.) (******* Or, " nations.") (******** Or, possibly, "people," may be preferable.) (********* "The nation" here has no word to represent it in the Hebrew.-Ed.)

(********** The word in this place is another word, not one of the three under review, viz., ■■■■■■ or ■■■■■■ it only occurs here and in Genesis 25:16, "twelve princes according to

their nations;" and in Numbers 25:15., "head over a people."-Ed.) The Editor suggests that in Psalms 7:8 and Psalms 9:20 the word rendered "God" should be as in the authorized version, "Lord." In noticing the omission of the word "Selah" from this paper, he would avail himself of the opportunity to remark that Jerome renders the word "Selah " by Semper, 1:e. Always; comm: vol. i υ. 49

Vol 03 - Fragment: Christ Overcoming

Fragment: Christ Overcoming

"I was much struck lately with the way in which Christ was answered and overcame in Gethsemane and on the cross. I apprehend, while looking forward to the dreadful cup, the proper and immediate trial of Gethsemane was the power of Satan. This is your hour and the power of darkness.' The great point was to get between his soul and the Father (as before, by desirable things for life). But he could not. Christ hence pleading with His Father, receiving nothing from Satan or man in the cup, receives it from His Father in perfect and blessed obedience-' Thou hast brought me into the dust of death.' Hence His soul is entirely out of the darkness, in respect of the enemy; and He can say, in perfect calm, of others, This is your hour and the power of darkness,' and present himself willingly, that His disciples might go free. How blessed the perfectness which at His own cost always kept them free, for in their position Satan would have caught them in his hour, had not the Lord stood forward in the gap-and so ever, and when needed for Peter-can allow just so much as was good to sift, but stay the proud billows for him which were to go clean over His own soul. He was thus, I judge, entirely out of the whole conflict with darkness, before it came in fact. He passed through it with God-His God. At the Cross. I apprehend, it was another thing. He was forsaken of God. He had immediately to do with God and just wrath against sin. It was not Satan. It was justice, holiness, arrayed against sin, and He, in that place, so that he could have no refuge for His soul. And here, too, He is perfect."

Vol 03 - Fragment: Greek Translation in Revelation

Fragment: Greek Translation in Revelation

" Two passages in Revelation seem to admit of being more easily explained, and to save some controversy, if we adopt the simple interpretation; that ψυχ■, in these places, means dead 'body' instead of 'soul,' see Numbers 9:1-23 One is Revelation 6:9, describing the opening of the fifth seal, where we read of souls' under the altar, the other the celebrated passage in Revelation 20:4, I saw the souls of them that were beheaded. An objection may be raised, How can dead, headless bodies speak? It may be a sufficient answer to say, How can a soul speak without a body at all? To which we may add, It seems contrary to common sense to see a soul. To make a soul visible would not only be (we may suppose) to suspend the course of nature, and achieve what is called a physical impossibility, which is the very nature of a miracle, but, beyond this, to bring to pass what is rather a metaphysical or mathematical impossibility, 1:e. that which, in the very nature of the case, can no more be than a sound can be seen, or a color be heard, or two and two can make Ave. At all events, this difficulty is worth considering. Corpses cannot literally speak, no more can blood, yet in figurative, 1:e. scriptural, language it has a voice, see Genesis 4:1-26Hebrews 11:1-40 Again, corpses, as such, do not live and reign, neither do souls (according to the common version) without bodies. In the one case the first resurrection unites body and soul, in the other it not only does so, but repairs the loss the mutilated body had sustained." B.

Vol 03 - Fragment: Mal_3:16-18

Fragment:Malachi 3:16-18

"THEN they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not,"-Malachi 3:16-18.

Vol 03 - Fragment: Rev_10:1-11; Rev_11:1-19

Fragment:Revelation 10:1-11;Revelation 11:1-19

Suggestive-If we attend carefully to the "words" of the 10th chapter of the Book of Revelation we may be kept clear of much of the perplexity and confusion which prevail in the Church of God with respect to this momentous and deeply-interesting portion of God’s Holy Word. Chapter 10, "The mighty angel (verse 1) sware (verse 6) by Him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: but (verse 7) in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished as he /Lath declared to his servants the prophets." In chap. 11 ver. 15, to the end we have the fulfillment of this oath-confirmed prophecy. "And (verse 15) the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wart, and art to come, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned." "And (verse 18) the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." "And (verse 19) the - temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings and voices and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." My object is to call attention to the thought, that the 18th and 19th verses of this 11th chapter contain a complete general account of the finished mystery of God. That, in fact, the Book of Revelation has AN end here. That which follows consists of circumstantial scenes or detailed pictures, which compose the eventful history so wonderfully generalized and condensed as to be comprised in the last two verses of the 11th chapter. M.

Worcester.

Vol 03 - On Worship

On Worship The habits of a vast number of Christians, and the moral atmosphere in which they are placed, have tended to produce the very vague notions they have as to worship. Having passed from formalism and superstitious views (which left the care of their religion to others) under the influence of the feeling of the need in which they stood of the truth, they have found in the recognition of the truth, in owning and hearing it-the sum total of their ordinary religious exercises. But, surely, heaven should have some place in our religion while here below. In heaven, doubtless, the truth will be known in all its perfectness; but truth formerly received into the heart will be actually realized there in the glory of God and of the Savior, about whom this truth treats. There will be no longer any need to hear the truth, nor to recognize it,-we shall live in it. The power of it in our hearts will be expressed in adoration. Such is the characteristic of heaven. But, surely, this should be realized, in some measure, while on earth, among those at least who have received the truth, and who, by it, have the knowledge of the God who has communicated it to us-of the Savior who came to accomplish his work of love and of righteousness on our behalf;-among those who have received not only the truth, but even the very Spirit who gave to the truth its place in their hearts, and to them the desire of glorifying Him whom it has revealed to them. When the Holy Spirit communicates heavenly truth to the renewed heart, it always re-ascends in thanksgiving and praise. True worship is but the return to God which is made by the heart, when filled with the deep feeling of that which has been communicated from on high. The Holy Spirit, who makes the communication to us, causes the feelings produced by the revelation of God-of His love in Jesus -of His glory, and of all the blessings wherewith He loadeth us (" our cup runneth over") to re-ascend to God in adoration. And, surely, the heart which is penetrated with the grace of God will feel the need of returning back to Him the homage of its adoration and of its gratitude, for all the blessings which are so many, proofs of the infinite and eternal love which God has had, and which He has had for us.

Let us, then, examine this subject according to the Scriptural ground which the Spirit has given us.

What, then, is worship?

" It is the honor and adoration which are rendered to God by reason of that which He is, and of that which He is for those who render it."

It is the employment of heaven; blessed and precious privilege for its upon earth, if the enjoyment of it be vouchsafed -to us. One might, indeed, add to this definition "rendered in common." So to speak would not contain the denial of the possibility of worship from an isolated individual.* If Adam had continued innocent he would, doubtless, as an individual have adored God.**

(* I doubt, however, whether, in point of fact, it is possible for an adequate worship to be rendered to God by any one alone. An innocent man might bless God for His goodness; but for such worship as should rise to the height of that which God is, to be rendered by a solitary being, would suppose a capacity to apprehend the motives of worship in God, such as would put him who

rendered the worship almost upon a level with Him to whom he rendered it. God would not be in the place proper to him for worship-for who alone could glorify God suitably, if himself the sole object of His favor. Here the intervention of Christ is of great importance for the foundation of worship-because God is so glorified, as that worship can be rendered to Him and those who adore Him, do so by virtue of that which He is for them in this intervention of Christ; the worship is based upon the fact that God is fully glorified, and we adore Him in acknowledging Him as thus glorified.) (* Nevertheless, for man himself, God said, that it was not good that he should be alone.) But it is not, therefore, the less true, that in point of fact, worship is a homage rendered in common; because, in fact, God has blessed many and many together; be it angels or men; and hence communion in adoration is of the essence of the act, because the blessing is one in common, and the joy which I have in the blessing of others is part of my own individual blessing. Their blessing forms part of the grace to which my heart responds; and love (which is the source and spring of it all) is defective if I enjoy not their blessing. If I bless not God for it, I am myself incapable of worship; for to bless God supposes that I am sensible of His love, and that I love.

We may, then, say, since God was not pleased that we should be alive, but that our blessing should be in communion, that worship is the honor and adoration rendered to God in common, by virtue of that which He is, and which He is in behalf of those who render it. But it is not to an abstract definition that I desire to confine myself; quite the contrary. But it is well to know what the subject is on which we speak. No work of God towards man is worship. Nor is any testimony rendered as to Him and His grace worship. Preaching the gospel-testimony (of infinite value) to His grace-has naught in common with worship. It may produce it, as being the means of communicating the knowledge of God in grace, which awakens the spirit of adoration in the heart; but no preaching (how blessed soever it may be) is worship rendered to God.*

(* The more one is in the spirit of worship, however, the better will one know how to render testimony-for it is char that it is in intimacy of communion with God that one will know how to render testimony as to Him in love.)

It is a testimony rendered on God’s part to man. This does not derogate from the value of such preaching; without it no Christian worship could exist, for the gospel makes known the God who ought to be adored, and, acting by grace, leads the soul into the state in which it is able to render true homage to God, even that which is in spirit and in truth. But it is not, therefore, the less true that no sort of testimony addressed to man from God, is worship rendered to God by man. A sermon has nothing in common with worship. It may be the means of producing it. The ministry of the word is a distinctive characteristic of the Christian economy. The Jewish people were counted to be already in relationship with God; externally they were so. There was no question about bringing them to God; they were already His people, and God dwelt in the midst of this people, as a people whom He had redeemed; but now the kingdom of heaven and the grace of salvation are proclaimed to sinners, and there is a ministry of the gospel for the calling of souls, and to invite them to enter into relationship with God, as in Israel there had been a priesthood for the maintenance of the relationship already formed.

Neither are prayers, addressed to God in order to obtain that of which we stand in need, worship, properly so called. They more immediately connect themselves with it, because they suppose the existence of the knowledge of God and of confidence in Him, and that we draw near to Him by

virtue of that which He is, and which He is for him who presents his prayers to Him. But supplications addressed to God (while founded upon confidence in Him, and thus intimately allied to adoration), have not the characteristic proper to adoration itself. Praises and thanksgivings, adoration, the making mention of the attributes of God and of His acts-whether of power or in grace-in the form of adoration, and of adoration, too, addressed to Himself, constitute that which is, properly speaking, worship. In it we draw near to God and address ourselves to Rim. To make mention of His praises, not in an address to Himself, is undoubtedly connected with worship, and the heart refers them to Him; but such mention of his praises has not the form proper to worship, although it may enter into it subordinately, as also the prayers which adoration itself suggests. And this distinction must not be thought to be of little importance. Sweet is it to record, the one to the other, the excellencies of Him whom we love, but the redeemed delight to have God Himself in their thoughts-delight to address themselves to Him, to speak to Him, to adore Him personally, to converse with Him, to open the heart to Him, to tell Him that we love Him., To the redeemed it is a delight that these things pass between God personally and themselves, and to testify to Him the feeling they have of His greatness and of His goodness, because God Himself is in it. In this case the communion is between ourselves and God; and God is more precious to us than are even our brethren. Such is the feeling of our brethren also. God is the portion of all in common. In short, in the cases first supposed, we speak to ourselves, or to one another, to say for ourselves how worthy God is to be praised; in the second, we address ourselves to God personally. It is plain, to him at least who knows God, that the latter is the more excellent, that it has a charm, an excellency, which the other possesses not. The spiritual affections are evidently of a higher tone, the communion is more complete.

Having presented these general thoughts as to the nature of worship, or rather having distinguished that which, as all are agreed, is properly meant by this word worship from other acts which are mixed up with it in the mind by reason of the actual practice of Christians, I will now examine: What is Christian worship according to the Word? I remarked, by the way, that there is a ministry in the Christian economy as there was a priesthood in that of the Jews. I turn back to this remark, in order to develop my subject, strengthened by the recollection that the Lord connects that which He says concerning the worship which the Father seeks, with that which formerly existed at Jerusalem. The worship of Israel, as a whole, supposed, it is true, -that the people were in relationship with God, and even that God had come to dwell in the midst of them; but, in all the circumstances which characterize that worship, He made it plain, that the people themselves could not draw near to God. Moreover, this was a thought which was essential to all the relationships which existed between God and the people. God had redeemed them out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, had borne them as upon eagles' wings, and had brought them even to Himself. He had given them, as a token of their deliverance, the promise that they should worship him upon mount Sinai, to the foot of which He in truth conducted them-with proofs innumerable of His patience and of His goodness. There God shows himself; but it is amid thunders and fire and the voice of a trumpet, which made even Moses (already familiar with the wondrous manifestations attendant upon the presence of God) to tremble. In harmony with such a revelation of his glory, the Lord commands bounds to be set around the mountain, and that if even a beast approach unto it, it should be stoned or thrust through with a dart. He spake, indeed, directly to the people, but in such a way as made the people ask that He should speak unto them no more: and God Himself approved the request. The ordinary worship of the people in the

tabernacle and in the temple, while wearing an appearance which was more gentle and calm, and less terrific towards the worshipper, contained in its basis the same character. If God did not shake the earth with His voice, if His presence did not cast terror amid the people-this was because He was hid behind the veil which concealed Him from their sight. He made Himself known but by His acts of blessing and of judgment alone, and revealed not Himself to the hearts of the people. The consequence of this was natural and evident.' The people came to acknowledge His benefits and to humble themselves in the thought of His just judgments, while they drew near toward the Holy place; but to Himself within the veil they never drew near. They did not even enter into His house. Within the veil the high priest alone was wont to enter once every year, in order to carry in the blood of the ram and of the bullock, of propitiatory victims, in order to make reconciliation for the people with a God who could not endure iniquity, and thus to renew their relationships with Him who demanded that His abode also should be purified from the defilements of the people among whom he vouchsafed to dwell. Doubtless, if dwelling between the cherubim, He judged from His throne that which was evil; He also heaped up blessings upon the people whom He had redeemed, with the assurance that, if they were faithful, they should be protected from all the attacks of their enemies. The people sought His protection and worshipped Him for the benefits He had conferred. The faith of the individual seized perhaps more immediately the glory of the Lord, but did not go, and could not, beyond the revelation which He had given of Himself in the government of Israel. The institution of the priesthood was the natural consequence of such a state of things; but the priests themselves fulfilled their service outside the veil which hid from them the God they adored. The way into the Holy place, says the apostle, was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing. Here, then, we see the character of Jewish worship as God established it. But all is changed now. Christian worship is founded upon principles which are in direct contrast* with all that about which we have just spoken. There was a shadow as to persons and circumstances in connection with which worship is now occupied, but the principles of its exercise, at that time, were in perfect opposition to those upon which Christian worship is based.

(* It will be found, consequently, on examination, that the Epistle to the Hebrews, throughout, bears the character of a contrast rather than a comparison.) The honor and adoration rendered to God by virtue of that which He is, and of that which He is for us, depend necessarily upon the revelation which He makes of Himself. God changes not; but no one draws near to Him in the light to which no man can approach. It is when He reveals Himself that our relationships with Him begin-be they partial or be they perfect. Now God, under the law, manifested Himself as requiring of man that which man ought to be, and, having placed him, by Divine power, in a position in which he ought to have brought forth fruit to the glory of Him who had made Israel to be His own vine, He blessed man if he was faithful to his duty, and He judged him if he was not so. Under such circumstances, God could not fully reveal Himself. Man was capable of bearing neither the brightness of His majesty nor the light of His holiness. His sovereign love, as Savior, agreed not with the peremptory demand for services under pain of a curse-a just demand, nevertheless, which served to manifest the need in which man was placed of that love and of that grace which brings salvation. God might act, bless, and punish; but, if He revealed Himself fully, it must needs be in order to be found in relationship with what perfectly responds to that which He Himself is. Otherwise it would be to endure iniquity (and that would not be Himself) or to drive it absolutely from before His face; in which case love would not have its place- and God is love. The immediate

revelation of Himself such as He is to man is impossible.

God putting Himself in relationship with man as a sinner yet responsible, acted, and concealed Himself.

Now Christianity is based upon an altogether new interposition of God; an interposition arranged in His counsels before the world was, but which waited for its accomplishment, not only the act of sin in man, but that sin should come to its full height, and should have taken the form (which was nothing else than its essential character) of enmity against God, and against God in the most perfect manifestation which was possible of His goodness and of His authority, and of His authority to be exercised in grace over man. Christ appeared, and man crucified Him!

What relationship then was possible between man and God? All is judgment, or all is grace. The former, (which will surely be exercised against all iniquity, and specially against those who have despised grace,) is not, (I thank God), our present subject. It forms only the dark and solemn background of the picture, and throws into relief the perfection, necessity, and brilliancy of grace.

It is with the latter (blessing God therefore), that we have to be occupied. Now, if man crowned his iniquity in rejecting, in the person of Jesus, not only the authority, but also the goodness of God, the same act which perfected the manifestation of the sin which was in the heart of man, and gave its full development to the positive evil which flowed thence-accomplished at the same time all that which the justice of God required with regard to that sin, and manifested His perfect love. Man is there fully made manifest: God also has there acted in all the full plenitude of His holy justice against sin. In Christ He was perfectly glorified in that respect. The affections and the majesty of God have no longer aught to claim from him who comes to God by Jesus Christ. His love is free to bless. The holiness of God is an infinite delight to those who can draw near to Him; for there is no longer any question about guilt between the worshipper and God. Christ has abolished it by the sacrifice of Himself. Entirely cleansed according to the efficacy of the work of Christ Himself, we draw nigh to that place where there is no guilt, to enjoy all that God can heap upon us of blessing; there, where His love has free course, without the hindrance which sin puts in its way, whether we consider His affections or His justice. Passing over it all we come to enjoy Himself. We are in relationship with God, without guilt in His sight, for the enjoyment of that which He is, having been led to the knowledge of Him by means of that which He has been for us in that glorious work by which He has reconciled us unto Himself, and has introduced us into His presence in the light-Christ, having accomplished the work which glorifies God as to sin, has appeared in His presence for us. And further, a necessary consequence, or rather striking expression of these truths, the veil (which was the sign that no one could draw nigh to God), has been rent from the top to the bottom. We have full liberty of entrance into the most holy place; God Himself is perfectly and fully manifested. The stroke which rent the veil and made manifest the God of holiness who cannot endure iniquity; who must needs smite the very Son of His love when He took upon Himself our sin-that same stroke removed the guilt which would have barred our approach to Him thus unveiled, because it could not have appeared in His sight. The light of that presence shines upon us cleansed from all guilt; and that which manifests all the holiness of His justice, which throws out into prominency all its vastness-has rendered us able to abide in the presence of that holiness without spot, and in joy.

All that God is has been manifested in that which He has been for us; and we can enjoy Him as our portion, according to His infinite love in Christ. Such is the basis of worship. That which the angels desire to look into is the daily aliment of all our precious relationships with God; and no one recognizes as he should the glory of the work of Christ, or of the love of his God, to which he is debtor for everything, who takes not up this place for himself. No one can render worship worthy of God upon any other footing. Indeed, no one has recognized himself to be a sinner aright who pretends to offer worship to God otherwise than in this liberty; for who would dare to present himself before God, if all guilt had not been removed? Who would dare to place himself in His presence without a veil; he cannot do it otherwise, for the veil is rent. God will not, cannot any longer, now that He has manifested Himself; now that the true light shines-endure any sin, in any manner, in His presence. Who is free from sin out of Christ? On whom, of those who are in Christ, does it rest? No: in Him it is ours no longer in the presence of God, since He has cleansed us from it; cleansed us by a work which could not possibly be done a second time, the efficacy of which is at once eternal and perfect. And this alone gives freedom to the spiritual affections. For us God is perfect love, and introduces us into the light as He is in the light. But who can fully enjoy that love if there be a bad conscience? Attracted he may be-but find enjoyment he cannot. His affections cannot have free play if his conscience reproaches him with offenses against Him who loves Him-if it produces fear in his soul. The heart must be free, if the affections are to be in exercise. But the work of Christ cleanses the conscience, and sets the heart free by the thought of the perfect love of God which is known by the perfect love which He has had for us, of which Christ is the proof and fullness. The light of His holiness is the joy of our souls. It is in that light that we see all that we love. This relationship, which exceeds all our thoughts, is presented to us in the most striking manner in the title " God of our Lord Jesus Christ." When God calls himself the God of any one, he alludes to a tie of intimacy formed between that person and Him who bears his name superadded to His own-a relationship which has for its basis that which God is for the one, whose God he is, and which implies the purpose to bless and honor according to the relationship, to which God cannot be unfaithful, and which is the subject of enjoyment, in God, by faith, of him whose name is added to the name of God; at least, that which he has the right to appropriate as pertaining to himself on the part. of God. Thus, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, besides being specially their God as the objects of distinctive blessing, is that which God was for these patriarchs, according to the revelation which He had made to them of Himself-that upon which their faith could count in their relationships with Him;-that which they were called to realize. He placed Himself in relationship according to that which His name expressed. Their spiritual privileges had this name for their character and measure. Thus God, in relation to us, is that which is expressed in the title, " God of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is thus that He reveals Himself to us in order that we may be in relationship with him according to the import of this title. When this is understood, we can comprehend what a glorious position we have in drawing near to God by virtue of this title, " God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory." For, here, Christ is as a man, as being at the head of a new family, ascended to his God and our God. This God, to whom we draw near, is, for us, all that He is for Christ entered into His presence, as having perfectly glorified Him upon earth; His beloved Son, in whom He is always well pleased. This truth stands out in full prominency in chapters 1: and 2: of the Epistle to the Ephesians. The Apostle in chapter 1: prays that the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we may know what is the hope of the calling of God, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the ’saints (ver. 18).

Then he unites us with Christ in that which he shows to be the true import of that glory-and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from among the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, etc. And you Days he] who were dead in trespasses and sins, He hath quickened together with Him-raised up together, and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ,-in order that He might show, in the ages to come, what are the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us by Jesus Christ. And what are the relationships which God has with Jesus Christ? What is there that belongs to Him, on God's part, in justice, in love, even as a man? Who can sound the love of God toward Christ? What are His claims upon the affection of His Father? See, then, in what a wondrous place we are when we come into the presence of God! The glory, even, which God has given unto Him, He has given unto us, in order that the world may know that we are loved even as He is loved. The words of the Lord will be remembered. " I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God." The two prayers, that of chapter 1 of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and that of chapter 3 will be seen to be respectively based upon these two titles. The prayer of chapter 1 is founded upon the second title, viz., that of " God;" chapter 3 upon the former, viz., that of " Father:" the first in view of glory, and the second in view of communion in love. The passage just cited from John 17:1-26, shows that the communication of the glory, all wondrous as it is, is, after all, but the proof that we are loved even as Jesus is loved. What simplicity in this truth, but what love, and what Divine depth even in the proportions of its very simplicity! "I was" as the first Adam; "I am" as the second Adam; I have borne the image of the first, "shall" bear the image of the second. Yes, it is simple; but who would have thought of it but God? It is Himself whom we know therein. The names of the tribes of Israel borne upon the breast of the high priest, as was also their judgment according to the light and perfection of God, were, after all, but a shadow (as says the Apostle) of such blessings. Therefore God, in speaking of the true circumcision (Php 3:1-21), says, "we worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." All that puts us out of this position, and supposes the need of anything as a means of our drawing near to God-all that suggests that there needs something intermediate, inasmuch as we are in Christ, puts us out of Him, and places us in Judaism which has, as a system, been nailed to the cross, and which, since the cross, is no better than any heathen ordinance (see Galatians 4:1-31) We are in Christ, or we are out of Christ; one with Him, or separate from Him. If we are separate from Him-the distance matters not-we are not in union with the fountain of life. The body separated from the head by a space more minute than the imagination of man can conceive; the body having between it and the head anything, thinner than the beaten leaf of gold, is a body without life. In Christ we are the objects of God's delight in Him, and we are as He is. Out of Christ, we are but objects of His judgment. What should we be before the God of our Lord Jesus Christ-our God? Therefore we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; but to follow out the glorious consequences of our position would lead us away from our subject. But there is yet another thing which is connected with the work of Christ, and on which worship necessarily hangs. Not only has Christ borne away our sin, cleansing us for the presence of God, whose love is manifest in the, unspeakable gift of His Son; but in order that we may enjoy this, He has gained for us, at the same time, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Not only do we receive a new nature, which is holy and capable of sentiments suitable to the position in which Holy has placed us as before God, but we receive the Holy Spirit, who communicates to us the things which are in the Divine presence, and inspires

sentiments such as they should awaken. We are strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man, in order that being rooted and grounded in love, Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, and that we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length, and breadth, and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us, and all that the Father hath is Christ's. That which eye hath not seen, which ear hath not heard, which came not into the heart of man-the things which God has prepared for him whom He loves-God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. The Holy Spirit is the unction which we receive of God, by the which we know the things which are freely given to us of God; by the which we know all things. He is the seal which God has put upon us unto the day of redemption: God has marked for that day of glory those who believe. He is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. He gives us the full assurance of the efficacy of the work of Christ, the knowledge of the position in which we are placed, cleansed by the blood of the Savior, in the sight of God-without spot in the light. By Him the love which was ready to undertake, and which has accomplished all these things, and which has brought us to the enjoyment of such great blessing, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. He is the originator in us of all the thoughts and of all the affections which are the response to it, even as He communicates all that produces them. But He does more, He is more than all this for us. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. This is not merely an imagination, a feeling, but is a fact; the same Spirit, whose fullness is in Christ, abides in us, and we are united to Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. By One Spirit we have all been baptized, that we might be one body. Not only is He the power, the link of this union, but He gives us the consciousness of it. " In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." The Holy Spirit, then, gives us, first of all, the assurance of our redemption. Where the Spirit is, there there is liberty. He reveals to us the glory of Christ, as to Stephen, who, full of the Holy Ghost, beheld the glory of God, and the Son of Man at the right hand of God. Moreover, He gives us the consciousness of our union with Christ on high. We know that we are quickened together with Him, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. Besides all this-and which is its spring and fountain of joy while we think of it-He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. All this also turns into rivers of joy and of love overflowing toward this poor world and toward Christians; but I enter not into this precious consequence and blessed privilege, because our subject is worship.

Another truth, of minor importance, but very precious in its place, depends upon this presence of the Holy Spirit: we are of the same body, and thus members one of the other. If Christ is the Head of the body, each Christian is a member of it, and consequently united by the Holy Spirit (who forms the bond of the whole) to every other member. The same Spirit dwells in each Christian; his body is His temple, and having thus united them together, the whole is also His temple. God dwells there by Spirit, in a manner less palpable, but fax more excellent, than in the temple of Jerusalem.

Now, it is in this position, according to this glorious revelation of God, which His love has made to us, and by this Spirit which He has given that we might enjoy it, that true Christian worship is offered to God.

It is thus we know what He is, and what He is for us who offer it to Him. Beholding Him, without a veil, according to the perfection of His Being, of His love, and of His holiness-rendered capable of abiding in the light, as He Himself is in the light, by the selfsame work by which He has revealed it-and thus according to the same perfectness; the objects of that love which spared not His well-beloved Son, in order that we might be in it; having received His Spirit in order that we might comprehend this love, and thus be enabled to adore Him according to His heart's desire, we offer our worship to Him according to that which He has manifested Himself to be in heart toward us, in those things which angels desire to look into, and by the which He will make known in the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Jesus, yet whom we already know by the Spirit. But there remains yet another element of our intelligent service-the character of the Father. God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, for He is a Spirit: but then again, the Father seeketh such to worship Him. To worship in spirit, is the powerful energy of communion which the Spirit of God gives (in contrast with the forms and ceremonies-with all the religion of which the flesh is capable)-and in the true nature of Him whom we worship (comp. Php 3:1-21) To worship God in truth-that is, to worship Him according to the revelation which He has given of Himself. The Samaritans worshipped God neither in spirit nor in truth. The Jews worshipped God in truth, so far as that can be said of a revelation which was imperfect; for the truth came not but by Jesus Christ (the darkness, says the apostle, is past, and the true light now shineth); but they worshipped Him in no respect in spirit. Now, to worship God, both are needful: the true revelation of Himself, in order that we may worship Him in truth; and to do so according to His nature, that is in spirit.

Yet this is not all that is presented to us in this passage; another precious element is found there: The Father seeks such worshippers. It is grace which makes such now. Grace desires such, but it desires them. It is not a responsibility imposed by the flames of mount Sinai, which, in the very act of demanding worship, in the name of the holy majesty of the Lord, placed, by the very requirement, a barrier which no one could pass under penalty of death: Majesty so terrific that it closed the way of access to God by the very act of requiring that we should draw near to Him-leaving the worshipper far off from God, trembling under the sense of responsibility although encouraged by the benefits he received from Him whom he dared not approach. No. Love seeks worshippers under the gentle name of Father. It places them in a position of freedom before Him as the children whom He loves; the Spirit who acts in them to produce worship is the spirit of adoption which cries Abba Father! It is not that God has lost His Majesty, but that He whose majesty is far better known bears this tender character of Father towards us. The Spirit who makes us worship the Father, gives us to perceive all the love of God, who has led us to worship Him there as His children. The sense of this, God be thanked, belongs to the most simple and the most ignorant among Christians. The Christian, when once he has understood grace and has received the spirit of adoption, possesses it without any reasoning, as a child knows his father before he can give any account of that which he enjoys. I have written these things unto you, says St. John, addressing himself to the little' children, in Christ, because you have known the Father. The feeblest Christian is, therefore, perfectly competent for worship. At the same time, it is sweet to be able to account to oneself for, and the more one thinks, the more one examines the word on this subject, the more will one see the import, the deep blessedness of, this relationship with God. The simple fact that God is our Father, and that we possess the enjoyment of such a relationship with Him by the Spirit, is in itself an immense privilege for creatures such as we are. Every child of God

has this privilege in unquestioned right; but it is in Christ that we possess it, and with Christ. He is the first-born among many brethren. He is gone to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God. What a precious relationship, what a family is that into which we are introduced; and how are we to learn, we, who were formerly strangers to these affections and to this love, how do we learn these things? How learn what the Father is, the knowledge of whom gives birth to these things in our hearts? It is the only begotten son, the first-born in this new relationship, who reveals Him unto us, who reveals Him as he himself has known Him. Eternal son of the Father, enjoying the infinite love of Him in whose bosom he dwelt. Become man upon this earth, Jesus ceased not to be the object of the same affection -affection which, when challenged, could not retain silence-This is my beloved son (said the voice of the Father), in whom I am well pleased. Nor did He in anything put Himself at a distance from it. Upon earth Christ was the object of this love, and He revealed Him in whom it was found. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed Him. Jesus, a man, the Son, in the enjoyment of the fullness of this affection, dwells, being upon earth, in the bosom of the Father, to originate here below, as being the object of it, all the beauty, all the force of that affection. Himself also He loved his disciples even as the Father loved him. As man, He was the object of this love, in order that we might understand it in its application to men. So He associates us with Himself in the joy of this love, and He reveals it to us as he himself knows it. How could He reveal it save as he knew it himself? But what grace and what a position for us I How does Jesus himself, who, by his sufferings, by his devotedness, has placed us therein, become for us an object of love and of adoration, of devotedness of heart. The very glory which we possess is presented to us by the Savior as a proof of this love. "The glory," said He, in chap. 17 of John, "which thou hast given unto me I have given unto them, that the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." He loves us enough to make him desire that we may enjoy this, so he renders us capable of it. " I have declared,' says he, in the same chapter, "thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world, and I will declare it, in order that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them." Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus. This fellowship expresses itself in adoration towards Him who is revealed and towards him who reveals.

It will be easily seen how the work of Christ is at the foundation of all this, whether in order to present us without spot and without fear in the presence of the God whom we adore in the light, or in order to place us in the relationship of children toward the Father. It was after his resurrection that Christ could say, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Then it was that He could say, "Go to my brethren." Now the Spirit which He gives from on high, answers to this blessing: He is the Spirit of adoption, as He is the Spirit of liberty, because we are accepted in the Beloved, and have the enjoyment of a redemption which has made us the righteousness of God in him, placing us in God’s presence without spot.

Thus we have, in principle, at least, the great foundation truths of Christian worship. Perfect in Christ; united to him; objects of the same love, in the presence of God, whose love and holiness are manifest without a veil, and constitute the infinite joy of our hearts; children beloved of the Father with Christ the first-born; we worship together according to the power, affections, and energy which the Spirit, who has been given to us inspires; the God of glory, whose presence is the stay instead of being the terror of our souls; the God of love, whose will was to lead us thither, in order to render us perfectly happy in Him; that He Himself might enjoy our perfect happiness,

Himself finding more happiness in our blessedness than even we ourselves; love, nevertheless, which we recognize while we love; we adore our Father with endearing confidence in His kindness,-kindness which blesses us with all spiritual blessings, and counts the very hairs of our heads while thoughtful of all our needs. We adore Him for that which he is; we adore Him for that which He is for us, the children of His house for eternity. We act thus in the consciousness that we are His beloved children, we present ourselves before the same Father-our common Father; so that the affections of brethren are developed, the joy of the blessing of each is reciprocally the joy of all, and praises multiplied ascend to God; for a joy full of love, and which is renewed by the blessing of another, by a common blessing, is far more powerful than the joy which flows merely from one's own peculiar blessing: it has more of God in it. Hence we see in the New Testament, that, while indeed the consciousness of this relationship must necessarily be individual in order for us to enjoy it together, and must be maintained in personal relationship with God and upon individual responsibility; yet at the same time the Spirit constantly uses the word Us when speaking of Christian affections and feelings. The Holy Spirit shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, it could not be otherwise. But the effect of the presence of this one Spirit goes yet much further. Not only does He give us the consciousness of being in Christ, perfect before God, presented according to the efficacy of the redemption which He has accomplished, the consciousness of being children with the Father who loves them, and who has introduced them into His house, but He gives us also the consciousness of being but one body, the body of Christ, and members one of another. The Church which God has created-that one new man-the redeemed who have been all baptized into one body-not offering worship save by the Spirit, they necessarily offer it as but one body, and that with all the redeemed-they are the tabernacle of God through the Spirit, and that Spirit uniting them all in the unity of the body of Christ, the adoration goes up on high toward the God who formed them to be but one new man in Christ. If Israel was, as a whole, represented by the priests who officiated in the tabernacle, the faithful who render direct worship to God, do it in the unity in which they are all one body in Christ. There is more than brotherhood, there is unity, not of nation, and not only of family, but of the members of one body by one Spirit. It is the Church's portion, which alone is baptized in order to be one body in Christ, the Head being ascended up on high, in order that she may do it freely and with joy before God. by that unction which descends from Him.

Let us state some of the practical effects which flow hence:-

First: it is evident that worship is the privilege only of the children of God-being to be offered in spirit and in truth-to be offered to Him who cannot admit sin into His presence. He who is washed in the blood of the Lamb and who has received the Spirit, and such only, can draw near to God to adore Him. That a man who is not converted should render worship to God, is simply what is impossible. God can bless such a one in temporal things. The man may, perhaps, ask such a blessing, and be heard: God may have tender compassion for him, as for a poor sinner, but as yet he knows not God, as yet he has not the Spirit, he is not as yet washed in the blood of Christ. That he thinks to draw nigh to God, is but the proof that he is ignorant of that which he is in himself, and of that which the God, whom he thinks to serve, is. Who else can enter into the sanctuary save he who is sanctified?-who address himself to a Father, as such, save a child? Moreover, the fact of the unity of the body of Christ, and that the worship is offered by the Spirit which has formed this unity and dwells in the body as in a temple, excludes, by the fact itself that the worship is offered,

him who is not of the body. It is to deny its existence, to suppose that a person who has not the Spirit can be of it; it is to deny its end and its nature; for if a man, not converted can enter and worship the God who is served there, there is no need that there should be either such a body or the redemption which is the basis of it. Why should there-be the redeemed, if the worldling can serve God in his presence? Wherefore a body of Christ, if the worldling forms a part of it? Wherefore. adore God by the Spirit, if he who has not the Spirit can adore just as well? Worship in common, supposes that I can say We, in sincerity, when addressing God; it supposes persons united in one body by the same Spirit. A hypocrite may be there-he will be a hindrance in the worship; but its validity will not be thereby destroyed when the worshipper says Us, in truth, in the name of all. It is believers who worship God. To render true worship to God, supposes that a soul is set at liberty. That is to say, that such a one finds himself free to draw near to God in virtue of the efficacy of the work of Christ. If I see a soul ever so timid which loves God, and which has no other hope than the work of Christ, clearly my part is to encourage such a one; but if such a one has no real knowledge of the efficacy of the work of Christ, he will be ill at ease even in drawing near to God, because His presence will communicate to it rather the conscience of its sin, than of the joy which that presence inspires to him who enjoys it in the peace which is by Christ. Nevertheless, in such cases, right affections often precede the being set free, and are more correct than the reasoning of the soul which is still trembling; but this state is not the normal state of worship. Before God, in the light, purified from all sin by the blood of Christ, such is the position of the true worshipper. The believer is always thus. In order to worship truly, he must know himself to be so. Sometimes the bad teaching one has had neutralizes in the mind the liberty, though the soul, all the while in solitude with God, cries Abba, Father! As a principle, whatever be the allowance made by charity for these cases of ignorance, true worship offered to God supposes that we can draw near to Him without fear; but this is a necessary and absolute effect of the blood and of the work of Christ, of which every true believer has the benefit. It is the presence of the Spirit who gives the enjoyment of it.

What joy, to be able thus to adore God! What a source of joy is He whom we adore! How great the blessedness of finding oneself in His presence, no cloud between, and without fear, being the righteousness of God in Christ-that presence being but an inexhaustible spring of joy for the nature which. He has given us, and which is capable of finding its enjoyment in Him! What joy, to be able to express one’s acknowledgments, to render to Him one’s thanksgivings, knowing that they are acceptable to Him! What a blessing to have His very Spirit, the Spirit of freedom and of adoption, as our power of acting thus, inspirer of praise and of the feeling of confidence and of adoration! What joy to act thus in unity, as members of the same family and of the same body, sensible that the joy is one common to all; sensible that those whom we love are perfectly acceptable to the Lord, and that they all find their pleasure in praising Him, who is worthy and who has loved us,- the God who is the source of our happiness and the object of our adoration-the Lord who gave Himself in order that He might be our portion! The perfection of all this will be in heaven. But Christian worship is the realization here below, in weakness, without doubt, of that which will form our eternal blessedness and our life. We have the privilege of feeling ourselves for a little while delivered from the world, withdrawn even from the work of faith, in order to enjoy the state of things in which Christ will see all the travail of His soul and be satisfied. I repeat it is in weakness, but in truth, through the Spirit. Also, the worship being offered by the Spirit, is offered in the unity of the whole body; it may be there are but two or three present; but He who is the center and bond of

all the members, is found there; and also by His Spirit we are necessarily and in love bound up with all the other members of His body, which is but one. " We comprehend with all saints be the number of those uniting together what it may] the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." The truth abides in undiminished force, that life is cultivated in private; but it is exercised before God in all the common joy of the Church. I believe there will be in heaven itself an individual joy and communion, and which will be known but to him who enjoys it. This precious truth, I think, is taught in that which is said to the Church of Pergamos: " To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and a name written thereon, which no one knoweth saving he that receiveth it." I add, that the ability actually to enjoy worship in communion depends upon the maintenance of the inward life; for how enjoy it, if God is not known in the soul? I add these few words lest any one should suppose that the joy of fellowship may lead to a neglect of the hidden walk with God individually. This is far from my thought; if the latter exist not, either the worship will be cold, or the joy will be carnal. But the true blessedness of worship depends upon the presence of the holy Spirit, and, therefore, upon the spiritual condition of those who are present, as taking part in it, save so far as the sovereign goodness of God interferes. This leads me to refer to a very important principle. Namely, that the holy Spirit is the energy, the sole-living source of all that takes place in worship, so far as it is genuine. Moreover, it is a principle, which is universally true-true of all the Christian life. We live by the Spirit; we walk by the Spirit; we worship in spirit and in truth. It is the Spirit who contends against the flesh; it is the affection of the Spirit which is the expression of the whole of the inward Christian life; but in Christian worship, the members of Christ being united together, the Spirit acts in the body. All that which is real and blessed comes from Him. Sovereign in action, but acting according to the spiritual capacity of each; he makes use of this, in order to express the feelings which are suitable to the assembly before God, but He raises them up to Him, for God is there in order to nourish by His grace. That which takes place ought to be according to the spiritual capacity of the assembly, raising it up, however, causing it to draw nigh to God. It is thus that the holy Spirit acts, for he acts in man, but according to the energy and grace of God. When Christians are met together in companies, the members each acting in his place through the Spirit, the opportunity is presented for the exercise of the gifts of the members, which are used in view of the edification of the body. I say the members of the body, because evangelization is necessarily addressed to the world. That is to say, an assembly which has worship for its primary object is the occasion, by its very nature, for the exercise of all the gifts which tend to the edification of the body, although such exercise be in no wise the object proposed by the meeting.*

(* Worship is every whit as perfect without the exercise of any gift, and indeed, in itself, more so. If the gifts are habitually used in such a way as to falsify the character of the meeting, and to deprive it of its true character of worship we are always losers thereby. For, if the Spirit of God who acts, finds it meet to exhort and to teach the members of the body on such occasions, it still remains true that to be able to adore God, without having the need of being exhorted, is a more excellent state; one is, in this case, more simply, and more entirely, with God-in the enjoyment, by grace, of Himself.) This is clearly established by the fourteenth chapter of the 1st Corinthians, which speaks in the most express manner of the exercise of gifts when the assembly is together, and gives directions to regulate the order of such exercise. This is easily understood. The meeting, being formed as the body of Christ, and the Spirit acting by the members of this body, edifies itself by that which is furnished by each member according to the gift which is distributed to each; the Spirit guiding all, in order that it may be for edification, which is His object. But the principal matter is to

draw near to God Himself; the exercise of gifts is but a means; the joy of love in the presence of God, in worshipping Him, the eternal aim. Gifts will cease in heaven, as also the ignorance which makes instruction needful, and the idleness which needs exhortation. Worship will, thank God, never cease. Under the law, the service of the priest was more excellent than that of the Levite; the Levite served; the Priest drew nigh to God, according to the unction which he had received. In the use of gifts we are Levites. In worship we are priests. Moreover, he, who through the Spirit takes part in the worship itself, does not use a gift,* which is in general a faculty given of God to act among men. At the same time, it is the measure of spirituality which gives the capability of being the organ of the assembly. The Spirit, then acting in spiritual men, in order to express the spiritual affections of the assembly-is the mode in which worship is rendered to God.

(* It seems that the gift of tongues was used in prayer as much as in teaching. This is easily understood, the spiritual man being required to take part in an assembly, the language of which he understood not but by revelation. This only confirms the general idea as stated above.)

We have remarked, which, moreover, in every Christian soul, connects itself' with the foundation of the truth, that the sacrifice of Christ is the necessary and fundamental basis of all Christian worship. We know that it is by means of this sacrifice alone that we can draw nigh to God, and that it is only in confiding in its efficacy that we can present ourselves before God, who has demanded all the holiness of it, all its perfect value; who, in his nature, could demand no less. But this is not all the relation which exists between worship and the sacrifice of Christ. Christ having opened to us this new and living way through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, we have full liberty to enter, through His blood, into the most holy place. But is that all? Do we forget the precious sacrifice when once we have entered by virtue of its worthiness? No. It is there that we recognize it, that we learn to appreciate its full value. Before entering thither, we might measure the value of the work of Christ, by the needs into which sin had pinned us. Now, happy, and in communion with God, tasting the sweetness of His love, instructed in his thoughts and feelings, we measure [what yet surpasses all measure], this work by the grace of God, which has been unfolded in it; we see in it that which God sees in it, instead of seeing only that which the sinner sees in it, all precious as such perception may be for us at the time in which it was vouchsafed to us..In the enjoyment of peace, being in heaven [spiritually speaking] by virtue of this sacrifice, we contemplate its value with the eyes of God; we are nourished with all. its perfectness according to God's thoughts. For these thoughts, and this vision are given to us by the Spirit to sanctify us, to bring our hearts into harmony with that which is in heaven. We see also in the offering He made of Himself what the love of Christ has been for us. The death of Christ has such a value in God's sight, that the Lord who, only begotten Son of the Father, was all His delight before the world was, could say, " Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." His devotedness to the glory of His Father, was in it, absolute. All that belonged to the moral development of that glory, was therein accomplished, at the cost of Him who suffered. All that mysterious evil, by means of which Satan had sway in this world, and misery, death and condemnation had entered, was turned to the manifestation of the glory of God. The righteousness of God, his majesty, his love, [impossible to reconcile together in the midst of sin] were thrown out in relief by sin itself, by means of Him who consented to be made sin for us. On the other hand, if we consider the personal perfection of Christ,' His devotedness to the will of His Father, His love, obedience, submission, sacrifice of all, even to His life, in order that the Father

might be glorified, and that those whom He loved might be saved. His perfect patience-the confidence in God which never failed, even when He was forsaken, all are found united in the cross. And when one thinks who He was-when one thinks that it was for us that He did it, what a value ought His death to have in our sight. Add to all this, the power of Satan overcome; death destroyed-become even a gain for us; the veil removed from before the presence of God; a perfection beyond the possibility of a taint, introduced into the whole wide universe, which it fills with peace and light, and of which it has made us the heirs; and more than all, the perfect enjoyment of the love of God. What moral worth has that cross in our eyes, however feeble may be our ability to proclaim it-however feeble our hearts may be, as vessels, to contain the sentiments it inspires. Our adoration necessarily links itself with the cross, the God whom we adore was there glorified, and could not be suitably so without it; there it is that we have learned that which He is. But is it a glory which is far from us, which dazzles us, and which forces us to a distance by its very greatness? Quite the contrary. Christ hung upon the cross for us, in our stead, as the very lowest from among the children of men; His visage marred more than any man's. His cross is the expression of tender affection toward us, stronger than death. He loved us even unto the end. He took upon Himself to render us happy in the presence of the Father; able to enjoy His presence-He counted nothing too dear to Him that He might accomplish this. And His heart, perfect in love, is attached to those whose cause he has undertaken. He has 'associated them with himself. He who had need of naught, had need of us. I go to prepare a place for you, said he, and if I go and prepare a place, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also. Whom seek ye, said he, in the garden of Gethsemane; if ye seek me, let these go their way, that his word might be accomplished. Of those whom thou gavest me I have lost none. He gave himself for us. With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you, said He, before I suffer, for I will no more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. As the Passover was the memorial of the deliverance out of Egypt for Israel, so the Supper is the memorial, not only of our deliverance, but moreover, of the love of Him who has delivered us. If Jesus attaches value to our remembrance, if he puts Himself thus near us with so much tenderness-it is a love, at the same time, which produces the very deepest affections; affections which are connected with what is most exalted in the grace of God, and which express themselves in the adoration of the heart. We can understand, then, that although worship is offered in various ways, by hymns, by thanksgivings, in the form of prayers, in praise, etc., we can understand, I say, that the Supper, as representing that which forms the basis of all worship, is the center of its exercise, around which the other elements that compose it are grouped. The worshipper is reminded of that which is the most precious of all things in the sight of God, the death of his beloved Son. He recalls the act in which the Savior testifies his love to himself in the most powerful way. Other considerations add their weight to those which we have just presented with regard to the Supper. One is at table in the house of God. One eats, as the priests, of the things with which expiation has been made; one enters with spiritual affection into the perfection of that expiation, and of that which Christ has been in the accomplishment of it; he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood, dwells in me and I in him. I apply not this exclusively to the supper; though it is the most vivid expression of it. The peace offering presents, with the passover, the most lively images of the true character of the supper. The former was a feast consequent upon a sacrifice, in the second Israel fed upon the sacrifice, the blood of which was their guarantee against judgment. In the former the partakers were, God, the priest who officiated, the priests, the worshipper, and those

who were with him. The fat burnt upon the altar was called the food of God. This is the fell satisfaction of God in the sweet odor of the work of Christ. The priest who offered the blood had his part. This is Christ, who has enjoyment in the joy of those that are His, produced by the efficacy of His death-of the fruit of the travail of His soul: the other priests eat another part-they represent Christians in general; lastly, the guests of Him who makes the sacrifice represent united worshipers. God himself has His part in the joy, so has Christ, the Church in general, and lastly, the assembly which participates therein. This figure of the peace offering is found, again, in a manner more precious in the supper. We feed on, and are nourished, through faith, by that holy victim, already offered, the sweet savor of which ascends to God. Christ has His joy in our joy, we share in it with all the Church. Already in heaven, in spirit, we bethink ourselves of what has given us the right to enter there, of that which will be precious above all to our souls when we are there. As Joshua celebrated the passover in Canaan before the walls of Jericho-separated from the world, and united in one body, we show forth the death of Jesus, which is the foundation of our salvation, until he come, and we are forever with Him on high, where remembrance will be useless because we shall be with Himself. Praises, the devotion of our adoration, our thanksgivings are necessarily linked up with the acceptance by our God, in heaven, of the sacrifice of Christ. This is ever true as to the heart; but it is this which makes the supper to form a part of the worship, if that is, so to speak, perfect. In the Old Testament this truth was expressed in figure in a remarkable manner. In the peace-offering, if any one eat the flesh of the victim on a day which was too far removed from the moment when the fat was burnt upon the altar as a sacrifice to God-it was, instead of being communion, a sin. In the case of thanksgivings, a man might eat of the flesh only on the same day. In the case of a voluntary offering, on the morrow also. The joy of the worshipper must be in immediate connection with the offering made to God; otherwise it was profane. Greater energy of piety gave more force to this association, so that in the latter case, the repast on the morrow was not really separate from the sacrifice. The importance of the Lord’s supper in worship, whether in connection with the sacrifice offered to God, foundation of all our relationships with him, or in connection with the affection and the devotedness of Christ for us (which are the two things which form the sphere of the spiritual affections in exercise in worship), will be clear enough when we reflect upon the truths of which we have just spoken. But there is another point also connected with it.

We have seen that the Holy Spirit being the source, force, and conductor of all true Christian worship offered to God, the unity of the body formed by him and in which he acts, is found necessarily to hold a prominent place in the worship which he produces in its members united together. Love, which is the soul of it, is defective in one of its most perfect forms, if the conscience of this unity is wanting. The presence of the Holy Spirit produces the consciousness of this unity, of which he is the author and the bond. Now, considered in one aspect, the supper is the expression of this unity. We are all but one body, inasmuch as we partake of but one loaf. If the bread broken represents, on the one hand the broken body of Christ, the unity of the bread represents, on the other, the unity of his spiritual body. When I knew (said the Apostle) "your love unto all Saints," comprehending with all Saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and what is the love of Christ which passes, knowledge, in order that ye may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power which worketh in us to Him be glory in the Church.

How sweet to find oneself united to all Saints, where-ever they may be, in the unity of the body of Christ, as together members of that body, according to all the privileges which attach to it by reason of the love of Him who nourishes and cherishes it as a man does his own flesh; to feel, by means of the Spirit, one's union with all that is united to Christ, and to feel it with the thought, full of deep joy, that all those who are infinitely-dear to us, as pertaining to Him, have the privilege of the care (which can never fail) of his love. What joy, by faith, to apply to them all that love of which, while worshipping, we have the consciousness-a faith, moreover, which never fails in its aim. Thus it is that intercession connects itself so intimately with worship, properly so-called, being inspired by the affections which are in exercise in virtue of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The requests for grace for themselves, made by those who worship, are scarcely further removed from it, because the feeling of what we owe to God, which is expressed in worship, necessarily produces the desire of glorifying him, and the need of the grace which alone can render us capable of doing so. With regard to the supper, we find, indeed, that not only it forms the prominent feature of the religious exercises of the faithful; but that it was, with this end in view, that they were wont to unite in the irregular and solemn assemblies-and " they continued with one consent in the temple and breaking bread" at home-that is, in their private houses in contrast with the temple. " They continued steadfast in the doctrine and fellowship of the Apostles, and in the breaking of brad and in prayer."-Acts 2:1-47; Acts 4:1-37.

It appears, then, that they partook of the supper even daily, and that, being still Jews, as we know, in many respects, they diligently frequented the temple; but then they had, in their houses, in remembrance of Christ this special service, as to which he had said, " Do this in remembrance of me." In the twentieth chapter of the Acts we are told, that on the first day of the week (now called Sunday), when the disciples were gathered together to break bread- that is to say, this act, though others might accompany it, was the object of their meeting.

It has been supposed that breaking of bread might apply to something besides the supper, since there is proof that they made a meal at the same time. There is no doubt as to the meal. Christ instituted the supper at the time of His own last evening's repast; and, at first, there was a supper at the same time that they broke bread; but the breaking of bread had a character proper and distinctive to itself even as it had its formal appointment. Not to perceive this when it is celebrated, is what the apostle calls " not discerning the body of the Lord," and, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he corrects this abuse, by appointing that the repast which previously had accompanied the Lord's Supper, should be separated from it. The passage shows that they came together to eat, but alas! their feast had at Corinth set aside the spiritual service, and some came to take their surfeit in eating and drinking, and left the poor in want. The supper was not observed in their private abodes, but in a building common to all, and every one brought his own supper, and the service had entirely lost its character as the Lord's Supper. The passage plainly shows that they came together in order to eat, and that they supped together in the public building, but that the Supper of the Lord was the avowed object of the meeting. To maintain this last institution in all its importance, the apostle ordained that the supper should be separate, and that each should eat his own supper at home; that so they might come together in the spirit of devotion, and not bring down upon themselves chastisement.*

(* The apostle does not suggest the idea of examining themselves whether or not they should partake, but in order that they may partake aright, that is to say, not do it with levity. The supper

being the expression of the unity of the body, not to partake of it is to excommunicate oneself. No one had an idea that a Christian would do such a thing with regard to himself.) The two grand elements of the ordinary worship of Christians, are the presence of the Holy Spirit and the remembrance of the sacrifice of' Christ, which is commemorated in the supper. We have seen that it was with the latter of these in view, that Christians assembled themselves together, according to that which is said in the Bible. But in this worship, the affections, which are connected with all our relationships with God, are developed. God, in His Majesty, is adored; the gifts even of His providence are recognized; He who is a spirit is worshipped in spirit and in truth. We present 'to our Father-the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ-the expression of holy affections which He has produced in us, for He sought us when we were afar off from Him, and has placed us near to himself, as his beloved children, in the spirit of adoption-associating us (wondrous grace!) with His well-beloved Son.

We adore the Savior God, being in His presence without spot; His holiness and His perfect righteousness being a joy for us which passes not away, for we are in the light, through the perfect work of Christ, as He Himself is in the light. It is the Holy Spirit Himself who reveals to us these heavenly things and the glory to come, and acts in us so as to produce feelings and affections suitable to such a blessing, to such relationships with God. He it is who is the bond of union between the heart and these things. But He does it by making us feel that we are children of the same family and members of the same body. Uniting us in this worship by means of mutual affections and feelings, common to all, towards Him who is the object of the worship which together we render. In short, the worship is exercised in connection with the very sweetest recollection of the love of Christ, whether we regard His work or whether we recall the thought of his tender affection for us. He desires our remembrance of Him. Sweet and precious thought for the heart. Oh! how precious to our souls, and yet at the same time how solemn ought such worship to be! What sort of life should we be careful to lead in order to render it? with what ardor ought we to seek the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in order to render it suitably? Yet it should be very simple, for true affection is always simple-at the same time, devout, for such interests give devoutness. The majesty and the greatness of the love of Him whom we adore, gives solemnity to every act by which we draw near to Him. With what deep affections and thankfulness should we also think of the Savior, at such times, when we can, by Him, abide in the presence of God, far removed from all evil, in the foretaste of our eternal blessing, and where we recall all His love for us. These two great subjects, about which Christian worship is occupied, viz., the love of God our Father and that of the Lord in His work and as head of His body the Church, afford slight changes in the character of the worship, according to the state of those who render it. There are times in which Jesus will be more present to the thoughts, others in which the Father will be more before the mind. The Holy Spirit alone can guide us in this; but, as our thoughts ought to be true, this will depend upon the state of those who compose the assembly. Effort in such things has no place. He who is the channel of worship (let me say it here) should not present that which is proper and peculiar to himself, but that which is truly the exercise through the Spirit of the hearts of those who compose the assembly. This will make us feel our entire dependance upon the Comforter for truthful service to God in communion. Nothing, however, is more simple or more evident, than the truth that the worship rendered should be that of all.

Another observation we may make here is, how much the worship will be affected by all that grieves the Holy Spirit; every impediment, even in one person, will make itself felt (at least if there be spirituality), for we are there as but one body. It is of the utmost importance that this delicacy of spiritual feeling should be maintained, that we should not habituate ourselves to the having the presence of God but little felt in worship, the action of the Holy Spirit little known. If there is true spirituality, if the Holy Spirit fills the assembly with His presence, evil of every kind is quickly discovered. For God is a jealous God, and He is faithful. A single Achan was discovered at the commencement of the history of Israel-a single lie in Ananias in the beginning of the Church's history. Alas! what things occurred afterward in Israel! what things took place afterward in the Church without any one having even the feeling that evil was present! May God make us humble, watchful, and true, and enable us to bear in mind that His Spirit always abides with us, in order that we may be able to render, by the action of that Spirit in us, spiritual worship! For it is the lovely and powerful testimony to the efficacy of the work of Christ, by the which we can abide in the presence of God, without blame and full of joy, to present to Him worship which, rising from hearts which find in His presence the source of their happiness, render testimony before the angels of heaven to His perfect love, and pre- sent to God -Himself the most acceptable proof of the efficacy of that work which takes from us all fear in His presence, and renders the full and perfect exercise of that love, in which He finds His delight, possible to God. The privilege of being able to render worship to God is granted to two or three gathered together in the name of Jesus: that is to say, when His name has gathered them together, as the tie among them, by its power common to them all, and known of all, and recognized 'among them as the principle of their assembly. Jesus is there as the joy and strength of their common service. The Lord said to Israel, " In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee" (Exodus 20:24). Further on it is said (Dent. 12:), that they should offer their offerings in the place which He would choose to set His name there; which had its definitive accomplishment at Jerusalem (1 Kings 8:25). But now, in Jesus, God sets His name there where two or three are gathered together in that name, with a promise (similar to that of Exodus 20:24), that there Jesus Himself would be in the midst of them; precious encouragement for the feebleness of His people, if there were thousands of disciples. How great soever the encouragement given by such an action of the Spirit, the presence of Jesus Himself (the most precious of all things) is vouchsafed to two or three of the least of those that are His, if it is truly in His name that they are met. Let it be only His name in which it is done; the fleshly pride which loves to make much of a gift, and would appropriate a flock as its own-human arrangement which would seek to avoid that which is painful to the flesh or the world-the narrowness which would welcome some upon the ground of a peculiar view-none of these is the name of Christ. Those who unite in the name of Christ embrace in heart and mind all those who are His, all the members of His body; they embrace them in the principle upon which they are met; otherwise it would not be in His name that they were united: for one cannot exclude from the power of His name those that are His; His heart embraces them. We are not united according to His heart, if, in principle, our assembly does not embrace them. Clearly His name does not embrace the world, nor sin, nor that which denies the truth which that name reveals. His name unites in one those that are His. He that gathers not with Him scatters abroad.

Christians are bound to maintain holiness and truth, and to make constant progress towards the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. If any would hinder this, would seek to fashion souls according to the mold of particular views, his action tends towards the destruction of

practical unity.

Nothing but spirituality, subject to the Word and regulated by grace, (in a word, the action of the Spirit of God), can, in certain cases, discern between that which is a step forward, and that which is the insisting upon some private view of one's own. For the spirit of the world, which loves not progress nor that which presents more of Christ, will stamp with the name of " particular views" all that which tends to make our responsibility to Christ deeper and more felt: and a spirit of narrowness will treat as progress all that makes much of its own notions. Moreover, if an assembly of worshippers is truly founded upon the basis of the unity of the Church of God-if the mass of the assembly is not in a state to bear that which would be a true step in advance-it is useless to insist upon it; to do so would tend to division rather than to progress. Such was the case of the Corinthians. The Apostle had to nourish them with milk. They were not able to bear anything else, even when he wrote to them. On the contrary, when it is a return to a Jewish spirit, which would compromise the Gospel, the Apostle refuses to stop (Hebrews 5:12; Hebrews 5:14; Hebrews 6:1; Hebrews 6:4). The energetic wisdom of the Spirit of God is needed by the Church. It is not the intention of God that she should be able to do without it, or be exempt from dependance upon Him who gives it. I have added these few practical words which only concern things which are accessory to my subject, because they refer to difficulties which are constantly occurring in the Christian's path when assembling for worship, or which are presented as such to prevent their walking in this path. I take it for granted all along, that the meeting is upon the eternal foundation of the unity of the Church of God; if that is compromised, there is no ground for any union at all, the meeting itself is not according to God. One must first of all be perfectly clear upon this point. But I desire that our souls may be brought back to the foundation of the subject which I treat. That which I have said is connected with the assembling of the children of God for worship. Sweet and precious privilege, to anticipate that which will be our eternal employ in heaven I There our worship will be perfect. There, all the Church, come to its full perfection, will be assembled to render worship in the midst of the general assembly on high; without distraction, and without fear of change in its joy, it will enjoy it eternally in the perfect favor of God. What a privilege, even here below, to close the door for a moment upon all the distractions of this nether world, and by the Spirit to satisfy the desire of the heart by rendering to God the thanksgiving which He is worthy to receive, and which He has, in His bounty, breathed into our hearts!

I will notice yet a few passages which may help individuals to seize the spirit of worship. The first passage which I will notice is Php 3:1-21 -" We serve God in spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." We may remark, that there is here no question about sin, in the ordinary sense, of the flesh, but of confidence in the flesh. That is its religion, altogether as evil as its lusts; for, after all, it is but one of them, though covered up with the veil of works and of holiness. The touchstone is, that it does not tend to the glory of Jesus, or yet better, that it does not glory only in Jesus. The religion of the flesh can be occupied much in good works, be without reproach as to conduct, have much of self-denial, much of piety, plenty of humility, be much occupied with the love of God; but while pretending, perhaps, to found it upon His love (which is infinite), it will be that love of God which is in the heart-our love to Him.

One may ask, But if all these things can exist in a person, and be nothing but the flesh, how can we discern the true circumcision? It rejoices in Jesus Christ. Nothing is easier than to judge these things, if Christ is our all. The fact that He is so, makes us feel, without hesitancy, that all this is

flesh, and yields its help to that which destroys Christianity from its foundations. Is there another mark desired, by which one can judge this religion of the flesh with all its pretensions? It does not hold the Head; that is to say, he who is in this state never has the consciousness of his own union with Christ, so as to be placed, as raised up together with Him, in the heavenly places: bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, one spirit with the Lord, a member of His body. Such an one will, perhaps, recognize this as true for the Church, in an abstract manner (for the religion of the flesh can be orthodox), but not that oneself is there. Now faith is an individual thing, and places him who possesses it in the enjoyment-or personally under the effects-of the object which it regards. Colossians 2:1-23, as well as the chapter cited above, judges all this fair but specious appearance. The Lord, in His addresses to. the. Scribes and Pharisees, judged it in its grosser forms. Another thing which marks carnal religion is, that however apparently elevated be its piety, it accords with things which are not of heaven, and seeks not, in every respect, the things which are on high, which is the sentiment of one who is dead and raised up together with Christ. The religion which is of the Spirit, true worship, serves God in Spirit, and has no confidence in the flesh; it knows not the religion of its forefathers, even though it may have been true. Of one's forefathers one inherits but a sinful nature. It confides not either in its zeal or in any devoutness which it can offer to God, nor in its love to Him. It does not rejoice save in Jesus Christ alone before God. The soul has learned that it was dead in its sins, and the precious Savior having come down even to the point of being made sin for us, as dead and raised up together with Him-for it is lost if it lives according to the natural life-it knows in God's sight but one sole thing, which it puts forward, in which it rejoices, in which it glories before Him, on which it knows that God has placed all his delight; it rejoices in Jesus Christ. One cannot fail to observe how this practical description of circumcision, 1:e., of the true people set apart for God, and as to the flesh, dead-connects itself with the grand foundations upon which we have already seen the true Christian placed in the service which he renders to God. Let us bear in mind also, that it will profit nothing to mingle carnal religion with that of the Spirit. The flesh of the Christian finds in such a course its aliment. The effort of the adversary, at the commencement of the Church, was not to substitute circumcision in the flesh, and the law in place of Christ, but to add them. But the Apostle saw clearly, by the Spirit, that in admitting this, all was lost. The Christian is one with the Head, which is Christ; the least thing between them, and the body is-naught more than a corpse. The work of Christ is not sufficient if anything is to be added. And, not only so, but all the Christian position was swept away. For instead of being in Christ, happy in God's presence, by virtue of one work already accomplished by the glorious Savior alone, " rendered complete in Him," " accepted in the beloved," man has still to seek means of rendering himself acceptable to God, to find the way by which he may present himself before Him. One is fallen from grace. The nature of Christianity is changed; it is denied, though not in word. The truth of the Gospel no longer remains. May God grant us to have no confidence in the flesh, but to rejoice in Christ Jesus!

One may ask oneself, But is it not possible to maintain these truths in all their height, and still to be carnal? I answer, doubtless: yet the flesh then takes the form of licentiousness, its real character, and not that of religiousness. It is very pious when it acts the pious, for it always desires to rejoice in itself.

I will cite another passage to show the spirit of worship, although it formally applies, of necessity, to things on earth. I refer to Deuteronomy 26:1-19. In type, Canaan represents heaven. Now,

Israel arrived in Canaan, enjoyed the effect of the promise. Read now Deuteronomy 26:1-19 The worshipper, already come to a good land which God had given to him as an heritage, presents himself with the fruits of the land. This is that which we have to offer to God, the joy of heavenly love- all that is found for our hearts-in the possession of heaven, whither we are entered in spirit-in Christ, who fills it with His glory and His perfections-in the love of God Himself, who has introduced us thither. Holiness and love characterize the land, are the fruits which grow there spontaneously, as are the thanksgivings in the hearts of those who find themselves there. The worshipper professed aloud that his God had accomplished all; it was thus that he presented himself. This was due to God, since Israel was indeed there through His faithful grace, and there would have been failure as to the only true feeling of his position if he had not come thus. Is it then that he forgot his own wretchedness? No. But he was in it no longer; it served only to exalt the thought of his deliverance. " And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became a nation, great, mighty, and populous: And the Egyptians evil entreated us and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: And when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression: And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which thou, 0 Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God." The Christian was the slave of Satan, and in himself miserable; but God delivered him by Christ, therefore He adores. Not only so, the Lord had given Israel this good land, full of that which makes the glory of every land, He brought the fruit of it, in testimony, with thanksgiving.

If we are seated in peace in the heavenly places, have our hearts naught there to offer? Has the country produced nothing which we can offer to God in testimony of the value of His gifts, of the feeling which we have of His goodness? Further, the worshipper addressed God directly, rendering the worship to Him which was due; the fruit of a heart happy in His bounty.

Thus the spirit of grace and of love was shed abroad in his heart, and he enjoyed all in simplicity and with gladness of heart; causing others also to enjoy with Him, rendering the desolate and the stranger happy.

" And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you. When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them." Pure in walk, carefully preserving the holiness of God, and that which was hallowed for Him, from being profaned, he could, from his heart, implore a blessing upon all the people of his God, and ask that it might rest on the whole state of things in which God had placed them. It was the memorial of a tie between God and His people. In examining also chapter 16 of Deut. we shall find, in the

directions given for the feasts of the Lord, an unfolding of what the spirit was in which Israel should have observed them, and in a measure, an instructive contrast between the state of soul which they respectively inspired.

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Vol 03 - On the Divine Inspiration of Scripture*

On the Divine Inspiration of Scripture* The question which I would here consider, is not that of the amount of inspiration. I do not enter on the discussion of verbal inspiration-interesting as it is to those who believe in a revelation from God.

(* This article is part of a letter (in French) written in answer to an "Attack upon Divine Inspiration." The author has corrected the present translation, and made many alterations and omissions from the original letter, which was not intended for publication. The remembering this will account to the reader for the abruptness and brokenness of the style.-Ed.) My object is the truth of inspiration itself, the reality of a written revelation, and indeed of all revelation given through the mouth of man.

It is not open infidelity as to the facts and doctrines of Christianity, which we have to combat. Our subject is the Divine authority of the books which relate these facts and treat of these doctrines. The existence of these truths is admitted, but their immediate communication to us by God, is denied with the exception possibly of the inward revelation of the person of Christ to the soul; if indeed that could be true consistently with these principles. It is the existence of the Word of God, having authority as His word, which is in question. It is owned perhaps: that Christ bore the title of the Word of God. But according to their system, they have no real authority for this-it may have been a mistake of John’s, or a rabbinical or rabbino-Platonic tradition; And in fact the expression is found in writings of this description. It is important to keep the question clearly on this ground. The denial of any communication of Divine truth which, coming from God, would have the authority of God as truth. For us, if there is no inspiration, there is no divine truth: because a truth which is not communicated with divine certainty, is not a divine truth to man. Or, to speak more accurately, an existing fact, which cannot be naturally known to man, because not belonging to this creation; cannot be a truth to my soul if it be not communicated with divine certainty. There might be an immediate revelation to each individual in each case; otherwise, in order to believe, there must be an inspired communication either written or by word of mouth. I am not speaking of truth being applied to the conscience by the Holy Ghost, but of the means of possessing a divine certainty of truth, by knowing from whom we have received it. A doctrine cannot have more authority, as a truth, than the means by which it is communicated. A man without being inspired may be the channel through which truth is imparted, and the truth may act through the Spirit’s power, on the heart and conscience; but this does not constitute a divine basis for faith in him who hears. The effect has been produced in the soul by God; the man may say " I believe this;" but if I ask him, " Why do you believe it?" he has no answer. He can give no account of his faith.

Let us remember, then, that when authority is spoken of, and it is said there is no authority, the words Divine certainty may be substituted for authority; and that the doctrine inculcated is, that there is no Divine certainty in the things of faith; that is to say, that there is no such thing as faith at all. John the Baptist describes faith in these words, " He that has received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." But this no

longer exists in the system which denies inspiration. There is no longer such a thing as faith. The testimony of God is excluded. This may be called an It priori argument. But no, I only place the doc- trine in its true light; which is often enough to convince a sincere person. If any one disputed the interpretation of a text, and I could show that his mode of looking at it, the effect of his reasoning upon it, was to make Christ wicked, or to prove that He was not the Son of God; to state the real question, would be, in fact, to decide it, in the mind of one who knew Christ.

Besides, there are two kinds of a priori arguments, which it is important to point out here; they differ totally from each other and are morally quite opposed to each other. Suppose that some one tried to prove God a liar. I answer that cannot be! I condemn your reasoning as false, a priori. My judgment is sound, perfectly logical and philosophical (if you like to take that ground); because it is much more sure, nay, it is infallibly sure, that God cannot lie; whilst it is very possible, that your reasoning is false, even though I were unable to detect the fallacy. How many things there are as to which man wants the capacity for reasoning rightly! And this is the safeguard which God has given to the simpleminded, namely, a divine conviction with respect to those things which are beyond their reach-beyond the reach of man; while the philosopher who undertakes to explain them sinks in the mire. It is also what is called a priori reasoning, to say "God ought not to be so and so," but of an entirely different kind. In the first case, I-measure the folly of man by the certainty of what God is; in the second, I measure what God ought to be, taking man for my measure; which is necessarily false. "Thou thoughtest," said God, "that I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things which thou halt done." In the first case, I say God is true, therefore your argument which denies it must be false! In the second, I say, this is my thought, and God must be according to my thought. To measure man by the certainty of what God is, and to measure God by man are two very different things. This may be termed a priori reasoning. It is true, that it presumes there is the knowledge of God; and all men have not the knowledge of God. " He hides these things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes."

It is evident, that whatever may be the competency of witnesses, from their own faithfulness, and from the ever interesting and important fact of their proximity to the circumstances they relate, and to the living source of Christian doctrine, yet to deny direct inspiration, and to put in its stead the competency of witnesses; is to substitute a merely human belief for a divine testimony. The aim of such a system is to shut out God. But I pursue my subject. It is asserted (for without this it would be open infidelity) that Revelation is allowed, although not, inspiration. That is to say, that the Apostles, or others, employed to communicate truth, had a Divine basis for their faith; but that other believers have not. For that is plainly the effect of this supposition. Truth has been revealed from heaven, that is, divinely communicated, to the Apostles and others; but since then there has been only a human testimony-however godly it may be, only human-no Divine basis, as to testimony, which, on God’s part, could shield the church from error. I say on God’s part, because no one disputes the possibility of man’s falling into error through his own folly or negligence. The mere statement of this doctrine is almost its refutation; but it is needless to dwell further upon it, since it is formally contradicted in the word itself. "But God," says the Apostle, who carefully states the opposite of the notion which we combat, "God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (I suppose no one would venture to assert that the communications made through Paul. were of a different character, or of another nature than those given through Peter or John or any other

prophet). The reason the Apostle gives for this revelation is very striking! "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are given to us of God." I was going to dwell upon this argument forgetting that the Apostle had used it; I will now only insist on the force of what he says: " Without a divine communication there can be no faith." That which belongs to man, which is within the limits of his intelligence, may be known to man through sight, through reasoning, or through the testimony of man; but it is not so in the things of faith, in Divine thoughts and truths. God alone knows them, and God alone can make them known; consequently, man must be entirely ignorant of them, unless God reveal them. But He makes them known by His Spirit, that is, by Revelation giving the Holy Ghost Himself, who reveals it in the heart. I speak of the Apostolic work. The question then stands within very narrow limits. It is this: The Apostles. having received the knowledge of these things in a divine manner, did they communicate them to us in a manner, excellent indeed, but not inspired? God had revealed them to the Apostles by His Spirit; how did they communicate them? Was their inspiration what is termed " simply religious inspiration?" was it only that operation of the Spirit which is found in a spiritual preacher, and which leaves him still liable to error. Nothing can be more precise than the testimony of the Apostle on this point. Continuing the passage already quoted, he says, "which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Could the idea of inspiration be embodied in a form of words more absolutely definite than the expression, "words-which the Holy Ghost teacheth?" Here then there is nothing equivocal. When the Apostle set forth the truths which the Holy Ghost had taught him, he used words which the Holy Ghost had also taught him; that is, it was God Himself speaking through the mouth of man. And remark here, that inspiration is asserted in cases where religious inspiration was impossible, as in that of Balaam, when " He took up his parable and spoke, having heard the words of God." Finally, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and so many others who have said to us, "Thus saith the Lord," "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying," etc., are all examples of positive, and properly-so-called inspiration. Nevertheless, the arguments which deny inspiration must be applied universally. Here, however, there is nothing doubtful. The prophets boldly proclaim their inspiration, and we have it in a written form. In examining this subject, one cannot honestly leave out the Old Testament, because the arguments (except, perhaps, that which relates to the Canon) apply to both; to the Old as to the New. Has the Old Testament authority, and has the New none? Is the Old Testament the Word of God, and not the New? It is very convenient to reason upon a subject and leave out that part of which the proofs are incontestable. Inspiration is a reality, and we possess the absolute authority of God’s own Word. The Prophets have affirmed it, the Lord has recognized it, 1:e. that of this body of writings as it stands; and He has declared that nothing can invalidate its authority. The Apostle also has declared that these Scriptures were given by inspiration of God, and are capable of making us wise unto salvation. The principle of authority is true, the principle of inspiration is true., The question is limited to this; Is the New Testament inspired, also? The Old Testament leaves no room for any argument which would make inspiration questionable. It affirms its own inspiration in all the prophetic part; and the words of the Lord and of the Apostles prove that of all the books it contains. This should be thoroughly understood. Inspiration is certain, the divine authority of the Word of God incontestable. This question alone remains. Is the New Testament a part of that Word? Principles which deny that which the Lord and the Apostles affirm, inspire no confidence in

the judgment of any one who can entertain such false and even blasphemous principles. He who denies inspiration, denies that which the Lord and the Apostles maintain-for they maintain the inspiration of the Old Testament. He has, therefore, already destroyed all my confidence in his judgment; and I cannot listen to him when he tells me that the New Testament has not the authority of inspiration.

I will not multiply quotations to prove that the prophets assert the inspiration of their prophecies; because it recurs at the beginning of almost every separate prophecy; but I will point out the passages in the New Testament, which recognize the Scriptures of the Old as having this authority. Luke 24:44, "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." Jesus here recognizes the body of writings, called the Old Testament in its three parts-still thus entitled in the modern Hebrew Bibles. The Lord gives them equal authority, ver. 27, "And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." John 5:39," Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." "And the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). These passages demonstrate that the Scriptures of the Old Testament were a body of writings recognized by the Lord, and that, in the detail of its present divisions, recognized as having, absolute authority. But, to have their writings is something more, as to the form of communication, than having the truth spoken by word of mouth; even though it were by the mouth of the Lord Himself. John 5:47, " If ye believe not his writings., how shall ye believe my words?" The writings, then, were the object of faith, and consequently had the authority of the Word of God. " They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them"-" If they 'hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:29; Luke 16:31). When the Apostle preached the truth at Berea, the Jews-his hearers-" searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so," that is to say, they made use of the Scriptures, as an authority, to judge the teaching even of an Apostle; and they are commended for so doing (Acts 17:11). The inspiration of the Old Testament is then demonstrated, its authority recognized by the Lord, and the whole-as we possess it-declared to be authentic, and to be clothed with an authority which nothing can invalidate. The Scriptures, as a whole, are owned of God, as a distinct class of writings, having a certain authority; namely, that of HIS WORD. As it is written in Proverbs 30:5-6-" Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not to His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Finally, the Apostle Paul (2 Timothy 3:16) gives a remarkable testimony to the same effect, and which clearly designates this class of writings; " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." We have only therefore to learn whether the New Testament forms a part of "the Scriptures," or whether the Church is entirely without a divine communication entrusted to herself; and possesses only the Old Testament. And here I would notice the folly of a principle set forth by some of those who deny inspiration. It is said, that the claim to inspiration is necessarily limited to the Book which makes the claim; or, at least, to the writings of the same author. There is no sense in this assertion. Why could not an inspired author, or the Lord, declare all the other Books, or some amongst them, to be inspired? And, on the other hand, there is no necessity that the other writings of an author should be inspired, because one of them is so. The Lord sets His seal to the entire Old Testament; and Paul declares that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Does this only prove the inspiration of the Epistle to Timothy in

which the assertion is found? Those who seek to overthrow the foundations of truth by such arguments as these, deserve chiding rather than refutation. In 2 Peter 1:19-21, we find, " the word of prophecy," " the prophecies of Scrip- lure," which holy men of God spade as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." There are persons who reject this Epistle; but I am not bound to own their authority. The style of the Epistle is not that of an impostor. Yet if not written by Peter, it is certainly the work of an impostor, for he calls himself the Apostle, and says it is his second Epistle. But I leave this. There is another point which must be noticed in this discussion. They maintain that we cannot avail ourselves of the New Testament, till the Canon is settled. Why not? Let us suppose (although I do not believe it of the Word) that a wilding is found in my garden, can I therefore maker no use of the good trees which are in it? Supposing the second Epistle of Peter were spurious, and that the Apocalypse deserved all that is said against it by certain authors, what has that to do with the Epistle of John, or that of Paul to the Romans. I might admit that one Epistle was questionable-which I do not admit-without, the least in the world, questioning the others.

I return to direct proofs. We have seen the inspiration, the authority, the Canon even, of the Old Testament fully proved; and the principles which deny inspiration itself, utterly overthrown. But we have seen more than this. Paul received "by revelation" the truths he taught, and he communicated them in "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," that is to say, by inspiration; consequently, it is certain that the early disciples had the truth communicated to them by inspiration, as the foundation of their faith. And the argument which denies inspiration to the New Testament, if true, would only prove that God had changed His mode of acting, and left the succeeding ages without this foundation, and without Divine basis for their faith: a change incredible enough. But when Paul says, "which things we speak" does he mean those things which he spoke by word of mouth only? And has he taught nothing by writing? We well’ know that he has taught by writing that which had been revealed to him; that is to say, that his writings for this purpose were inspired. He even says so, which would not have been necessary after the passage we have quoted from Corinthians. But God has favored us with this additional proof: "How," he says, " by revelation He made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ?" Should any say, "It may be so when fundamental truths are concerned, but not otherwise;" even this refuge is denied them by Scripture. In giving details for the inward regulation of a church (1 Corinthians 14:36-37), the Apostle says, "Came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." The communications then of the Spirit to the church or to the world, were the "Word of God," and that which was written by the Apostle to direct the Saints, was " the commandment of the Lord." " For this cause," said the Apostle to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 2:13), "we thank God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." Thus we see that the Apostle puts his writings on the footing of commandments from the Lord, with the sorrowful consolation for those who cannot discern it, " If any man be ignorant, LET HIM BE IGNORANT." NOW will any one tell me, that the Apostle, acting in the self-same character and addressing himself in the same manner in virtue of his Apostolic sanction and authority, to the Romans or to the Galatians, is less inspired than when he addresses the Corinthians? Such an argument deserves no other refutation than "if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant!" To say

God has willed that the faith of the Ephesians and Corinthians, should rest upon Divine inspiration, and that of the Romans and Galatians on a human basis, deserves no serious answer. We have a particular class of writings; and this class of writings is called "The Scriptures." The sixteenth chapter of Romans defines this principle very clearly in ver. 26. "But now is made manifest [1:e. the mystery] and by the prophetic writings [see Greek] according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." This passage again points out that class of writings which we call the Scriptures. Writings which have the authority of a revelation, an oracle of God; they are " prophetic writings." In short, to sum up this part of the testimonies we possess, Peter in his second Epistle, recognizing these writings as the Scriptures, tells us, when speaking of Paul's Epistles, that those who are "unlearned and unstable, wrest them, as they do the other. Scriptures," proving that Paul's Epistles form a part of the Scriptures, a term very well understood and having the same meaning then as now; as the Lord's own words demonstrate. I know, indeed, as I have already said, that some reject this Epistle; but I do not accept their dictum as an authority. The existence, then, of prophetic scriptures, of the scriptures of the New Testament, which have the authority of the Word of God, of the commandments of God, is most clearly proved. He who finds more authority in the words of the Lord's Apostle than in those of the adversaries of inspiration, he who reveres the Word of God and the revelations of God, will have no doubt on the subject. But, if there are the writings of John or Peter making the same claim, addressing Christians in the same manner; and that in perfect accordance with the divine ministry committed to them; as, for instance, those of Peter to the circumcision, could a Christian say, "The writings of one apostle are inspired, but those of another are not; although entirely of the same nature, and although he speaks expressly in the name of his apostolate and as exercising the authority of his mission? I assume now their authenticity; and that they are really the writings they claim to be. We need not look for the words "I am inspired." We find in them the unequivocal expression of authority. The faith of Christians consequently clothes them with this authority. They announce the truth, as having a right to impose their thoughts, as such, and in fact imposing them. Take the first Epistle of Peter. Does he not speak with full authority as apostle? And when Paul said, "If any obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man and have no company with him;" had not that written word apostolic authority? When John said, "We are of God: he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us" (1 John 4:6), exercising thus divine authority over the conscience, do you think he meant that these words pronounced so solemnly had not altogether the same authority? It would be a contradiction in itself, for if they rejected his words they did not hear him. One cannot attribute authority to his words spoken elsewhere, without attributing it to the words which claim that authority. If I say, "I command you to obey me," the command which I give, and the authority of that which I have already commanded, stand or fall together. I cannot believe the authority of Peter to be less great than that of John or of Paul. He was sent forth with the same authority by the Lord.

Well then what have we proved? That there is a class of writings called " the Scriptures" which are inspired, which possess absolute authority as the Word of God, recognized by the Lord and His apostles, and brought forward constantly by them with the greatest solemnity. We have found that a very large portion of the New Testament is spoken of as forming part of these Scriptures; that there is a body of writings attached to the apostolic work, prophetic scriptures used by the command of God, a body of writings which has the authority of the Word of God. The question then is narrowed into very small dimensions. The assertion that there is no inspiration no Divine

authority for the word, has been proved entirely false. It is in flagrant opposition to the authority of the Lord and the apostles; and seeks to overthrow that which they maintain. The only question is this, does such or such a book form a part of this inspired collection? A very important question; but which, by the very fact of its being asked, presupposes the existence and the authority of the Word of God; and only seeks not to confound human pretensions with the divine authority it reveres; the full value of which it seeks to preserve untouched and without alloy.

It will be felt that this is not the place for detailed proofs of the authenticity of each book of the New Testament: it would be to write an introduction to the New Testament. I will point out farther on, some general principles of the ways of God in this respect. The great question is decided. It did not consist in inquiring whether such or such a book were genuine, admitting the inspiration of the rest; but in ascertaining whether there be such a thing as inspiration at all. Now, inspiration has been proved; not only revelation, but inspiration. The revealed truth communicated in words taught by the Holy Ghost. If this be so (mark it well) the system which denies it, bears the character not only of a false principle, but of a principle hostile to God and to His goodness, subversive of the truth He has condescended to make known to us, and of the very foundations of our faith. It is a very important thing to judge the source and the character of that which presents itself as truth. "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world [to act]." Following this injunction of the apostle’s - of the Holy Ghost’s-I solemnly judge that the principle in question proceeds from Satan. It were out of place here to examine how far the principles current in the religious world, have given occasion to this inroad of the enemy. Whatever saps the foundations of faith, in opposition to the express declarations of the Spirit of God, comes from the enemy; and I have always found that to deal with that which is of the enemy openly and publicly as from the enemy, is the wisdom of God and is accompanied by His strength and His blessing. I deal thus with the doctrine that denies the inspiration of scripture.

There is one kind of proof of the authority of Scripture, that is to say of a collection of writings having the authority of the Word of God, which is difficult to produce, on account of the very thing which constitutes its value. I mean; the constant appeal to the Written Word when addressing believers as to a recognized authority. It is used as an authority which no one, except a professed unbeliever, would think of disputing. Open the New Testament at almost what page you like, you will find a proof of this. " It is written, it is written," settled every question decided every controversy. It is not the Scriptures which have to be proved, they serve themselves for an absolute and final proof. This is the strongest testimony we can have. If I say-in canvassing some point of human conduct-the law says this, and the law says that, as settling the question; that takes for granted the existence of the law and its sovereign authority over all disputed points-an authority which no one can gainsay. Thus it is in the use of Scripture. If the word of the Apostles were the word of authority, like that of the Church (as has been said) and were not the word of God, which I entirely believe it to be, even this word of authority submits itself most absolutely to the authority of the Word. The Scriptures are searched to ascertain whether the teaching of an. Apostle were true. " These things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled."-" Jesus, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst."-" Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers."-"Promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures."

Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures."- "And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen

through faith."- "And the Scripture cannot be broken." "Give place unto wrath; for it is written." - "That by comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope."

It was the highest of all the Jewish privileges, that the "oracles of God" were committed to them. " For what saith the Scripture?"-"The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation." The Jews made "the Word of God of none effect through their traditions."- " Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures: and said unto them, Thus it is written." Is it in accommodating Himself to man, that the Lord opens the understanding that they may understand things which have not divine authority? No, the Scriptures are treated by the Apostles, by the Lord himself, as having an incontestable and divine authority as the Oracles of God, as The Word of God. This is so entirely true, that when-in fulfilling his divine mission-it behooved the Lord to undergo the temptation of the enemy, this was the weapon He used-as being divinely tempered-against which Satan had no power, and his devices no possible success. It sufficed to say, "It is written." The tempter would have betrayed himself if he had questioned the absolute authority of the quotation: his best resource was to quote Scripture his own way; but it does not fail under this trial. The second Adam still replies, " It is also written." One may, without blame, prefer the wisdom and the perfection of one’s Savior, to the self-sufficiency and unbelief of human wisdom. And observe here, the importance of this use of the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, the Oracles of God, by the Apostles and by the Lord. People say, " But there are various readings, bad translations, statements which the increase of knowledge has proved impossible, so that Scripture cannot be used as an authority." The Lord, then, was mistaken!

There were various readings, bad translations (especially that of the Septuagint), pointed out by those who deny Inspiration, and supposed inconsistencies, at the very time when the Lord said, " The Scriptures cannot be broken." When, in his controversy with Satan, he employed the Scriptures, Satan, lest he should appear to be Satan undisguised, durst not question their authority. These things existed too when the Apostle called them the Oracles of God. None of these things prevented the Lord’s recognizing their absolute authority on every occasion. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men." As to proofs which may be given of the authority of The Word, it carries its own proof with it, as does every testimony from God. This is a fundamental principle. It does not require proof, it furnishes its own proofs of everything to the soul. We do not bring a light to the sun in order to discern it, it enlightens us. The Word of God is not judged, it judges. If God speaks, and we have seen that the Scriptures are called His Word, woe unto him that knows not it is God who speaks. There are those assuredly who will not own that it is He. If this refusal to believe be final, they are lost, sentence has already been passed upon them; the light is come, and the darkness comprehends it not. "The word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is received, whether spoken or written, as the Word of God; he who rejects it is lost. If any remain in ignorance of some of its details, if any are mistaken as to some book, they lose just so much of it through their pride. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple moreover by them is thy servant warned." - "The entrance of thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding unto the simple." Read the whole 119th Psalm. This conviction that the Word is its own evidence, is all-important; this alone maintains the true character of the Word of God. Like Jesus, it "receives not testimony from man." He who believes not in the Son of God will be condemned. He that believeth not the record that God gave of his

Son hath made God a liar, and hath not life. Now, according to the Lord's own words, the Scriptures testify of Him. The fundamental principle is this-The Word of God must be received by Faith; and the reasonings of man cannot be the foundation of faith; if they were, it would not be faith in God, nor faith in His word. "He believed God."- "They shall be all taught of God; every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me."

Having established this principle, I would enter into some details respecting the ways of God in this matter. We have seen the Lord setting his seal to the Scriptures, but observe, in so doing, He has set his seal to the faith of all those who had previously believed in them. It was not because He had done so that those faithful ones believed. Their heart, their faith, had been previously tested. They had faith, because they had received the testimony of the Scriptures before they were thus sanctioned., at the time when they were presented to their faith, on the ground of their own authority. When Jeremiah spoke, it does not follow that all received his testimony; there were some who had not ears to hear, but who listened to false prophets. When God is to be owned it becomes a moral question: but in all ages, believers have received the testimony of God, and unbelievers have not been able to discern God in the testimony; it is so now. God gives, in His word, sufficient moral evidence to commend it to the conscience. When He has set up a new thing, or when He has sustained faith at a distance from the sanctuary, He has added a sufficiency of extraordinary evidences. But with this comes the moral responsibility of him who hears, which God never sets aside; and also the grace which acts in giving and in establishing faith: the reception of the Word, and afterward the understanding this Word, is a thing presented to the responsibility of man. Grace alone can enable him to receive and to understand it. Nothing can set aside this responsibility, or take away the necessity of this grace, or destroy its efficacy. The positive authority of the Apostolic testimony, claiming submission, as it does, in the most peremptory manner, cannot alter this. " If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." An Apostle cannot go beyond that. For the things which are communicated in words taught by the Spirit, are spiritually discerned. It was thus in the days of all the prophets. " Hear ye and give ear," said Jeremiah, " be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." Now, the condition which brings judgment upon the house of God is marked by this-the Word loses its authority, excepting over the remnant preserved by Him. " And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned; saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men." This is the condition of the people and the cause of the judgment which falls upon them.

Then the Lord said "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples… To the law and to the testimony." Thus also in the New Testament " In the last days perilous times shall come." What is then the resource? " But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The resource in the last days, is reverence for

the Holy Scriptures, and the assurance of their sufficiency. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Therefore whether amongst the Jews, whether in the Church, the resource in evil days is confidence in the Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The Lord has pointed it out, and sanctioned it, but this confidence in the authority of the Word existed before He had given it His sanction. And it is this faith, without any other sanction than the. Word itself, which He has sanctioned. Precious testimony for after-days, since the same sanction applies to them also. The apostle, in warning us of perilous times, directs our thoughts beforehand to the same means of establishing the soul. Those who had faith in the Scriptures before the Savior's testimony, having been enabled, through grace, to discern what was God's word, before Jesus Lad sealed the whole, have thus been approved by Him. Those who do so afterward, have already this approval. They have the same responsibility as to what they receive; but although this responsibility exists, God does not fail to use means. There is another principle which should be noticed here. It is, that the oracles of God are committed to His people. The Church cannot impose her authority upon us; but she is responsible for preserving that which has been committed to her. Thus Rome has shown her unfaithfulness, by adding apocryphal books. Now, although the Church may, in detail, fail in her responsibility, it is impossible, in anything essential to it, that God should fail His Church, or that Christ should cease to nourish and cherish it. God watches over all this; not to keep the learned from stumbling, but that believers may have food from Him, and an unerring rule of life. It is not the babe and the wayfaring man who find difficulties; God has given them the Bible, and preserved it for them; and their conscience bears them witness in the Holy Ghost, that God works in them by this Word. The Holy Ghost enables them, according to the measure of their spirituality, to use and understand it. A heart, full of joy because taught of God, discerns the Word. It is read perhaps in a bad translation; and doubtless, something is lost thereby; but God has taken care that enough should remain to teach the heart with certainty His truth and His ways. This Word is the sword of the Spirit-it carries conviction with it, when the Spirit uses it in the power of His grace. It leaves man under the responsibility of having rejected it, whenever it has been presented to his conscience. A man of little information, but taught of God, is much more able to apprehend the whole truth, even through the medium of an indifferent translation, than the learned man who thinks he can judge of the whole canon; and for this reason. The Church puts the New Testament into his hands, for the oracles of God are committed to the Church; this does not indeed impart faith, but it is the means which God uses. The Church presents us with them; not with authority as having power to judge the Word; but as the faithful guardian of that which had been committed to her. This is done through relations, friends, ministers; and there is a general belief in the professing Church that it is the word of God. The simple-minded do not set themselves to judge the whole canon of the New Testament before reading it; they read it, and the Word produces faith. A man receives, by the teaching of God, first one truth and then another. To such a one, the history of Jesus is all divine; it communicates to his soul what he receives with divine knowledge, for these things are spiritually discerned. The word has judged him, the Word has revealed Jesus to him. The epistles unfold divine truth-he enjoys the word with a divine certainty that God has spoken to him. He makes use of every book in the New Testament, without knowing what the term "Canon" means. And if some great scholar would deprive him of his treasure; to wit, the authority and inspiration of that word which he knows to be of God; this Word is the sword of the Spirit in his hands, to teach him the folly of human wisdom. He pities the learned man who is without all that, of which he has the divine fruition.

He who has eaten bread knows what bread is, although -he may not understand the art of baking. If, through grace, the believer grows in divine knowledge, he sees the harmony of the whole, the adaptation of the several parts. He has not only the full assurance of faith, but the full assurance of understanding also. He perceives the divine wisdom of the Bible, and not merely the divine truth in it. He finds perhaps a text spoiled by a bad translation-it does not harmonize with what he knows to be the truth of God; he will say, "I don't understand that passage" (I am supposing him deprived of all spiritual help, which is not the case, according to the ways of God in His Church). Humble in heart, he will attribute it to his own ignorance. The wisdom of this world reasons about the canon, and will form its judgment before it reads, and it receives nothing. The mind of man cannot create for itself the things of God. Human reason cannot pronounce upon the authority of the word of God.. It may be said, this is trusting to a feeling; but no, it is trusting to God. "They shall be all taught of God." The authority of the Word can only be known by believing in it.

He who has only man's thoughts will say, " But I must know that it is the word of God before I can believe in it." I reply, "You cannot." It is true, happily true, that we receive the New Testament as the Word of God, on the faith of our parents or of our education; but it is never really received as such, till it is " mixed with faith " in those that read it. For my part, I receive the New Testament with full assurance, in its present form, as adopted by the universal Church. Circumstances having called me to it, I have examined the external evidences, and found them satisfactory; but that does not produce faith. It may be useful, to obviate the objections made by those who do not live upon the Word, and cannot judge of it. The authority of God is not subject to human intelligence. I know that some of the epistles were questioned in the early ages, at least in certain places; but I doubt not, that in receiving those books which form the New Testament, as inspired, the Church was guided by God. The means of communication are not the rule of authority; but these means may be used according to the certainty of the rule. A mother instructs her child in the truth, but she is not the rule of the truth. Thus the poor Christian receives the New Testament in the form in which it is distributed. It may be that he cannot demonstrate its authenticity, but he happily profits by the fact that the Church receives it. When he has read it, he finds it divine. God thus uses means to spread the truth, and the book which contains it. The multitude of believers profit by it. It is God who acts thus.

If an answer must be given to unbelievers who dispute the authority of that which others enjoy, it may be that only a few amongst them are able to convince gainsayers; but that does not hinder God's using these means, and giving faith to those who use them; and then the 'folly of gainsayers and of those who have fed themselves upon unbelief, becomes manifest.

I have said that the man who is exercised in the word according to God, finds not only the proof of its divinity in the application of passage after passage to his conscience, but will gain the deepest conviction of its perfection as a whole, through the knowledge he will thus gain of the fullness of Christ. I will take an instance, which is used to prove that there are things in the New Testament which are outside the province of spiritual discernment. The Spirit of God cannot, it is said, make us feel the value of a genealogy. Such a remark only betrays ignorance of the Word and of Christ Himself: To set forth the varied glory of Jesus, according to the counsels of God respecting Him, it is needful to present the different characters He bears; this is the substance of God's revelation. Now His connection with Abraham and David, and His connection with Adam, are leading points in this revelation; and the genealogies set this before us. But this is not all. They correspond exactly

with the character of the Gospels in which we find them. The Gospel by Matthew treats especially of the Messiah, of the relation of Christ to the Jews, of the fulfillment of prophecy in Him, and at the same time, of His rejection as Messiah, and the transition to a new dispensation. Luke sets before us, after the Savior's birth, the great features of grace brought in by the second Adam, and the great moral principles belonging to it; so that in the body of this Gospel, events are not arranged in chronological order, but according to their moral bearing. This is true, even in the history of the temptation. John, on the contrary, gives us the person of the Savior, who is above all the dispensational dealings of God in the earth. The Jews are set aside throughout as rejected, therefore no genealogy is given. The Word was God. John's gospel begins before Genesis, and at the close, we find neither the agony in Gethsemane, nor the forsaking on the cross; but other things are mentioned which are not found in Matthew or in Luke. Thus the different glories of Christ are manifested, and by degrees the admirable perfection of the Word shines forth in all its splendor. The criticisms of man fade away, like the stars before the sun, which makes them disappear, with the darkness that allowed them to be seen. The Bible presents us with a perfection both in its details and as a whole, which leaves no doubt in the mind of one who has tasted it, that as a complete whole it is divine.

I have already spoken of its divinity in its separate parts, as the sword of the Spirit causing its power to be felt in the soul, judging it, and revealing Christ to it; but I speak of it now as a whole, of what is called the canon of Scripture. If Matthew were wanting, we should not have the Messiah, Son of David, and Son of Abraham. If Mark were wanting, we should not have the Servant, made in the likeness of man; if Luke, we should not have the Son of Man; if John, we should lose the Son of God. In the Acts, we find the foundation of the Church, by the power of the Spirit of God, the commencement and development of the Church in Jerusalem, through the instrumentality of the twelve; then the Gentiles grafted into the good Olive Tree by Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision; and, when Jerusalem had rejected the testimony, the Church, fully revealed, and called by the ministry of Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. The Epistle to the Romans furnishes the eternal principles of God's relationship with man, established in blessing by means of Christ, dead and risen, and the reconciling of these things with the specialty of the promises made to the Jews by Him whose gifts and calling are without repentance. In the Corinthians are found details respecting the inward regulation of a Church; its walk, its order, its restoration when it had gone astray, the patience and the energy of grace; the whole sketched by the Spirit of God, acting through an apostle, and declaring the divine authority of His commands. In Galatians, the contrast between Law and Promise as well as the source of ministry; in a word the condemnation of Judaism, even in its very roots. In Ephesians, the fullness of the Church's privileges, as the body of Christ, her connection with Him, and " the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations," in which all the counsels of God, for His glory, are unfolded. In Colossians, the fullness which is in the head for the body, and the solemn warning not to separate practically from this standing of union with the Head, through allowing a show of humility to glide into the bosom of the Church. In Philippians, the Apostle's experience of what Christ is to the Christian; as sufficient for all things, whatever his position may be. His immediate sufficiency, even when the Christian should be deprived of apostolic support; and the walk of the Church in the unity of grace, in unity maintained by grace, when the spiritual energy of her human leaders should be wanting. It is a precious epistle in this point of view. In Thessalonians the hope of the Church in the freshness of her affections; and the mystery of iniquity ending in the manifestation of the man of sin; a mystery

notwithstanding which, the Church is called to maintain this hope and her affections. In Timothy and Titus, what may be termed ecclesiastical care for the maintenance whether of truth or of order. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Church had been seen seated as a body in the heavenly places. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the faithful are viewed as journeying in weakness upon the earth, and Christ is consequently seen apart, for them, in heaven, in contrast with the earthly figures of it given to Israel. This gives rise to a glorious unfolding of the person of our Lord, as God the Creator, as man, and as the Son over His own house, the Creator of all things, and lastly, very fully as High Priest; after the order of Melchisedec, as to his personal rights; after the likeness of Aaron, or rather in contrast with Aaron, as to the present exercise of priesthood. This leads to the unfolding of the life of faith, the faith common to all saints; and to the final separation of the believing Jews from the camp of earthly religion, as having " come to the heavenly Jerusalem." James sets before us that girdle of practical righteousness, which restrains the natural tendency of the heart to abuse grace; and the last dealings of God with the twelve tribes (as in Jonah with the Gentiles) when the light and perfection of a new order of things eclipsed that old order to which those tribes had proved unfaithful. In Peter, we find the Christian a pilgrim on the earth, placed in this position by the power of Christ's resurrection, according to an election which is not that of an earthly people, but unto eternal life. This was addressed to the Jews of the Dispersion (Peter was the apostle of the Circumcision), and was particularly adapted to them, setting them free from the idea of an earthly establishment, to be pilgrims, through grace, on the earth, in view of an incorruptible inheritance. THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER is written in the prospect of his departure, and of the flowing in of evil. It exhorts them to press forward. On the one hand, it gives the picture and the assurance of the glory of the coming kingdom, in its heavenly aspect but manifested on the earth; on the other hand, the corruption which would degrade and swallow up Christianity; and the consequences of this in judgment. Peter never represents the Church as one body in heaven, as Paul does; he views her, or rather her members, as on the earth; and they are pilgrims there. The exact correspondence of every detail with this point of view, even in the manner of presenting the glory (2 Peter 1:1-21), manifests a perfection which proves its divine origin. Jude admirably unfolds all the features of the apostasy; its beginning and its results; recording that which we should otherwise have lost, the solemn prophecy of Enoch; proving how clear was the testimony of God before the flood-God, who is unchangeable in purpose from the beginning to the end. John presents us with all the features of the Divine nature; first of all as manifested in Jesus; and then as characteristic of the whole family; a safeguard against every pretension, which, not having these features, would seek to pervert the faithful; and the means of strengthening and establishing the faithful by the development of these qualities of the nature of God, with whom, if light be in them, they have communion; and in whom, if love be in them, they dwell, and He in them. This is true of every believer in Jesus. This love was manifested in Christ's coming down into the earth; and was perfected, by setting us, in full enjoyment with Him, in His own place above. Philemon, and the two lesser Epistles of John, show us that if the mystery of God is revealed to us by one Apostle, and the nature of God set evidently before us by another; if they lift us up to the height of His counsels and of His being, they can-and the Christianity they preach can-be occupied with the interests of a runaway slave and his master, and with the anxieties and practical difficulties of an excellent lady, and a kind and worthy brother, as to receiving persons to whom Christian love might open the door, but who brought not the doctrine of Christ. They show us, that that love which dwells in God, which is the very nature of God, which is

manifested in the glorious work of Christ, that wisdom, which ordains all mysteries for His eternal glory, disdains not to provide, with perfect delicacy, for the difficult relationships between a master and his slave; nor to manifest the tenderest solicitude with respect to the details of life. This love, in the perfection of wisdom and grace, links the fullness and the perfection of God with every emotion of the human heart, with every circumstance of our life in this world; and sanctifies a people who are to dwell with God by the revelation of what he is, and fits them for His presence by creating pure affections, and by making a holy love the spring of their whole life. In the Apocalypse, the Spirit of God, after having given, in an admirable review of the state of seven Asiatic churches, the elements of a perfect judgment with respect to every state in which one connected with the Church could be found; after having at the same time encouraged the faithfulness of those who had ears to hear, by promises of blessing from above, specially suited to the difficulties of these several conditions; after having declared that these blessings are prepared for " him that overcometh" in the conflict, which the declension of the Church brings him into (a declension which had already commenced in the days of the Apostle, in their leaving their first love, and which will end in compelling Christ to spew out of His mouth those who bear His name); after having thus furnished the Christian with all that he needs in the midst of the difficulties presented by the state of the professing Church; and having revealed the judgment of Christ with a perfection, and a circumstantial adaptation which are most admirable, the Holy Ghost then lifts the veil, to show where all this will end in the judgment of the world. He reveals, first of all, chastenings in outward things; then more directly upon man himself; afterward, all the features of man’s dreadful apostasy, the diabolical organization of his forces against Christ; and, at length, the judgment which will break forth at the coming of Christ himself, the King of kings and Lord of lords. This judgment making way for an administration of blessing and happiness (Satan being bound), which will only be interrupted by his being loosed from his prison, to try those who have enjoyed this happiness, and thus to bring on the final judgment of the dead, and the eternal state in which God will be all in all. This is the methodical and complete development of that which Jude, 2 Peter, and 2 Thessalonians had made known to the Church in its moral elements. At the close of the book the connection of the Church in Heaven with Christ, and with the times of blessing enjoyed under the reign of Christ, are more particularly unfolded.

There is another striking feature of the perfection of the Apocalypse, which may be added here; that is, its moral unity. The standing of the Church is indeed defined in the opening and concluding paragraphs, by the expression of her own sentiments; but there is never throughout the book, one thought connected with the living communication of grace from the Head to the members. It is a prophetic book of judgment, first of all that of the Church, seen in its responsibility upon the earth. In the chapters which speak of the Church, there is promise, threatening, warning, judgment of its condition, revelation of the characters of the Son of Man, everything connected with responsibility. The Head, the source of life and knowledge to the body, is not mentioned in these chapters. After the judgment of the Church comes that of the world; a judgment increasing in severity, up to the destruction of the Wicked One. In this part of the book is found all that the faithful need, in order to understand the ways of God, and to discern the path He has marked out for them in these perilous times; but never Christ the living source of grace: everything is in its right place, for it is the work of God. The New Testament presents us then, from the manifestation of the Man Christ in humiliation on the earth, up to the eternal state when God will be all in all, with the full development of all the ways of God, and of what He is in Himself, in order that man may joy in Him, know Him and glorify

Him: that the believer may be kept through all the difficulties and dangers of the way, by the wisdom and the admonitions of God; and that he may understand His wisdom and His infinite love. Man could not have composed this as a whole, could not have foreseen the necessity for each part. One feels in it the energetic spontaneity of life, that is to say, of the Spirit of God. But take away one single part-when we possess the whole-and the breach is immediately felt by one who has seen and appreciated its completeness. The perfection of the whole is manifested, as in everything which God has made, from the insect which sports in the air, to the admirable details of the body of man, united to a mind which can be taken lip with God, and, through grace, express Him in His countenance even, and in His ways. The Word is not a shapeless mass, it is the complete body of the revealed thoughts of God. More perfect even than man to whom it is addressed, because more immediately divine, it expresses itself in man, because God will introduce man into it; but it is God who expresses in it all His thoughts. Yes, man who would be wise, does not understand this body, because he does not perceive it; he judges one of its members according to the little pitiful history of ecclesiastical weaknesses and contentions, the most pitiful of all contentions. The things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned. Divine perfection shines forth at every page for him who is spiritual; and the unity of the whole, the perfect connection of its several parts, the relation of these parts to each other and to all the ways of God, to the person of Christ, to the Old Testament, to the heart of the renewed man who, through grace, knows himself, to the necessities of sinful man, to the dangers and difficulties which long afterward sprang up in the Church, all combine to crown with divine glory the demonstration of the origin and the true Author of the book which contains these things. Its author is so much the more evidently. God, from the human instruments having been many and diverse. But its unity and, above all, the intimate union of its different parts, demonstrate a complete and perfect body. If but one joint of a finger were wanting to a man, he is not a man such as God made him; it is at once perceived, he may have life, but he is imperfect. Take away a book from the New Testament, the remainder is divine undoubtedly, but it is no longer the New Testament in its divine perfection. As in a noble tree the inward energy, the freedom of the sovereign power which works in it, produces a variety of forms, in which the details of human order may appear to be wanting, but in which there is a beauty that no human art can imitate. Cut off one of its branches, the void is obvious; the minute connection of the remainder is destroyed, the gap which is made in the intertwining of its tender leaves proves that the devastating hand of man has been there. This then is how the Christian possesses the Word; each part of it acts divinely in him, and, in proportion to the progress he makes, it unfolds itself as a whole to the eyes of his faith, with a divine evidence which unites itself with every element of his faith, with the varied glories of the person of Christ, and with the universal perfection of the ways of God; a perfection of which the christian has not judged a priori, but which he has learned in the Word itself. When I see a man do I need to be told that his form is complete? The more I know of anatomy the more I shall admire its structure. But it is the sight of the man himself which makes me apprehend his perfectness. Thus it is with all the works of God; only His Word requires, as it produces, spiritual discernment. If any one be a prophet or spiritual let him acknowledge it. And do you know how the Word disposes of those who do not acknowledge it? "If any be ignorant let him be ignorant." It is humbling, no doubt, to have all one’s learning treated thus; but this is as it should be between God and man. I repeat, I doubt not that outward evidences confirm the spiritual judgment. The learned man who creates doubts for himself, needs evidences to remove them. The simple Christian feeds on that which is divine, and

knows nothing of the difficulties which man's poor learning creates. Lastly, I will go over, in order to show their futility, some of the arguments which are used to deny inspiration. It is a melancholy task, after having had one's thoughts directed towards the perfection of the Bible. The first thing which strikes one is that all is judged from without. We are told that at the time of the reformation one authority was substituted for another. But observe, it is not through anything found in the Bible that unbelief judges its authority. Men would have faith to rest upon historical certainty and moral evidence. But this skews entire ignorance of what faith is. He who could be satisfied with this has never had divine conviction, feels not the need of divine faith, and knows not its nature; for no historical or moral certainty can be faith more or less. Faith comes from God, and receives a testimony, whereupon it sets to its seal that God is true. The rationalist, who has not the Spirit, can only see in Scripture the testimony of the man who wrote it. This is easy to be understood. He gives up the Spirit and the Word together, and falls back upon his own reason. Stress is laid also on the imperfection of the text of the New Testament, on its being written in a dead language, on its being read in translations; and, finally-, we are told that its authors followed the opinions of the day in which they lived. This last objection is itself but a judgment formed upon the opinions of the present day, and is not worth a refutation. It is an accusation, not a proof: and the accusation is but a calumny. In fact if it were well-founded, the same should be said of the Lord's own discourses, or the whole history should be rejected as false (see John 3:33-34; John 8:47). As to the other objections, I have a divine certainty of their futility, because, as I have already shown, the Lord has set his seal to the Old Testament scriptures, in spite of the same difficulties. I would add a few words. Those who reason in this way confound the-rule of faith with the means by which it is made known; in the latter, the imperfection of the instrument is felt. No one would assert that a translation was divine; but this is merely saying that through human diligence we profit by a divine work. The deposit, the rule of faith, remains in its original purity.

If clouds, formed by exhalations from the earth, obscure the light of the sun, they only prove, by thus veiling it, the power of that light which still suffices for all human purposes, although not seen in all its brightness. This objection, then, only tells us that when God gives blessing, we profit by the blessing according to our diligence. But this is not all. It is said that we do not even possess the original in its purity. This is, in the main, the same principle we have just touched on.

All that God gives He puts into the hands of men for their use, and they never know how to keep it as they ought. The revelation of God has been placed in the hands of men-of the Church. Man has not preserved it in its absolute perfection: be it so. God allows man to learn what he is; but faith knows that behind all this, there is the faithfulness of God, who watches over the Church, and that Christ nourishes and cherishes her. Experience teaches, and the Day of Judgment will make manifest, that faith in God is always in the right. Thus the believer quite supposes it possible that, through the carelessness of man, some defects may have crept into that which was committed to him; but he has full confidence in the faithfulness of God. His experience, as we have seen, confirms his faith, for he finds the Word divine. The judgment of God will decide that question for the unbeliever, which. divine faith has already decided for the believer. The examination of the text by learned men has, indeed, shown the rashness of infidel knowledge; but has left no serious doubt, except as to an extremely small number of texts, or rather of words, nor a shadow of obscurity upon any passage of the slightest importance as to the truth.

One learns that God was there, as much in His caring for, as in His gift of, the Word; although, apparently, He left all to the responsibility of man. To say that the meaning of a passage is doubtful, in order to deny its inspiration, is too absurd an argument to be repeated. It is saying, that the ignorance and incapacity of man are a proof that God has not acted in anything which man does not understand. There is a superficiality in such reasoning as this, which reveals the true value of mere human wisdom. The meaning is doubtful! doubtful to whom? I ask. It is said that the writers of the New Testament implicitly followed the translation of the Seventy. The contrary is the truth. When this translation gives the sense they used it. Half their quotations are faithfully rendered from the Hebrew; and if there are passages which differ from the present Hebrew text, the researches of the learned have proved that they are borne out by the testimony of the oldest translations. In many instances the meaning is given without attaching themselves to the exact words. Conscientious research on this point strongly confirms the divine inspiration of the authors of the New Testament. Inaccuracies, errors, and contradictions are alleged. I deny these contradictions and these inaccuracies. Let us remember that the certainty of the objector's knowledge must be first ascertained, and I have no confidence in it. I have known many cases in which man would prune away the fruit of the spontaneous actings of the Spirit, and carve the beautiful tree into a round or a square. For my part, I have seen divine perfection in the form it has. All is divinely. adapted to the object which the Holy Ghost had in view. We have seen that John does not mention the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane; Matthew and Luke omit what John relates. What does this prove to me? That John was not there? Not so; but that the Holy Ghost is the author of the two accounts, and not John and Matthew. Man would have related what man had seen. The Holy Ghost sets before me in the one Gospel, the man and the Messiah suffering; in the other, the Divine Person who offered up Himself, and whose life no man took from Him. I see divine perfection where human wisdom see blemishes. Luke puts the offer of the kingdoms of the earth before the temptation on the pinnacle of the Temple, and, in consequence, omits "Get thee hence, Satan!" "This is wrong!" cries the worldly scholar. "What perfection!" says the Christian. Matthew gives the historical order, Luke the moral order; for the spiritual temptation, through the written word, was of a deeper character than that of the offer of the whole world. The Man, the Messiah, Son of Man, the Holy One, relying on the promises, duly succeed each other. Now this moral order is characteristic of the whole of Luke's Gospel, excepting where the historical order is necessary to the truth of the recital. It is the Holy Ghost who writes. I have found difficulties in the Word: this has not surprised me, ignorant as I am; but I have found these difficulties, one after another, to be but the means of entering more fully into the perfection, the wisdom, and the divine beauty of the revelation of my God. If I still find more of these difficulties, and I do so, I wait upon Him to solve them for me; and I do not say "the meaning is doubtful," but "the meaning is doubtful to me." I do not say " there is inaccuracy- and I am accurate enough to judge it without divine light;" but "I am ignorant, and God will enlighten me in due time." Some have even gone so far as to say, that Scripture does not lay claim to inspiration. This shows an ignorance, or a disregard, of its contents, which, especially on such a subject, renders the arguments of those who could assert it unworthy of the attention of a serious man. The apostle asserts the exact contrary in the most clear and absolute manner. We have already seen how the Word, as a principle, speaks of the Scriptures. I will not return to it. I have already exposed the folly of the argument, that inspiration is limited to the passage which asserts it-I say its folly; for why could not a text say, "All these writings are inspired." The fact is, that the passages which assert it, limit it neither to the book

which contains them, nor to the writings of the same author. They establish a principle, or allude to the writings of another, to invest them with the authority of Scripture. They establish the existence of a class of writings having divine authority; they ascribe this authority to the entire Old Testament. The Church, it is also said, may have made mistakes. Be it so; but is there no God? Would He allow us to be deceived on so essential a point? Those who do not know His goodness answer that He might; and boldly pronounce about books which have edified the Church for centuries. But what is this opinion worth? That must be settled before we allow it to invalidate the Book it refers to. I by no means admit the authority of the Church; but I recognize that it is her duty to preserve the deposit committed to her; and I believe in the faithfulness of God. In a certain sense, everything is necessarily referred to individual judgment, that is to say, each one is under its responsibility for himself. A Socinian claims a right to deny the divinity of Christ and the Atonement. Were I the Pope, I could not hinder his thinking so; but being a Christian, I know that he is lost if he remain in this state. I cannot make another believe the inspiration of the New Testament: each one must judge for himself. But he who rejects the Word, the Word will reject him. He is bolder than man should dare to be; but he will not be stronger than God. Salvation does not depend on faith in the inspiration of the New Testament. A man may be saved, without knowing that the book exists, by the truth which it contains reaching his heart through the lips of another. To reject the Word of God, when it is before us, is quite another thing.

I admit that there is a difference between the inspiration of the New Testament and that of the Old; not as to its authority, but as to its character. The prophets of old said, "Thus saith the Lord"; and they announced the thoughts of God, in His own words, on a particular subject, at the moment when his word was addressed to them. But the Holy Ghost-come down as the Comforter to lead into all truth-is different from the Spirit of Prophecy, although the same Spirit (see 1 Peter 1:11-12). He searches all things, even the deep things of God." "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Christ being glorified, the Holy Ghost dwells in His disciples, and can open all the treasures of the glory of the Lord, all the tenderness of His love, of His connection, as man, with his own. God was made man, and God the Holy Ghost dwells in the Church, and thus, if I may so speak, humanizes Himself, while not ceasing to be God; He expresses Himself in grace and blessing in all the details and circumstances of human life: He helps our infirmities. He that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God. The inspiration of the New Testament partakes of this character. It unfolds itself, in the unity of the Church, in feelings and affections, and ministers to her need by telling of the love and the ways of the God-man in a world of sinners; but if the Holy Ghost has thus acted in the Church, united to the Head whom he glorifies, what He spoke and what he caused to be written, was none the less the Word of God, the thoughts of God communicated in words of His own teaching. As Christ did not cease to be God because he was made man, so he that received the testimony of Christ set to his seal that God is true. We do not give up (alas! too many human teachers have given it up) that presence of the Holy Ghost in the church which. produces religious inspiration; that is, the energy which acts in power and blessing in Christians, without making them an authority; neither do we give up the authority of that which has been communicated, whether by word of mouth (had we been present to profit by it), or by writings and words taught by the Holy Ghost; nor do we give up those things which are the Lord’s commands..

Observe also, that it is not apostolic authority only which is the question, but the authority of the Word of God. A prophet who spoke by inspiration, and who could say, "The Holy Ghost saith, Separate me Barnabas and Saul;" had as much authority in that instance as Paul or Barnabas. He was but the mouth of God, just as what Paul and Barnabas spoke by the same inspiration was the Word of God. To allege that the Gospels were not written by Apostles is idle. If an Apostle had written without being inspired, his book would only have had the value of that of a godly man. If one of the least in the Church has been used by the Holy Ghost, his book has the authority of the Word of God. The infinite value of Scripture proceeds from its Author, and not, in any instance, from the spiritual personality of its authors. The two Gospels which are not written by Apostles are none the less the perfect presentation of God manifest in the earth, in that aspect which the Holy Ghost had in view. It is Christ, it is God, who was there. The instrument used in giving us the history of our Savior is of no importance; the only essential thing is, that Christ should be faithfully presented as He was, as God would present Him.

Doubts are raised especially about the Epistle of Jude, the second of Peter, and the Apocalypse. Let us briefly examine these three books. Peter’s Epistle contains the assertion that it was written by himself: it has a tone of deep and spiritual holiness, a dignified confidence, most remote from imposture; yet such it must be if it were not written by the Apostle Peter. I find in it minute allusions to things which happened to himself, related elsewhere, which would not have occurred to an impostor: not the smallest deviation from divine truth: a solemnity and an authority nowhere found except in inspired writings: a direct application to the soul, as from God, of the authority of its contents, which is one characteristic of Inspiration. The manner in which the Word is used in it, as well as the events of the life of Christ, has a divine character. We see in it also a knowledge and a use of the grand principles of divine truth, which are unquestionably original, and which possess, at the same time, that divine force which belongs to the whole Bible; an absence of amplification only to be found in the Bible, and which is the result of that consciousness of authority with which an inspired man would speak, or which was rather the natural consequences of his divine authority. Those who have read the Epistle of Barnabas, which some would compare with that of Peter, will be able to judge of the difference between them, and of the discernment of those who could put it on a level with that of the Apostle. Not to say that it is scarcely doubtful that this so called Epistle of Barnabas is a fabrication, even the one which has been sifted, one has but to read the Epistles of the Fathers (called apostolic) to see that God has guarded the testimony of His Word by the counter-proof of the futility of the writings even of the Apostle’s companions; one would scarcely find so much nonsense in these days, even in the religious books written for children. There are two epistles by Clement-kind and amiable enough -written to make peace at Corinth, but they are the only passable ones; and even these are as inferior to the New Testament as, doubtless, the humility of the author would have admitted them to be. Jude is accused of having made use of fables and apocryphal books in his Epistle; but where is the proof of this? The Epistle, on the whole, contains deep and wonderful instruction as to the features of the Apostasy which is foretold in other parts of the Word; supplying elements which, although linking themselves with the whole Scripture, are found no where else.

It contains deep principles of eternal and divine truth, and sketches, with surprising distinctness in a few words, the moral progressive steps of man’s apostasy; as well as its historical beginnings in the Church, beginnings confirmed doctrinally, and by allusions to other parts of the New

Testament. It bears the same marks of inspiration and divine authority which I have pointed out in Peter, and the same contrast with what we know to be of man. But, it is said, there are fables in it; which are they? Is the fall of the angels a fable? The Lord Himself tells us that Satan is a fallen being: we learn from Peter that there are angels reserved for judgment. The temerity of human knowledge calls everything which is beyond its reach a fable. Jude and Peter are borne out, if that were needful, by other passages. All Revelation is a fable to him who believes not: perhaps Michael contending with the devil is meant. But this, as a scriptural principle, is recognized, not only in the Apocalypse and the second of Peter, but also in the book of Daniel (10:20, 21), quoted by the Lord Himself; and that passage chews that Michael especially interests himself in Israel: He is there called their prince. We find the same thing in Daniel 12:1, a chapter, one part of which is especially pointed out as worthy of attention by the Lord Jesus. It proves that Michael is used of the Lord in behalf of Israel. One can easily understand the use which the Israelites would have made of the body of Moses, as we know what they did for centuries with the brazen serpent. We know also that the Lord buried him, carefully concealing the place of his interment. Does He not use the angels in His service, for these things, and Michael especially, for Israel, and against Satan, who opposed his service to that people. So that there is not an element contained in Jude's statement that is not borne out, in principle, by the general testimony of the word of God. That Jude should have been commissioned to add another act to all this is no difficulty to one, whose mind is imbued with the word of God. On the contrary, there is much solemnity in the instruction. It has none of those curious and idle details which we find in the fables of the apocryphal books; but that which throws much light on that invisible world of Providence, the existence of which is proved by a multitude of passages, and which will be unveiled to us when we shall know even as we are known.

If I reason thus, it is not that I question the inspiration of Jude: no; for his whole epistle is stamped with the love, the holiness, and the authority of God; and has its own manifest place in the series of the books of the New Testament. I am not proving the truth of what Jude spoke by inspiration, but the superficial character of the objections brought against the epistle. As to the accusation of borrowing from the apocrypha, where is it proved? I conclude it is the prophecy of Enoch which ’2 alluded to, as it is found in an apocryphal book, bearing the name of Enoch, which was published in England some years ago, and which exists in the Ethiopian language. But there is no shadow of a proof that Jude borrowed it from this Ethiopian book. There would be nothing extraordinary in the idea that the author of the so-called book of Enoch may have been acquainted with this prophecy. The prophecy itself is confirmed by a multitude of passages in the Old and New Testament. Its divine truth is proved by innumerable texts of all kinds. Is the preserving that which is certainly true, and nothing else, a proof of not being directed by God, whilst he who composes a book, known to be an imposture, adds to it a mass of crudities? Is it not rather a proof to the contrary, if proof were needed? Jude gives us a true prophecy, and nothing else. Another avails himself of the truth of this prophecy, which had come to his knowledge, to accredit a mass of errors. And this is brought forward as a proof that the former was not under the direction of God, and that he must have quoted the true prophecy from him, who made so bad a use of it And this is called reasoning, and wisdom, and knowledge! To a Christian, the preservation of this prophecy has an affecting interest. In adding the fact of its having been prophesied by Enoch, to a truth taught elsewhere, we have a testimony that, even before the flood, the man of God, who walked with Him, who was taken from the world - as the church will one day be had already, at that early period, announced

the judgment of the world he was leaving. "Known unto God are all His works, from the beginning of the world." All His purposes are fixed beforehand, whatever may be His patience and His dealings in long-suffering and in righteousness with man, ere those purposes be accomplished. In short, to say that this passage has been taken from an apocryphal book is an assertion destitute of proof. It is a question whether this book were in existence when Jude wrote his Epistle. The date of the apocryphal book of Enoch is controverted. And this must be settled before there can be any foundation whatever for alleging that the passage in Jude was taken from it.

We have only now to consider the Apocalypse. This book is only rejected because not understood. Ignorance assumes the office of judge, and decides with the temerity natural to it. It is obscure in its style, to one not familiar with the Word; and in its matter, because it treats of subjects which naturally tend to make it so. But there is no book in the New Testament of which the date and the author are established by more precise, more ancient, and more competent evidences; not one which has acted in a more holy and solemn manner on the conscience of true Christians; not one which - if it be not the simple truth, commending itself - links itself more admirably with the whole structure of the New' Testament, completing the whole edifice; and the absence of which, in this respect, would be more sensibly felt. Not one that connects itself so much with, the. Old Testament, by borrowing the imagery of the prophets to unfold its revelations, while so far altering it as to adapt it to the New Testament. This mode of acting forms the most perfect connection between heavenly and earthly things - a connection fully established in the New Testament-and makes the symbols more easy to be understood, and the object of the book more apparent. There is scarcely a point, from the first chapter of Genesis, with which the Apocalypse does not link itself, without effort, and in a manner which is altogether beyond human art. This book has the impress, the lofty range, the perfection of the mind of God, precisely in those things from which man has endeavored, apart from the Bible, to borrow something from God to give a more exalted character to the idolatry of his own heart. Creation-the Jew-Man, his power in the world, the work of Satan, that of Christ in its results of glory to Himself and to the earth, the church, the condition of the saints in relation to God and to the earth, the government and the long-suffering of God, the angels-all these subjects are treated of, set in their relations to each other and to God, and yet in no respect whatever is this book deficient, as to any one doctrine revealed in the Word; not copying these doctrines, but expressing them in new forms and in altogether new circumstances, which throw fresh light upon the former ones, and receive it from them in return.

One understands, that a book which, like the Bible, sets forth all the ways of God, from the creation to the return of that creation - long rebellious and miserable, but now redeemed-into the order and blessing in which it is set, by the fullness of God, in safety, shutting out that only which is incompatible with the blessing itself; one can understand, that a book which reveals the eternal Son of God, who was before creation, standing in the midst of this whole scene, to bring out of it glory to His Father, and a more beautiful order than that which had been lost; one can understand, I say, that such a book would not close without taking up again all the threads of this wondrous divine process, in those results which (when the work of the Son is perfected, and all things subdued) will bring in the full and perfect dominion of Him who surrounds Himself with the eternal blessing of that God who has made himself known in Him. This is what the Apocalypse sets before us. Who is it (to enter into some details of another part, of this book), who is it that in choosing seven churches (a number which, in itself, suggests the idea of a complete whole), could give us,

in two short chapters, every moral position in which the Church (and even every individual who has ears to hear) could be found, from the beginning to the end of its career? Who is it that could, with this, give us the most precious revelation of heavenly blessings, adapted as special encouragement to the difficulties of each of these respective conditions, and, at the same time, revelations of the divine and varied glory of the person of the Son of God, a glory which beams with all-pervading brightness over every part of the subject; and that in such details as are calculated to strengthen those who are in the circumstances which, these chapters describe, whilst making known to all the glory of Him who speaketh. This is what we find in chapters 2: and 3: of the Apocalypse. One understands, also, that when the inspired communications made to the. Church were about to be closed; when those who were commissioned by God to superintend were being remove- and evil, as the Word. everywhere testifies, was coming in like a flood; one can understand, I say, that the Spirit of God should have thus left to the Church-to the faithful who needed it-a moral summary, which could meet their need in the moral darkness which was gathering around them; a summary which, if God aroused those who were His, would explain the course of events which had taken place during this darkness, and make it manifest that nothing happened without God, even although the Church might slumber; a summary which would, also, give warning of the judgment which will fall upon that which, in the world, is the result of this forsaking of God and of His light by the Church, or by those who profess to be the Church; in a word, upon that which is the result of this corruption of God’s -last manifestation of Himself to man-a result which will leave room for nothing but judgment-a judgment which will establish righteousness by divine power.

One understands that such a book as this would close up the revelations of God. Rationalism sees nothing in it but historical speculations-an opinion worthy of such a system. That there should be in it things hard to be understood is not to be wondered at.; it is only in proportion as the Church awakens, takes her place (in humbling herself,) and apprehends her true relationship to God, that she will be able also to acquire a Divine understanding of this rich treasury of all which enlightens her outward position, and to comprehend the way in which God resumes the government of the world to place it in the hands of the First-begotten, whom He brings into it.

Rationalism prefers man to God, or, at least, would rather listen to him, and that is in truth preferring him. This will be exclaimed against as calumny. I shall be glad of it, for at least it will show that conscience feels it is a horrible thing if true; and that a system which has this for its root and principle, condemns itself. Well then, I repeat it, it prefers man to God, and avows that it does so. The Bible is no longer the Word of God for the rationalist. Human reason pronounces upon it, upon its verity, upon its moral worth; but it is self-evident that this cannot be done with the Word of God. It is equally certain that the rationalist does thus judge the Bible, and chooses rather to rely on his own reason than to acknowledge Divine authority, be it in what book it may. One of the most recent expositors of this doctrine in France, says, " The Bible is no longer the Word of God, and I know not what detriment it will be to the cause of piety to exchange a written code for the living produce of apostolic individuality," that is to say, an inspired collection which has the authority of God, " a uniform impress of divinity," for that which gives man in his individuality, man as he is, godly perhaps, yet man; " authority for history; and, to speak plainly, a cabalistic ventriloquy, for the noble accents of the human voice." If this be not preferring the word of man to the Word of God, what is it? Inspiration, which makes man the mouth and the voice of God, is a cabalistic

ventriloquy!! This author would have the human voice: he thinks it a more noble voice. Poor rationalists! self-admirers, to whom the voice of God, too clearly heard, is a deathly alarm; an unknown sound, which too plainly tells them what they are! Yet hearken to it, ye wise men, who are tempted of Satan to search into good and evil by yourselves; hearken to it: you will find it a voice of grace which can restore you, if it convict you, and cover your moral nakedness with the perfection and the glory of the second Adam-of the Son of God.

One of the shapes which error has taken of late years, is to assert that rejecting the inspiration of the Bible and its authority over believers, allows the Holy Ghost to resume His right place. I fully allow that the Church has grievously forgotten the presence and authority of the Holy Ghost dwelling in her. But I cannot understand how rejecting the authority. of what He has already spoken, can enhance His authority. It appears to me to be rather opening the door to human pretensions and the devices of Satan. I have seen the latter effect produced by the same cause; and in the writings which advocate this system, we are already given over to the former. " Instead of the authority of the Word, we shall have the word of authority; instead of referring the poor proselyte to the articles of a code, to the ritual of a dogmatist [which I would no more do, than the author whom I quote], or to the pages of I know not what mysterious oracles; we will refer him to all the great prophets of all ages, to the living instruction of the Church, to the Word of God, personified in His servants, to the Spirit and to His manifestations, in a word, to the immediate contact of the heart with truth." How my heart would be in more immediate contact with truth, by listening to the voice of man, than by listening to " the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," is difficult to conceive. I accept "the manifestation of the Spirit," if by that is only meant the exercise of spiritual gifts for the edification of the Church, and the energy of the Spirit manifested in these gifts; but I warn the believer to be carefully on his guard against all false claims to these " manifestations." I have witnessed such, and could plainly see in them the presence and active energy of Satan. It is not every spirit which is the Spirit of God; and Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light. Such manifestations, when accompanied by the rejection of the Word and of its direct authority over the soul, proceed from the enemy of souls. This is the case with the Irvingites, and there have been others. It seems to me that the enemy is preparing some attempt of this kind, if the Lord hinder him not. The Church in general does not sufficiently own the Holy Ghost to have real strength against such pretensions. But it is not in giving up the Word which the Spirit has given us, that we shall find strength.

Observe, we are asked to give up that which we have now heard called " I know not what mysterious oracles," but which Stephen calls "the lively oracles," and Paul, " the oracles of God" (and remark, the lively oracles were the letter), and to give ourselves up to "all the great prophets of all ages," 1:e. to all the vagaries of the human mind, without God, perhaps under the influence of Satan, and that without remedy; for there is no Word of God, only the noble accents of the human voice, and a word of authority: that is to say, whether it be an individual, or a body, which assumes this authority, man, instead of God.

I recognize the existence of the evil which this system attacks. It is one of the commonest devices of the enemy, to attack an evil when it grows old and loses its power over the mind of man, in order to set up some other evil more in accordance with the state of men’s minds. Thus the Roman mythology was assailed by the scoffs of infidelity, as soon as it had been shaken by Christianity. Eclectic philosophy began also to display itself. Modern rationalism is doing the same

thing. It attacks that lifeless dogmatic theology which makes use of the name of God, to fetter-not man, but the Holy Ghost. But while doing this, instead of bringing us back to the authority of God, it sets up that of man; instead of restoring the liberty and the rights of the Spirit of God, it gives us up to the spirit of man, publishing its unbelief as to the Word, and undermining as far as it can, all that is certainly of God. This once taken away, and when (as they avow) there is no more authority, 1:e. authority of God, which alone secures true liberty to man; when there is no other authority than that of him who speaks, or of the Church who will then be free.

It is said that faith in the person of the Savior will remain; doubtless this is the center and the strength of Christianity: but I do not very well know what this faith would be, or in what Savior, if the Word of God were taken from us. The Holy Ghost is spoken of in this system:-I own most fully the way in which the precious Comforter sent down from Heaven has been grieved and forgotten; but, if the authority of the written Word be set aside, it is something vague and mystical, and nowise answering to what inspiration says of the Comforter. It is a kind of principle, which forms a community, and not the revealer of Christ, and the power of a Divine person in the Church. The Holy Ghost is the only source of strength, of power, and of understanding in the Church, and in the Christian. But if you separate the idea of the Holy Ghost from the inspiration, and the authority of the written Word, you give yourself up-either to the imaginations of the mind of man, or to an authority which is merely human; whatever may be its pretensions, or the ecclesiastical form it may put on. It is authority, and not truth. The Word of God is the authority of the Truth, and of Him who reveals it

There is an important point which I have not yet brought forward; and on which I would add a few words.-That is, authority of the Word, independently of the effect it produces on the heart. I may be led to recognize the authority of the Word of God, through the effect it has had upon me; but, evidently, it is not this effect which gives it its authority. If the Word produces this effect, it is because it possessed the authority, which I recognized before I yielded to it. I recognize it, because it exists. If Christ pronounced the Words of God, his words had authority, whatever might be the unbelief of his hearers; that is to say, they possessed intrinsic authority. Nor have they lost it, by /being written. The Lord speaks of "Writings" being the highest order of means of communication. If the Apostle has made the will of God known to us in "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," the revelations he received- his words have a divine authority over the conscience, even though they should be rejected by man. The authority of the Word does not depend upon its being received by him who hears. It is not he who is to judge it, except at his own peril. "The words which I speak, the same shall judge you in that day." This may indeed be called possessing authority, independently of him who would judge it.

We are not now discussing the authenticity of the Testimony, but its authority, allowing it to be authentic. Wherein lies this authority? Suppose two persons read a book of the Bible: the heart of one is touched and convinced of the divine authority of what he reads, the other remains in his unbelief. Does the authority of the Word depend on the faith of the one who believes, or is it the same for both; although unrecognized by him who believes not? It is evident that either he who believed was mistaken, or if not, that the authority of the book, although unrecognized by the unbeliever, is as great for him as for the one who bowed to it. The authority lies then in the Word itself, independently of the effect produced by it; or, of the opinion man forms of it. It possesses intrinsic authority. The judgment of the last day will prove it. " The words which I have spoken, the

same shall judge you in that day." It could not be otherwise with the Word of God; but it is important clearly to establish this principle. The Word of God can be of no profit, if it be not received; nevertheless it retains its full authority, because it is the Word of God. Unless the existence of any divine communication be denied, this principle cannot be questioned. He who denies all such communication is an unbeliever. So that the point is not to reason upon what the Church possesses in the Scriptures; but to convince an unbeliever. Moreover, this unbelief does not destroy the authority of the Word; for the rebellion of man cannot destroy the authority of God. The day of probation is granted to man: the day of judgment will make good the authority of God. The Word itself establishes this principle. "And, thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious" (Exodus 2:7): Compare 1 John 3:11-24.-" He that believes has the witness in himself." This is the inward power of the testimony: " He that believeth not God hath made him a liar:" here is the guilt of him who believes not. The authority then, of Testimony from God is independent of the judgment man may pronounce upon it. The testimony will itself judge man.

Other passages, founded upon this principle, apply it to the Scriptures as a body of writings; seeing that from a child " thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Timothy 3:15. Here the holy Scriptures exercise authority over man, from his childhood, as well as make the man of God perfect. It is not then the opinion of the man of God which determines the value of the Scriptures. He who knew their value as making the man of God perfect, recognized their, authority over him at a time when he was quite incapable of, judging at all on the subject. That is to say, they possessed full and absolute authority over him, independently of his power to receive them: an intrinsic and divine authority. The most advanced man of God is glad to receive them in this spirit, 1 Peter 2:1-2. The principle of authority is formally laid down by the Apostle in the same passage, " Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned-knowing of whom thou had learned them." The authority of Him from whom he had learned them, was the reason for continuing in them. The intrinsic authority, then, of the testimony of Scripture is clearly established. Authority independent of the reception of the testimony by the hearer. So entirely independent that the Word will judge him who is not obedient to it. This proves to us that God has endued it with moral evidence, powerful enough to bring him in guilty, who does not receive the testimony; thereby making God a liar. Nevertheless, it is only the grace of God which can overcome the moral resistance of man’s heart; unbelieving as it is by nature and by will, when God is in question, though full of credulity as to the things of man.

There is another point which I have only glanced at, and which I desire to put forward a little more plainly. Many circumstances testify that the narratives of the evangelists were not written merely by man, but by the Holy Ghost. John was one of the three apostles who were with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, close to the scene of His agony. He says not a word about it. Nothing can be more affecting and more solemn than the Savior’s agony; and most certainly John had not forgotten it, for he remembers many other circumstances which are not to be found in the other gospels; for instance, that those who came to take Jesus went backward and fell to the ground. John accompanied Jesus also to the cross, yet he says not a word of His having been forsaken of God, although he relates a multitude of other circumstances which prove that the Savior was as calm there as when he showed Him to us in the garden. A man who had written the history of the sufferings of the Savior, would not have failed to relate things so deeply interesting, and of which

he had himself been an eye-witness. Matthew also would have related the remarkable incident which occurred in the garden of Gethsemane, of which he was an eye-witness, namely, that they all fell to the ground; but he does not mention it, whilst he gives an account of the agony of Jesus and his prayer, although he was not one of the three who accompanied Him at that time.

Now, if you examine these gospels you will find, that this peculiarity-inexplicable as this would be if they were not inspired-becomes quite intelligible when we. recognize their inspiration. One and the same author wrote them all. The Holy Ghost, whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and to show them unto us, furnishes us in John with those circumstances of the history of Jesus which would bring out the glory of his person-His glory who offered Himself to God for us. In Matthew he gives us that which is needed to make known the suffering Messiah. The result is not only harmony between the parts of each gospel, but also between all the gospels; producing a perfect whole, exhibiting the design and the workmanship of one and the same author. This principle is applicable to the entire contents of the four, gospels. I have only called the reader's attention to the garden of Gethsemane and to the cross as striking instances. One who is well versed in the gospels, and who has spiritual discernment, would know by the manner in which the subject is presented, in which gospel it is to be found. Compare the connection between the end of Matthew 21:1-46 and the parable in the beginning of 22: also the way in which the corresponding parable in Luke 14:16 is introduced, with that of the husbandmen in Luke 20:1-47, and you will perceive that the substance, the form, and the diversities of these parables are in perfect harmony with the design of each gospel. In Matthew, the rejection of Christ in connection with the relation of the Messiah to the Jews; in Luke, the moral order of the events, the acts and ways of the God of grace, founded on the broader, more moral and less official basis of the character of the Son of Man. The same thing may be observed in comparing Matthew 24:1-51 and Luke 22:1-71

There is another testimony to the truth of inspiration, the peculiar character of which deserves the reader's attention. It applies especially to the Old Testament; but it brings out very clearly the difference between the inspiration of the Old, and that of the New. It is that the prophets did not understand their own prophecies, but studied them as we might do. We read in 1 Peter 1:11 -" Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister," etc. They searched into that which the Holy Ghost had spoken through themselves. Their inspiration was so absolute, and so independent of the workings of their own minds, that they sought the meaning of what they uttered, as one of us might do. This is not precisely the character of the inspiration of the New Testament; but it is not, therefore, the less real. It is declared in the succeeding words-" reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven." The Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven leads into all truth, and thus inspiration acts in the understanding and by the understanding; but it is not the less inspiration. On the contrary, the apostle Paul preferred the inspiration which acts by the understanding, to that which is, apparently, more independent of the man. 1 Corinthians 14:14-19 -" If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth; but my understanding is unfruitful." Daniel 12:8 gives us an example of that which Peter describes" And I heard, but understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of those things? And He said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." The reader will remember that the passage I have quoted, is the one to which the Lord Himself

referred the disciples, in order that they might understand it. Now if the prophet did not understand the revelation he gave; if the prophets searched into their own prophecies to understand them, it is most evident that those prophecies were given through direct and positive inspiration. I desire to add a thought which tends to confirm the truth I seek to maintain, and which applies to the whole of the Bible. Our attention is called to the fact that the Bible is not one book, but a collection of writings by different authors. It is precisely on this fact I ground my argument, adding to it that they were written at periods very remote from each other. In spite of this great diversity of times and of authors, there is a perfect unity of design and of doctrine: a unity, the separate parts of which are so linked with each other, and so entirely adapted to each other, that the whole work is evidently that of one and the same Spirit, one and the same mind; with one purpose, carried on from the beginning to the end, whatever might be the date of each separate book. And this, not at all by means of mere uniformity of idea, for the Promises are quite distinct from the Law; and the Gospel of Grace is distinct from them both; nevertheless, its parts are so correlative, and form so harmonious a whole, that with the least attention, one cannot fail to perceive that it is the production of ONE MIND. Now there is but One who lived through all the ages during which the various books of the Bible were written, and that One is the HOLY GHOST.

Look at Genesis. You will find doctrines, promises, types which are in perfect harmony with that which is more fully developed in the New Testament events, which in this book are narratives, related with the greatest simplicity; yet in such a manner as to give the most perfect picture of things which should happen in after, ages. Feelings natural to piety (speaking historically) are so related as to possess a meaning, which when we have the key to it, throws light upon the most precious doe, trines of the New Testament, and the most remarkable events of prophecy. Look at Exodus; and you will find the same thing. Everything is made according to the pattern Moses saw in the Mount, and furnishes us with the clearest exposition we possess of the ways of God in Christ. At the same time the Law is given. A Law which is not imitated in the Gospel, which does not contain a copy of it, nor any human order. Nevertheless the Law is linked with the Gospel in a manner which makes it impossible to separate them, and which gives to the authority of this revelation, a divine and absolute character. Were it not so, Christ would have died to suffer the consequences of a partly human thing; for He bore the curse of the Law. Observe this carefully, the curse of the Law, revealed to man; and of which He had said, that not one jot or tittle should pass away, till all were fulfilled. And moreover, it was not when reasoning with the Jews, upon their own ground, that He said this; but when teaching His disciples, according to His own perfect wisdom, and solemnly setting before them the principles of His kingdom. Take Leviticus; the details of its sacrifices furnish a light, which throws upon the work of Christ, rays so bright that nothing could replace them; supplying a key to all the workings of the human heart, and an answer to all its need, such as it is found even among the heathen. These details prefigure every aspect of the work of Christ, as doctrinally unfolded in the New Testament, whether by Himself or His apostles. For the inspired writer, they were Jewish ordinances. Take Numbers, the history of the journey of God’s people through the Wilderness. "These things," says the apostle, "happened to them for examples [types] and they are written for us, upon whom the ends of the world are come; "Who was it that wrote them for us? Certainly not Moses; although he was the human instrument. It was He who knoweth the end from the beginning, and who orders all things according to His good pleasure.

All the circumstances of Christian life are found treasured up in these oracles in so complete a manner, that the apostle could say, " They are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the New Testament is equally far from merely repeating the substance of the Old, or from making void its authority. It brings in an altogether new light, which-while setting aside a multitude of things, as fulfilled-throws a light upon the contents of the Old Testament, which alone gives it its true bearing. All this applies to the moral, and to the ceremonial Law; to the history of the Patriarchs; to the royalties of David and of Solomon; to the sentiments expressed in the Psalms, as well as to other subjects. Is it not ONE MIND which has done all this? Was it the mind of Moses or of Paul? Assuredly not. Observe also, that all this refers to Christ, and to all the various glories of Christ; glories which God alone knew, so as to reveal them beforehand; and to give, in the history and ordinances of His people, and even in that which is related. of the world, precisely that which would serve for the development of all that was to be manifested in His Son Jesus. Accordingly, what says Peter? (Acts 2:1-47) " Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David; that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day; therefore being a prophet, and seeing this before, he spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

I will not go through all the books of the Bible, to give proofs of this unity of design, which is manifested in a work wrought by such various instruments, and at periods so remote from each other. A unity realized in the accomplishment of a work which precludes all idea of its having been intended by the persons who executed it. I only use this thought in confirmation of the doctrine I maintain; but to one who has any knowledge of the Word of God, it is an incontestable proof.

I will add but one word. In judging of Inspiration by the precision of the account, a mistake is committed as to what should be sought for. The Holy Ghost does not aim at that accuracy which would be needful to prove the truthfulness of man. The Holy Ghost has always a moral or spiritual object; the revelation of some eternal principle of truth and grace. Every circumstance which has no bearing upon His object is omitted. He pays no attention to accuracy in that respect. But the moral accuracy is all the greater on this account; and the picture presented to the conscience much more complete. The introduction of something needful to human accuracy, would spoil the perfection of the whole, as God’s testimony. God does not seek to amuse the mind of man by stories to no purpose, but to instruct his heart by truth. This might sometimes make it rather difficult to balance the whole, as a mere narrative; but there are two ways of explaining the cause of a difficulty-the ignorance of him who feels the difficulty, or the impossibility of the thing which has perplexed him. And man willingly attributes to the latter cause, that which proceeds from the former. He who understands the design of the Holy Ghost in what He says, seizes the perfection of the Word, where the mind of man is perplexed by a thousand obstacles.

Vol 03 - Psa_32:8-9

Psalms 32:8-9

I win instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

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