

PRESENT TESTIMONY VOLUME 12, 1861

by G.V. Wigram

A collection of articles and writings by G.V. Wigram from Present Testimony Volume 12, 1861, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

71 Chapters

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1 Chronicles 21

It is most lovely to see the way in which David takes refuge in God at the very time His hand was upon him in chastening. He had been away from Him for months, whilst the numbering was going on. But God loved His child, and cannot suffer him to be so at a distance. So, He must make him feel his sin. And now David finds that he has to do with God. How the thought of God, and of our personal dealing with Him, throws light on all our ways! For alone with Him must the state of our souls be settled. But never is God more precious to His people, than when Himself their refuge against the sin which He must bring to their remembrance, and visit.

1 John

The Epistle of John has a peculiar character. It is eternal life manifested in Jesus, and imparted to us. The life which was with the Father, and which is in the Son. It is in this life that believers enjoy the communion of the Father; that they are in relationship with the Father by the Spirit of adoption, and that they have fellowship with the Father and the Son. God's own 'character is that which tests it; because it proceeds from Himself.

1 John 1

The first chapter establishes these two latter points: namely, communion with the Father and the Son, and that this communion must be according to the essential character of God. The name of Father is that which gives character to the second chapter. Afterward, it is that which God is, which tests the reality of the imparted life.

The Epistles of Paul, although speaking of this life, are, in general, occupied with setting before Christians the truth respecting the means of standing in the presence of God, justified and accepted. The Epistle of John, that is to say, his, first, shows us the life that comes from God by Jesus Christ.

Now, this life is so precious, manifested as it is in the person of Jesus, that the epistle now before us has, in this respect, a quite peculiar charm. When I turn, too, my eyes to Jesus, when I contemplate all His obedience, His purity, His grace, His tenderness, His patience, His devotedness, His holiness, His love, His entire freedom from all self-seeking, I can say, That is my life.

This is immeasurable grace. It may be, that it is obscured in me;- but it is none the less true, that that is my life, Oh, how do I enjoy it thus seen! How I bless God for it! What rest to the soul! What pure joy to the heart! At the same time, Jesus Himself is the object of my affections; and all my affections are formed on that holy object.

But we must turn to our epistle. There were many pretensions to new light, to clearer views. It was said that Christianity was very good as an elementary thing; but that it was grown old, and that there was a new light which went far beyond that twilight truth.

The person of our Lord, the true manifestation of the divine life, itself dissipated all those proud pretensions, those exhalations of the human mind under the influence of the enemy, which did but obscure the truth, and lead the mind of man back into the darkness whence they themselves proceeded.

That which was from the beginning (of Christianity), that which they had heard, had seen with their own eyes, had contemplated, had touched with their own hands, of the Word of Life,-that was it which the apostles declared. For the life itself had been manifested. That Life which was with the Father, had been manifested to the disciples. Could there be anything more perfect, more excellent, any development more admirable in the eyes of God, than Christ Himself, than that Life which was with the Father, manifested in all its perfection in the person of the Son? As soon as the person of the Son is the object of our faith, we feel that perfection must have been at the beginning.

The person, then, of the Son, the eternal life manifested in the flesh, is our subject in this epistle.

Grace is, consequently, to be remarked here in. that which regards life; while Paul presents it in connection with justification. The law promised life, upon obedience -but life came, in the person of

Jesus; in all its own divine perfection, in its human manifestations. Oh, how precious is the truth that this Life, such as it was with the Father, such as it was in Jesus, is given to us. In what relationships it sets us, by the power of the Holy Ghost, with the Father and with the Son Himself. And this is what the Spirit here first sets before us. And observe how it is all grace here. Further on, indeed, he tests all pretensions to the possession of fellowship with God, by displaying God's own character: a character from which He can never deviate. But, before entering on this, He presents the Savior Himself, and communion with the Father and the Son by this means, without question and without modification. This is our position and our eternal joy.

The apostle had seen that Life, had touched it with his own hands; and he wrote to others, proclaiming this, in order that they also should have communion with him in the knowledge of that Life which had been thus manifested. Now that Life was the Son, it could not be known without knowing the Son, i.e., that which He was, entering into His thoughts, His feelings; otherwise, He is not really known. It was thus they had communion with Him with the Son. Precious fact! To enter into the thoughts (all the thoughts), and into the feelings, of the Son of God come down in grace; to do this in fellowship with Him, that is to say, not only knowing them, but sharing these thoughts and feelings with Him. In effect, it is the Life.

But we cannot have the Son without having the Father. He who had seen Him had seen the Father; and, consequently, he who had communion with the Son had communion with the Father; for their thoughts and feelings were all one. He is in the Father, and the Father in Him. We have fellowship, therefore, with the Father. And this is true, also, when we look at it in another aspect. We know that the Father has entire delight in the Son. Now He has given us, by revealing the Son, to take our delight in Him also, feeble as we are. And I know, that when I am delighting in Jesus, I have the same feelings, the same thoughts, as the Father Himself. In that the Father delights, and cannot but delight, in Him in whom I now delight, I have communion with the Father. All this flows, whether in the one or the other point of view, from the person of the Son. Herein our joy is full. What can we have more than the Father and the Son? What more perfect happiness than community of thoughts, and communion, with the Father and the Son; deriving all our joy from themselves.

This is our Christian position here below, in time, through the knowledge of the Son of God; as the apostle says, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

But He who was the Life, which came from the Father, has brought us the knowledge of God. The apostle had heard from His lips that which God was. Knowledge of priceless value; but which searches the heart. And this also the apostle, on the Lord's part, announces to believers. This, then, is the message which they had heard from Him, namely, that God is Light, and in Him is no darkness. With regard to Christ, He spoke that which He knew, and bore testimony to that which He had seen. No one had been in heaven, save He who came down from thence. No one had seen God. The Son of Man, who is in the bosom of the Father, had declared Him. No one had seen the Father, save He who was of God; He had seen the Father. Thus He could, of His own and perfect knowledge, reveal Him. Now, God was Light, perfect purity, which Makes manifest at the same time all that is pure, and all that is not so. To have communion with Light, one must oneself be light, be of its nature. It can only be linked with that which is of itself. If there is anything else that mingles with it, Light is no longer Light. It is absolute in its nature, so as to exclude all that

is not itself.

Therefore, if we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practice truth: our life is a perpetual lie.

But, if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we (believers) have communion with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. These are the great principles, the great features of Christian position. We are in the presence of God without a veil it is a real thing, a matter of life and of walk. It is not the same thing as walking according to the light; but it is in the light. That is to say, that this walk is before the eyes of God, enlightened by the full revelation of what He is. It is not that there is no sin in us; but, walking in, the light, the will and the conscience being in the light as God is in it; everything is judged that does not answer to it. We live and walk morally in the sense that God is present. We walk thus in the light. The moral rule of will is God Himself; God known. The thoughts that sway, the heart come from Himself, and are formed upon the revelation of Himself. The apostle puts these things always in an abstract way; thus, he says, "He cannot sin, because he is born of God;" and that maintains the normal rule of this Life; it is its nature; it is the truth, inasmuch as the man is born of God. We cannot have any other measure of it: any other would be false. It does not follow, alas! that we are always consistent; but we are inconsistent if we are not in this state; we are not walking according to the nature that we possess; we are out of our true condition according to that nature.

Moreover, walking in the light as God is in the light, believers have communion with each other. The world is selfish. The flesh, the passions, seek their own gratification; but if I walk in the light, self has no place there. I can enjoy the light, and all I see in it, with another, and there is no jealousy. If another possess a carnal thing, I am deprived of it. In the light, we have fellow possession of that which. He gives us, and we enjoy it 'the more by sharing it together. This is a touch-stone to all that is of the flesh. As much as any one is in the light, so much will he have fellow-enjoyment with another who is in it. The apostle, as we have said, states this in an abstract and absolute way. This is the truest way to know the thing itself. The rest is only a question of realization.

In the third place, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

To walk in the light as God is in it, to have fellowship with one another, to be cleansed from all sin by the blood; these are the three parts of Christian position. We feel the need there is of the last; for-while walking in the light as God is in the light, with (blessed be God!) a perfect revelation to us of Himself, with a nature that knows Him, that is capable of seeing Him spiritually, as the eye is made to appreciate light (for we participate in the divine nature),-we cannot say that we have no sin. The Light itself would contradict us. But we can say that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us perfectly from it. Through the Spirit, we enjoy the Light together; it is the common joy of our hearts before God, and well-pleasing to Him; a testimony to our common participation in the divine nature, which is Love also. And our conscience is no hindrance; because we know the value of the blood. We have no conscience of sin; but we have the conscience of its being cleansed by the blood. But the same Light which shows us this, prevents our saying (if we are in it) that we have no sin in us. We should deceive ourselves, if we said so; and the truth would not be in us: for if the truth were in us, if that revelation of the divine nature, which is Light, were in us, the sin that is in us would be judged by the Light itself. If it be not judged, this Light - the truth which speaks of

things as they are - is not in us.

If, on the other hand, we have even committed sin, and all, being judged according to the light, is confessed (so that the will no longer takes part in it, the pride of that will being broken down), He is faithful and just to forgive us, and to cleanse us from all iniquity. If we say that we have not sinned (as a general truth), it shows not only that the, truth is not in us, but we make God a liar; His Word is not in us, for He says that all have sinned. There are the three things: we lie - the truth is not in us - we make God a liar. It is this fellowship with God in the light, which, in practical daily Christian life, inseparably connects forgiveness and the present sense of faith and purity of heart.

Thus, we see the Christian position, ver. 7. And the things which, in three different ways, are opposed to the truth, to communion with God in life.

The apostle wrote that which relates to the communion with the Father and the Son, in order that their joy might be full.

1 John 2

That which he wrote according to the revelation of the nature of God, which he had received from Him who was the life from Heaven, was in order that they should not sin. But to say this, is to suppose that they might sin. Not that it is necessary they should do so; for the presence of sin in the flesh by no means obliges us to walk after the flesh. But if it should take place, there is provision made by grace, in order that grace may act, and that we may be neither condemned, nor brought again under the law.

We have an Advocate with the Father: One who carries on our cause for us on high. Now, this is not in order to obtain righteousness, nor again to wash our sins away. All that has been done. Divine righteousness has placed us in the light, even as God Himself is in the light. But communion is interrupted, if even levity of thought finds place in our heart; for it is of the flesh, and the flesh has no communion with God. When communion is interrupted, when we have sinned (not when we have repented for it is His intercession that leads us to repentance), Christ intercedes for us. Righteousness is always present - our righteousness - "Jesus Christ the Righteous." Therefore, neither the righteousness, nor the value of the propitiation for sin, being changed, grace acts, one may say, acts necessarily, in virtue of that righteousness, and of that Blood which is before God; acts, on the intercession of Christ, who never forgets us, in order to bring us back to communion by means of repentance. Thus, while yet on earth, before Peter had committed the sin, He prayed for him; at the given moment, He looks on him, and Peter repents, and weeps bitterly for his offense. Afterward, the Lord does all that is necessary to make Peter judge the root itself of the sin; but all is grace.

It is the same in our case. Divine righteousness abides - the immutable foundation of our relationships with God, established on the blood of Christ. When communion, which exists only in the Light, is interrupted, the intercession of Christ -available by virtue of His blood -for propitiation for the sin has also been made, restores the soul that it may continue to enjoy communion with God according to the Light, into which righteousness has introduced it. This propitiation is made for the whole world, not for Jews only, nor to the exclusion of any one at all; but for the whole world, God, in His moral nature, having been fully glorified by the death of Christ.

These three capital points - or, if you will two capital points, and the third, namely, Intercession, which is supplementary - form the introduction, the doctrine of the epistle. All the rest is an experimental application of that which this part contains: namely, first (Life being given), communion with the Father and the Son. Second, The nature of God; Light, which manifests the falsehood of all pretension to communion with the Light, if the walk be in darkness. And third, seeing that sin is in us -although we are cleansed before God so as to enjoy the Light- the Intercession which Jesus Christ the Righteous can always exercise before God, on the ground of the righteousness which is even in His presence, in order to restore our communion, when we have lost it by our guilty negligence.

The Spirit now proceeds to develop the characteristics of this divine Life.

Now, we are sanctified unto the obedience of Jesus Christ: that is to say, to obey on the same principles as those on which He obeyed. It is the obedience of a Life to which it was meat and drink to do the will of God: not, as under the law, in order to obtain life. The life of Jesus Christ was a life of obedience, in which He enjoyed the love of His Father perfectly. His words, His commandments, were the expression of that life; they direct that life in us, and ought to exercise all the authority over us of Him who pronounced them.

The law promised life to those who obeyed it. Christ is the Life. This life has been imparted to us - to believers. Therefore, the words which were the expression of that life, in its perfection, in Jesus, direct and guide it in us, according to that perfection. Besides this, it has authority over us. His commandments are its expression. We have, therefore, to obey, and to walk as he walked - the two forms of practical life. It is not enough to walk well; we must obey, for there is authority. This is the essential principle of a right walk. On the other hand, the obedience of the Christian -as is evident by that of Christ Himself-is not that which we often think. We call a child obedient, who, having a will of his own, submits himself at once when the authority of the parent intervenes to prevent his accomplishing it. But Christ never obeyed in this way. He came to do the will of God. Obedience was His mode of being. His Father's will was the motive, and, with the love that was now separate from it, the only motive, of His every act and every impulse. This is obedience properly called Christian. It is a new life which delights in doing the will of Christ, acknowledging His entire authority over it. We reckon ourselves to be dead to everything else; we are alive unto God, we are not our own. We only know Christ inasmuch as we are living of His life; for the flesh does not know Him, and cannot understand His life.

Now, that life is obedience: therefore, he who says, "I know Him," and does not observe His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. It does not say here, "he deceives himself," for it is very possible that he is not self-deceived, as in the other case of fancied communion; for here the will is in action; and a man knows it, if he will confess it. But the reality is not there; he is a liar, and the truth in the knowledge of Jesus, which he professes, is not in him.

There are two remarks to be made here. First, that the apostle takes things always as they are in themselves in an abstract way, without the modifications that are occasioned by other things, in the midst of which, or in relation with which, the former are found. Second, that the chain of consequences which the apostle deduces is not that of outward reasoning, the force of which is, consequently, on the surface of the argument itself. He reasons from a great inward principle, so that one does not see the force of the argument unless one knows the fact, and even the scope, of that principle: and, in particular, that which the life of God is in its nature, in its character, and in its action. But, without possessing it, we do not and cannot understand anything about it. There is, indeed, the authority of the apostle and of the Word, to tell us that the thing is so, and that is sufficient. But the links of his discourse will not be understood without the possession of the Life which interprets what he says, and which is itself interpreted by that which he says.

I return to the text. Whoso observeth His word, in him the love of God is perfect. It is in this way that we are conscious that we know Him. His "word" has rather a wider sense than His "commandments." That is to say, while it equally implies obedience, the word is less outward. "Commandments" are here details of the divine life. His "word" contains its whole expression-the spirit of that life. It is universal and absolute. Now, this life is the divine life manifested in Jesus,

and which is imparted to us. Have we seen it in Christ? Do we doubt that this life is love? that the love of God has been manifested in it? If, then, I keep His word; if the scope and meaning of the Life which that word expresses, is thus understood and realized, the love of God is perfect in me. The apostle, as we have seen, always speaks abstractedly. If, in fact, at any given moment, I do not observe His word, in that point I do not realize His love; happy intercourse with God is interrupted. But, so far as I am moved and governed absolutely by His word, His love is completely realized in me; for His word expresses what He is, and I am keeping it. This is intelligent communion with His nature in its fullness, a nature in which I participate; so that I know that He is perfect love, I am filled with it, and this shows itself in my ways: for that word is the perfect expression of Himself.

Consequently, we know thus that we are in Him, for we realize that which he is, in the communion of His nature. Now, if we say that we abide in Him, it is evident, from what we have now seen in the instruction the apostle gives us, that we ought to walk as He walked. Our walk is the practical expression of our life: and this life is Christ, known in His word. And since it is by His word, we, who possess this life, are under an intelligent responsibility to follow it; that is to say, to walk as He walked. For that word is the expression of His life.

Obedience, then-as obedience,-on the one hand; and on the other, a walk like His; these are the two moral characteristics of the life of Christ in us.

In verses 7 and 8, the two forms of the rule of this Life are presented-forms which, moreover, answer to the two principles we have just announced. It is not a new commandment which the apostle writes unto them, but an old one. It is the word of Christ from the beginning. Were it not so, were it in this sense new, so much the worse for him who set it forth; for it would no longer be the expression of the perfect life of Christ Himself; but some other thing, or a falsification of that which Christ had set forth. This corresponds with the first principle, i.e., obedience to commandments, to the commandments of Christ.

In another sense, it was a new commandment, for (by the power of the Spirit of Christ, being united to Him, and drawing our life from Him), the Spirit of God manifested the effect of this life by revealing a glorified Christ in a new way. And now it was not only, a commandment; but the thing itself was true in Christ and in His own as partakers of His nature and united to Him.

By this revelation, and by the presence of the Holy Ghost, the darkness disappeared, passed away, and, in fact, the true Light shone. There will be no other Light in Heaven; only that it will be publicly displayed in glory without a cloud.

Ver. 9. The Spirit of God now applies in detail the qualities of this life, as a proof of its existence to seducers who sought to terrify them by new notions, as though Christians were not really in possession of life, and, with life, the Father and the Son. The true Light now shines. And this Light is God; it is the divine nature. It was Christ in the world. It is ourselves, in that we are born of God. And one who has this nature, loves his brother; for is not God love? Has not Christ loved us, not being ashamed to call us brethren? Can I have His life and His nature, if I do not love the brethren? No. I am then walking in darkness; I have no light on my path. He who loves His brother, dwells in the light; the nature of God acts in Him, and he dwells in the bright spiritual intelligence of that life, in the presence and in the communion of God. If any one hates, it is evident that he has

not divine light. With feelings according to a nature opposed to God, how can it be pretended that he has light?

Moreover, there is no occasion of stumbling in one who loves, for he walks according to divine light. There is nothing in him which causes another to stumble, for the revelation of the nature of God in grace will assuredly not do so; and it is this which is manifested in him who loves his brother.

Having established these two great principles -obedience and love with reference to the possession of the divine nature, of Christ known as Life, and to our abiding in Him; the apostle goes on to show us the position of Christians on the ground of grace, in three different degrees of ripeness.

He begins by calling all the Christians to whom he was writing, "Children." A term of affection in the loving and aged apostle. And as he writes to them (2:1) in order that they should not sin, so he writes also because all their sins were forgiven for Jesus' name's sake. This was the assured condition of all Christians: that which God had granted them in giving them faith, that they might glorify Him. He allows no doubt as to the fact of their being pardoned. He writes to them because they are so.

We next find three classes of Christians: Fathers, young men, and babes. He addresses them each twice. Fathers, young men, babes, ver. 13. Fathers, in the first half of ver. 14"; young men, from the second half to the end of ver. 17; and babes, from ver. 18 to the end of ver. 27. In ver. 28, he returns to all Christians under the name of "Children."

That which characterizes fathers in Christ, is that they have known Him who is from the beginning, i.e., Christ. This is all that he has to say about them. All had resulted in that. He only repeats the same thing again, when, changing his form of expression, he begins anew with these three classes. The fathers have known Christ. This is the result of all Christian experience. The flesh is judged, discerned, wherever it has mixed itself with Christ in our feelings; it is recognized, experimentally, as having no value; and, as the result of experience, Christ stands alone, free from all alloy. They have learned to distinguish that which has only the appearance of good. They are not occupied with experience that would be being occupied with self, with one's own heart. All that has passed away; and Christ alone remains as our portion, unmingled with aught beside, even as He gave Himself to us. Moreover, He is much better. known; they have experienced what He is, in so many details, whether of joy in communion with him, or, in the consciousness of weakness, or in the realization of His faithfulness, of the riches of His grace, of His adaptation to our need, of His love; so that they are able now to say, "I know whom I have believed." Such is the character of "fathers" in Christ.

"Young men" are the second class. They are distinguished by spiritual strength in conflict: the energy of faith. They have overcome the wicked one.

The third class is "babes." These know the Father. We see here that the Spirit of adoption and of liberty characterizes the youngest children in the faith of Christ, that it is not the result of progress. It is the commencement. We possess it because we are Christians; and it is ever the distinguishing mark of beginners. The others do not lose it, but other things distinguish them.

In again addressing these three classes of Christians, the apostle, as we have seen, has only to repeat that which he at first said with regard to the fathers.

In the case of the young men, he develops his 'idea, and adds some exhortations. "Ye are strong," he says, "and the word of God abideth in you." An important characteristic. This word is the revelation of God, and the application of Christ to the heart, so that we have thus the motives which form and govern it, and a testimony founded on the state of the heart, and on convictions which have a divine power in us. It is the sword of the Spirit, in our relations with the world. We have been ourselves formed by those things to which we bear testimony in our conflict with the world, and those things are in us according to the power of the word of God. The wicked one is thus overcome; for he has only the world to present to our lusts; and the Word abiding in us, keeps us in an altogether different sphere of thought in which a different nature is enlightened and strengthened by divine communications. The tendency of the young man is toward the world: the ardor of his nature, and the vigor of his age, tend to draw him away on that side. He has to guard against this by separating himself entirely from the world and the things that are in it; because, if any one love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him, for those things do not come from the Father. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, these are the things that are in the world and that characterize it. There are really no other motives besides these in the world. Now, these things are not of the Father.

The Father is the source of all that is according to His own heart. Every grace, every spiritual gift, the glory, the heavenly holiness of all that was manifested in Christ Jesus. And all this had only the Cross for its portion here below. But the apostle is speaking here of the source; and assuredly the Father is not the source of those other things.

Now, the world passes away; but he who does the will of God, he who, in going through this world, takes for his guide, not the desires of nature, but the will of God -a will which is according to His nature, and which expresses it,-such a one shall abide forever; according to the nature and the will that he has followed after.

We shall find that the world, and the Father, with all that is of Him; the flesh, and the Spirit; the Son, and the devil; are put respectively in opposition. Things are spoken of in their source and moral nature, the principles that act in us and that characterize our existence and our position, and the two agents in good and evil that are opposed to each other, without (thanks be to God!) any uncertainty as to the issue of the conflict; for the weakness of Christ, in death, is stronger than the strength of Satan. He has no power against that which is perfect: Christ came that He might destroy the works of Satan.

To the babes, the apostle speaks principally of the dangers to which they were exposed from seducers. He warns them with tender affection, reminding them, at the same time, that all the sources of intelligence and strength were open to them and belonged to them. ".It is the last time;" not exactly the last days, but the season which had the final character that belonged to the dealings, of God with this world. The Antichrist was to come, and already there were many antichrists: by this it might be known that it was the last time. It was not merely sin, nor the transgression of the law; but, Christ having already been manifested, and being now absent and hidden from the world, there was a formal opposition to the especial revelation that had been made. It was not a vague and ignorant unbelief; it took 'a definite shape as having a will directed

against Jesus. They might, for instance, believe all that a Jew believed, as it was revealed in the Word; but, as to the testimony of God by Jesus Christ- they opposed it. They would not own Him to be the Christ; they denied the Father and the Son. This, as to religious profession, is the true character of the Antichrist. He may, indeed, believe, or pretend to believe, that there shall be a Christ; but the two aspects of Christianity, that which on the one hand regards the accomplishment, in the person of Jesus, of the promises made to the Jew; and, on the other hand, the heavenly and eternal blessings presented in the revelation of the Father by the Son; this the antichrist does not accept. That which characterizes him as Antichrist, is that he denies the Father and the Son. To deny that Jesus is the Christ, is indeed the Jewish disbelief that forms part of his character. That which gives him the character of Antichrist is that he denies the foundation of Christianity. He is a liar, in that he denies Jesus to be the Christ; consequently, it is the work of the father of lies. But all the unbelieving Jews had done as much without being antichrist. To deny the Father and the Son characterizes him.

But there is something more. These antichrists came out from among the Christians. There was apostasy. Not that they were really Christians, but they had been among the Christians, and had come out from them. (How instructive for our days also is this Epistle!) It was thus made manifest that they were not truly of the flock of Christ. All this had a tendency to shake the faith of babes in Christ. The apostle endeavors to strengthen them. There were two means of confirming their faith, which also inspired the apostle with confidence. First, they had the unction of the Holy One; secondly, that which was from the beginning was the touchstone for all new doctrine, and they already possessed that which was from the beginning.

The indwelling of the Holy Ghost as an unction and spiritual intelligence in them, and the truth which they had received at the beginning, the perfect revelation of Christ,-these were the safeguards against seducers and seductions. All heresy and all error and corruption will be found to strike at the first and divine revelation of the truth, if the unction of the Holy One is in us to judge them. Now, this unction is the portion of even the youngest babes in Christ, and they ought to be encouraged to realize it, however tenderly they may be cared for, as they were here by the apostle.

What important truths we discover here for ourselves! The last time already manifested, so that we have to be on our guard against seducers; persons, moreover, issuing from the bosom of Christianity.

The character of this antichrist is, that he denies the Father and the Son. Unbelief in its Jewish form is also again manifested-owning that there is a Christ, but denying that Jesus is He. Our security against these seductions, is the unction from the Holy One-the Holy Ghost; but in especial connection with the holiness of God,-which enables us to see clearly into the truth (another characteristic of the Spirit); and, secondly, that that abide in us which we have heard from the beginning. It is this, evidently, which we have in the written word. "Development," note it well, is not that which we have had from the beginning. By its very name, it sins radically against the safeguard pointed out by the apostle. That which the Church has taught, as development of the truth, whensoever she may have received it, is not that which has been heard from the beginning.

There is another point indicated here by the apostle that ought to be noticed. People might pretend, by giving God in a vague way the name of Father, that they possessed Him, without the

true possession of the Son, Jesus Christ. This cannot be. He who has not the Son, has not the Father. It is by Him that the Father is revealed.; in Him that the Father is known.

If the truth that we have received from the beginning abide in us, we abide in the Son and in the Father; for this truth is the revelation of the Son, and is revealed by the Son, who is the truth. It is living truth, if it abides in us; thus, by possessing it, we possess the Father also. We abide in it, and thereby we have eternal life (compare John 17:3).

Now, the apostle had happy confidence that the unction which they had received of Him abode in them, so that they needed not to be taught of others, for this same unction taught them with respect to all things. It was the truth-for it was the Holy Ghost Himself; acting in the Word, which was the revelation of the truth of Jesus Himself,-and there was no lie in it. Thus should they abide in Him, according to that which it had taught them.

Observe also here, that the effect of this teaching by the unction from on high, is two-fold with regard to the discernment of the truth. They knew that no lie was of the truth. Possessing this truth from God, that which was not it, was a lie. They knew that this unction which taught them of all things, was the truth, and that there was no lie in it. The unction taught them all things, that is to say, all the truth, as truth of God. Therefore, that which was not it, was a lie, and there was no lie in the unction. Thus, the sheep hear the voice of the good Shepherd; if another calls them, it is not His voice, and that is enough. They fear it, and fly from it, because they do not know it.

With ver. 27 ends the second series of exhortations to the three classes. The apostle begins again with the whole body of Christians, ver. 28. This verse appears to me to correspond with ver. 8 of the second Epistle, and with chap. 3 of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians.

The apostle, having ended his address to those who were all in the communion of the Father, applies the essential principles of the divine life, of the divine nature, as manifested in Christ, to test those who claimed participation in it; not in order to make the believer doubt, but for the rejection of that which was false. I say, "not to make the believer doubt;" for the apostle speaks of his position, and of the position of those to whom he was writing, with the most perfect assurance (3:1 and 2). He had spoken, in re-commencing at ver. 28, of the appearing of Jesus. This introduces the Lord in the full revelation of His character, and gives rise to this scrutiny of the pretensions of those who called themselves by His name. There are two proofs which belong essentially to the divine life, and a third, which is accessory, as privilege: righteousness, and love, and the presence of the Holy Ghost.

Righteousness is not in the flesh. If, therefore, it is really found in any one, he is born of Him, he derives his nature from God in Christ. We may remark, that it is righteousness as it was manifested in Jesus; for it is because we know that He is righteous, that we know that he who doeth righteousness is born of Him. It is the same nature demonstrated by the same fruits.

1 John 3

Now, to say that we are born of Him, is to say that we are children of God. What a love is that which the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children! Therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not. The apostle returns here to His appearing, and its effect on us. We are children of God: this is our present sure position; we are born of God. That which we shall be, is not yet manifested; but we know that-associated with Jesus, in the same relationship with the Father, Himself being our life- we shall be like Him when He appears. For it is to this we are predestined, to see Him as He now is with the Father, from whom the Life came, which was manifested in Him and imparted to us.

Having, then, the hope of seeing Him as He is, I seek to be as like Him now as possible, since I already possess this life-He being in me, my life.

This is the measure of our practical purification. We take Christ, as He is in heaven, for its pattern; we purify ourselves according to His purity, knowing that we shall be perfectly like Him when He is manifested. Before marking the contrast between the principles of the divine life and of the enemy, he sets before us the true measure of purity (he will give that of love, in a moment), for the children, inasmuch as they are partakers of His nature, and have the same relationship with God.

There are two remarks to be made here. First, the "hope in Him" is not in the believer; but a hope that has Christ for its object. Second, it is striking to see the way in which the apostle appears to confound God and Christ together in this epistle; and uses the word "Him" to signify Christ, when he has just been speaking of God; and vice versa. We may see the principle of this at the end of chap. 5, "We are in Him that is true, that is to say, in His Son Jesus Christ, who is the true God, and the eternal life." In these few words, we have the key to the epistle: Christ is the Life. It is evidently the Son; but it is God Himself who is manifested, and the perfection of His nature; which is the source of life to us also, as that life was found in Christ as man. Thus I can speak of God, and say, "born of Him;" but it is in Jesus that God was manifested, and from Him that I derive life: so that "Life," "Jesus Christ," and "God" are substituted for each other. Thus, "He shall appear," chap. 2, ver. 28, is Christ; "He is righteous;" the righteous one "is born of Him." But in 3:1, it is "born of God," "children of God;" and "when He shall appear," it is Christ, and we purify ourselves "even as He is pure." There are many other examples.

It is said of the believer, "he purifies himself;" this shows that he is not pure, as Christ is. He needed not to purify Himself. Accordingly, it is not said, he is pure as Christ is pure; for, in that case, there would be no sin in us; but, he purifies himself according to the purity of Christ as He is, in heaven; having the same life as the life of Christ Himself.

Flaying set forth the positive aspect of Christian purity, he goes on to speak of it in other points of view, as one of the characteristic proofs of the life of God in the soul.

He who commits sin - not, transgresses the law, but - acts in despite of law. His conduct is without 'the restraint, without the rule, of the law. He acts without curb; for sin is the acting without the curb

of a law. But Christ was manifested that He might take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin; so that he who commits sin, acts against the object of the manifestation of Christ, and in opposition to the nature of which, if Christ is our life, we are partakers. Therefore, he who abides in Christ, does not practice sin. He who sins, has neither seen Him nor known Him. All depends, we see, on participation in the life and nature of Christ. Let us not, then, deceive ourselves. He who practices righteousness is righteous as He is righteous: for, by partaking in the life of Christ, one is before God according to the perfection of Him who is there the Head and Source of that life: but we are thus as Christ before God, because He Himself is really our life. Our actual life is not the measure of our acceptance; it is Christ who is so. But Christ is our life, if we are accepted according to His excellence; for it is as living of His life that we participate in this.

But the judgment is more than negative: he who practices sin is of the devil, has, morally, the same nature as the devil; for he sinneth from the beginning; it is his original character as the devil. Now, Christ was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil; how, then, can one who shares the character of this enemy of souls be with Christ?

On the other hand, he who is born of God, does not practice sin; the reason is evident: he is made a partaker of the nature of God; he derives his life from Him. This principle of divine life is in him. The seed of God remains in him; he cannot sin, because he is born of God. This new nature has not in it the principles of sin, so as to commit it. How could it be that the divine nature should sin?

Having thus designated the two families, the family of God and that of the devil, the apostle adds the second mark, the absence of which is a proof that one is not of God. He had already spoken of righteousness,-he adds, the love of the brethren. For this is the message that they had received from Christ Himself, that they should love one another. In ver. 12, he shows the connection between the two things: that hatred of a brother is fed by the sense one has that his works are good, and one's own evil. Moreover, we are not to wonder that the world hates us; for we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. If this love is an essential proof of being renewed, it is quite natural that it should not be found in the men of the world. But, this being the case, he who does not love his brother (solemn thought!) abides in death. In addition to this, he who does not love his brother is a murderer, and a murderer has not eternal life.

Further, as in the case of righteousness and of purity, we have Christ as the measure of this love. We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us. We ought to do the same. Now, if our brother has need, and we possess this world's good, but do not provide for his necessity, is that the divine love which made Christ lay down His life for us? It is by this real and practical love that we know we are in the truth, and that our heart is confirmed and assured before God. For, if there is nothing on the conscience, we have confidence in His presence; but if our own heart condemn us, God knows yet more.

It is not here the means of being assured of our salvation, but of having confidence alone in the presence of God. We cannot have it with a bad conscience in the practical sense of the word, for God is always Light and always holy.

We also receive all that we ask for, when we walk thus in love before Him, doing that which is pleasing in His sight; for, thus walking in His presence with confidence, the heart and its desires respond to this blessed influence, being formed by the enjoyment of communion with Him in the

light of His countenance. It is God who animates the heart; this life and this divine nature, of which the epistle speaks, being in full activity, and enlightened and moved by the divine presence in which it delights. Thus our requests are only for the accomplishment of desires that arise when this life, when our thoughts, are filled with the presence of God, and with the communications of His nature. And He lends His power to the fulfillment of these desires, of which He is the source, and which are formed in the heart by the revelation of Himself.

This is, indeed, the position of Christ Himself when here below: only that He was perfect in it (compare John 8:29; and 11:42).

And here it is the commandment of God which He desires us to obey: namely, to believe on the name of His Son Jesus, and to love one another, as He gave us commandment.

Now, he who keeps His commandments, dwells in Him; and He dwells also in this obedient man. It will be asked whether God or Christ is here meant. The apostle, as we have seen, confounds them together in his thought. That is to say, the Holy Ghost unites them in our minds. We are in Him who is true, i.e., in His Son Jesus Christ. It is Christ who, in life, is the presentation of God to men; and, to the believer, He is the communication of that life, so that God dwells in him, by the revelation, in its divine excellence and perfection, of the nature which the believer shares. And the Holy Ghost likewise dwells in him.

But what marvelous grace to have received a life, a nature, by which we are enabled to enjoy God Himself; as dwelling in us, and by which, since it is in Christ, we are, in fact, in the enjoyment of this communion, this infinite privilege, and have the consciousness of this relationship with God. He who has the Son, has life: but God then dwells in him as the portion, as well as the source of this life; and he who has the Son has the Father.

What marvelous links of vital and living enjoyment, through the communication of the divine nature of Him who is its source; and that, according to its perfection in Christ! Such is the Christian according to grace. Therefore, also, he is obedient, because this life in the man Christ (and it is thus that it becomes ours) was obedience itself: the true relationship of man to God.

Practical righteousness, then, is a proof that we are born of Him who, in His nature, is its source. In presence, also, of the world's hatred, we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. Thus, having a good conscience, we have confidence in God, and we receive from Him whatsoever we ask, walking in obedience and in a way that is pleasing to Him. Thus walking, we dwell in Him and He in us.

1 John 4

A third proof of our Christian privileges arises here. The Spirit whom He has given us is the proof that He Himself dwells in us; the manifestation of the presence of God in us. He does not add that we abide in Him, because the subject here is the manifestation of the presence of God. The presence of the Spirit demonstrates it, but in abiding in Him there is the enjoyment of that which He is, and, consequently, moral communion with His nature. He who obeys enjoys this also, as we have seen; but the presence of the Holy Ghost in us is the demonstration of only the half of this truth. But when this manifestation of the divine nature is seen in us; according to grace and according to the powers of the Spirit, then we know that we are in communion with that nature, that we dwell also in Him from whom we derive these graces and all the spiritual forms of that nature in practical life. It is in verses 12 and 13, chap. 4 that our apostle speaks of this.

Practical righteousness, the love of the brethren, the manifestation of the Spirit of God-these are the proofs of our relationship to God. Practical righteousness, that we dwell in Him; the Spirit, that He dwells in us.

Now to make use of this last proof caution was required, for many false prophets would assume, and even in the time of the apostle had already assumed, the semblance of having received communications from the Spirit of God, and insinuated themselves among the Christians. It was necessary, therefore, to put them on their guard, by giving them the sure marks of the real Spirit of God. The first of these was the confession of Jesus come in the flesh. It is not merely to confess that He is come, but to confess Him thus come. The second was, that he who really knew God hearkened to the apostles. In this way, the writings of the apostles became a touchstone for those who pretend to, teach the church. All the Word is so, doubtless; but I confine myself here to that which is said in this place. The teaching of the Apostles is formally a touchstone for all other teaching. I mean that which they themselves taught immediately. If any one tells me that others must explain or develop it, I reply "You are not of God, for he who is of God hearkens to them, and you: would have me not to hearken to them, and whatever may be your pretext, you prevent my doing so." The denial of Jesus come in the flesh is the spirit of Antichrist. Not to hear the apostles is the provisional and preparatory form of the evil. True, Christians had overcome the spirit of error by the Spirit of God, who dwelt in them.

The three tests of true Christianity are now distinctly laid down, and the apostle pursues his exhortations, developing the fullness and intimacy of our relationships with a God of love.

Love is of God, and he who loves is born of God, -partakes therefore of His nature and knows him (for it is by faith that he received it). He who loves not does not know God. We must possess the nature that loves in order to know what love is. He, then, who does not love does not know God, for God is love. Such a person has not one sentiment in connection with the nature of God, how then can he know him? No more than an animal can know what a man's mind and understanding is when he has not got it. Give especial heed, reader, - to this immense prerogative, which flows from the whole doctrine of the epistle. The eternal Life, which was with the Father, has been

manifested and has been imparted to us: thus; we are partakers of the divine nature. The affections of that nature, acting in us by the powers of the Holy. Ghost, in communion with God, who is its source, place us in such a relationship with Him that we dwell in Him and He in us. The actings of this nature prove that He dwells in us. We know at the same time that we dwell in Him, because He has given us of His Spirit. But this passage, so rich in blessing, demands that we should follow it with order.

He begins with the fact that love is of God. It is His nature; He is its source. Therefore he who loves is born of God, is a partaker of His nature. Also, he knows God, for he knows what love is, and who is its fullness. This is the doctrine which makes everything depend on our participation in the divine nature.

Now this might be transformed into mysticism, by leading us to fix our attention on our love for God and by seeking to fathom the divine nature in ourselves. In effect, he who does not love (for the thing is expressed in an abstract way), does not know God, for God is love. The possession of the nature is necessary to the understanding of what that nature is, and for the knowledge of Him, who is its perfection. But it is not to the existence of the nature in us that the Spirit of God directs the thoughts of the believers as their object. God, He has said, is love; and this love has been manifested towards us in that He has given His only Son, that we might believe through Him. The proof is not the life in us, but that God has given His Son in order that we might live. God be praised! we know this love, not by the poor results of its action in ourselves, but in its perfection in God, and that even in its manifestation towards us. It is a fact outside ourselves which is the manifestation of this perfect love.

The full scope of this principle and all the force of its truth are stated and demonstrated yet more plainly in that which follows. Herein is love, not that we have loved God, but in that He has loved us and has given His Son to make propitiation for our sins. Here, then, it is, that we have learned that which love is. It was perfect in Him when we had no love for Him. Perfect in Him, in that He exercised it towards us when we were in our sins and sent his Son to be the propitiation for them. The apostle then affirms, no doubt, that he who loves not knows not God. The pretension to possess this love is judged by this means; but in order to know love we must not seek for it in ourselves, but must see it manifested in God when we had none. He gives the life which loves, and He has made propitiation for our sins.

And now with regard to the enjoyment and the privileges of this love. If God has so loved us-this is the ground he takes - we ought to love one another.

No one has ever seen God: if we love one another God dwells in us. One can understand this. How is it that I love strangers from another land, persons of different habits whom I have never known, more intimately than members of my own family after the flesh? How is it that I have thoughts in common, objects infinitely loved in common, affections powerfully engaged, a stronger bond, with persons whom I have never seen, than with the otherwise dear companions of my childhood? It is because there is in them and in me a source of thoughts and of affections which is not human. God is in it. God dwells in us. What happiness! What a bond! Does He not communicate Himself to the soul? Does He not render it conscious of His presence in love? Assuredly, yes. And if He is thus in us, the blessed source of our thoughts, can there be fear, or distance, or uncertainty, with regard to what he is? None at all. His love is perfect in us. We know

Him as love in our souls.

The apostle has not yet said "We know that we dwell in Him." He will say it now. But, if the love of the brethren is in us, God dwells in us. When it is in exercise, we are conscious of the presence of God, as perfect love in us. It fills the heart, and thus is exercised in us. Now this is the effect of the presence of His Spirit as the source and power of life and nature in us. He has given us not "His Spirit," the proof that He dwells in us, but "of His Spirit; "we participate by His presence in us, in divine affections through the Spirit, and thus we not only know that He dwells in us, but the presence of the Spirit, acting in a nature which is that of God in us, makes us conscious that we dwell in Him.

The heart rests in this, and enjoys Him, and is hidden from all that is outside Him, in the consciousness of the perfect love in which (thus dwelling in Him), one finds oneself. The Spirit makes us dwell in God and gives us thus the consciousness that He dwells in us.

If we compare ver. 12 of this chapter (4) with ver. 18, chap. 1 of the gospel by John, we shall better apprehend the scope of the Apostle's teaching here. The same difficulty, or, if you will, the same truth, is possessed in both cases. No one has ever seen God. How is this met? In John 1:18, the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. He, who in the most perfect intimacy, in the most absolute proximity, and as the one, eternal, absorbing object that knew the love of the Father as His only Son, has revealed Him unto us as He has Himself known Him. What is the answer in our epistle to this same difficulty? "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and His love is perfected in us." By the communication of the divine nature and by the dwelling of God in us, we inwardly enjoy Him, as He has been manifested and declared by His only Son. His love is perfect in us; known to the heart, as it has been declared in Jesus. The God who has been declared by Him dwells in us. What a thought! that this answer to the fact that no one has ever seen God, is equally that the only Son has declared Him, and that He dwells in us. What light this throws upon the words "Which thing is true in Him and in you!" for it is in that Christ has become our life, that we can thus enjoy God and His presence in us by the powers of the Holy Ghost.

We see also the distinction between God dwelling in us and we in God, even in that which Christ says of Himself. He abode always in the Father and the Father in Him; but He says "The Father who dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." Through His word the disciples ought to have believed in them both; but in that which they had seen -in His works-they had rather seen the proof that the Father dwelt in Him. They who had seen Him had seen the Father. But when the Comforter was come, at that day they should know that Jesus was in His Father - divinely one with the Father.

He does not say that we are in God nor in the Father, but that we dwell in Him, and that we know it, because He has given us of His Spirit. We have already noticed that He says (3:24) hereby we know that He (God) abideth in us because He has given us His Spirit. Here he adds, we know that we dwell in God, because it is-not the manifestation, as a proof, but-communion with God Himself. We know that we dwell in Him always, as a precious truth-an unchangeable fact. Sensibly, when his love is active in the heart. Consequently, it is to this activity that the Apostle immediately turns, by adding, "and we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." This was the proof, for every one, of that love which the Apostle enjoyed-as all believers do-in his own heart. It is important to notice how the passage thus first presents the fact of God's dwelling with us, then the effect, as He is infinite, of our dwelling in Him, and then the realization of

the first truth, in conscious reality of life.

And here comes in a principle of deep importance. It might, perhaps, be said that this dwelling of God in us and our dwelling in Him, depended on a large measure of spirituality, the Apostle having, in fact, spoken of the highest possible joy. But although the degree in which we intelligently realize it is, in effect, a matter of spirituality, yet the thing in itself is the portion of every Christian. It is our position, because Christ is our life and because the Holy Ghost is given us. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God." How great the grace of the Gospel! How admirable our position, because it is in Jesus that we possess it.

The Apostle explains this high position by the possession of the divine nature- the essential condition of Christianity. A Christian is one who is a partaker of the divine nature. But the knowledge of our position 'does not flow from the consideration of this truth, but of that of God's own love, as we have already seen. And the Apostle goes on to say "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." This is the source of our knowledge and enjoyment of these privileges, so sweet and so marvelously exalted, but so simple and so real to the heart when they are known.

We have known love, the love that God has for us, and we have believed it. Precious knowledge! by possessing it we know God; for it is thus that He has manifested Himself. Therefore can we say, "God is love." There is none besides. Himself is love. He is love in all its fullness. He is not holiness, He is holy; but He is love. He is not righteousness; He is righteous.

By dwelling, then in love, I dwell in Him, which I could not do unless He dwelt in me, and this He does. Here he puts it first, that we dwell in Him, because it is God Himself who is before our eyes, as the love in which we dwell. Therefore, when thinking of this love, I say that I dwell in Him, because I have in my heart the consciousness of it by the Spirit. At the same time, this love is an active, energetic principle in us, it is God Himself who is there. This is the joy of our position-the position of every Christian.

Verses 14 and 16 present the twofold effect of the manifestation of this love.

First. The testimony that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Quite outside the promises made to the Jews (as everywhere in John), this work is the fruit of that which God Himself is. Accordingly, whosoever confesses Jesus to be that Son, enjoys all the fullness of its blessed consequences.

Second. The Christian has believed for himself in this love, and he enjoys it according to its fullness. There is only this modification of the expression of the glorious fact of our portion-that the confession of Jesus as the Son of God is primarily here the proof that God dwells in us, although the other part of the truth equally says that he who confesses Him dwells also in God.

When speaking of our portion in communion, as believing in this love, it is said, that he who dwells in

love dwells in God; for, in effect, that is where the heart is. Here, also, the other part of the truth is equally true, God dwells in him likewise.

I have spoken of the consciousness of this dwelling in God, for it is thus only that it is known. But it is important to remember, that the Apostle teaches it as a truth that applies to every believer. These might have excused themselves for not appropriating these statements as too high for them; but this fact judges the excuse. This communion is neglected. But God dwells in every one who confesses that Jesus is Son of God, and he in God. What an encouragement for a timid believer. What a rebuke for a careless one. The Apostle returns to our relative position, viewing God as outside ourselves, as He before whom we are to appear, and with whom we have always to do. Herein is love perfect with us (in order that we may have boldness for the day of judgment), namely, that as He is, such are we in this world. In effect, what could give us a more complete assurance for that day than to be as Jesus himself. He who will judge in righteousness is our righteousness. We are in Him the righteousness according to which He will judge. Truly this can give us perfect peace. But observe that it is not as representing us before God that this is here said, but as having Christ for our life, and as being livingly identified with Him.

Now in love there is no fear: there is confidence. If I am sure that a person loves me I do not fear him. If I am only desiring to be the object of his affection,' I may fear that I am not so, and may even fear himself. Nevertheless, this fear would always tend to destroy my love for him and my desire to be loved by him. There, is incompatibility between the two affections-there is no fear in love. Perfect love, then, banishes fear; for fear torments us, and torment is not the enjoyment of love. He, therefore, who fears does not know perfect love. And now what does he mean by "perfect love "? It is the consciousness.in the heart of that which God is, by His presence in us, so that we dwell in Him. The positive proof is that we are such as Christ is. But that which we enjoy is God, who is love, and we enjoy Him because He is in us; so that love and confidence are in our hearts; and we have rest. That which I know of God is that He is love and love to me, and nothing else but love to me, because it is Himself who is so. Therefore there is no fear.

If we inquire practically into the history, so to speak, of these affections - if we seek to separate that which in its enjoyment is united, because the divine nature in us, which is love, enjoys love in its perfection in God, His love shed abroad in the heart by his presence, therefore we wish to specify the relationship in which our hearts find themselves with God in regard to this-here it is, "we love him because he first loved us." It is grace and it must be grace, because it is God who is to be glorified.

Here it will be worth our while to notice the order of this remarkable passage (7-10). We possess the nature of God, consequently we love; we are born of Him and we know him. But the manifestation of love towards us in Christ Jesus is the proof of that love; it is thus that we know it (11-16); we enjoy it by dwelling in it. It is present life in the love of God, by the presence of His Spirit in us; the enjoyment of that love by communion, in that God dwells in us, and we thus dwell in Him (17); His love is perfected with us; the perfection of that love, viewed in the place that it has given us-we are, in this world, such as Christ is (18, 19); it is thus fully perfected with us-love to sinners, communion, perfection before God, gives us the moral and characteristic elements of that love, what it is in our relationship with God.

In the first passage, where the Apostle speaks of the manifestation of this love, he does not go beyond the fact that one who loves is born of God. The nature of God, which is love, being in us, lie who loves knows Him, for he is born of Him, has His nature and realizes what it is.

It is that which God has been with regard to the sinner, which demonstrates His nature of love. Afterward, that which we learned as sinners, we enjoy as saints. The perfect love of God is shed abroad in the heart, and we dwell in Him. As already with Jesus in this world, fear has no place in one to whom the love of God is a dwelling-place and rest.

Verse 20. The reality of our love to God, fruit of His love to us, is now tested. If we say that we love God and do not love the brethren, we are liars; for if the divine nature so near us (in them), does not awaken our spiritual affections, how then can he who is afar off do so? Accordingly, this is His commandment, that he who loves God, love his brother also.

Love for the brethren proves the reality of our love for God. And this love must be universal, must be in exercise towards all Christians, for whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and he who loves a person will love one who is born of him. And if the being born of him is the motive, we shall love all that are born of him.

But a danger exists on the other side. It may be, that we love the brethren because they are pleasant to us; they furnish us with agreeable society, in which our conscience is not wounded. A counter proof is therefore given us. "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, if we love God and keep his commandments." It is not as children of God that I love the brethren, unless I love God, of whom they are born. I may love them individually as companions, or I may love some among them, but not as the children of God, if I do not love God Himself. If God Himself has not His true place in my heart, that which bears the name of love to the brethren shuts out God; and that in so much the more complete and subtle a manner, because our link with them bears the sacred name of brotherly love.

Now there is a touchstone even for this love of God, namely, obedience to His commands. If I walk with the brethren themselves in disobedience to their Father, it is certainly not because they are His children that I love them. It was because I loved the Father and because they were His children, I should assuredly like them to obey Him. To walk then in disobedience with the children of God, under the pretext of brotherly love, is not to love them as the children of God. If I loved them as such, I should love their Father and my Father, and I could not walk in disobedience to Him, and call it a proof that I loved them because they were His.

If I also loved them because they were His children, I should love all who are such, because the same motive engages me to love them all.

The universality of this love with regard to all the children of God: its exercise in practical obedience to His will: these are the marks of true brotherly love. That which has not these marks is a mere carnal party spirit, clothing itself with the name and the forms of brotherly love. Most certainly I do not love the Father, if I encourage His children in disobedience to him.

Now there is an obstacle to this obedience, and that is the world. The world has its forms, which are very far from obedience to God. When we are occupied only with Him and His will, the world's enmity soon breaks out. It also acts, by its comforts and its delights, on the heart of man as walking after the flesh. In short, the world and the commandments of God are in opposition to each other; but the commandments of God are not grievous to those who are born of Him, for he who is born of God overcomes the world. He possesses a nature and a principle which surmount the difficulties that the world opposes to his walk. His nature is the divine nature, for he is born of God;

his principle is that of faith. His nature is insensible to the attractions which this world offers to the flesh, and that because it has outside this world an independent spirit, an object of its own, which governs it. Faith directs its steps, but faith does not see the world nor that which is present. Faith believes that Jesus, whom the world rejected, is the Son of God. The world, therefore, has lost its power over it. Its affections and its trust are fixed on Jesus, who was crucified, owning Him as the Son of God. Thus the believer, detached from the world, has the boldness of obedience, and does the will of God which abides forever.

The Apostle sums up in a few words the testimony of God respecting the life eternal which He has given us. This life is not in the first Adam, it is in the second- in the Son of God. Man does not possess it, does not acquire it. He ought, indeed, to have gained' life under the law. This characterized it, "Do this and live." But man did not and could not.

God gives him eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life, and he who has not the Son, has not life.

Now what is the testimony rendered to this gift of life eternal? The witnesses are three: the Spirit, the water and the blood. This Jesus, the Son of God, is he who came by water and by blood. Not by water only, but -by water and by blood. The Spirit also bears witness because He is truth. That to which they bear witness is that God has given us eternal life, and that this life is in His Son. But whence did this water and this blood flow? It was from the pierced side of Jesus. It is the judgment of death pronounced and executed (compare Rom. 8:3), on the flesh, on all that is of the old man, on the first Adam. Not that the sin of the first Adam was in the flesh of Christ, but that Jesus died in it as a sacrifice for that sin. "In that He died, He died unto sin once." Sin in the flesh was condemned in the death of Christ in the flesh. There was no other remedy. The flesh could not be modified nor subjected to the law. The life of the first Adam was nothing but sin in the principle of its will; it could not be subject to the law. Our purification as to the old man is its death. He who is dead is freed from sin. We are, therefore, baptized to have part in the death of Jesus. We are crucified with Christ, nevertheless we live, but not we, it is Christ who lives in us. Participating in the life of Christ risen, we reckon ourselves as dead with Him, for why live of this new life, this life of the second Adam, if we could live before God in the life of the first Adam? No; by living in Christ we have accepted, by faith, the sentence of death, passed by God on the first Adam. This is Christian purification: even the death of the old man, because we are made partakers of life in Christ Jesus. "We are dead," crucified with Him. We need a perfect purification before God-we have it for that which was impure no longer exists.

He came by water-a powerful testimony, as flowing from the side of a dead Christ, that life is not to be sought for in the first Adam; for Christ, as associated with him, taking up his cause, the Christ come in the flesh, had to die, else he had remained alone in His own purity. Life is to be sought for in the Son of God risen from among the dead.

But it was not by water only that He came; it was also by blood. The expiation of our sins was as necessary as the moral purification of our souls. We possess it in the blood of a slain Christ. Death alone could expiate them, blot them out. And Jesus died for us. The guilt of the believer no longer exists before God; Christ has put Himself in his place. The Life is on high, and we are raised up together with Him, God having forgiven us all our trespasses.

The third witness is the Spirit-put first in the order of their testimony on earth; last, in their historic order. In effect, it is the testimony of the Spirit, His presence in us, which enables us to appreciate the value of the water and the blood. We should never have understood the practical bearing of the death of Christ, if the Holy Ghost were not a revealing power to the new man, of its import and its efficacy. Now, the Holy Ghost came down from a risen and ascended Christ; and thus we know that eternal life is given us in the Son of God.

The testimony of these three witnesses meet together in this same truth, namely, that grace, that God Himself, has given us eternal life; and that this life is in the Son. Man had nothing to do in it -except by his sins. It is the gift of God. And the life that, He gives is in the Son. The testimony is the testimony of God. How blessed to have such a testimony, and that from God Himself, and in perfect grace!

We have, then, the three things: the cleansing, the expiation, and the presence of the Holy Ghost as a witness that eternal life is given us in the Son who was slain for man when in relationship with man here below. He could but die for man as he is. Life is elsewhere, namely, in Himself.

Here the doctrine of the epistle ends. The apostle wrote these things in order that they who believed in the Son might know that they had eternal life. He does not give means of examination to make the faithful doubt whether they had eternal life; but-seeing that there were seducers who endeavored to turn them aside as deficient in something important, and who presented themselves as possessing some superior light,-he points out to them the marks of life, in order to reassure them; developing the excellence of that life, and of their position as enjoying it; and in order they might understand that. God had given it to them, and that they might be in no wise shaken in mind.

He then speaks of the practical confidence in God which flows from all this-confidence exercised with a view to all our wants here below, all that our hearts desire to ask of God.

We know that He always listens to everything that we ask in accordance with His will. Precious privilege! The Christian himself would not desire anything to be granted him that was contrary to the will of God. But for everything that is according to His will, His ear is ever open to us, ever attentive. He always hearkens. He is not like man, often occupied so that He cannot listen, or careless, so that He will not. God always hears us, and assuredly He does not fail in power: the attention He pays us is a proof of His good-will. We receive, therefore, the things that we ask of Him. He grants our requests. What a sweet relationship! What a high privilege! and it is one also of which we may avail ourselves in charity for others.

If a brother sins, and God chastises Him, we may petition for that brother, and life shall be restored. Chastisement tends to the death of the body (compare Job 33, and 36, and James 5:14 and 15); we pray for the offender, and he is healed. Otherwise, the sickness takes its course. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is such sin as is unto death. This does not seem to me to be some particular sin, but all sin which has such a character, that, instead of awakening Christian charity, it awakens Christian indignation. Thus, Ananias and Sapphira committed a sin unto death. It was a lie; but a lie under such circumstances, that it excited horror rather than compassion. We can easily understand this in other cases.

Thus far, as to sin and its chastisement. But the positive side is also brought before us. As born of God, we do not commit sin at all; we keep ourselves, and the wicked one toucheth us not. He has nothing wherewith to entice the new man. The enemy has no objects of attraction to the divine nature in us, which is occupied, by the action of the Holy Ghost, with divine and heavenly things, or with the will of God. Our part, therefore, is so to live, -the new man occupied with the things of God and of the Spirit.

The apostle ends his epistle by specifying these two things: our nature, our mode of being as Christians; and, the object that has been communicated to us, in order to produce, and to nourish faith.

We know that we are of God; and that, not in a vague way, but in contrast with all that is not us-a principle of immense importance, which makes Christian position exclusive by its very nature. It is not merely good, or bad, or better; but it is of God. And nothing which is not of God, that is to say, which has not its origin in Him, could have this character and this place. The whole world lies in the wicked one.

The Christian has the certainty of these two things, by virtue of his nature, which discerns and knows that which is of God, and thereby judges all that is opposed to it. The two are not merely good and bad, but of God and of the enemy. This as to the nature.

With regard to the object of this nature, we know that the Son of God is come-a truth of immense importance also. It is not merely that there is good, and that there is evil; but the Son of God has Himself come into this scene of misery, to present an object to our hearts. But there is more than this. He has given us an understanding that in the midst of all the falsehood of this world, of which Satan is the prince, we may know Him that is true-the true One. Immense privilege! which alters our whole position. The power of the world, by which Satan blinded us, is completely broken, and we are brought into the true light; and in that light We see and know Him who is true, who is in Himself perfection; that by which all things can be perfectly discerned and judged according to truth. But this is not all. We are in this true One, partakers of His nature, and abiding in Him, in order that we may enjoy the source of truth. Now, it is in Jesus that We are. It is thus, it is in Him, that we are in connection with the perfections of God.

We may again remark here, that which gives a character to the whole epistle-the manner in which God and Christ are united in the apostle's mind. It is on account of this, that he so frequently says "He," where we must understand "Christ," although he had previously spoken of "God." For instance, chap. 3:2. And here, "We are in Him that is true, that is to say, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal Life."

Behold, then, the divine links of our position! We are in Him who is true: this is the nature of Him in whom we are. Now, in reality, as to the nature, it is God Himself. As to the person, and as to the manner of being in Him, it is in His Son Jesus Christ. It is in the Son, in the Son as man, that we are in fact as to His person; but he is the true God, the veritable God.

Nor is this all-but we have life in Him. He is also the eternal Life, so that we possess it in Him. We know the true God-we have eternal life.

All that is outside this, is an idol. May God preserve us from it, and teach us by His grace to preserve ourselves from it. This gives occasion to the Spirit of God to speak of "the truth" in the two short epistles that follow.

A Few Words on 1 John

Rich and deep secrets of the divinest character are to be found in this epistle.

At the opening of it, the Lord is called "the Word of life," because He is the manifestation of the life. He has shown life to us. In His person, St. John heard it, looked on it, handled it.

It has also been imparted to us. In the power of the Holy Ghost, we have been given to receive it from the source of it.

In its nature, or essence, it is infallible, or indestructible, beyond the reach of the sting of death. It is here called "that eternal life." Unlike the life that was in Adam, who was "the living soul," which was to be tested; and which, as we know, was lost in the struggle, this life of Him, who is "the quickening Spirit," is invulnerable, and has so proved itself by resurrection. For resurrection is life in victory.

But further. This life clothes itself, if I may so express my thoughts, with relationship. It puts itself into relationship. And what would life, even human life, be without that? Were we to live in mere individuality, life would be but existence. But we share a life that is common, and stand related to one another. And so, this eternal life. It was, as we read here, "with the Father"-and, as we read again, it introduces us into "fellowship." "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ." It introduces us as children, thus putting us into nearest relationship to God; and this is our fullness of joy-as we still further read here; "these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

We may be weak and sickly. The workings of unbelief, the force of lust and vanity, the fiery darts of the enemy, may cause -various distempers in the soul; but the due condition or attribute of this life, thus introducing us to the relationship and fellowship of children, is nothing less than fullness of joy.

And further still. This life has its moral qualities, as well as its nature or essence, and its relationship. It is undefileable, as well as eternal. The possession of it is our moral restoration. The Son of God was manifested; to take away our sin, and in him is no sin." The Message which He who is this life, brings to us, is this, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." And this is the contradiction of that word which the serpent, the liar, brought to the ear of Eve. He told Eve, that, as to God; there was no light at all in Him, neither truth nor love. The Son, the Life, tells us that there is nothing but light in Him; and that to have fellowship with Him, we must ourselves walk in light. And this is our moral recovery - not, however, perfect as yet - for if we say; that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." But then, the Son, who has this life for us-this secret of moral recovery; has also remedy for this lack of perfection, and we are to use Him. We are to confess our sins, and God is faithful to the Son our Savior just to that work of His which has accomplished reconciliation - to forgive us our sins.

And though it be indeed true, that this moral restoration is not now perfect in unhindered power in the soul, and that we have, still sins to confess, yet is it complete in the range or sphere of its influence. That is, it heals us not only as towards God, but as towards one another. It brings us back into the light, and it makes us to love one another. The moral power of it is the contradiction of both Adam and Cain. Adam, in Gen. 3, represents the ruined nature in relation to God, forcing him into distance and darkness; Cain, in Gen. 4, represents the same ruined nature in relation to our fellow-creatures.

But now, through the virtue of this life; we walk in the light, and we love one another.

All this is told us in the early parts of this epistle. And it is a: great discourse. The life in its own eternal infallible essence, in its known and enjoyed relationship, and in its various restoring moral virtues, is the subject of it.

Fathers, young men, and little children, are also severally addressed, addressed, too, in reference to this life, or to Him who has it in Himself for us.

The fathers make Christ their object. They, as it were, gaze at Him, consider Him, learn Him, under, stand Him.

The young men make Him, and the life they have received from Him, their strength, Using it in conflict with the world, that scene, which "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," are animating, and filling.

The little children make Christ, this life, their joy, knowing the Father through Him - knowing Him for themselves, in the free and happy spirit of adoption.

Surely; this exhibits beautiful, varied, moral power in the soul, by reason of this life. And as connected

with the condition of the "little children," John introduces a warning against that form of the lie, or that

Antichrist, which denies "the Father and the Son." And this is most suitable and seasonable. Because the standing or condition of the "little children," altogether depends on that mystery. They are in the adoption; they know the Father; they enjoy it, as I said. But this is taken away from them, by that lie or antichrist which denies the Father and the Son. Relationship is lost to us then. The soul is robbed of it. Another lie, at the beginning, robbed Adam of his innocency; this lie robs the little children of their joy. How rightly, therefore, are they warned against it.

It is said to some one, in another place, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." And, in like spirit, John would here tell the children to hold fast what they had, that no lie should take their joy from them.

This epistle takes us back, in spirit and in recollection, to the first chapters of Genesis. Indeed, John is, generally, independent of all merely dispensational truth, and is intensely personal and individualizing.

Genesis opens with Creation. This epistle, like the gospel by the same Evangelist, with Him that was before creation. In the system of creation, man, and all things with him, or under him, were in

life, order, and beauty. Death was then the foreign thing, and consequently it was the threatened thing. The revelation or proclamation that was made in the midst of all that scene of life, and order, and beauty, was about death.

In the present evil world, we have death; the wages of sin, manifested. The earth has become the grave of its inhabitants. Sin reigns unto death upon it. Life is, therefore, the foreign and proclaimed thing-and this epistle tells us so. Life is to be received by us, dead as we are in trespasses and sins; as death, on the other hand, was incurred by Adam in his estate of life and perfection. We are now summoned to hear words of truth from the Son of the Father, as Adam heard and received the lie from the serpent. We have to acquaint ourselves with "the Word of life," personally and immediately, as Eve acquainted herself personally and intimately with the Tree of death, when she took it and ate of it (see Gen. 3:6). That acceptance of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil gave Adam fellowship with death in all its sorrowing, degrading results. He lost the garden, and Eve, and God -everything. He lost himself. A disturbed conscience; the apron of fig leaves; the covert of the trees; the sword of the cherubim; all tell the ruinous details of his condition. Acceptance of "the Word of life," according to this epistle, recovers everything, and everything, lost though it may have been, and lost as it was, with unspeakable advantage. We get God in the relation of a Father: We get ourselves in fullness of joy. We get one another as brethren. We get inheritance, as in glory. All is now ours, in incorruptible, unassailable, victorious, abiding virtue. We feed on meat taken from the eater, and sweetness gathered out of the strong one.

Thus is it with us in Christ. And after this manner it is, that this epistle, as I have already hinted, keeps us' in company, in spirit, and in remembrance, with the earliest chapters of Genesis. It all but closes the volume; but it links itself, morally, with the opening of it.

There are, however, other thoughts that arise in the soul, on reading this epistle, which I would also communicate-in no way, of course, contradictory of what I have suggested above; nay, in no measure, even the slightest, interfering therewith; but still of another kind.

This epistle may be said to exhibit the power of communion to leave upon the soul the impression of the object with which the communion has been enjoyed.

There are, consequently, three principal thoughts found again and again in it; and these are, manifestation, communion, impression. That is, the Lord is manifested in some form or character; the believer has communion with Him as so manifested; a kindred impression is thereby left on the believer's soul.

This is simple.

The epistle opens with a declaration of this manifestation. And the interpretation that is made of that manifestation is this, that it gives the soul communion or fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ; and it is then further declared, that the result of this upon the soul, the impression produced by this communion is, fullness of joy (1:1-4).

This is a sample of what, as I judge, is a great leading character of the whole epistle, and as I have already suggested. Here we find our object manifested, a certain communion with that object, and then a corresponding impression produced.

So again. The object manifested is declared to be "light"; and accordingly, it is at once denied that there any communion with that object, if our walk be still in "darkness" (1:5, 6).

Then, quite in accordance with what I have suggested, it is said, "he that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself so to walk even as He walked." And in consequence of this, as love had been illustrated in Christ's walk or doing for us; if we take the place of fellowship with Him, or profess that we abide in Him the light, and yet hate one another, we deceive ourselves, and are still in darkness (2:7-9).

And still pursuing this epistle, we are told of another quality, or virtue, in this object that has been manifested; that "in Him is no sin." And, therefore, it is also again at once denied, that we have either seen or known Him, if we commit sin (3:5, 6).

The same principle is recognized in that passage-that the object will, if the soul have fellowship with it, leave its likeness behind it.

So again, a second time, as to love. Love is perceived or manifested in the Lord Jesus laying down His life for us. If we shut. up our -compassions from one another, that love does not dwell in us. We can have had no fellowship with it (3:16, 17; 4:9-11).

And further still, as to love. It is a perfect love -which has been displayed; communion with it, therefore, believing, intelligent apprehension of it, will beget full assurance in the soul, and cast out all fear (4:17-19).

Surely I do not say too much, when I say, after all this, that this blessed epistle gives us various manifestation of God in Christ, "the Word of life," and that such manifestations leave their impressions on the souls that have communion with them.

And this same thing, the power of communion with manifestations to leave impressions on the soul, is incidentally contemplated in two interesting instances.

1st. We are to be like Jesus in glory, when He is manifested in glory, because we shall see Him in that glory (3:2).

2ndly. We are liars, if we say that we love God, while we are hating our brother. Such things cannot be. Our brother has been seen-God has not been seen. Therefore, on the principle of the epistle, on the- principle that communion with things manifested, leaves impressions behind it, we cannot love God, whom we have not seen, if we love not our brother whom we have seen (4:20, 21).

These passages strikingly affirm the general principle.

But there is true blessing from all this. It takes us into real, vital, personal knowledge of the Blessed One. And supposing that these impressions, of which we speak, are but faintly and partially produced in the soul; and surely we know too well that such is the case - we know where to charge the mischief; that is, on the imperfectness of our communion with the object, and not on the object or manifestation itself. And that discovery is our blessing. For God is true to us; it is we who are false to ourselves. The manifestations made of God to us should produce, as this epistle tells us, joy, light, love, holiness, assurance of heart. If then, we find that all this precious fruit is but

partially ripened in our souls, we charge this on the poverty of our communion with our object, and not on the -manifestation He has made of Himself. That manifestation is such as would secure all these virtues in us in full measure. We find out, that we are not straightened in Him; but in our own bowels. And surely this is precious. The reflection in us is faint; but the light that has awakened it is unclouded.

The way, however, to deepen these impressions, is, still to be occupied with the manifestation. We are not to be too carefully turning over the shame and the grief of this faintness before the conscience, but to be returning, so to speak, again and again, to the object. And with this judgment, the Spirit in the apostle seems to concur, when He says, "these things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe in the name of the Son of God" (v. 13). Let the Son of God be still the object of your faith.

I would say a little further on this epistle. In chap. 5:13-21, the apostle gives us three results, and then -closes his letter. We get, in these verses, three "We knows," leading forth three distinct, though connected, truths, each of them weighty, solemn, and precious.

1st. He that is born of God sinneth not, but keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Such doctrine had been considered in some of the previous parts of the epistle. The Son of God had been declared to have been manifested to take away our sin, and to have no sin in Himself (chap. 3:5): such words teaching us, that the life imparted to us by the Son is a clean life, a life according to God in righteousness and holiness. The fountain of it is Himself, without touch or stain of sin; and that which flows from Him in us is of like quality. The same fountain cannot send forth both salt-water and fresh. The nature that sins, that yields sin as its fruit, can have no communion with Him. What fellowship has light with darkness? Neither can "the wicked one," the source of the unclean nature, touch that which is born of God, or derived from the Son, as is here taught us. He cannot come in to defile it, as he defiled Adam.

And this is very blessed. It intimates a condition gloriously beyond that of Adam. All Adam's estates and possessions were exposed to the attempts of "the wicked one." - The Serpent was no trespasser in the garden of Eden. He had title to be there, so that Adam might be assayed. But it is otherwise with us. We carry a life, and are heirs of an inheritance, that is not thus exposed. Both our life and our inheritance, all our estate in Christ, and through Christ, are drawn from Christ in victory over him. The Serpent is not seen in the city, as he is in the garden (Rev. 21, Gen. 3) The Tree of Life is there, but not the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

2nd. We are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one.

Such doctrine had also been previously treated in the epistle. It had been declared, that all that was in the world was of the world, and that the enemy of God was the one that was quickening the world, as its indwelling energy (chap. 2:16, 4:4.). There were, thus, two distinct scenes of action, and two distinct principles of action. There was God in the saints, and there was the wicked one in the world. The saints were of God; all besides were of the world. The one had the renewed faculty of the flock of God, to hear the Shepherd's voice; all besides had taste and intelligence only for the interests and delights of a system which their own hearts and hands, Corrupted and occupied by Satan, had fashioned and were sustaining every day (chap. 4:1-6.).

This is a proposition of an awful character. It teaches us, that there is no belonging to God among men, but by being drawn out of the world by Jesus. The world may have its varieties and measures; but it is all in the wicked one. All is but varied darkness, and enmity. No deliverance, no translation into light, no return to God, but by the way of Jesus, that manifested Life, which this epistle had declared.

3rd. The Son of God has come to give us an understanding to know Him that is true, and we are in Him, and have the true God, and, in Him and with Him, eternal life.

This likewise is doctrine of wondrous value. The world by wisdom had not found out God. All their learning had left them ignorant of God. The altar at Athens witnesses this. But God had now revealed Himself, and that revelation was in Jesus. The glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ. This epistle had already taught us this, that the eternal life that was with the Father had been manifested. The apostles had seen, and heard and handled it. So that knowledge of God was now secured to us. We have been given an understanding to know Him; and we find this knowledge to be eternal life - as this epistle had likewise already said, "he that has the Son has life;" and had shown the various fruits of being in the knowledge of, or fellowship with, this revealed God.

All thoughts of our own, all conjectures of our own about God, can but make idols or false deities. We are to keep ourselves from all such. We are to know God only in this manifestation of Himself which we get and have in Jesus, and we are to treat all other thoughts of Him as idolatrous. This only is "the true God," and we are to keep ourselves from all besides as from "idols."

Thus we have three distinct, weighty propositions. Solemn, interesting, blessed conclusions they are. The saints have knowledge of God, and life in that knowledge; and thus they are separated from a world which the wicked one owns and animates, and are in possession of that which that same wicked one can never touch.

And the whole closes with that warning already referred to, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. The true God being now revealed, let no thought of God, no reasoning about Him, no conclusions of our own wisdom or theology, arise independently in the heart. All this will but end in idolatry; refined it may be, speculative and philosophic; but still idolatry. The notions of man about Him must be false; for by wisdom we cannot know Him. God has been pleased to Manifest Himself, and with that manifestation we are to have communion, and by the light of it to walk apart from all idols; ever esteeming it our blessedness, that we are not left to our conjectures about God, but are called to know Him in the light of His own revelation of Himself, and in that knowledge find our life eternally secured to us.

Lord Jesus! when I think of Thee,

Of all Thy love and grace,

My spirit longs, and fain would see

Thy beauty, face to face.

And though the wilderness I tread,

A barren, thirsty ground,
With thorns and briars overspread,
Where foes and snares abound;
Yet in Thy love such depths I see,
My soul o'erflows with praise-
Contents itself, while, Lord, to Thee
A joyful song I raise.
My Lord, my Life, my Rest, my Shield,
My Rock, my Food, my Light;-
Each thought of Thee doth constant yield
Unchanging, fresh delight.
My Savior, keep my spirit stayed,
Hard following after Thee;
Till I, in robes of white arrayed,
Thy face in glory see.

1 Peter

The First Epistle of Peter is addressed, to believers among the dispersed of Israel found in those provinces of Asia among which are named in the first verse. The Second Epistle declares itself to be a second, addressed to the same persons; so that the one and the other were destined for the Jews of Asia Minor; i.e. to those among them who had received the same precious Faith as the Apostle.

1 Peter 1

The First Epistle is founded on the doctrine of the Heavenly calling (I do not say on that of the Church, which is not brought before us here), in contrast with the portion of the Jews on earth. And thus it presents Christians-and in particular Christians among the Jews-as pilgrims and strangers on the earth. The conduct suited to such persons is more largely developed than the doctrine. The Lord Jesus, who was Himself a pilgrim and a stranger here, is presented as a pattern in more than one aspect. At the same time, both Epistles pursue the righteous government of God in all its phases, from the beginning to the consummation of all things, in which the elements melt with fervent heat, and there will be new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell.

Nevertheless, in presenting the heavenly calling, the Apostle necessarily presents Salvation, the deliverance of the soul, in contrast with the temporal deliverances of the Jews.

The following is the description which the Spirit gives of these believers. They are elect; and that, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. Israel was a nation elected on the earth by Jehovah. Here, it is those, who were foreknown of the Father: The means by which. their election is carried out, is Sanctification of the Holy Ghost. They are really set apart by the power of the Spirit. Israel was set apart by ordinances; but these are sanctified unto the obedience of Jesus Christ and for the sprinkling of His blood. That is to say, on the one hand, to obey as He obeyed; and on the other, to be sprinkled with His blood, and thus to be perfectly clear before God. Israel had been set apart for the obedience of the law, and for that blood which, while it announced death as the sanction of its authority, could never cleanse the soul from sin.

Such was the Christians' position. The Apostle wishes them grace and peace-the known portion of believers. He reminds them of the blessings with which God had blessed them; blessing God who had bestowed on them. Believing Israelites knew Him now, not in the character of Jehovah, but as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That which the Apostle presents as the fruit of His grace, is a hope beyond this world, not the inheritance of Canaan, appropriate to man living on the earth, which was the hope of Israel, and is still that of the unbelieving nation. The mercy of God had begotten them again for a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead. This resurrection showed them a portion in another world, and the power which brought man into it, although he had been subjected to death he would enter it by resurrection, through the glorious triumph of the Savior, to share an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The Apostle is not Braking of our resurrection with Christ: he views the Christian as a pilgrim here, encouraged by the triumph of Christ Himself in resurrection; which animated him by the consciousness that there was a world of light and happiness before him, and a power which would bring him into that world. Consequently, the inheritance is spoken of as "reserved in Heaven." in the Epistle to the Ephesians, we are seated in the Heavens in Christ; and the inheritance is that of all things of which Christ Himself is heir. But the Christian is also in fact a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth; and it is. a strong consolation to us, in our pilgrimage, to see this heavenly inheritance before us, safely kept in the

Heavens; and the resurrection of Jesus, as a certain pledge of our own entrance into it.

Another inestimable consolation is added. if the inheritance is preserved in Heaven for us, we are kept by the power of God all through our pilgrimage, that we may enjoy it at the end. Sweet thought!-we, kept here below, through all our dangers and difficulties, and, on the other hand, the inheritance there, where there is no defilement or possibility of decay.

But it is by moral means that this power preserves us (and it is in this way that Peter always speaks): by the operation in us of grace, which fixes the heart on objects that keep it in connection with God and with His promises (compare 2 Peter 1:4). We are kept by the power of God THROUGH FAITH. It is-God be praised!-the power of God Himself; but it acts by sustaining faith in the heart; maintaining it, in spite of all temptations, above all the defilements of the world, and filling the affections with heavenly things. Peter, however, always occupied with the ways of God respecting this world, only looks at the share that believers will have in this 'salvation, this heavenly glory, when it shall be manifested; when God will, by this glory, establish His authority in blessing on the earth. It is, indeed, the heavenly glory, but the heavenly glory manifested, as the means of the establishment of the supreme government of God on earth, for His own glory, and for the blessing of the whole world.

It is salvation, ready to be revealed in the last times. This word "ready" is important. Our apostle says, also, that the judgment is ready to be revealed. Christ is glorified personally, has conquered all His enemies, has accomplished redemption. He only waits for one thing, namely, that God should make His enemies His footstool. He has taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, because He has accomplished everything. It is the actual salvation of souls-the gathering together of His own, which is not yet finished (2 Peter 3:9,15); but when once all they who are to share it are brought in, there is nothing to wait for as regards the salvation; that is to say, the glory in which the redeemed will appear, nor, consequently, as regards the judgment of the wicked on the earth, which will be consummated by the manifestation of Christ. All is ready. This thought is sweet for us in our days of patience, but full of solemnity when we reflect upon the judgment.

Yes, as the apostle says, we rejoice greatly in this salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last times. We are waiting for it. It is the time of rest, of the earth's blessing, of the full manifestation of His glory who is worthy of it, who was humbled and who suffered for us; the time when the light and the glory of God in Christ will illumine the world, and chase away all its evil.

This is our portion: abundant joy in the salvation about to be revealed, and in which we may always rejoice; although, if it be needful for our good, we may be in sorrow through divers temptations. But it is only for a very little while-only a light affliction, which passes away, and which only comes upon us if it be needful, in order that the precious trial of faith should have its result in praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, for whom we are waiting. That is the end of all our sorrows and trials, transitory and light as they are, in comparison with the vast result of the excellent and eternal glory towards which they are leading us, according to the wisdom of God and the need of our souls. The heart attaches itself to Jesus: He will appear. We love Him, although we have never seen Him. In Him, though now we see Him not, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It is this which decides and forms the heart, which fixes it, and fills it with joy, however it may be with us in this life. To our hearts, it is He who fills all the glory. By grace, I shall be glorified-I shall have the glory; but I love Jesus, my heart pants for His presence,

desires to see Him. Moreover, we shall then be like Him. The apostle may well say, "unspeakable and full of glory." The heart can desire nothing else; and if some light afflictions are needful for us, we endure them gladly, since they are a means of forming us for the glory. And we can rejoice at the thought of Christ's appearing; for, in receiving Him unseen, into our heart, we receive the salvation of our soul. This is the object and the end of faith; far more precious than the temporal deliverances that Israel enjoyed, although the latter were tokens of the favor of God.

The apostle goes on to develop the three successive steps of the revelation of this grace of salvation-this full and entire deliverance from the consequences, the fruits, and the misery of sin. The prophecies; the testimony of the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven; the manifestation of Jesus Christ Himself, when the deliverance, that had been already announced, should be fully accomplished.

It is interesting to see here how the rejection of the Messiah, according to Jewish hopes, already anticipated and announced in the Prophets, necessarily made way for a salvation which brought with it that of the soul likewise. Jesus was no more seen, the earthly portion was not realized by His first coming, salvation was to be revealed in the last times. But thus a salvation of the soul was unfolded, the whole extent of which would be realized in the glory about to be revealed; for it was the spiritual joy of the soul in a heavenly Jesus who was not seen, and who, in His death, had accomplished expiation for sin, and in His resurrection, according to the power of the life of the Son of God, had begotten again to a living hope. By faith, then, this salvation was received -this true deliverance. It was not yet the glory and the outward rest; that salvation would indeed take place when Jesus appeared, but, meantime, the soul already enjoyed, by faith this perfect rest, and, in hope, even the glory itself. Now the prophets had announced the grace of God which was to be accomplished for believers, and, which, even now, imparts to the soul the enjoyment of that salvation; and they had searched into their own prophecies, which they had received by inspiration from God, seeking to understand what time, and what manner of time, the Spirit indicated, when He testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow. For the Spirit spoke of them both by the prophets, and signified, consequently, more than a temporal deliverance in Israel; for the Messiah was to suffer. And they discovered that it was not for themselves, nor for their own times, that the Spirit of Christ announced these truths with regard to the Messiah, but for Christians. But Christians, while receiving salvation of the soul by the revelation of a Christ seated in Heaven after His sufferings, and coming again in glory, have not received those glories which were revealed to the prophets. These things have been reported with great and divine plainness by the Holy Ghost, sent down from Heaven after the death of Jesus; but the Spirit does not bestow the glory itself in which the Lord will appear. He has only declared it. Christians have, therefore, to gird up the loins of their mind, to be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that (in effect) will be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Such are the three successive steps in God's dealings: the prediction of the events relating to Christ, which went altogether beyond Jewish blessings; the things reported by the Spirit; the accomplishment of the things promised, when Christ is revealed.

That, then; which the apostle presents is a participation in the glory of Christ when He shall be revealed; that salvation, of which the prophets had spoken, which was to be revealed in the last days. But, meantime, God had begotten again the believing Jews to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead; and, by means of His sufferings, had made

them comprehend that, even now, while waiting for the revelation of the glory, realizing it in the person of Jesus, they enjoyed a salvation of the soul before which the deliverances of Israel faded away, and might be forgotten. It was, indeed, the salvation "ready to be revealed" in all its fullness; but, as yet, they only possessed it in respect of the soul. But, being detached from the manifestation of the earthly glory, this salvation had a yet more spiritual character; therefore, they were to gird up their loins, while waiting for the revelation of Jesus, and to acknowledge, with thanksgiving, that they were in possession of the end of their faith. They were in relationship with God.

When announcing these things by the ministry of the prophets, God had Christians in view, and not the prophets themselves. This grace was in due time to be communicated to believers; but, meantime, for faith, and for the soul, the Holy Ghost, sent down from Heaven, bore testimony to it. It was to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Jesus Christ, which was the guarantee of the accomplishment of all the promises, and the power of life for their enjoyment, had begotten them again unto a living hope; but the right to enjoy the effect of the promise was founded on another truth. To this the exhortations conduct us. They were to walk as obedient children, no longer following the lusts that had led them in the days of their ignorance. Called by Him who is holy, they were to be holy in all their conversation, as it is written. Moreover, if they called on the Father, who, regardless of appearances, judged according to every one's works, they were to pass the time of their sojourn here in fear. Observe here, that he is not speaking of the final judgment of the soul. In that sense, "the Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son." The thing spoken of here is the daily judgment of God's government in this world, exercised, with regard to His children. Accordingly, it says, "the time of your sojourn here." It is a judgment applied to Christian life. The fear spoken of is not an uncertainty as to salvation and redemption. It is a fear founded on the certainty that one is redeemed; and the immense price, the infinite value of the means employed for our redemption-namely, the blood of the Lamb, without blemish and without spot- is the motive for fearing God during our pilgrimage. We have been redeemed, at the cost of the blood of Jesus, from our vain conversation; can we, then, still walk according to the principles from which we have been thus delivered? Such a price for our deliverance demands that we should walk with circumspection and gravity before the Father, with whom we desire to have intercourse, both as privilege and spiritual relationship.

The apostle then applies this truth to the Christians, whom he was addressing. This Lamb had been ordained in the counsels of God before the world was made; but He was manifested in the last days for believers: and these are presented in their true character; they believe in God by Jesus-by this Lamb. It is not by means of the creation that they believe: although creation is a testimony to His glory, it gives no rest to the conscience, and does not tell of a place in Heaven. It is not by means of Providence, which, even while directing all things, yet leaves the government of God in such profound darkness. Nor is it by means of the revelation of God on Mount Sinai under the name of Jehovah, and the terror connected with a broken law.

It is by means of Jesus, the Lamb of God, that we believe; observe that it is not said, "in Him," but by Him in God. We know God as the One who, when we were sinners and dead in our trespasses and sins, loved us, and gave this precious Savior to come down even into the death in which we were; to take part in our position, as lying under this judgment, and die as the Lamb of God. We believe in God who, by His power, when Jesus was there for us-in our stead-raised Him up from

the dead, and gave Him glory. It is in a Savior-God, therefore, a God who exercises His power in our behalf, that we believe by Jesus, so that our faith and our hope are in God. It does not say in something before God, but in God Himself. Where, then, shall any cause for fear or distrust arise as regards God, if our faith and hope are in Himself? This changes everything. The aspect in which we view God Himself is entirely changed, and this change is founded on that which establishes the righteousness of God in accepting us as cleansed from all sin, the love of God in blessing us perfectly in Jesus, whom His power has raised from the dead and glorified. Our faith and our hope are in God Himself.

This places us in the most intimate of relationships with the rest of the redeemed: objects of the same love, washed by the same precious blood, redeemed by the same Lamb, they become-to those whose hearts are purified by the reception of the truth through the Spirit -the objects of a tender brotherly love, a love unfeigned. They are our brethren. Let us, then, love one another fervently, with a pure heart. But this is based on another essential, vital principle. It is a new nature which acts in this affection. If we are redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb without spot, we are born of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, which lives and abides forever. For the flesh is but grass; the glory of man, as the flower of grass. The grass withers, its flower falls, but the Word of the Lord abides forever. This is the Word of the Gospel which has been preached unto us. It is an eternal principle of blessing. The believer is not born after the flesh, to enjoy temporary rights and blessings, as was the case with a Jew, but of an incorruptible seed, a principle of life as unchangeable as the Word of God Himself. The prophet had told them so, when comforting the people of God, all flesh, the nation itself, was but withered grass. God was unchangeable, and the Word which, by its immutable certainty, secured divine blessings to the objects of God's favor, wrought in the heart to beget a life as immortal and incorruptible as the Word which is its source.

Thus cleansed, therefore, and born of the Word, they were to put off all fraud, hypocrisy, envy, slander; and, as new-born babes, to seek for this milk of the understanding, in order to grow thereby; for the Word is the milk of the child, as it was the seed of its life; and we are to receive it as babes, in all simplicity; if in truth, we have felt that the Lord is good and full of grace. It is not Sinai (where the Lord God declared His law from the midst of the fire, so that they entreated not to hear His voice any more), to which I am come, or from which the Lord is speaking. If I have tasted and understood that the Lord acts in grace, that He is love towards me, and that His Word is the expression of that grace-even as it communicates life-I shall desire to feed on this milk of the understanding, which the believer enjoys in proportion to his simplicity; that good Word which announces to me nothing but grace, and the God whom I need as all grace, full of grace, acting in grace, as revealing Himself to me in this character -a character which He can never cease to maintain towards me.

I now know the Lord Himself: I have tasted that Which He is. Moreover, this is still in contrast with the legal condition of the Jew, although it is the fulfillment of that which the Psalms and the Prophets had declared: the resurrection, having plainly revealed in addition a heavenly hope. It was they themselves who were now the spiritual house, the holy priesthood. They came to the Living Stone, rejected, indeed, of men, but chosen of God and precious, and they were built up on Him as living stones. The Apostle delights in this word "living." It was to him the Father had revealed that Jesus was the Son of the Living God. No one else had then confessed Him as such, and the Lord told him that, on this rock, i.e., on the person of the Son of God in power of life

(manifested in the resurrection, which declared Him to be such), He would build His Church. Peter, by his faith, participated in the nature of this living rock. Here, then (2:5), he extends this character to all believers, and exhibits the holy house built on the Living Stone which God Himself had laid as the chief corner-stone, elect and precious. Whosoever believed in Him should not be confounded.

Now, it was not only in the eyes of God that this Stone was precious, but in the eyes of faith, which - feeble as the possessors of it may be - see as God sees. To unbelievers, this Stone was a Stone of stumbling and of offense. They stumbled at the Word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed. It does not say that they were appointed to sin, nor to condemnation but these unbelieving and disobedient sinners, the Jewish race, long rebellious, and continually exalting themselves against God, were destined to find in the Lord of grace Himself a rock of offense; and to stumble and fall upon that which was to faith the precious Stone of salvation. It was to this particular fall that their unbelief was destined.

Believers, on the contrary, entered into the enjoyment of the promises made to Israel, and that, in the most excellent way. Grace-and the very faithfulness of God-had brought the fulfillment of the promise in the person of Jesus, the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to fulfill the promises made to the fathers. And, although the nation had rejected Him, God would not deprive of the blessing those who-in spite of this difficulty to faith and to the heart-had submitted to the obedience of faith, and attached themselves to Him who was the despised of the nation. They could not have the blessing of Israel with the nation on earth, because the nation had rejected Him; but they were brought fully into the relationship with God of a people accepted of Him. The heavenly character which the blessing now assumed, did not destroy their acceptance according to the promise; only they entered into it according to grace. For the nation, as a nation, had lost it; not only long ago by disobedience, but now by rejecting Him who came in grace to impart to them the effect of the promise.

The Apostle, therefore, applies the character of "holy nation" to the elect remnant, investing them, in the main, with the titles bestowed in Ex. 19 on condition of obedience, but here in connection with the Messiah - their enjoyment of these titles being founded on His obedience, and on rights acquired by their faith in Him.

But the privileges of the believing remnant being founded on the Messiah, the Apostle goes farther, and applies to them the declarations of Hosea, which relate to Israel and Judah when re-established in the fullness of blessing in the last days, enjoying those relationships with God into which grace will bring them at that time.

"Ye are," he says, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a purchased people." These are almost the words of Ex. 19. He goes on: "Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; who formerly had not obtained mercy, but have now obtained it." These are the words of Hos. 2. This sets before us, in the most interesting way, the principle on which the blessing is founded. In Exodus, the people were to have this blessing if they exactly obeyed the voice of God. But Israel had not obeyed, had been rebellious and stiff-necked, had gone after strange Gods, and rejected the testimony of the Spirit: yet; after their unfaithfulness, God Himself had laid in Zion a stone, a chief corner-stone, and whosoever believed in Him should not be confounded. It is grace, that when Israel had failed in every respect, and, on the ground of

obedience, had lost everything, God should bestow on them by Jesus, through grace, that which was promised them at first on condition of obedience. In this way all was secured to them. The question of obedience was settled-on Israel's disobedience-by grace, and by the obedience of Christ; the foundation laid by God in Zion But this principle of grace abounding over sin-by which is shown the inability of disobedience to frustrate the purposes of God, for this grace came after the completion of disobedience -this principle, so glorious and so comforting to the convinced sinner, is confirmed in a striking way by the quotation from Hosea. In this passage from the prophet, Israel is presented, not merely as guilty, but as having already undergone judgment. God had declared that He would no more have mercy (with regard to His patience towards the ten tribes); and that Israel was no longer His people (in His judgment on unfaithful Judah). But afterward, when the judgment had been executed, He returns to His irrevocable purposes of grace, and allures Israel as a forsaken wife, and gives her the Valley of Achor - the valley of trouble, in which Achan was stoned, the first judgment on unfaithful Israel after their entrance into the promised land-for a door of hope. For judgment is changed into grace, and God begins all afresh upon a new principle. It was as though Israel had again come out of Egypt, but upon an entirely new principle. He betroths her to Him forever, in righteousness, in judgment, in grace, in mercy, and all is blessing. Then He calls her "Ru-hama," or, "the subject of mercy;" and "Ammi," "my people." These, then, are the expressions which the Apostle uses, applying them to the remnant who believed in Jesus, the stumbling-stone to the nation, but the chief corner-stone from God to the believer. Thus, the condition is taken away, and instead of a condition we have blessing after disobedience, and after judgment the full and assured grace of God, founded (in its application to believers) on the person, the obedience, and the work of Christ.

It is affecting to see the expression of this grace in the term "Achor." It was the first judgment on Israel in the Land of Promise, for having profaned themselves with the forbidden thing. And there it is that hope is given: so entirely true is it that grace triumphs over justice. And it is this which has taken place in the most excellent way in Christ. The very judgment of God becomes. in Him the door of hope, the guilt and the judgment having alike passed away forever.

Two parts of the Christian life-so far as it is the manifestation of spiritual power-result from this, in the double priesthood, of which the one answers to the present position of Christ on high, and the other; anticipatively, to the manifestation of His glory on earth: the priesthoods of Aaron and of Melchizedek. For He is now within the veil, according to the type of Aaron; hereafter He will be a priest on his throne; it will be the public manifestation of His glory on earth. Thus, the saints exercise "a holy priesthood" (verse 5), to offer up spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. Sweet privilege of the Christian, thus brought as near as possible to God; he offers -sure of being accepted- for it is by Jesus that he offers them - his sacrifices to God.

This part of the Christian life is the first, the most excellent, the most vital, the source of the other (which is its expression here below); the most excellent, because, in its exercise, we are in immediate connection with the divine objects of our affections. These spiritual sacrifices are the reflex, by the action of the Holy Ghost, of the grace which we enjoy; that which the heart returns to God, moved by the excellent gifts of which we are the object, and by the love which has committed them to us. The heart (by the power of the Holy Ghost) reflects all that has been revealed to it in grace; worshipping the Author and Giver of all, according to the knowledge we have of Himself through this means: the fruits of the heavenly Canaan in which we participate, presented as an

offering to God: the entrance of the soul into the presence of God, to praise and adore Him.

This is the holy priesthood, according to the analogy of the priesthood of Aaron, and of the temple at Jerusalem which. God inhabited as His house.

The second priesthood of which the Apostle speaks is, to show forth the virtues of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Its description is taken, as we have seen, from Ex. 19. It is a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood. I only allude to the Melchizedek priesthood to show the character of a royal priesthood. Priests, among the Jews, drew near to God. God had formed the people for Himself; they were to show forth all His virtues, His praises. Christ will do this perfectly' in the day of His glory. The Christian is called to do it now, in this world. He is to reproduce Christ in this world. It is the second part of his life.

It will be noticed that the first chapter of this Epistle presents the Christian as animated by hope, but under trial-the precious trial of faith. The second chapter presents him in his privileges, as of a holy and royal priesthood, by means of faith.

1 Peter 2

After this (chap: 2:11), the Apostle begins his exhortations. Whatever may be the privileges of the Christian, in this position, he is always viewed as a pilgrim on the earth; and, as we have seen, the constant government of God is the object that presents itself to the mind of the Apostle. But he warns them first, with regard to that which is inward, against those sources from which the corruptions spring, that (in the scene of this government), would dishonor the name of God, and even bring in judgment.

Their conversation was to be honest among the Gentiles. Christians bore the name of God. The mind of men, hostile to His name, sought to bring disgrace upon it, by attributing to Christians the evil conduct which they themselves followed without remorse, while, at the same time, complaining (4:4) that they would not go with them into the same excesses and disorder. The Christian had only to follow the path of faithfulness to God. In the day when God would visit men, these calumniators, with their will broken and their pride subdued by the visitation of God, should be brought to confess-by means of the good works which, in spite of their calumnies, had always reached their conscience-that God had acted in these Christians, that He had been present among them.

After this general exhortation, brief, but important to believers, the Apostle takes up the relative walk of Christians in a world where, on the one hand, God watches over all, yet where He permits His own to suffer, whether for righteousness' sake, or for the name of Christ; but where they ought never to suffer for having done wrong. The path, then, of the Christian is marked out. He is subject, for the Lord's sake, to human ordinances or institutions. He gives honor to all Men, and to each in his place, so that no one shall have any reproach to bring against him. He is submissive to his masters, even if they are had men, and yields to their ill-treatment. Were he subject only to the good and gentle, a worldly slave would do as much; but if, having done well, he suffers, and bears it patiently, this is acceptable to God. This is grace. It was thus that Christ acted, and to this we are called. Christ suffered in this way, and never replied by reproaches or threats to those who molested him, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. To Him we belong. He has suffered for our sins, in order that; having been delivered from them, we should live to God. These Christians from among the Jews had been as sheep going astray; they were now brought back to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

1 Peter 3

Likewise, wives were to be subject to their husbands in all modesty and purity, in order that this testimony to the effect of the Word by its fruits might take the place of the Word itself, if their husbands would not listen to it. They were to rest, in patience and meekness, on the faithfulness of God, and not be alarmed at seeing the power of the adversaries (compare Phil. 1:28).

Husbands were, in like manner, to dwell with the wife: their affections and relationships being governed by Christian knowledge, and not by any human passion; honoring the wife, and walking with her as being heirs together of the grace of life.

Finally, all were to walk in the spirit of peace and gentleness, carrying with them in their intercourse with others the blessing of which they were themselves the heirs, and the spirit of which they ought, consequently, to bear with them. By following that which is good, by having the tongue governed by the fear of the Lord, by avoiding evil and seeking peace, they would in quietness, enjoy the present life under the eye of God. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who, moreover, would harm them, if they followed only that which is good?

This, then, is the government of God, the principle on which he superintends the course of this world. Nevertheless, it is not now a direct and immediate government, preventing all wrong. The power of evil still acts upon the earth; those who are animated by it show themselves hostile to the righteous; and act by means of that fear which Satan is able to produce. But by giving the Lord His place in the soul, this fear which the enemy excites has no longer a place there. If the heart is conscious of the presence of God, can that heart tremble at the presence of the enemy? This is the secret of boldness and peace in confessing Christ. Then, the instruments of the enemy seek to turn us aside, and to overwhelm us by their pretensions; but the consciousness of God's presence dissipates those pretensions, and destroys all their power. Resting on the strength of His presence, we are ready to answer those who ask the reason of our hope with meekness and a holy reverence, remote from all levity. For all this, it is necessary to have a good conscience. We may carry a bad conscience to God, that he may pardon and have mercy on us; but if we have a bad conscience, we cannot resist the enemy—we are afraid of him. On the one hand, we fear his malice; on the other, we have lost the consciousness of the presence and the strength of God. When walking before God, we fear nothing; the heart is free, we have not to think of self, we think of God, and the adversaries are ashamed of having falsely accused those whose conduct is unblameable, and against whom nothing can be brought except the calumny of their enemies, which calumnies turn to their own shame.

It may be that God sees it good that we should suffer. If so, it is better that we should suffer for well doing than for evil doing. The Apostle gives a touching motive for this; Christ has suffered for sin once for all; let that suffice; let us suffer only for righteousness. To suffer for sin was His task: He accomplished it, and that forever. Put to death, as to His life in the flesh, but quickened according to the power of the Divine Spirit.

The passage that follows has occasioned difficulties to the readers of Scripture; but it appears to me simple, if we perceive the object of the Spirit of God. The Jews expected a Messiah corporeally present, who should deliver the nation, and exalt the Jews to the summit of earthly glory. But He was not present, we know, in that manner, and the believing Jews had to endure the scoffs and the hatred of the unbelieving, on account of their trust in a Messiah who was not present, and who had wrought no deliverance for the people. Believers possessed the salvation of their soul, and they knew Jesus in Heaven; but unbelieving men did not care for that. The Apostle, therefore, cites the case of Noah's testimony. The believing Jews were few in number, and Christ was theirs only according to the Spirit. By the power of that Spirit He had been raised up from the dead. It was by the power of the same Spirit that He had gone-without being corporeally present-to preach in Noah. The world was disobedient (like the Jews in the Apostle's days), and eight souls only were saved; even as the believers were now but a little flock. But the spirits of the disobedient were now in prison, because they did not obey Christ present among-them by His spirit in Noah. The long-suffering of God waited then, as now with the Jewish nation; the result would be the same. It has been so.

This interpretation is confirmed (in preference to that which supposes that the Spirit of Christ preached in Hades to souls which had been confined there ever since the flood) by the consideration that in Genesis it is said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with men, but their days shall be a hundred and twenty years." That is to say, His Spirit should strive, in the testimony of Noah, during a hundred and twenty years, and no longer. Now, it would be an extraordinary thing, that with those persons only (for he speaks only of them) the Lord should strive in testimony after their death. Moreover, we may observe, that in considering this expression to mean the Spirit of Christ in Noah, we only use a well-known phrase of Peter's; for he it is, as we have seen, who said, "The Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets."

These spirits, then, are in prison, because they did not hearken to the Spirit of Christ in Noah (compare 2 Peter 2:5-9). To this the apostle adds the comparison of baptism to the ark of Noah in the deluge. Noah was saved through the water. We also; for the water of baptism typifies death, as the deluge, so to speak, was the death of the world. Now, Christ has passed through death and is risen. We enter into death in baptism; but it is like the ark, because Christ suffered in death for us, and has come out of it in resurrection, as Noah came out of the deluge, to begin, as it were, a new life in a resurrection-world. Now Christ, having passed through death, has atoned for sin; and we, by passing through it in spirit, leave all our sins in it, as Christ died, in reality for us; for He was raised up without the sins which He expiated on the Cross. And they were our sins; and thus, through the resurrection, we have a good conscience. We pass through death, in spirit and in figure; by baptism: the force of the thing is the resurrection of Christ, after He had accomplished expiation; by which resurrection, therefore, we have a good conscience.

Now, this is what the Jews had to learn. The Christ was gone up to Heaven, all powers and principalities being made subject to Him. He is at the right hand of God. We have, therefore, not a Messiah on earth, but a good conscience and a heavenly Christ.

1 Peter 4

From the beginning of this chapter to the end of verse 7, the apostle continues to speak of the general principles of God's government, exhorting the Christian to act on the principles of Christ Himself, which would cause him to avoid the walk condemned by that government, while waiting for the judgment of the world by the Christ whom he served. Christ glorified, as we saw at the close of the previous chapter, was ready to judge; and they who were exasperated against the Christians, and who were led by their own passions, without caring for the coming judgment, would have to give account to that Judge whom they refused to own as Savior.

Here, it will be observed, it is suffering for righteousness' sake (2:17, 3:19), in connection with the government and judgment of God. The principle was this: they accepted, they followed, the Savior whom the world and the nation rejected; they walked in His holy footsteps in righteousness, as pilgrims and strangers, abandoning the corruption that reigned in the world. Walking in peace and following after good, they avoided, to a certain extent, the attacks of others; and the eyes of Him, who watches from on high over, all things, rested upon the righteous. Nevertheless, in the relations of ordinary life (2:18), and in their- intercourse with men, they might have to suffer, and to bear flagrant injustice. Now, the time of God's judgment was not yet come. Christ was in Heaven; He had been rejected on the earth, and the Christian's part was to follow Him. The time of the manifestation of the government of God would be at the judgment which Christ should execute. Meanwhile, His walk on earth had furnished the pattern of that which the God of judgment approved (2:21-23, 4:1, and following verses).

They were to do good, to suffer, and to be patient. This is well-pleasing to God; this is what Christ did. It was better that they should suffer for doing well, if God saw fit, than for doing ill. Christ (2:24) had borne our sins, had suffered for our sins, the Just for the unjust, in order that we, being dead to sin, should live for righteousness, and in order to bring us unto God Himself. Christ is now on high; He is ready to judge. When the judgment shall come, the principles of God's government will be manifested, and shall prevail.

The beginning of chap. 4 requires some rather more detailed remarks. The death of Christ is there applied to practical death unto- sin; a state presented in contrast with the life of the Gentiles.

Christ, on the Cross (the apostle alludes to the 18th verse of the preceding chapter), suffered in the flesh for us. He died, in fact, as regards His human life. We must arm ourselves with the same mind, and allow of no life as to the will of the -old man, but hold ourselves to be dead as to the flesh, never yielding to its will. Sin is the action in us of the will of the flesh, the will of the man as alive in this world. When this will acts, the principle of sin is there; for we ought to obey: The will of God ought to be the spring of our moral life; and so much the more, because now that we have the knowledge of good and evil-now that the will of the flesh, unsubject to God, is in us, we must either take the will of God as our only motive, or act according to the will of the flesh, for the latter is always present in us.

Christ chose to die, to suffer all things, rather than not obey. He thus, dies to sin, which never found an entrance into His heart. With Him it was death, rather than disobedience, tempted thus to the uttermost. The sin which ever assailed Him (for He had none within) was always kept outside; and by dying, by suffering in the flesh, He entered forever into rest, after having been tried to the uttermost, and tempted in all things similarly to us, as regards the trial of faith, the conflict of the spiritual life.

Now, it is the same thing with respect to ourselves. If I suffer in the flesh,, the will of the flesh is assuredly not in action; and the flesh, suffering, i.e., dying, has nothing more to do with sin. We, then, are freed from it, have done with it, and, are at rest. If we are content to suffer, the will does not act; sin is not there, as to fact; for to suffer is not will, it is grace acting in accordance with the image and the mind of Christ in the new man; and we are freed from the action of the old man. It does not act; we rest from it; we have done with it, no longer to live, for the remainder of our life here below in the flesh, according to the lusts of man, but according to the will of God, which the new man follows.

It is enough to have spent the past time of our lives in doing the will of the Gentiles (he still speaks to Christians of the circumcision), and in committing the excesses to which they addicted themselves, while they wondered at Christians for refusing to do the same; speaking evil of them for this reason. But they would have to give account to Him, who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

The Jews were accustomed to the judgment of the living, for they were the center of God's government on the earth. The judgment of the dead, with which we are more familiar, had not been definitely revealed to them. They were liable, nevertheless, to this judgment; for it was with this object that the promises of God were presented to them while living, in order that they might either live according to God in the Spirit, or be judged as men responsible for what they had done in the flesh. For the one or other of these results would be produced in every one who heard the promises. Thus, in regard to the Jews, the judgment of the dead would take place in connection with the promises that had been set before them. For this testimony from God placed all who heard it under responsibility, so that they would be judged as men who had to give account to God of their conduct in the flesh, unless they came out of this position of life in the flesh by being quickened through the power of the Word addressed to them, applied by the energy of the Spirit; so that they escaped from the flesh through the spiritual life which they received.

Now the end of all things was at hand. The apostle, while speaking of the great principle of responsibility in connection with the testimony of God, draws the attention of believers to the solemn thought of the end of all these things on which the flesh rested. This end drew near.

Here, observe, Peter presents, not the coming of the Lord to receive His own, nor His manifestation with them, but that moment of the solemn sanction of the ways of God, when every refuge of the flesh should disappear, and all the thoughts of man perish forever.

As regards the relations of God with the world in government, the destruction of Jerusalem, although it was not "the end," was of immense importance, because it destroyed the very seat of that government on the earth, in which the Messiah ought to have reigned, and shall yet reign.

God watches over all things, takes care of His own, counts the hairs of their heads, makes everything contribute to their highest good; but this is in the midst of a world which He no longer owns; for not only is the earthly and direct government of God set aside, which took place in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and, in a certain sense, in those of Saul, but the Messiah, who ought to reign in it, has been rejected, and has taken the heavenly place in resurrection, which forms the subject of this Epistle.

The destruction of Jerusalem (which was to take place in those days) was the final abolition of even the traces of that government, until the Lord shall return. The relations of an earthly people with God, on the ground of man's responsibility, were ended. The general government of God took the place of the former; a government always the same in principle, but which, Jesus having suffered on the earth, still allowed His members to suffer here below. And, until the time of judgment, the wicked will persecute the righteous, and the righteous must have patience. With regard to the nation, those relations only subsisted till the destruction of Jerusalem; the unbelieving hopes of the Jews, as a nation, were judicially overthrown. The apostle speaks here in a general way, and in view of the effect of the solemn truth of the end of all things, for Christ is still "ready to judge;" and if there is delay, it is because God willeth not the death of the sinner, and He prolongs the time of grace.

In view of this end of all that we see, we ought to be sober, and watch in order to pray. We ought to have the heart thus exercised towards God, who changes not who will never pass away, and who preserves us through all the difficulties and temptations of this passing scene, until the day of deliverance, which is coming, Instead of allowing ourselves to be carried away by present and visible things, we must bridle self and will, and corn-mime with God.

This leads the apostle to the inner position of Christians; their relations among themselves, not with God's general government of the world. They follow, not righteousness, because they are Christians, but Christ Himself. The first thing that he enforces on them is fervent charity; not merely long-suffering, which would prevent any outbreak of the anger of the flesh, but an energy of love, which, by stamping its character on all the ways of Christians towards each other, would practically set aside the action of the flesh, and make manifest the divine presence and action.

Now this love covered a multitude of sins. He is not speaking here with a view to ultimate pardon, but of the present notice which God takes - His present relations of government with His people. For we have present relationships with God. If the Church is at variance, if there is little love, if the intercourse among Christians is bad, the existing evil, the mutual wrongs, subsist before God; but if there is love, which neither commits nor resents these things, but pardons them, and only finds in them occasion for its own exercise, it is then the love which the eye of God rests upon, and not the evil. Even if there are misdeeds - sins, love occupies itself about them, the offender is brought back, is restored, by the charity of the Church; the sins are removed from the eye of God-they are covered. It is a quotation from the Book of Proverbs, 10:12: "Hatred stirreth up strife, but love covereth all sins." We have a right to forgive them to wash the feet of our brother. Compare James 5:15, and 1 John 5:16. We not only forgive, but love maintains the Church before God according to His own nature, so that He can bless it.

Christians ought to exercise hospitality towards each other with all liberality. It is the expression of love, and tends much to maintain it: we are no longer strangers to each other.

Gifts come next, after the exercise of grace. All comes from God. As every one had received the gift, he was to serve, in the gift, as a steward of the varied grace of God. It is God who gives; the Christian is a servant, and under responsibility as a steward, on God's part. He is to ascribe all to God, in a direct way to God. If he speaks, he is to speak as an oracle of God, i.e., as speaking on God's part, and not from himself. If any one serves in things temporal, let him do it as in a power and an ability that come from God, so that whether one speaks or serves, God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To Him, the apostle adds, be praise and dominion, Amen:

After these exhortations, lie comes to sufferings for the name of Christ. They were not to view the fiery persecution, that came to try them, as some strange thing that had befallen them. On the contrary, they were connected with a suffering and rejected Christ; they partook, therefore, in His sufferings, and were to rejoice at it. He would soon appear, and these sufferings for His sake should turn to their exceeding joy at the revelation of His glory. They were, therefore, to rejoice at sharing His sufferings, in order to be filled with abounding joy when His glory should be revealed. If they were reproached for the name of Christ, it was happy for them; the Spirit of glory and of God rested on them. It was the name of Christ that brought reproach on them. He was in the glory with God; the Spirit, who came from that glory, and that God, filled them with joy in bearing the 'reproach. It was Christ who was reproached- Christ who was glorified; reproached by the enemies of the Gospel, while Christians had the joy of glorifying Him. It will be observed, that in this passage it is for Christ Himself (as it has been said that the believer suffers; and, therefore, the apostle speaks of glory and joy at the appearing of Jesus Christ, which he does not mention in chap. 2:20, 3:17. Comp. Matt. 5:10, and ver. 11, 12, of the same chapter.

As an evil-doer, then, the Christian ought never to suffer; but if he suffered as a Christian, he was not to be ashamed, but to glorify God for it. The Apostle then returns to the government of God; for these sufferings of believers had also another character. To the individual who suffered, it was a glory: he shared the sufferings of Christ, and the Spirit of glory and of God rested on him; and all this should turn to abounding joy when the glory was revealed. But God had no pleasure in allowing His people to suffer. He permitted it: and if Christ had to suffer for us, when He who knew no sin did not need it for Himself, the people of God have often need on their own account to be exercised with suffering. God uses the wicked, the enemies of the name of Christ, for this purpose. Job is the book that explains this, independently of all dispensations. But in every form of God's dealings, He exercises His judgments according to the order He has established. He did so with Israel. He does so with the Church. The latter has a heavenly portion; and if she attaches herself to the earth, God allows the enemy to trouble her. Perhaps the individual who suffers is full of faith and devoted love to the Lord; but, under persecution, the heart feels that the world is not its rest, that it must have its portion elsewhere, its strength elsewhere. We are not of the world which persecutes us. If the faithful servant of God is cut off from this world by persecution, it strengthens faith-for God is in it; but they, from the midst of whom he is cut off, suffer, and feel that the hand of God was in it; His dealings take the form of judgment; always in perfect love, but in discipline.

God judges everything according to His own nature. He desires that all should be in accordance with His nature. No upright and honorable man would like to have the wicked near him, and always before him; God assuredly would not. And in that which is nearest to Him, He must above all desire that everything should correspond to His nature and His holiness-to all that He is. I would have everything around me clean enough not to disgrace me; but in my own house I must have

such cleanness as I personally desire. Thus, judgment must begin at the house of God: the Apostle alludes to Ezek. 9:6. It is a solemn principle. No grace, no privilege changes the nature of God; and everything must be conformed to that nature, or, in the end, must be banished from His 'presence. Grace can conform us, and it does. It bestows the divine nature: so that there is a principle of absolute conformity to God. But as to practical conformity in thought and deed, the heart and the conscience must be exercised, in order that the understanding of the heart, and the habitual desires and aspirations of will, should be formed upon the revelation of God, and continually directed towards Him. Now, if this conformity should so fail, that the testimony of God is injured by its absence, God, who judges His people, and who will judge evil everywhere, does so by means of the chastisements which He inflicts. Judgment begins at the house of God. The righteous are saved with difficulty. It is evidently not redemption or justification that is here intended, nor the communication of life: those whom the Apostle addresses were in possession of them. To our Apostle, "salvation" is not only the present enjoyment of the salvation of the soul, but the full deliverance of the faithful, which will take place at the coming of Christ in glory. All the temptations are contemplated, all the trials, all the dangers, through which the Christian will pass in reaching the end of his career. All the power of God is requisite, directed by divine wisdom, guiding and sustaining faith, to carry the Christian safely through the wilderness, where Satan employs all the resources of his subtlety to make him perish. The power of God will accomplish it; but, from the human point of view, the difficulties are almost insurmountable. Now, if the righteous-according to the ways of God, who must maintain His judgment conformably to the principles of good and evil in His government; and who will in nowise deny Himself in dealing with the enemy of our souls - if the righteous were saved with difficulty, what would become of the sinner and the ungodly? To join them would not be the way to escape these difficulties. In suffering as a Christian, there was but one thing to do - to commit oneself to Him who watched over the judgment that He was executing. For, as it was His hand, one suffered according to His will. It was this that Christ did.

Observe here, that it is not only the government of God; but there is the expression "as unto a faithful Creator." The Spirit of God moves in this sphere: It is the relationship of God with this world, and the soul knows Him as the One who created it, and who does not forsake the work of His hands. This is Jewish ground; God known in His connection with the first Creation. Trust in Him is founded on Christ; but God is known in His ways with this world, and with us in our pilgrimage here below, where He governs, and where He judges Christians as He will judge all others.

1 Peter 5

The Apostle returns to Christian details. He exhorts the elders-himself an elder; for it appears that, among the Jews, this title was rather characteristic than Official (Compare ver. 5.). He exhorts them to feed the flock of God. The Apostle designates himself as one who had been a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and who was to be a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. It was the function of the twelve to be witnesses of the life of Christ (John 15), as it was that of the Holy Ghost to testify of his heavenly glory. Peter places himself at the two ends of the Lord's history, and leaves the interval devoid of all except hope, and the pilgrimage towards an end. He had seen the sufferings of Christ; he was to share His glory when He should be revealed. It is a Christ on the ground of faith who puts Himself in relation with the Jews. During His life on earth, He was in the midst of the Jews, although suffering there and rejected. When He shall appear, He will again be in relation with the earth and with that nation.

Paul speaks differently, while, at the same time, confirming these truths. He only knew the Lord after His exaltation; he is not a witness of His sufferings; but he seeks for the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings. Paul's heart is bound to Christ while He is in Heaven, as united to 'Him above'; and, although he desires the Lord's appearing, for the restitution of all things, he rejoices to know that he shall go with joy to meet Him, and shall return with Him when He is revealed from Heaven.

The elders were to feed the flock of God with a ready mind, and not as by constraint, nor for gain, nor as governing an inheritance of their own, but as ensamples to the flock. Loving care was to be lavished upon it, for the sake of Christ, the chief Shepherd, with a view to the good of souls. Moreover, it was the flock of God which they were to feed. What a solemn as well as sweet thought! How impossible for any one to entertain the notion of its being his flock, if he has laid hold of the thought that it is the flock of God, and that God allows us to feed it.

We may observe that the heart of the blessed Apostle is where the Lord had placed it. "Feed my sheep," was the expression of the Lord's perfect grace towards, Peter, when He was leading him to the humiliating, but salutary, confession, that it needed the eye of God to see that His weak disciple loved Him. At the moment that He convinced him of his utter nothingness, He entrusted to him that which was dearest to Himself.

Thus we see here that it is the Apostle's care, the desire of the heart, that they should feed the flock. Here, as elsewhere, he does not go beyond the Lord's appearing. It is at that period that the ways of God in government-of which the Jews were the earthly center -shall be fully manifested. Then shall the crown of glory be presented to him that has been faithful, that has satisfied the Chief Shepherd's heart.

The young were to submit themselves to those who were older, and all to one another. All were to be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. These are still the principles of His government. Under His hand, they were therefore to humble themselves; they

should be exalted in due time. This was to commit themselves to God. He knew what was needful. He who loved them would exalt them at the right time. He cared for them; they were to rest on Him, commit all their cares to Him.

On the other hand, they were to be sober and vigilant, because the adversary sought to devour them. Here-whatever may be his wiles, however he may lie in wait for Christians-it is in the character of a roaring lion, one who excites open persecution, that the Apostle presents him. They were to resist him, steadfast in the faith. Everywhere the same afflictions were found. Nevertheless, the God of all grace is the Christian's confidence. He has called us to participate in His eternal glory. The Apostle's desire for them is, that, after they had suffered for a time, the God of grace should make them perfect, complete; should stablish and strengthen them, building up their hearts on the foundation of an assurance that cannot be shaken. To Him, he adds, be glory and dominion.

We see that the Christians to whom he wrote were suffering, and that the Apostle explained these sufferings on the principles of the divine government, with regard especially to the relation of Christians with God, as being His house; whether those sufferings were for righteousness' sake, or for the name of the Lord. It was but for a time. The Christian's hope was elsewhere; Christian patience was well-pleasing to God. It was their glory, if it was for the name of Christ. Besides which, God judged His house, and watched over His people.

2 John

The second Epistle of John warns the faithful against the reception of those who do not teach the truth respecting the person of Christ. The third encourages believers to receive and help those who teach it. Accordingly, they both, and the second especially, lay stress on "the truth."

The Apostle loved this elect lady, "in the truth;" as did also all those who had known the truth, and that for the truth's sake. He wished her blessing in truth and in love. He rejoiced that he had found some who were her children walking in the truth. He desired that there should be mutual love among Christians, but this was love, that they should keep the commandments; for many deceivers were come into the world. Now, whosoever transgressed, and did not abide in the doctrine of Christ, had not God. He ends his epistle, of which we have given an almost complete summary, by exhorting this lady, in case any one should come and not bring this doctrine, not to receive him into her house, nor say to him, "God bless you, or be with you," or "I salute you." For to do so, would be to make herself a partaker in the evil he was doing.

The false doctrine which was abroad at that moment was the denial of the truth of Christ come in the flesh; but the Apostle says, in a general way, that if any one transgressed and did not abide in the doctrine of Christ, he had not God.

We learn several important things in this little epistle. The mission of a man who went about preaching was never brought into question, but the doctrine which he brought; if he brought sound doctrine, he was welcome.

A woman having the Word - as this epistle, for example -was capable of judging his doctrine, and responsible to do so. Inexorable rigor was to be maintained, if the doctrine as to the person of Christ were touched. The door was to be shut against whoever falsified it. They were not even to say to him "I salute you;" for they who did so, became partakers of his evil work. It would be to help on the deceits of Satan.

Moreover, the semblance of love which does not maintain the truth, but accommodates itself to that which is not the truth, is not love according to God. It is the taking, advantage of the name of love, in order to help on the seductions of Satan. In the last days, the test of true love is the maintenance of the truth. God would have us love one another, but the Holy Ghost, by whose power we receive this divine nature, and who pours the love of God into our hearts, is the Spirit of truth, and His office is to glorify Christ. Therefore, it is impossible that a love which can put up with a doctrine that falsifies Christ, and which is indifferent to it, can be of the Holy Ghost-still less so, if such indifference be set up as the proof of that love.

The doctrine of the reward and crown of glory which the laborer possesses in the fruits of his ministry, is presented in a very strong light in the eighth verse. This second epistle puts Christians on their guard against all that is equivocal with respect to the person of Christ; and exhorts to an unwavering firmness on this point.

3 John

The third Epistle encourages the believer to the exercise of hospitality whether towards the known brethren or strangers, and to all benevolent care in furthering their journey when departing, provided that they come with the truth and for the truth's sake, without salary or provision. Gaius received them, as it appears, and was helpful to them, both in his own house and on their journey. Diotrephes, on the contrary, did not love these strangers, who went about, as it is said, without a formal mission, and without any visible means of subsistence. They had gone forth for the Lord's sake, and had received nothing from the Gentiles. If in reality they came out of love to that name, one did well to receive them.

Again, the Apostle insists on the truth, as characterizing real love; "Whom I love in the truth," he says to Gaius. He rejoiced when the brethren (those, I imagine, whom Gaius had received into his house and helped on their journey) testified of the truth that was in him, as in effect he walked in the truth. The Apostle had no greater joy than that of hearing that his children walked in the truth. In receiving those who went forth to preach the truth, they helped the truth itself; they were co-workers with it. Diotrephes would have nothing to do with this; he not only refused to receive these itinerant preachers, but excommunicated those who did so. He claimed authority for himself. The Apostle would remember it. It was their duty to do good. He that doeth good is of God.

He goes so far, with regard to the truth, as to say that the truth itself bore witness to Demetrius. I suppose that the latter had propagated it, and that the establishment and confirmation of the truth everywhere—at least, where he had labored—was a testimony with regard to himself.

This insistence on the truth, as the test for the last days, is very remarkable. And so are these courses of preaching, by persons who took nothing of the Gentiles when they came forth, leaving it to God to cause them to be received of those who had the truth at heart; the truth being their only passport among Christians, and the only means by which the Apostle could guard the faithful. It appears that they were of the Jewish race, for he says, "receiving nothing of the Gentiles," the Apostle thus making the distinction. I notice this, because, if it be so, the force of the expression, "And not for ours only," 1 John 2:2, becomes simple and evident; which it is not to every one. The Apostle, as Paul does, makes the difference of us, Jews—though one in Christ. We may also remark that the Apostle addressed the assembly, and not Diotrephes its head; and that it was this leader who, loving pre-eminence, resisted the Apostle's words, which the assembly, as it appears, were not inclined to do.

Gaius persevered in his godly course, in spite of the ecclesiastical authority (whatever may have been its right or pretended right) which Diotrephes evidently exercised; for he cast parsons out of the assembly.

When the Apostle came, he would (like Paul) manifest his real power. He did not own in himself an ecclesiastical authority to remedy these things by a command. These epistles are very remarkable in this respect. With regard to those who went about preaching, the only means he had, even in

the case of a woman, was to call her attention to the truth. The authority of the preacher lay altogether in that. His competency was another matter. The Apostle knew no authority which sanctioned their mission, and the absence of which would prove it to be false or unauthorized. The whole question of their reception lay in the doctrine which they brought. The Apostle had no other way to judge of the authority of their mission. There was then no other, for had there been any, that authority would have flowed from him. He would have been able to say, "Where are the proofs of their mission?" He knew none but this-do they bring the truth? If not, do not salute them. If they bring the truth, you do well to receive them, in spite of all the Diotrephes in the world.

2 Peter

The Second Epistle of Peter is even more simple than the first. Like those of Jude and John, it is written essentially with a view to the seducers, who, with large promises of liberty, beguiled souls into sin and licentiousness-denying the coming of Christ, and, in fact, disowning all His rights over them. This epistle admonishes the same Christians, to whom, the first was written, pointing out the characteristic features of these false teachers; denouncing them with the utmost energy; explaining the long-sufferance of God, and announcing a judgment which, like His patience, would befit the majesty of Him who was to execute it.

2 Peter 1

But before giving these warnings, which begin with chap. 2, the Apostle exhorts Christians to make their own calling and election sure-not evidently in the heart of God, but as a fact in their own hearts, and in practical life, by walking in such a manner as not to stumble, so that testimony to their portion in Christ should be always evident, and an abundant entrance be ministered to them.

These exhortations are founded, 1st, on that which is already given to Christians; 2ndly, on that which is future-namely, the manifestation of the glory of the Kingdom. In touching upon this last subject, He indicates a still more excellent portion-the bright Morning Star, the heavenly Christ Himself; and our association with Him before He appears as the Sun of Righteousness; 3rdly, we shall see that the warnings are founded also on another basis-namely, the dissolution of the heavens and the earth, proving the instability of all that unbelief rested upon, and furnishing, for the same reason, a solemn warning to the saints to induce them to walk in holiness.

The Apostle describes his brethren as having obtained the same precious faith as himself, through the faithfulness of God to the promises made to the fathers, for that surely is the force of the word righteousness in this place. The faithfulness of the God of Israel had bestowed on His people this faith (that is to say, Christianity), which was so precious to them.

Faith here is the portion we have now in the things that God gives, which in Christianity are revealed as truths, while the things promised are not yet come. It was in this way that the believing Jews were to possess the Messiah, and all that God gave in Him - as the Lord had said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. There are many mansions in my Father's house; I go to prepare a place for you." That is to say, "You do not visibly possess God; you enjoy Him by believing in Him. It is the same with respect to me: you will not possess me corporeally, but you shall enjoy all that is in me, righteousness, and all the promises of God by believing." It was thus that these believing Jews, to whom Peter wrote, possessed the Lord: they had received this precious faith.

He wishes them, as was his custom, "Grace and peace," adding, "Through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." it is the knowledge of God and of Jesus, which is the center and the support of faith, that which nourishes it, and guards it from the vain imaginings of seducers. But there is a living power in this knowledge -a divine power in that which God is to believers-as He is revealed in this knowledge to faith; and this divine power as thus given to us-that is to say, made efficacious for us and in us all that pertains to life and godliness. By the realizing knowledge of it which we possess, it becomes available and efficacious for all that appertains to life and godliness- "The knowledge of Him who has called us by glory and by virtue."

Thus, we have here the call of God to pursue glory as our object, gaining the victory by virtue-spiritual courage-over all the enemies that we find in our path. It is not a law given to a people already gathered together, but glory proposed, in order to be reached by spiritual energy. Moreover, we have divine power, acting according to its own efficacy, for the life of God in us, and

for godliness.

How precious it is to know that faith can use this divine power, which is realized in the life of the soul, directing it towards glory as its end. What a safeguard from the efforts of the enemy, if we are really established in the consciousness of this divine power acting on our behalf in grace. The heart is led to make glory its object, and virtue, the strength of spiritual life, is developed on the way to it.

Now, in connection with these two things-namely, with glory and with the energy of life, very great and precious promises are given us; for all the promises in Christ are developed either in the glory or in the life which leads to it. By means of these promises, we are made partakers of the divine nature; for this divine power, which is realized in life and godliness, is connected with these great and precious promises that relate either to the glory, or to virtue in the life that leads to it-that is to say, it is divine power which develops itself in that which characterizes its own nature. We are thus made morally partakers of the divine nature. Precious truth! Privilege so exalted, and which renders us capable of enjoying God Himself; as well as all good.

By the same action of this divine power, we escape the corruption that is in the world through lust; for the divine power delivers us from it. Not only do we not yield to it, but we are occupied elsewhere, and the action of the enemy upon the flesh is kept off; the desires from which one could not cleanse oneself are removed; the corrupt relationship of the heart with its object cease. It is a real deliverance; we have the mastery over ourselves in this respect; we are set free from sin.

But it is not enough to have escaped by faith from even the inward dominion of the desires of the flesh: we must add to faith - to that faith which realizes divine power, and the glory of Christ that shall be revealed:-we must add to faith, virtue. This is the first thing: it is, as we have said, the moral courage which overcomes., difficulties, and governs the heart by curbing all action of the old nature: it is an energy by which the heart is master of itself, and is able to choose the good, and to cast aside the evil, as a thing conquered and unworthy of oneself. This, indeed, is grace; but the Apostle is here speaking of the thing itself; as it is realized in the heart, and not of its source. I have said that this is the first thing, because, practically, this self-government - this virtue, this moral energy, is deliverance from evil, and renders communion with God possible. It is the one thing which gives reality to all the rest, for without virtue we are not really with God. Can divine power develop itself in the laxity of the flesh? And if we are not really with God - if the new nature is not acting - knowledge is but the puffing up of the flesh; patience but a natural quality, or else hypocrisy; and so on with the rest. But where there is this virtue, it is very precious to add knowledge to it. We have, then, divine wisdom and intelligence to guide our walk: the heart is enlarged, sanctified, spiritually developed, by a more complete and profound acquaintance with God, who acts in the heart, and is reflected in the walk. We are guarded from many errors-we are more humble, more sober-minded: we know better where our treasure is, and what it is, and that everything else is but vanity and a hindrance. It is, therefore, a true knowledge of God that is here meant.

Thus walking in the knowledge of God, the flesh, the will, the desires, are bridled, all their practical power diminishes, and they disappear as habits of the soul; they are not fed: we are moderate; we do not give way to our desires; temperance is added to knowledge. The Apostle is not speaking of the walk, but of the state of the heart in the walk. Self, being thus governed, and the will bridled,

one bears patiently with others; and the circumstances that must be passed through, are, in all respects, borne according to the will of God, be they what they may. We add patience to temperance. The heart, the spiritual life, is then free to enjoy its true objects—a principle of deep importance in the Christian life. When the flesh is at work, in one way or another (even if its action is purely inward), if there is anything whatever that the conscience ought to be exercised about, the soul cannot be in the enjoyment of communion with God in the light, because the effect of the light is then to bring the conscience into exercise. But when the conscience has nothing that is not already judged in the light, the new man is in action with regard to God, whether in realizing the joy of His presence, or in glorifying Him in a life characterized by godliness. We enjoy communion with God; we walk with God; we add to patience godliness.

The heart being thus in communion with God, affection flows out freely towards those who are dear to Him, and who, sharing the same nature, necessarily draw out the affections of the spiritual heart: brotherly love is developed.

There is another principle which crowns, and governs, and gives character to all the others: it is charity-love, properly so called. This, in its root, is the nature of God Himself—the source and perfection of every other quality that adorns Christian life. The distinction between love and brotherly love, is of deep importance; the former is, indeed, as we have just said, the source whence the latter flows; but as this brotherly love exists in mortal men, it may be mingled in its exercise with sentiments that are merely human—with individual affection, with the effect of personal attractions, or that of habit, of suitability in natural character. Nothing is sweeter than brotherly affections: their maintenance is of the highest importance in the Church; but they may degenerate, as they may grow cool; and if love-if God-does not hold the chief place, they may displace Him-set Him aside-shut Him out. Divine love, which is the very nature of God, directs, rules, and gives character to brotherly love; otherwise, it is that which pleases us - i.e., our own heart-that governs us. If divine love governs me, I love all my brethren; I love them because they belong to Christ: there is no partiality. I shall have greater enjoyment in a spiritual brother; but I shall occupy myself about my weak brother, with a love that rises above his weakness, and has tender consideration for it. I shall concern myself with my brother's sin, from love to God, in order to restore my brother, rebuking him, if needful; nor if divine love be in exercise, can brotherly love or its name be associated with disobedience. In a word, God will have His place in all my relationships. To exact brotherly love in such a manner as to shut out the requirements of that which God is, and of His claims upon us, is to shut out God, in the most plausible way, in order to gratify our own hearts. Divine love, then, which acts according to the nature, character, and will of God, is that which ought to direct and characterize our whole Christian walk, and have authority over every movement of our hearts. Without this, all that brotherly love can do is to substitute man for God.

Now, if these things are in us, the knowledge of Jesus will not be barren in our hearts. But if, on the contrary, they are wanting, we are blind; we cannot see far into the things of God; our view is contracted; it is limited by the narrowness of a heart governed by its own will, and turned aside by its own lusts. We forget that we have been cleansed from our old sins: we lose sight of the position Christianity has given us. This state of things is not the loss of assurance, but the forgetfulness of the true Christian position into which we are brought -purity in contrast with the ways of the world.

Therefore, we ought to use diligence, in order to have the consciousness of our election fresh and strong, so as to walk in spiritual liberty. Thus doing, we shall not stumble; and thus an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom will be our portion. Here, as throughout, we see that the Apostle's mind is occupied with the government of God, applying it to His dealings with believers, in reference to their conduct and its practical consequences. He is not speaking in an absolute way of pardon and salvation, but of the kingdom-of the manifestation of His power who judges righteously-whose scepter is a scepter of righteousness. Walking in the ways of God, we have part in that kingdom, entering into it with assurance - without difficulty - without that hesitation of Soul which is experienced by those who grieve the Holy Ghost, and get a bad conscience, and allow themselves in things that do not accord with the character of the kingdom, or who show by their negligence that their heart is not in it. If, on the contrary, the heart cleaves to the kingdom, and our ways are suitable to it, our conscience is in unison with its glory. The way is open before us: we see into the distance, and we go forward, having no impediments in our way-nothing turns us aside as we walk in the path that leads to the kingdom, occupied with things suitable to it. God has no controversy with one who walks thus. The entrance into the kingdom is widely opened to him, according to the ways of God in government.

The Apostle desires, therefore, to remind them of these things, although they knew them, purposing, so long as He was in his earthly tabernacle, to stir up their pure hearts to keep them in remembrance; for soon would he have to lay aside his earthly vessel, as the Lord had told him, and by thus writing to them, he took care that they should always bear them in mind.

It is very plain that he was not expecting other apostles to be raised up, nor an ecclesiastical succession to take their place as guardians of the faith, or as possessing sufficient authority to be a foundation for the faith of believers. He was to provide for this himself, in order that, on his removal, they might find something on his part that would remind the faithful of the instructions he had given them; for this purpose he wrote his epistles.

The divine importance and certainty of that which he taught were worthy of this labor. We have not, says the apostle, followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty.

The apostle is speaking, as his words plainly show, of the transfiguration. I notice it here, in order to mark more evidently that in his thoughts of the Lord's coming he does not go beyond His appearing in glory. For the moment, He was hidden from those who trusted in Him: this was a great trial of their faith, for the Jews were accustomed, as we know, to look for a visible and glorious Messiah. To believe, without seeing, was the lesson they had to learn; and it was a magnificent support to their faith this fact, that the apostle, who taught them, had, with his two companions, seen, with their own eyes, the glory of Christ manifested - had seen it displayed before them, together with that of former saints who shared His kingdom. At that time Jesus received, in testimony, from God the Father honor and glory; a voice addressing Him from the excellent glory - from the cloud which was, to a Jew, the well-known dwelling-place of the Most High God-owning Him as His well-beloved Son; a voice which the three apostles also heard (even as they saw His glory), when they were with Him on the holy mount.

We see that it is here the glory of the kingdom, and not the dwelling in the Father's house forever with the Lord. It is a manifestation to men living on the earth; it is the power of the Lord, the glory

which He receives from God the Father as the Messiah, acknowledged to be His Son, and crowned with glory and honor before the eyes of the world. It is into the everlasting kingdom that the apostle wishes them to have an enlarged entrance. It is the power and glory, that Christ received from God, which the apostle saw, and to which He bears testimony. We shall, indeed, have this glory, but it is not our portion, properly so called; for that is within the house, to be the Bride of the Lamb, and it does not display itself to the world: With regard, however, to the Church, the two things cannot be separated; if we are the Bride, we shall assuredly participate in the glory of the Kingdom.. To the Jew, who was accustomed to look for this glory (whatever might be his ideas respecting it), the fact of the apostle's having seen it, was of inestimable importance. It was the heavenly glory of the kingdom, as it shall be manifested to the world; a glory that shall be seen when the Lord returns in power. Compare Mark 9:1. It is a communicated glory which comes from the excellent glory. Moreover, the testimony of the prophets relates to the manifested glory; they spoke of this kingdom and glory, and the brightness of the transfiguration was a splendid confirmation of their words. We have, says the apostle, the words of the prophets confirmed. Those words proclaimed indeed the glory of the kingdom which was to come, and the judgment of the world, which was to make way for its establishment on earth. This announcement was a light in the darkness of our world; truly a dark place, that had no other light than the testimony which God had given, through the prophets, of that which shall happen to it, and of the future kingdom, whose light shall finally dispel the darkness of separation from God, in which the world lies. Prophecy was a light that shone during the darkness of the night (but -there was another light for those that watched).

For the remnant of the Jews, the Sun of righteousness should rise with healing in His wings; the wicked should be trodden as ashes under the feet of the righteous. The Christian, instructed in his own privileges, knows the Lord in a different way from this, although he believes in these solemn truths. He watches during the night, which is already far spent. He sees in his heart, by faith, the dawn of the day, and the rising of the bright star of the morning. He knows the Lord as they know Him who believe in HIM before He is manifested, as coming for the pure heavenly joy of His own, before the brightness of the day shines forth. They who watch see the dawn of day; they see; the morning star. Thus we have our portion in Christ not only in the day, and as the prophets spoke of Him, which all relates to the earth, although the blessing comes from on high; we have the secret of Christ and of our union with Him, and of His coming to receive us to Himself as the Morning Star, before the day comes. We are His during the night; we shall be with Him in the truth of that heavenly bond which unites us to Him, as set apart for Himself while the world does not see Him. We shall be gathered to Him before the world sees Him, that we may enjoy Himself, and in order that the world may see us with Him when He appears.

The joy of our portion is, that we shall be with Himself; "forever with the Lord." Prophecy enlightens the Christian; and separates him from the world, by testimony to its judgment, and to the glory of the coming kingdom. The testimony of the Spirit to the Church does this by the attraction of Christ Himself, the bright Morning Star, our portion while the world is still buried in sleep.

The bright morning star is Christ Himself, when (before the day, which will be produced by His appearing) He is ready to receive the Church, that she may enter into His own peculiar joy. Thus it is said, Rev. 22:16, "I am the bright and morning star." This is what He is for the Church, as He is the root and offspring of David for Israel. Consequently, as soon as He says "the morning star,"

the Spirit who dwells in the Church, and inspires her thoughts, and the Bride, the Church itself; which waits for her Lord, say "Come!" Thus, in Rev. 3:28, the faithful in Thyatira are promised by the Lord that He will give them the morning star, that is to say, joy with Himself in heaven. The kingdom and the power had been already promised them; according to Christ's own rights (ver. 26, 27); but the Church's proper portion is Christ Himself. In addition to the declaration of the prophets, with regard to the kingdom, it is thus that the Church expects Him.

The apostle goes on to warn the faithful, that the prophecies of Scripture were not like the utterances of human will, and were not to be interpreted as though each had a separate solution as though every prophecy were sufficient to itself for the explanation of its full Meaning. They were all parts of one whole, having one and the same object, even the kingdom of God; and each event was a preliminary step towards this object, and a link in the chain of God's government which led to it, impossible to be explained, unless the aim of the whole were apprehended - the revealed aim of the counsels of God in the glory of His Christ. For holy men, moved by the Holy Ghost, pronounced these oracles, one and the same Spirit directing and coordinating the whole for the development of the ways of God to the eye of faith, ways which would terminate in the establishment of that kingdom, the glory of which had appeared at the Transfiguration.

Thus we have here (chap. 1) these three things: 1st. Divine power for all that appertains to life and godliness; a declaration of infinite value, the pledge of our true liberty. Divine power acts in us, it gives to us all needed to enable us to walk in the Christian life.

2nd. There is the government of God, in connection with the faithfulness of the believer, in order that a wide and abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom may be granted us, and that we may not stumble. The great result of this government will be manifested in the establishment of the kingdom, the glory of which was seen on the holy mount by the three apostles. But,

3rd. For the Christian, there was something better than the kingdom - something to which the apostle merely alludes, for it was not the especial subject of the communications of the Holy Ghost to him, as it was to the apostle Paul, namely, Christ taking the Church to Himself; a point not found either in the promises or the prophecies, but which forms the precious and inestimable joy and hope of the Christian taught of God.

This first chapter has thus taught us the divine aspect of the Christian position, given to the apostle for the instruction, in the last days, of believers from among the circumcision.

2 Peter 2

The two next chapters set before us, on the other hand, the two forms of evil that characterize the last days-the false and corrupt teaching of bad men, and the unbelief which denies the return of the Lord, on the ground of the stability of the visible creation. The former really denies the Master who bought them. It is no question here as to the title of Lord, nor of redemption. The simile is of a master who has purchased slaves at the market, and they disown and refuse to obey him. Thus among the converted Jews there would be false teachers, who disowned the authority of Christ - His rights over them. Many would be led away by them; and as they bore the name of Christians, the way of truth would be brought into disrepute by their means; while, in fact, by their covetousness and hypocritical words, they would make merchandise of Christians for their private gain. But the resource of faith is always in God. Judgment would overtake them. The examples of the fallen angels, of Noah and the deluge, of Lot and Sodom, proved that the Lord knew how to deliver the righteous out of their trials, and to reserve the unrighteous for the Day of Judgment.

That which would characterize this class of evil doers would be the unbridled license of their conduct. They would indulge their carnal lusts, and despise all authority in a way that angels would not dare to do. Still, they would call themselves Christians, and associate with Christians in their love-feasts, deceiving their own hearts, addicting themselves continually to evil, promising liberty to others, but themselves the slaves of corruption.

Now, to be thus entangled in evil, after having escaped it through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior, was worse than if they had never known anything of the way of truth. But it was according to the true proverb - The dog had returned to his own vomit, and the sow that had been washed to her wallowing in the mire. They were apostates, therefore; but here the Spirit of God does not so much point out the apostasy as the evil, because the government of God is still in view. In Jude, the apostasy is the prominent thing. Peter tells us that the angels sinned; Jude, that they kept not their first estate. But God will judge the wicked.

2 Peter 3

In the last chapter, as we have said, it is Materialism: trust in the stability of that which can be seen, in contrast with trust in the Word of God, which teaches us to look for the coming of Jesus, the return of the Lord. They judge by their senses. There is, say they, no appearance of change. This is not the case. To the eye of man, it is indeed true that there is none. But these unbelievers are willfully ignorant of the fact, that the world has been already judged once; that the waters, out of which, by the mighty word of God, the earth came, had, for the moment, swallowed it up again, all perishing, except those whom God preserved in the ark.

And, by the same word, the present heavens and earth are reserved for the Day of Judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. It is not that the Lord is slack concerning the promise of His return, but that He is still exercising grace, not wishing any to perish, but that all should come to repentance. And a thousand years are to Him but as a day, and a day as a thousand years. But the day of the Lord shall come, in which all things will pass away, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and all that is on the earth shall be consumed. Solemn consideration for the children of God, to main-thin them in complete separation from evil, and from all that is seen, looking for and basting the day in which the heavens shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Everything on which the hopes of the flesh are founded shall disappear forever.

Nevertheless, there shall be new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell. It is not here said, "shall reign," which would be the thousand years of the Lord's dominion; here it is the eternal state, in which the government, that has brought all things into order, will terminate, and unhindered blessing will flow from God, the kingdom being given up to God the Father.

It is in following out the ways of God in government that the apostle carries them on to the eternal state, in which the promise will be finally accomplished: The Millennium itself was the restitution, of which the prophets had spoken; and, morally, the heavens and the earth had been changed by the imprisonment of Satan and the reign of Christ., See Isa. 65:17,18, Jerusalem having been made a rejoicing. But, materially, the dissolution of the elements was necessary for the renewal of all things.

It will be observed, that the Spirit does not speak here of the coming of Christ, except to say that it will be scoffed at in the last days. He speaks of the day of God, in contrast with the trust of unbelievers in the stability of the material things of creation, which depends, as the apostle shows, on the word of God. And, in that day, everything on which unbelievers rested, and will rest, shall be dissolved and pass away. This will not be at the commencement of the day, but at its close; and here we are free to reckon this day, according to the apostle's word, as a thousand years, or whatever length of period the Lord shall see fit.

So solemn a dissolution of all that the flesh rests upon should lead us so to walk as to be found of the Lord, when He comes to introduce that day, in peace, and blameless; accounting that the apparent delay is only the Lord's grace, exercised for the salvation of souls. We may well wait, if

God makes use of this time to -rescue souls from judgment; by bringing them to the knowledge of Himself, and saving them with an everlasting salvation. This, the apostle says, had been taught by Paul, who wrote to them (the Hebrew believers) of these things, as he did also in his other epistles.

It is interesting to see that Peter, who had been openly rebuked before all by Paul, introduces him here with entire affection. He notices that Paul's epistles contained an exalted doctrine, which they who were unstable, and not taught of God, perverted. For Peter, in fact, does not follow Paul in the field on which the latter had entered. This, however, does not prevent his speaking of Paul's writings as forming a part of the Scriptures;" as also the other scriptures," he says. This is an important testimony; which, moreover, gives the same character to the writings of one who is able to bestow this title on the writings of another.

Let Christians, then, be watchful, and not allow themselves to be seduced by the error of the wicked; but strive to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory, both now and forever, Amen!

Bright Thoughts

My cheerful soul now all the day
Sits waiting here and sings;
Looks thro' the ruins of her clay,
And practices her wings.
Faith almost changes into sight,
While from afar she spies
Her fair inheritance in light,
Above created skies.
Had but the prison walls been strong,
And firm without a flaw,
In darkness she had dwelt too long,
And less of glory saw.
But now the everlasting hills
Through every chink appear;
And something of the joy she feels,
While she's a prisoner here.
Some rays from heaven break sweetly in
At all the opening flaws;
Visions of endless bliss are seen,
And native air she draws.
Watts's Lyrics.

Remarks on the Addresses to Ephesus and Smyrna

There is a whole class of subjects, connected with that thread of truth that runs right through Scripture, which demands consideration from those who desire full light in reading the Revelation.

For instance, "He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (Rev. 2:1), would raise the question of-

1st. The connection between light and the means of displaying light.

In following this out practically and according to Scripture we should have to look carefully at the one candlestick of the sanctuary (Ex. 25:31); at the ten candlesticks of the temple (1 Kings 7:49; 2 Chron. 4:7); at the one candlestick of Zech. 4:2-14; at the seven candlesticks of the Apocalypse (Rev. 1; 2; 3); at the seven lamps of fire (Rev. 4 and 5); at the two candlesticks (Rev. 11:4); and at the light and the means of displaying it of the golden crystal city (Rev. 21, 22:5).

What was common to them all? What was distinctive and peculiar to each phase of the one common truth?

I may note here, the difference between three words, which is according to classical Greek, the Greek of the LXX, (speaking generally), and the Greek of the New Testament.

The words for candlestick, candleflame, and lamps, are three-*λυχνια* (candlestick) occurs twelve times in the New Testament, and is always rendered "candlestick" (see Matt. 5:15; Mark 4:21, etc.; Heb. 9:2; Rev. 1:12, 13, 20; 2:1, 5; 11:4); *λαμπας* (candle-flame) occurs about fourteen times, and is always rendered "candle" or "light" (see Matt. 5:15; Rev. 18:23; 21:23; 22:5); *λαμπα*, lamp (Matt. 25:1, 3, 4, 7, 8; Rev. 4:5; 8:10). Again, that which in Rev. 21 and 22 would correspond to the candlestick as the means of upholding the light, would be the New Jerusalem herself. But the "candleflame" is the Lamb; the *φως*, light diffusible (see, also, Rev. 18:23) is the glory of God (21:23 and 22:5).

As connected with this subject, the word *φωστηρ*, light-giver (Phil. 2:15; Rev. 21:11), may be compared with 2 Cor. 4:4,6. There is, at this present time, a fountain of full-bodied light (2 Cor.) which it diffuses; it has reflectors now down here (Phil. 2), and will have them in perfection hereafter (Rev. 21:11).

Again, the connections of the word *αστηρ*, star, are of much interest.

Leaders in evil (Jude, ver. 13) are compared to wandering stars. See, also, Rev. 8:10, "There fell a great star from heaven, burning, as it were, a lamp.... and the name of the star is called -Wormwood," etc.

And "I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace," etc. (Rev. 9:1).

So far as to what was evil. A star might be an evil ruler. And mark, here, the connection of the star with the lamp.

On the other hand, as to the seven churches, among which the Lord walked-the candlesticks rested on the earth. But the seven stars were His (3:1), and held in His right hand (2:1).

Himself, in one of His sweetest names, is "a star" (Rev. 2:8, and 22:16). "The bright and morning star."

We read that God made the sun to rule the day; the moon to rule the night, the stars also. A created. star (Matt. 2:2,7,9,10) ushered Himself into the world, and so waited on His grace, that it guided the Magi to the spot where He was.

Himself, ere day dawn, will appear to us that watch for him-harbinger of and guide to the place of full blessing.

The stars would seem to be almost (if not quite) always emblems of government (Rev. 12:1), and that, too, during the night.

Surely, it is the grace of Him who has provided the New Jerusalem to be the light-bearing body (for the heavens, during the thousand years, while Jehovah-Shammah (Ez. 48) shall be on earth; and then for heaven and earth), which alone has kept a record of the light between both man and Himself, throughout the history of man's eventful pilgrimage upon earth. But, secondly, another question might rise theoretically here, viz., "What is light?" It is, however, in fact, raised a few verses lower down, in our chapter, viz., in the promise, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (ver. 7).

This passage leads us to two others, the contrasting of which together elicits, as is oft the case in Scripture, much new light.

"The tree of life, also, in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:9)-a part of Eden's fair scene, is one of these passages, and is obviously connected with the hope held out in the promise (ver. 7), a sort of counterpart, in God's paradise, to something which was in the paradise made for man. On the other hand, by way of contrast, that which was altogether prohibited in Eden, is conceded in this promise to the overcomer. But (1 John 5:4,5), there is no means of overcoming but faith; no overcomer but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.

This leads us, at once, to another verse (John 1:4) "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men," part of the glory of the Son of God. There are two ideas common to both these two passages (Gen. 2:9, and John 1:4), which are pretty nearly these, "continuity of being," and "intelligence"; in other respects the difference between the two verses is infinite. God, who is a source that giveth unto all, is the Author of order, not of confusion, as saith Paul. He formed a scene, and placed a creature in it, in blessing, with a high measure of intelligence in that which was good; and continuance in that state hung (for his breath was in his nostrils, his life like a vapor, that passeth away, and he is gone) by the fiat of the Maker of all, upon ignorance of evil. This was man as a mere creature.

It gave occasion, however, alas! to one who had broken all order before, and was become a destroyer and a liar, to show himself. And after he had done his worst, the Son of God, in whom is that life which has not only continuity in it, but the eternity and moral characteristics of God, came in with His light, which has the intelligence of discerning and judging the evil of all that is out of God's order, and is the revelation of a new and a divine system of light and life. The Lamb is commissioned to take away the sin of the world, and is the Son of God; He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

This leads one naturally to the principles of Rev. 2:7, "Eating of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God."

As to Eden itself, I notice that "the tree of life, in the midst of the garden," is named (Gen. 2:9) before "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." Afterward (ver. 17) the prohibition is merely as to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and it is not until after man, neglecting the light which he had as a creature (viz. that obedience was his duty) had disordered his whole being, that he is judicially shut out from the tree of life, lest he should eat of it and live forever (3:22, 24), in his then state of sinfulness.

The connection of these two principles "Life" and "Light," runs right through Scripture, and on the correct application of them all blessing hangs.

With the fall (Gen. 3) man lost all his intelligence as a creature of God, and forfeited; too, the life he had. His life was a forfeit, and the intelligence of good changed for the knowledge of good and evil.

The expression (John 1) "in Him was life" is to be noted. There was, IN Him the Logos, life. As the Logos, or Word, He was the intelligence of God, as well as the One through whom any partial expression of anything in God which He was pleased to make was made, as in creation, providence, economies, etc. But these were not the light, though they gave light to a certain extent, but they were not in Him. "IN Him was life." IN Him was-not what could and would pass away, as the first creation, providence to a wicked world, economies, but what could not pass-life: eternal life. The entity and very being of Him was light. Wherever He was, the who and the what He was gave light. Creation speaks of eternal power and goodness; providence speaks of patient goodness amid rebellion throughout time. But neither of them express and present that which displays the divine character and being itself, or which throws out into full light the enormity of rebellion against him. Rebellion against infinite power and wisdom is madness, although He that has the power be ever so patient and good towards the rebel as a rebel; but rebellion against One that is merciful, compassionate, and full of pity, is base and shameful to the rebel. In His days of humiliation; when upon the cross; in the days between His resurrection and ascension; and, now ascended; wherever He, of whom we speak, is found personally present, there there is the Life which is the light of men.

The shortcoming of the light in creation and in providence is plainly seen; the former is enough to condemn a man in nature; and is constantly so spoken of, as in Rom. 1, a man worships his own conceits, surrounded by a circle of testimony to the truth, that there is but one true God. Providence, on the other hand, is the patient goodness of God to a world of sinners, and has for its basis, the very fact that caused the destruction of the former heaven and earth, viz., man's incorrigible badness (comp. Gen. 8:21,22, and 6:5, 6, 7).

In Eden, the seat of the life and of the light of intelligence was in man; so, also, the responsibility was in a fallible one, who was only a creature. The blessing was human, and the keeping of it trusted to man.

But now, the seat of life is in the Son of God, and so, also, the light shines down from Him; He who is infallible; Who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; the Creator of all, is now the Creator anew, Head and Source of a new creation (Rev. 3:14), life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45), Giver of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), Planter, through the word of His grace, in poor sinners who believe, of an incorruptible seed (1 Peter 2:23), for He is Redeemer as well as Creator (Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:20, 21). Opener He of wells of living water in the hearts of poor Samaritan women, of water that springs up into everlasting life (John 4), giving forth, out of the belly, rivers of living water (John 7).

What can be more exquisite than the Lord Jesus' conduct with the poor woman taken in the very act of adultery (John 8:1-12)? What more precious to the soul of a poor sinner, of a saved saint, and of Him the Savior, than that that scene should be the proper scene to introduce the announcement, "I am the light of the world" (ver. 13) Ah! what is light to a world which is in darkness, save Himself, in whom is eternal life, and who can give it freely to the poor sinner; who alone could say (John 11:25, 26) "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (v. 21, 24. See, also, 17:3; 1 John 1:5; 4:15, 16; 5:20).

Note that, in the letter to the church at Ephesus, we have that which corresponds to the two trees in the garden of Eden: The light of intelligence in the address, and the power of continuance in the promise: viz., 1st., Christ, as the holder of the seven stars in His right hand, walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; and, 2ndly., the Spirit promising to give to the overcomer to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. 1st. The light of the testimony of finished redemption spread abroad; and, 2nd., the practical hearer of it to enter into God's joy in the Fountain of life.

These are the termini of the Christian race-course. Behind me is Christ; and I am in the light of His sympathy, risen from the grave, fruit of the finished redemption; that is, the terminus from which I start: the terminus or goal toward which I run is the scene of God's delight in Christ as the tree of life in the midst of His own garden of delights.

Am I in this position as a mere man; drawing my strength from myself; trusting to my own intelligence, and the life of the living soul, and the power of its continuance? If so, all will be failure; for it will be, after all, but the trial of man, which always ends in failure. But, thank God, it is NOT so: I have an ear to hear Christ's gift. And, in the power of that grace, I can say, that if the beginning and the ending of the course both tell of creature-failure, both, likewise, tell of how God, in redeeming love, can triumph in the midst of creature-failure.

Light; its connection with life; Christ the alone organon of eternal life to man; and that life, the light of men, we have already looked at. The Christ, life-giving Spirit-or the Organon of eternal life-is not, however, all we have to look at, because we have to ask "Who was this second Adam? Who

was, personally, this Son of Man?" The Son of God became Son of Man. And that which the Son of Man displayed, was that which had been, and was true of Him as Son of God.

3rdly. In other words, that which has been under consideration, leads to the question of the connection of creation, providence, and redemption, with the revelation made by God of Himself, with his motives, thoughts, plans, and counsels therein. This would naturally divide itself into two parts, viz., redemption; 1st, in the gradual historic development of its various parts (used as the gradual development of it has been made, in time, for a testimony for God in government and in grace, before men, principalities and powers); and 2ndly. In the display of it when, being perfectly accomplished, it will fill heaven and earth with a fullness of God, that will force down into the pit below all that is not, in spirit, heart and principle, identified with God,-though the molding of that which will then fill the heavens, will differ from the form and fashion of that which will then fill the earth. The Spirit, all-pervading, in these scenes, will be the power to make God all in all in heaven above and on earth beneath; but this will in nowise prevent the phase of the heavenly sphere, as a whole, telling out a tale fuller than the earth can tell out, and one of higher and more lofty themes too. When I read the address to Smyrna, as from Him that is "The first and the last, and who became dead and lived," (v. 8); who encourages to be "faithful unto death [of the body], and I will give thee a crown of life" [in resurrection-glory]; and who, by the Spirit, promises to the overcomer, that he "shall not be hurt of the second death,"- I get much of this third question suggested to me.

"The First and the Last." The mercy of the 'Lord (says David, Psa. 103) is from everlasting to everlasting. The eternity behind me is more difficult to realize than the eternity which is before me. For I, according to the eternal life which the anointed Son of Man has already communicated to me, have tasted mercy, and learned, through grace, many of the rich provisions for the future, which revelation points out by the word, as forethoughts of God for His people. To trace the stream from its source outward, and study its goings, and the amazing benefits it confers all through the wilderness, until it comes to the rich, land, its own land, is a pleasant study. But the source, the spring,-there it has been ere ever I was, there it is-who can follow it up, and who can search it out to perfection? I know, however, now, One-a man-a living man, upon the throne of God and the Father. Revealer He of the Father; and in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. When I go forward into the history of the future-God's history- there, this same One, who is now upon the throne, is to be seen, the same yesterday, today, and forever! Inside of all that faith can realize as its own scene, is Himself the Center of all; above all the wide universe this One, is recognized as Head; and beyond all creation wide there He is. I look forward and see marks connected with Himself-and own Him as the last. And because I know Him as He is, and the future is connected with Him as He is, I can apprehend many, many a detail rich and glorious about it. But if in grace he became manifest in flesh so as to be able to say, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also; and if all that He has been and is, as Son of Man, is the perfect presentation of God and the Father to us-this is only so, because He, as God, was manifest in the flesh; and ere ever He became manifest, so that man could look upon, handle, see Him: "He was with God and was God." I look back, then, and in so far as I rightly know, the only begotten Son of the Father, Him, who came full of grace and truth, and who manifested the Father, so far can I apprehend something about Him, as "the first" in the highest thought which it presents. I say the highest thought, because "in all things," He has "the pre-eminence." He is first, and has the pre-eminence in every way. It must be so (Col. 1:15-19). He has the pre-eminence in many ways. Who but He

could sit upon the Father's throne? Who, but He, as having divine glory, could be worshipped as Son of Man; as our Lord and our God? Who had the pre-eminence in sorrow? Whose sorrows were like unto His? Who will be anointed with oil of joy and gladness above His fellows, save Himself? In all things, in every way, the pre-eminence is surely His. And He can stand now MORE than half way across the gulf of time: individually He is altogether on the other side of the gulf: is He not to faith, too, on the other side of the gulf, and we in Him there? There He stands and speaks to a people who are passing through a measure of the experience of death and resurrection, through the deep floods of which He passed all alone. He speaks to them of His own strange mystery and experiences: He, the First and the Last (strange mystery, but true) became dead! and (then) lived! And He speaks to them of a crown of life being ready for those who will drop the body in faithfulness for His sake, and how Himself will be their shelter from the second death.

Oh, that we knew better how to see everything in His presence! Knew how to see ourselves (so little in ourselves) the care of such an one as He! Knew how to spread out our experiences of sorrow in His presence who suffered so much! Knew how to see time in the light of eternity; and Satan, the world, and the flesh, in contrast with the sphere in which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will fill all in heaven above, and in which faithfulness here unto death will win there the crown of life, and shelter from the second death.

As a practical word I would ask my reader, instead of murmuring to man when under trial and endeavoring to escape the cross, to turn to the Lord Jesus alive, as Son of Man in Heaven, and to enumerate to Him all the contrasts between what His sorrows were, with what ours are. And oh, how little will our own then seem!

Fragment: Going Forward

How can I draw others out of the world, if I am myself lagging behind in it? When in the spirit a man is active in following Jesus and serving Him; and when the flesh is denied for this end, then the life gets filled, up with the things of Christ, which are the element in which the new life finds its delight and joy; and, moreover, in which we find the Lord with us. Thus the conscience is kept sweet, and the heart happy. But when this is not the case, there is no power to resist the encroachments of that which defiles the conscience and enfeebles attachment to Christ. Thus, everything is gained and enjoyed in going forward, though it is death to the flesh.

Fragment: "Regions Beyond" and "Let Us Go Again"

"The longer I live, the more deeply do I feel the value and importance of those mottoes:- 'The Regions beyond'-and, 'Let us go again.'"

C. H. M.

Fragment: The Obedience of Faith

Found by God (in His changeless grace, and in His delight in Christ, and in His body the church), amid the ruins of a sevenfold failure of all that is merely human,-I see nothing now left to us but that which I may call, in a peculiar sense, the obedience of faith. Obedience (and suffering the will of God is often the highest part of obedience, as it was in the case of our Lord, Phil. 2), and nothing but obedience, cost what it may. Yet obedience, not to the letter of texts (which repeated failure on man's part, has made, often, to be impossible; and the attempt to do so, to involve the pride of rebellion), but to the Spirit and mind of God-the living God-His written word taken in connection with His own leading of His people: His word in its real, present bearing upon His people.

If any one will study Acts 20:29-32; 2 Tim. 3 (note ver. 15); Jude 20-25, they will see plainly enough, so I judge, that the word of God as given through the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, predicted a state of failure of the church upon earth; and that, in the trial so created by man's failure on earth, there would be no succession, no apostles, no official authorities to turn to, no new revelation; but that, to the humble and truthful amid their failed circumstances, God and the word of His grace would be sufficient.

The portions, Lev. 26:40-45; Deut. 30 (as also many other parts of the Old Testament) bear witness to the same truth: as did, in one aspect of it, our Lord's most blessed walk when He was upon earth,

There are three points in this obedience of faith (of faith as contrasted with obedience to the letter) which I have ever found to be of primary importance.

1st. Never to gloss, or cover over past failure, in any way whatsoever.

2ndly. Not to dissociate myself from the sorrows brought upon God's people by failure-be it theirs or my own.

3rdly. When taking, thus, my stand amid failure and its fruits,--a failed one amid failed ones in the circumstances of to-day, not to refuse subjection to God and His word, and the responsibility of caring for His honor today because of past failure.

To nature, there oft seems an easy and a short cut out of present difficulties, which really involves rebellion against God, and the refusal to submit to Him.

The testimony given to us in Num. 14:39 -45, is a solemn warning-a warning which Protestantism, Nonconformity, and Reformers have too generally neglected.

Fragment: Three Positions and States of Man

Adam: innocent and blessed; his creature-blessedness to continue so long as he owned the authority of God's Word and did not touch one tree:

Man: sinful in nature and in works-under a law which cursed every one that was not sinless:

And under Christ, who saves the lost through faith-becomes their life and everlasting blessing:

Give us three very distinct and different positions and states of man.

Fragment: Twelve Tribes

Owing to Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, being brought-in in place of Joseph-there are thirteen instead of twelve tribes. In speaking of the twelve tribes, one of the thirteen is commonly omitted. Attention may well be called to this; and the inquiry raised on what principle now one, and now another of them is omitted; and why the order is different in different places.

JACOB means Supplanter.

ISRAEL, a Prince with God.

REUBEN, Lo! a son.

SIMEON, Hearing.

LEVI, Union.

JUDAH, Praise.

ZEBULON, Dwelling.

ISSACHAR, Hire.

DAN, Judgment.

GAD, a Troop.

ASHER, Prosperity.

NAPHTALI, Wrestling.

JOSEPH, He shall add.

BENJAMIN, Son of the right hand.

MANASSEH, Forgetting.

EPHRAIM, Fruitful.

Fragments

"Most men think that there is much to be settled by and bye. Their own choice now cannot be settled by and bye. It is their own choice now that settles the judgment by and bye. Thus much is settled now. ' He that believeth not is condemned already.' The Lord has said it. Confess [now] Jesus to be your only true and proper Lord, and believe that God hath raised Him from the dead, and YOU SHALL BE SAVED."

L.

Even so! the sanctuary is my home. What other place is there for Jabez in this wide, wild, weary world?

Jabez must be a sanctuary-man; and a sanctuary-man must be a Jabez.

E. D.

Fragments

1. Colossians 1:24

"I (Paul) now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His body's sake, which is the church - (Col. 1:24). People suppose that Christ's sufferings were only for and in making atonement. This is a great mistake. The atonement took place at Calvary; and, though the most awful part of His course, only occupied three hours.

In truth, He suffered not only the wrath of God due to my sins in His own body on the tree, but when He came into the world, He came to display God by His sufferings in humiliation; and all through His course He learned obedience by the things that He suffered; so that, in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.

There are two kinds of suffering which the believer now, in his measure, enters into: 1. Directly God was manifest in the flesh, He became the open book in which God was revealed, and in which those who knew aright about God saw the object of their worship.

The babe born (Luke 2:7) to shepherd's keeping watch over their flock by night... "lo, the angel of the Lord came," etc. (ver. 9-12) "and then suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," (13, 14).

When He came to His public service, and stood in the water to be baptized of John - Father, Son, and Holy Ghost could be set forth together. The Son in the water, the Spirit descending on Him, and a voice proclaiming from on high: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." When He came to the transfiguration, He is again greeted from on high: "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." And all this before atonement was commenced. But the glory that gave abroad its fragrance was the marvel of God manifest in the flesh. The Creator tabernacling in the flesh of the holy, harmless, undefiled seed of the woman. But this glory was not separable from the humiliation, from the incarnation.

Answering in its place to this, we get the truth of the church used of God while in the wilderness, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God," (Eph. 3:10).

What a difference, when we take our sorrows, our trials, our afflictions, bereavements, needs, temptations, etc., merely as the sorrows of humanity in its present fallen state, and when we take them as parts of our testimony to principalities and powers in heavenly places. "Why should I linger here," said a saint, "I am of use to no one-whom can I serve, and what can I do?" The answer was: -" Angels and principalities have been eyeing with wonder, that such a thing as you seem to be should have so much of the attention of Christ, be so much thought about in heaven; they look at you and then confess that mercy and compassion, pity and grace, are very real, very substantial things in God. That the Christ ascended and glorified should bear such an one upon His heart and mind."

But 2ndly: The Son, who had been the object of worship and to whom all were subject, came into the world, and learned obedience by the things that He suffered. With this He blended that learning of sympathy as a sufferer. God stooped from governing all things to learn obedience.

Poor Paul had to learn obedience in another sense. Never at the head, but a rebel against the Head, he had to learn to set aside his bad will, and to be meek and lowly of heart. But the lessons which Paul had, not only bowed his own soul to the blessed Lord Jesus who was in very nature; as seed of the woman, meek and lowly of heart, but also his lessons were for the elect's sake. God taught him, Paul, that he might be able to teach those who are members of the body of Christ. This, too, gives strength to the soul under trial of any kind, to be able to say, "Well, not only am I sure that I want discipline myself, but my gracious Lord is teaching me, both how He was the prince of sufferers, in order that we all might find an answer to our sufferings in Him, and is teaching it to me, too, for the sake of His body which is dear to Him, that I may be able to comfort others with that comfort wherewith I myself have been comforted of God."

2.-Heaven, Earth, And Hell

The Son of God has undertaken, as to the heavens and as to the earth prepared for man, to purge out every mark and stain of sin, and to fill them with a new energy and power, viz., of the Holy Ghost. This redemption of the whole world, as a system, is emphatically His work; and assuredly it is a work that none but He could accomplish. The system of this world, as a whole, does not embrace the universe, nor all the men that have been on the earth, nor all the angels that have been in heaven. There is hell (originally prepared for the devil and his angels) open for those men who prefer the service of him, who, in rebellion against God, is a liar and a murderer from the beginning, to the service of that meek and lowly Jesus, the Redeemer, who-the Son and servant of God -is full of grace and truth.

May we, as saints, be carried in the current of this work of the Son: My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

3.-"Mine Own Ways"

There is nothing so sweet to a man as his own way. "I will have my own way," is the language of the natural heart both young and old. And it shows itself both in worldliness and religiousness. "The way of Cain" was his own way: and the many unscriptural ways of God's people, whether in public or private, are only so many indications of self-will. These things call for self-judgment, "for if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged." But even "when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11)

Job was -a real man of faith, and patience too. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job." God drew the attention of Satan to him as a sincere and upright man. Satan acknowledges that there is "a hedge about him," which if God will but break down and let him get at him, he will curse God. The permission is given; and immediately Job's property, Job's children, and then Job's person are all touched by Satan. In the midst of this scene, his wife urges him to curse God, as Satan said he would, but Job says "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, BLESSED be the name of the Lord."

And now comes the hottest part of the trial. His friends come to him to comfort him; but instead of doing this they argue that he must have been a hypocrite, or God would never have afflicted him in this way. Conscious of his integrity, he justifies himself to such an extent, that it amounts to self-righteousness, and Job's heart in its faith and failure is fully revealed in this expression (chap. 13:15): "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him; but I will maintain, or argue mine own ways before Him." This was the dross which God was purging from him, and when He had tried him "he came forth like gold." God's ways are "past finding out," whether in nature or grace; we only know what He reveals; and this is what is taught to Job by the Almighty's address to him. He had heard of God, he now says, by the hearing of the ear, but now that his eye saw Him he abhors himself. This is very different from maintaining his own ways. And this was Job's blessing. So is it ours. May we learn the lesson.

Elihu, the youngest, was the only one of Job's friends who spoke to him according to God.

B.

Job 42:5-6

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

4.-Gilgal

"And 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."-Josh. 5:9.

Circumcision began not with Moses, but with the fathers. 'Twas their mark in their pilgrim course, of separation unto God and of a blessing from Him; a blessing, however, according to promise.

Their descendants observed it while in Egypt; but it seemed to have lost its tone and power on their souls, for they all that came out of Egypt were circumcised, yet they perished in the wilderness, and they neglected to circumcise their children, so verse 9 is introduced.

All the males took upon themselves the marks of separation unto the Lord, each one separately and as an individual. They thus owned their connection with the whole line that had preceded them, up to the fathers. In an especial way they admitted the evil of the Egyptian generations, and of their own wilderness-wanderings, but declared thus that though Satan might have been acting against, and man might have forgotten Jehovah as the God of holiness, they did not; but amid all the evil before and around them, they confessed to it; and confessed too, to all their own disorderliness; but they would give to the Lord honor amid all the failure, commit themselves individually to Him, and receive His mark upon them. And thus the marks of their being one body together were renewed. For the question here, was not that which came out afterward, viz., the power to trace the pedigree (Ezra 2:59-63), but whether the people carried the marks of separation to God upon the ground of a hope according to promise given to the fathers.

The Lord was at Gilgal before they were; it was He who ordained Gilgal.

Who gets to Gilgal now? If any has, he has found God there with the sharp knives, that self may be mutilated, if so be -that I may be connected with God's house, as set up at Pentecost, and may know how to walk as a pilgrim-conqueror before the Lord until He come.

Later in Israel's history, the "Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim" (Judg. 2:1-5). To humble and break down the people came He thither; and to recall-to them their misdeeds, and to warn them of the consequences. Yet was there a door of hope for the weepers. And he who goes to Bochim now cannot forget the coming up out of Egypt (ver. 1), or the ground of the LORD'S complaint against them which revived the past and their fellowship with it.

5.-2 Samuel 15

Observe the exceeding grace of David in the whole scene connected with Absalom's rebellion. He would flee to save the people, and to avoid the shedding of blood. He would send back Ittai the Gittite, who will not go, and who is, indeed, the expression of that deep reverent affection which never skews itself more than when its object is in distress. He will not check Shimei, though cursing him and following them all the way with stones. He sends back the ark, too, and Zadok, even now taking refuge as he was wont in the tender-mercy of his God. If he should find favor in His sight, he would bring David back to see both it and his habitation; but if not, if He were to say I have no delight in thee,-well, there he was, entirely at His disposal. O, the exquisite grace of this man of God, never more manifest than at this moment. It is entire up-giving to His mercy. He owned it was God's hand in displeasure, but whilst owning the hand he takes refuge in His heart.

How different with Ahithopel! When his glory was touched, by Absalom's rejecting his counsel; he went and hanged himself. He could not outlive his reputation. But David can, for he knew God. Lovely specimen of "subjection to the Father of Spirits."

6. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." Rom. 11:35

Nor Satan, nor fallen angel, nor 'rebellious man, can hinder this word being true. The past, the present and the future of all things, also, must each pay tribute of glory to Him. But there is, an "of," a "through," and a "to" Him who, is here spoken is the indefeasible birthright of each heavenly Christian alone, is already His in principle, and should be his actually in practice.

On principle, I, as a Christian, am of Him, thus: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14-16). My origin as a Christian cannot be of the world (present corrupted state of things upon earth), nor of earth at all. It is of the Eternal Son of God, as Son of Man, glorified in heaven. My life is in Him, and thus I am of him. I- of Him, Himself.

The "through" Him, or mode of this being made good, brings in Christ's revealing of Himself to me by faith, and the giving thereby a new nature "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6). "Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.... The word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:23-25).

The "to" Him (conformity to the blessed One's own principle, who was "obedient unto death, the death of the Cross;" for He came to do God's will), is the secret of all that blessing: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to (His) purpose. For whom He did foreknow, he also did predestinate (to be) conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren" (Rom. 8:28, 29). A "to" Him which will land us in the glory close to the person of the Beloved.

In practice, alas! how do we come short of Paul's consciously attained measure: "To me to live (is) Christ, to die (is) gain" (Phil. 1:21). As to those that subscribe to this confession, may they do two things: 1st. Let them study such words as those in Rev. 3:15-20; and Rom. 14:6-2, etc.

But, 2ndly, May they, at once, take up Paul's axiom for well-doing: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing (I do), forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13,14).

When a man works from his own energy, his own plans are sure to come in; and then Will follows-something for himself in the end, which he pursues. It is just this drawing out of human energy, which has been the canker-worm of religious activities in our own generation. It has plunged those that sought to be doers and not hearers only, into worldliness and selfishness; often, I am persuaded, without their knowing how.

On the other hand, our deliverance, and our safety are found in humble seeking of a right object. To seek to do God's will, and that only, will bring light whereby to judge all by-paths, and all false energy. And it must be so; for God is faithful, and those that honor Him, He will honor. Those that seek to do His will, who mistrust themselves, and seek to give themselves to God in Christ, they

shall have light and purified ways too.

7. Restoring Grace

As one who has tasted not only saving grace, but preserving grace, and restoring grace-" He restoreth my soul desire to call attention to this last-named subject, as unfolded to us by the Lord in Luke 15 I am aware that many commentators, and others, look upon this portion of scripture as teaching only saving grace; and that it may be used in that sense when preaching the gospel, I do not deny; for the word of God is a two-edged sword, which cuts both ways; but the plain interpretation of the Chapter gives one a perfect picture of restoring grace. And this we shall clearly see, if we remember that man, as a sinner, is born outside Eden, away from God, an enemy to Him; and that in the gospel, God, by His evangelists, beseeches poor sinners to be reconciled, and that on the ground of Christ's accomplished work (see 2 Cor. 5:20,21). Now, in Luke 15, the prodigal son had been in the father's house; the wandering sheep had been in or among the flock; and the piece of money had been in the woman's possession. And

when the son is found, the sheep brought back, and the piece of silver recovered; there is "joy," not merely among the angels, but in the presence of them; joy in the heart of the Father; joy in the heart of the Good Shepherd, Christ; joy in the Church, as symbolized by the woman possessing the Spirit, or "light;" for neither God nor Christ are ever symbolized by a woman, but the Church always is a virgin," the "bride," etc.

The prodigal had tasted the bread of the father's house, and knew the plentiful supply; but he did not know the fullness of blessing, till he had tasted restoring grace. Then he knew, not only relationship, but divine righteousness, "the best robe," etc. The elder brother is a thorough sample of Pharisaism among saints. He had no idea of what was becoming in his Father, as the "God of all grace." And the Father's grace is shown to him, for he says, going out to him, "Son, thou art ever with me,"- thou hast not wandered from the house -"and all that I have is Mine." What a foolish thought, that his Father never gave him "a kid," -"all that I have is Mine; but here was the point, "it was meet that we should be glad," etc. And this is just where saints need instruction now; for, like the elder brother, they are very slow in entering into God's joy in "grace." Paul had to write to the Corinthians to restore the excommunicated person who was sorry for his sin, "lest Satan should get an advantage." Would that we could say "we are not ignorant of his devices" (see 2 Cor. 2:7-11). Many a poor sheep has not only not been "sought after," in this cloudy and dark day; but when it has run bleating to the threshold, as it were, it has been hunted off. This is not exhibiting God. It is making the table ours instead of the Lord's.

Were I asked for an Old Testament instance of restoring grace, I should point to David; if asked for a New Testament one, I should point to Peter.

B.

"I weary? Oh no! I am unweary: it is the world all around me that is weary -not I." So said one. "A weary one, indeed, I am," said another; "but one in whose soul hope ever lives." One spirit, but two different experiences.

Fragments

1. To many I would especially commend, at the present moment, the study of the parable of the sower (Matt. 13).

The word detected, and proved the hostile character of Satan (ver. 4, 19); the shallowness of the human mind (ver. 5, 20); the choking character of the world (ver. 7, 22); as well as (blessed be God, for His unspeakable grace) that it was (ver. 8, 23), a life-giving, fruit-bearing seed in His own people.

2. The conversion of five thousand in a place would in nothing change the responsibility of a gathering of saints, to examine carefully the converts ere receiving them. For no excitement, as of a great and holy movement, can set aside responsibility, as to either the holiness of the House of God, or tender compassion toward the souls of men.

3. Every man's work will be tried of what sort it is: may piety, modesty and firmness increase and abound.

L.

Fragments

1. Luke 15,-The truth which was dominant in the blessed Lord's mind at this time seems to me to have been-neither that of the privileges or experience of disciples, nor that of the way of making man such; and though, doubtless, it had connection with both of these topics, they are so entirely subordinate to it, that if either of them absorb the attention, it, in all its magnificent splendor, is, for the moment, necessarily lost sight of.

The goodness of God, which had recognized man (though a sinner) under His governmental way-if, haply, man could so be blessed-having been shown out to be insufficient, through the sinfulness of man, for man's blessing, God, if He would bless man, must act upon the ground of His own immutable character, and position, and rights, as God - upon that which it was meet that He should do, according to His own position, and character, and will.

Sinful man's being satisfied with any position of blessing whatsoever, is vanity, unless God, in His own immutable character and grace, fill both man and the position with power.

The governmental ways and dealings of God include, not only the Mosaic economy, but the Noahic and Abrahamic blessing also; for ere ever there was a people for Moses to take up in Egypt, God had separated Abram from among idolaters, and even before that, had given a charter of providential blessing through Noah.

People are so awfully full of self and man, that they can hardly read the Lord's teaching with the thought, that God and the full range of His ways were what occupied Him.

2. "I do not know that the unity of the House is stated anywhere in Scripture, any more than the, unity of Christ; and are you scriptural in saying, the Spirit dwells in the body? Scripture speaks only of the unity of the Spirit-only says, 'There is one body' (Eph. 4, and 1 Cor. 12). The unity of the body is as foreign from Scripture thought as a thing to be kept, as is the unity of the house. 'The unity of the Spirit, to be kept in the bond of peace,' is all that Scripture speaks of. 'There is one

body:’ unity, in this sense, cannot be broken. - The use of the term unity’ is often ambiguous. It means practical union, when contrasted with schism; and immutable oneness, when used of the Body. But what underlies much of the ignorance on these subjects is the denial of the unity of the body on earth; the result would be isolate churches, and unity there alone. The body and the house cannot be separated as to responsible position. No doubt the house is not really the body of Christ-it is another order of ideas; but they who call themselves ‘Church’ (assembly), take upon themselves the responsibility of the body, as well as of the house, The assembly, which is His body - ‘how one ought to behave oneself in the House of God, which is the assembly of the living God.’ Rome is not the house, nor is a national establishment; the whole is. The question is this: The assembly is the house, the assembly is the body. What is the assembly? He hath set in the assembly apostles; gifts of healing: not in a local body, apostles-not gifts of healing-but on earth.’

3. If I were an Englishman, I do not think that I should be able to entertain a thought, which supposed that the three things represented by the kingdom of Great Britain, the Royal Household, and the family of Queen Victory, were now separable.

Loving and honoring the powers that be, such would be the expression of my heart and moral feeling about my country.

A stranger, as an Indian or a savage, ignorant of the subject, might suppose, on hearing me talk, that the three expressions "Great Britain," "Queen Victoria," "The Royal Household" were three synonyms for one and the same thing. At first, I might let this assumption pass; after a time, I might endeavor to explain to him how these three terms were like three circles drawn from one and the same center, one outside the other; three circles having, indeed, one common center, and, in one sense, "all one," yet, in another sense, each of them having ideas distinctly peculiar to itself.

Queen Victory-she, while she lives, is the center and pillar of the State; her family are separated from everybody else in the nation, the alone right inheritors of the throne.

The Royal Household contains them all and such as are necessary for their comfort and state.

Great Britain is (not herself, nor her family, nor her household, nor the whole of her empire, but) the kingdom more peculiarly hers; - kingdom which owns and puts her forward, the wide world over, as its representative.

Yet, while each circle has ideas peculiar to it - they all go together, and form an inseparable unity in the heart of an Englishman.

Hebrews 10

How wonderful is the grace which we are now considering!

There are two things that present themselves to us in Christ. The attractions to our heart of His grace and goodness, and His work which brings our souls into the presence of God. It is with the latter • that the Holy Ghost here occupies us. There is not only the piety which grace produces: there is the efficacy of the work itself. What is this efficacy? What is the result, for us, of His work? Our presentation to God; in the light, without a veil, sin being entirely put away. Marvelous position for us! We have not to wait for a day of judgment (assuredly coming as it is), nor to seek for means of approach to God. We are in His presence. Christ appears in the presence of God for us. And not only this: He remains there ever; our position, therefore, never changes. It is true that we are called to walk according to that position; but this does not touch the fact that such is the position. And how came we into it; and in what condition? Sin entirely put away, perfectly put away; and once for all; the whole question settled forever before God, we are there because Christ has abolished it. So that there are the two things-this work accomplished, and this position taken in the presence of God.

We see the force of the contrast between this and Judaism. According to the latter, divine service, as we have seen, was performed outside the veil. The worshippers did not reach the presence of God. Thus they had always to begin again. The propitiatory sacrifice was renewed from year to year -a continually repeated testimony that sin was still there. Individually they obtained a temporary pardon for particular acts. It had constantly to be renewed. The conscience was never made perfect, the soul was not in the presence of God; this great question was never settled. (How many souls are even now in this condition!) The entrance of the high priest once a year, did but furnish a proof that the way was still barred, that God could not be approached, but that sin was still remembered.

But now, for believers, sin is put 'away by a work done once for all; the conscience is made perfect; and, in Christ, we are ever before God, in His presence. The high priest remains there. Thus, instead of having a memorial of sin re-iterated from year to year, perfect righteousness subsists ever for us in the presence of God. The position is entirely changed.

The lot of men (for this perfect work takes us out of Judaism) is death and judgment. But now our lot depends on Christ, not on Adam. Christ was offered to bear the sins of many -the work is complete, the sins blotted out, and to those who look for Him He will appear without having anything to do with sin, that question having been entirely settled at His first coming. In the death of Jesus, God dealt with the sins of those who look for Him; and He will appear, not to judge, but unto salvation; to deliver them finally from the position into which sin had brought them. This has its application to the Jewish remnant, according to the circumstances of their position; but in an absolute way it applies to the Christian who has Heaven for his portion.

The essential point established in the doctrine of the death of Christ is, that He offered Himself once for all. We must bear this in mind, in order to understand the full import of all that is here said. The tenth chapter is the development of this. In it the author recapitulates his doctrine on this point, and applies it to souls, confirming it by Scripture, and by considerations which are evident to every enlightened conscience.

1.-The law, with its sacrifices, did not make the worshippers perfect; for if they had been brought to perfection, the sacrifices would not have been offered afresh.

If they were offered again, it was because the worshippers were not perfect. On the contrary, the repetition of the sacrifice was a memorial of sin; it reminded the people that sin was still there, and that it was still before God. In effect, the law, although it was the shadow of things to come, was not their true image. There were sacrifices; but they were repeated, instead of there being one only sacrifice of eternal efficacy. There was a high priest, but he was mortal, and the priesthood transferable. He went into a "holiest of all," but only once a-year, the veil which concealed God being still there, and the high priest unable to remain in His presence, the work being not perfect. Thus, -there were, indeed, elements which plainly indicated the constituent parts, so to speak, of the priesthood of the good things to come; but the state of the worshippers was, in the one case, quite the opposite of that which it was in the other. In the first, every act showed that the work of reconciliation was not done; in the second, the position. of the high priest and of the worshippers is a testimony that this work was accomplished, and that the latter are perfected forever in the presence of God.

In chapter 10 this principle is applied to the sacrifice. Its repetition proved that sin was there. That the sacrifice of Christ was only offered once, was the demonstration of its eternal efficacy. Had the Jewish sacrifices rendered the worshippers permanently perfect, they would have ceased to be offered. The apostle is speaking (although the principle is general) of the yearly sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. For if, through the efficacy of the sacrifice, they had been permanently made perfect, they would have had no more conscience of sin, and could not have had the thought of renewing the sacrifice.

Observe here, that which is very important, that the conscience is cleansed, sin being expiated, the worshipper drawing nigh by virtue of the sacrifice. The meaning of the Jewish service was, that sin was not put away; that of the Christian, that it is. As to the former-precious as the type is-the reason is evident: the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin. Therefore, those sacrifices have been abolished, and a work of another character (although still a sacrifice), has been accomplished. A work which excludes all other, and all repetition of the same, because it consists of nothing less than the self-devotedness of the Son of God to accomplish all the will of God the Father: an act impossible to be repeated-for all His will cannot be accomplished twice.

This is what the Son of God says in this most solemn passage (5-9), in which we are admitted to know, according to the grace of God, that which passed between God the Father and Himself, when He undertook the fulfillment of the will of God, that which He said, and the eternal counsels of God which He carried into execution. He takes the place of submission and of obedience, of performing the will of another. God would no longer accept the sacrifices that were offered under the law (the four classes of which are here pointed out), He had no pleasure in them. In their stead, He had prepared a body for His son-vast and important truth-for the place of man is

obedience. Thus in taking this place, the Son of God put Himself into the position to obey perfectly. In fact, He undertakes the duty of fulfilling all the will of God, be it what it may; a will which is ever "good, acceptable and perfect." The Psalm says in the Hebrew: "Thou hast digged my ears," translated by the Septuagint, "Thou hast prepared me a body;" words which, as they give the true meaning, are used by the Holy Ghost. For "the ear "is always employed as a sign of the reception of commandments, and the principle of obligation to obey, or the disposition to do so. He hath opened my ear morning by morning, (Is. e. has made me obedient to His will. The ear was bored or fastened with an awl to the door, in order to express that the Israelite was attached to the house, as a slave, to obey, forever. Now, in taking a body, the Lord took the form of a servant. Ears were digged for Him. That is to say, He placed Himself in a position in which He had to obey all His master's will, whatever it might be. But it is the Lord Himself who speaks, in the passage before us; "Thou," He says, "hast prepared me a body."

Entering more into detail, He specifies burnt offerings and offerings for sin, sacrifices which had less of the character of communion, and had thus a deeper meaning; but God had no pleasure in them. In a word, the Jewish service was already declared by the Spirit to be unacceptable to God. It was all to cease, it was fruitless; no offering that formed part of it was acceptable. No, the counsels of God unfold themselves-but first of all, in the heart of the Word, the Son of God, who offers Himself to accomplish the will of God. "Then, said He, Lo I come-in the volume of the book it is written of me-to do Thy will O God." Nothing can be more solemn than thus to lift the veil from that which takes place in heaven between God and the Word who undertook to do His will. Observe, that before He was in the position of obedience, He offers Himself in order to accomplish the will of God; that is to say, of free love for the glory of God, of free will, as One who had the power, He offers Himself. He undertakes obedience, He undertakes to do whatsoever God wills. This is, indeed, to sacrifice all His own will, but freely and as the effect of His own purpose, although on the occasion of the will of His Father. He must needs be God, in order to do this, and to undertake the fulfillment of all that God could will.

We have here the great mystery of this divine intercourse, which remains ever surrounded with its solemn majesty, although it is communicated to us that we may know it. And we ought to know it; for it is thus that we understand the infinite grace and the glory of this work. Before He became man, in the place where only divinity is known, and its eternal counsels and thoughts are communicated between the Divine Persons, the Word -as He has declared it to us, in time, by the prophetic Spirit,-such being the will of God contained in the book of the eternal counsels, He who, was able to do it, offered Himself freely to accomplish that will. Submissive to this counsel, already arranged for Him, He yet offers Himself in perfect freedom to fulfill it. But in offering, He submits, yet at the same time undertakes to do all that God, as God, willed. But also in undertaking to do the will of God, it was by the way of obedience, of submission, and of devotedness. For I might undertake to do the will of another, as free and competent, because I willed the thing; but if I say "to do Thy will," this in itself is absolute and complete submission. And this it is which the Lord, the Word, did. He did it also, declaring that He came in order to do it. He took a position of obedience by accepting the body prepared for Him. He came to do the will of God.

This, of which we have been speaking, is continually manifested in the life of Jesus on earth. God shines through His position in the human body; for He was necessarily God in the act itself of His humiliation; and none but God could have undertaken and been found in it; yet He was always and

entirely and perfectly obedient and dependent on God. That which revealed itself in His existence on earth, was the expression of that which was accomplished in the eternal abode, in His own nature. That is to say (and of which Psa. 40 speaks), that which He declares, and that which He was here below, are the same thing; the one in reality in heaven, the other bodily on earth. That which He was here below, was but the expression, the living, real, bodily manifestation of those divine communications which have been revealed to us, and which were the reality of the position that He assumed.

And it is very important to see these things in the free offer made by divine competency, and that not only in their fulfillment in death. It gives quite a different character to the bodily work here below.

In reality, from chapter 1 of this epistle, the Holy Ghost always presents Christ in this way. But this revelation in the Psalm was requisite to explain how He became a servant, what the Messiah really was; and to us it opens an immense view of the ways of God; a view, the depths of which—clearly as it is revealed, and through the very clearness of the revelation—display to us things so divine and glorious, that we bow—the head and veil our faces, at having had part, as it were, in such communications, on account of the majesty of the persons whose acts and whose intimate relationships are revealed, it is not here the glory that dazzles us. But in this poor world there is nothing to which we are greater strangers than the intimacy of those who are, in their modes of life, much above ourselves. What then, when it is that of God! Blessed be His name! there is grace that brings us into it—and that has drawn nigh to us in our weakness. We are then admitted to know this precious truth, that the Lord Jesus undertook, of His own free will, the accomplishment of all the will of God, and that He was pleased to take the body prepared for Him, in order to accomplish it. The love, the devotedness to the glory of God, and the way in which He undertook to obey, are fully set forth. And this—the fruit of God's eternal counsels—displaces (by its very nature) every provisional sign; and contains, in itself alone, the condition of all relationship with God, and the means by which He glorifies Himself.

The Word then assumes a body, in order to offer Himself as a sacrifice. Besides the revelation of this devotedness of the Word to accomplish the will of God, the effect of His sacrifice, according to the will of God, is also set before us.

He came to do the will of Jehovah. Now, it is by this will of God, (i.e. by His will who, according to His eternal wisdom prepared a body for His Son), that faith understands that those whom He has called unto Himself are saved, are set apart to God; in other words, are sanctified. It is by the will of God that we are set apart for Him (not by our own will), and that, by means of the sacrifice offered to God.

We shall observe, that the epistle does not here speak of the communication of life, nor of a practical sanctification wrought by the Holy Ghost: the subject is the person of Christ ascended on high, and the efficacy of his work. And this is important with regard to sanctification, because it shows that sanctification is a complete setting apart to God, as belonging to Him at the price of the offering of Jesus: a consecration to Him by means of that offering. God took the unclean Jews from among men and set them apart, consecrated them to Himself, by means of the offering of Jesus.

But there is another element, already pointed out, in this offering, the force of which the epistle here applies to believers, namely, that the offering is "once for all." It admits of no repetition. If we enjoy the effect of this offering, our sanctification is eternal in its nature. It does not fail. It is never repeated. We belong to God forever, according to the efficacy of this offering. Thus our sanctification, our being set apart to God, has-with regard to the work that accomplished it-all the stability of the will of God, and all the grace from which it sprang; it has, in its nature, the perfection of the work itself, by which it was accomplished, and the duration and the constant force of the efficacy of that work. But the effect of this offering is not limited to this setting apart for God. The point already treated contains our consecration by God Himself, through the perfectly efficacious offering of Christ, fulfilling His will. And now the position which Christ has taken, in consequence of His offering up of Himself, is employed, in order clearly to demonstrate the state it has brought us into before God.

The high-priest among the Jews-for this contrast is still carried on-stood before the altar continually, to repeat the same sacrifices which could never take away sins. But this man, when He had offered one sacrifice for sin, sat down forever at the right hand of God. There,-having finished for His own all that regards their presentation without spot to God,-He awaits the moment when His enemies shall be made His footstool, according to Psa. 110 "Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." And the Spirit gives us the important reason so infinitely precious to us: "For He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

Here (ver. 14) as in ver. 12, on which the latter depends, the word "forever" has the force of permanence, uninterrupted continuity. He is ever seated, we are ever perfected, by virtue of His work and according to the perfect righteousness in which, and conformably to which, He sits at the right hand of God upon His throne, according to that which He is personally there; His, acceptance on God's part being proved by His session at His right hand. And He is there for us.

It is a righteousness suited to the throne of God, yea, the righteousness of the throne. It neither varies nor fails. He is seated there forever. If then we are sanctified, set apart to God, by this offering according to the will of God Himself, we are also made perfect for God by the same offering, as presented to Him in the person of Jesus.

We have seen that this position has its origin in the will, the good will of God (a will which combines the grace and the purpose of God), and that it has its foundation and present certainty in the accomplishment of the work of Christ, the perfection of which is demonstrated by the session at the right hand of God of Him who accomplished it. But the testimony,-for to enjoy this grace, we must know it with divine certainty; and the greater it is, the more would our hearts be led to doubt it,-the testimony upon which we believe it must be divine. And this it is. The Holy Ghost bears witness to us of it. The will of God is the source of the work; Christ, the Son of God, accomplished it; the Holy Ghost bears witness of it. And here the application to the people, called by grace and spared, is, in consequence, fully set forth; not merely the fulfillment of the work. The Holy Ghost bears us witness, "I will remember no more their sins and iniquities."

Blessed position! The certainty that God will never remember our sins and iniquities, is founded on the steadfast will of God, on the perfect offering of Christ, now, consequently, seated at the right hand of God, and on the sure testimony of the Holy Ghost. It is a matter of faith that God will never remember our sins.

We may remark here, the way in which the covenant is introduced; for although, as writing to "the holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," he says "a witness to us," the form of his address is always that of an epistle to the Hebrews, (believers, of course, but Hebrews, still bearing the character of God's people). He does not speak of the Covenant in a direct way, as a privilege in which Christians had a direct part. The Holy Ghost, he says, declares, "I will remember no more," &c. It is this which he quotes. He only alludes to the New Covenant; leaving it aside, consequently, as to all present application. For after having said, "This is the covenant," etc., the testimony is cited, as that of the Holy Ghost, to prove the capital point which he was treating, i.e., that God remembers our sins no more. But he alludes to the Covenant (already known to the Jews as declared before of God) which gave the authority of the Scriptures to this testimony that God remembered no more the sins of His people who are 'sanctified and admitted into His favor, and which, at the same time, presented these two thoughts:-1st, that this complete pardon did not exist under the first covenant; and 2nd, that the door is left open for the blessing of the nation when the New Covenant shall be formally established.

Another practical consequence is drawn: sins being remitted, there is no more oblation for sin. The one sacrifice having obtained remission, no others can be offered in order to obtain it. Remembrance of this one sacrifice there may indeed be, whatever its character; but a sacrifice to take away the sin which is already taken away, there cannot be. We are, therefore, in reality on entirely new ground-on that of the fact, that by the sacrifice of Christ sin is altogether put away, and that for us who are sanctified and partakers of the heavenly calling, a perfect and everlastingly permanent cleansing has been made, remission granted, eternal redemption obtained. So that we are, in the eyes of God, without sin, on the ground of the perfection of the work of Christ who is seated at His right hand, who has entered into the true Holiest, into heaven itself, to sit there, because his work is accomplished.

Thus, all liberty is ours to enter into the Holy Place (all boldness) by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, i.e., His flesh, that veil rent for us, to admit us without spot into the presence of God Himself, who is there revealed. For that which rent the veil in order to admit us, has likewise put away the sin which shut us out.

We have also a great High Priest over the house of God, as we have seen, who represents us in the Holy Place.

On these truths are founded the exhortations • that follow. One word before we enter on them, as to the relation that exists between perfect righteousness and the priesthood. There are many souls who use the priesthood as the means of obtaining pardon when they have failed. They go to Christ as a Priest, that He may intercede for them and obtain the pardon which they desire, but for which they dare not ask God in a direct way. These souls-sincere as they are-have not liberty to enter into the Holy Place. They take refuge with Christ that they may afresh be brought into the presence of God. Their condition, practically, is that in which a pious Jew stood. They have lost, or rather they have never had by faith, the real consciousness of their position before God, in virtue of the sacrifice of Christ. I do not speak here of all the privileges of the Church: we have seen that the epistle does not speak of them. The position it makes for believers is this. They whom it addresses are not viewed as placed in heaven, although partakers of the heavenly calling; but a perfect redemption is accomplished, sin entirely put away, for the people of God, who remembers

their sins no more. The conscience is made perfect: they have no more conscience of sin, by virtue of the work accomplished once for all. There is no more question of sin, i.e., of its imputation, of its being upon them before God, between them and God. It has been put away upon the Cross. Therefore the conscience is perfect; their Representative and High Priest is in heaven, a witness there to the work already accomplished for them.

Thus, although the epistle does not present them as in the Holiest, as sitting there,--like the epistle to the Ephesians--they have full liberty, entire boldness, to enter into it. The question of imputation no longer exists. Their sins have been imputed to Christ. But He is now in heaven--a proof that the sins are blotted out forever. Believers, therefore, 'enter with entire liberty into the presence of God Himself, and that, always; having no more forever any conscience of sin.

For what purpose, then, is priesthood? What is to be done with respect to the sins we commit? They interrupt our communion; but they make no change in our position before God, nor in the testimony rendered by the presence of Christ at the right hand of God. Sin is measured by the conscience, according to our position. The priesthood of Christ, united to His perpetual presence at God's right hand, has this two-fold effect for us. 1st. Righteousness always subsists. 2nd. We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. We draw nigh to God in the Holiest, according to that righteousness. But, by sin, communion is interrupted; our righteousness is not altered--for that is Christ Himself at God's right hand, in virtue of His work--nor is grace changed; but the heart has got away from God, communion is interrupted. Under these circumstances grace acts, in virtue of perfect righteousness, and by the intercession of Christ, on behalf of him who has failed; and his soul is restored to communion. Not that we go to Jesus for this; He goes, even if we sin, to God for us. His presence there is the witness of an unchangeable righteousness which is ours; His intercession maintains or restores the communion which is founded on that righteousness. Our access to God is always open. Sin interrupts our enjoyment of it, the heart is not in communion; the intercession of Jesus is the means of rousing the conscience by the action of the Spirit and the Word, and we return (first humbling ourselves) into the presence of God Himself.

Exhortations follow. Having the right thus to approach God, let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith. This is the only thing that honors the efficacy of Christ's work, and the love which has thus brought us to enjoy God. In the words that follow, allusion is made to the consecration of the priests - natural allusion, as drawing near to God in the Holiest is the subject. They were sprinkled with blood and washed with water, and then they drew nigh to serve God. Still, although I doubt not of the allusion to the priests, it is quite natural that baptism should have given rise to it. The anointing is not spoken of here--it is the power or privilege of the moral right to draw nigh.

Again, we may notice that as to the foundation of the truth, this is the ground on which Israel will stand in the last days. In Christ, in heaven, will not be their place, nor the possession of the Holy Ghost as uniting the believer to Christ in heaven; but the blessing will be founded on water and on blood. God will remember their sins no more; and they will be washed in the clean water of the Word.

The second exhortation is to persevere in the profession of faith; without wavering. He who made the promises is faithful.

Not only should we have this confidence in God for ourselves, but we -are also to consider one another for mutual encouragement; and, at the same time, not to fail in the public and common profession of faith, pretending to maintain it while avoiding the open identification of oneself with the Lord's people in the difficulties connected with the profession of this faith before the world. Besides, this public confession had a fresh motive in that the day drew nigh. We see that it is the judgment which is here presented as the thing looked for,-in order that it may act on the conscience, and guard Christians from turning back to the world, and from the influence of the fear of man,-rather than the Lord's coming to take up His own people. Ver. 26 is connected with the preceding paragraph (23-25), the last words of which suggest the warning of ver. 26; which is founded, moreover, on the doctrine of these two chapters (9 and 10), with regard to the sacrifice. He insists on perseverance in a full confession of Christ, for His one Sacrifice once offered was the only one. If any one who had professed to know its value abandoned it, there was no other sacrifice to which he could have recourse; neither could it be ever repeated. There remained no more sacrifice for sin. All sin was pardoned by the efficacy of this sacrifice: but if, after having known the truth, they were to choose sin instead, there was no other sacrifice, by virtue even of the perfection of that of Christ. Nothing but judgment remained. Such a professor, having had the knowledge of the truth and having abandoned it, would assume the character of an adversary.

The case, then, here supposed is the renunciation of the confession of Christ; deliberately preferring - after having known the truth - to walk according to one's own will in sin. This is evident, both from that which precedes and from ver. 29.

Thus we have the two great privileges of Christianity, that which distinguishes it from Judaism, presented in order to warn those who made profession of the former, that the renunciation of the truth, after having enjoyed these advantages, was fatal; for if this means of salvation were renounced, there was no other. These privileges were the manifested presence and power of the Holy Ghost, and the Offering which, by its intrinsic and absolute value, left no place for any other. Both of these possessed a mighty efficacy which, while it gave divine spring and force, the manifestation of the presence of God on the one hand; made known on the other hand the eternal redemption and the perfection of the worshipper; leaving no means for repentance if any one abandoned the manifested and known power of that presence, no place for another sacrifice (which, moreover, would have denied the efficacy of the first), after the perfect work of God in salvation, perfect whether with regard to redemption or to the presence of God by the Spirit in the midst of His own. Nothing remained but judgment.

They who despised the law of Moses, died without mercy. What then would not those deserve at the hand of God, who trod under foot the Son of God, counted the blood of the Covenant by which they had been sanctified, as a common thing, and done despite to the Spirit of Grace. It was not disobedience; it was contempt of the grace of God, and of that which He had done, in the person of Jesus, in order to deliver us from the consequences of disobedience. On the one hand, what was there left, if-with the knowledge of what it was-they renounced this? On the other hand, how could they escape judgment; for they knew a God who had said that vengeance belonged unto Him, and that He would recompense? And again, the Lord would judge His people.

Observe here the way in which sanctification is attributed to the blood: and also, that professors are treated as belonging to the people. The Blood, received by faith, consecrates the soul to God;

but it is here viewed also as an outward means for setting apart the people, as a people. Every individual who had owned Jesus to be the Messiah, and the blood to be the seal and foundation of an everlasting Covenant, available for eternal cleansing and redemption on the part of God, acknowledging himself to be set apart for God, by this means, as one of the people—every such individual would, if he renounced it, renounce it as snail; and there was no other way of sanctifying him. The former system had evidently lost its power for him, and the true one he had abandoned. This is the reason why it is said, "having received the knowledge of the truth."

Nevertheless, he hopes better things, reminding them how much they had really suffered for the truth, and that they had even received joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had a better and an abiding portion in heaven. Therefore they were not to cast away their confidence, the reward of which would be great. For, in truth, they needed patience, in order that after having done the will of God they might receive the effect of the promise. And He who is to come, will come soon.

It is to this life of patience and perseverance that the chapter applies. But there is a principle which is the strength of this life, and which characterizes it. In the midst of the difficulties of the Christian walk, the just shall live by faith; and if any one draws back, God will have no pleasure in him. But, says the author, placing himself, as ever, in the midst of the believers, "We are not of them who draw back, but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul." Thereupon he describes the action of this faith, encouraging believers by the example of the elders who had acquired their renown by walking according to the same principle as that by which the faithful were now called to walk.

Hebrews 11

It is not a definition of this principle, that the epistle gives us at the commencement of chap. 11; but a declaration of its powers and action. Faith realizes (gives substance to) that which we hope for, and is a demonstration to the soul of that which we do not see.

There is much more order than is generally thought, in the series given here of examples of the action of faith; although this order is not the principal object. I will point out its leading features.

1st. With regard to creation. Lost in reasonings, and not knowing God, the human mind sought out endless solutions of existence. Those who have read the cosmogonies of the ancients, know how many different systems, each more absurd than the other, have been invented for that which the introduction of God, by faith, renders perfectly simple. Modern science, with a less active and more practical mind, stops at second causes, and is but little occupied with God. Geology has taken the place of the cosmogony of the Hindus, Egyptians, Orientals, and Philosophers. To the believer the thought is clear and simple; his mind is assured and intelligent by faith. God, by His Word, called all things into existence. The universe is not a 'producing cause; it is itself a creature acting by a law imposed on it. It is one having authority who has spoken; His word has divine efficacy. He speaks-and the thing is. We feel that this is worthy of God. For when once God is brought in, all is simple. Shut Him out, and man is lost in the efforts of his own imagination, which can neither create nor arrive at the knowledge of a Creator, because it only works with the powers of a creature. Before, therefore, the details of the present form of creation are entered upon, the Word simply says, "In the beginning; God created the heavens and the earth:" Whatever may have taken place between that and Chaos, forms no part of revelation: It is distinct from the special action of the Deluge which is made known to us. The beginning of Genesis does not give a history of the details of creation itself, nor the history of the universe. It gives the fact that in the beginning God created: and afterward, the things that regard man on the earth. The angels, even, are not there. Of the stars it is only said, "He made the stars also." When, we are not told.

By faith, then, we believe that the worlds were created by the Word of God. But sin has come in: and righteousness has to be found for fallen man, in order that he may stand before God. God has given a Lamb for the sacrifice. But here we have set before us, not the gift on God's part, but the soul drawing near to Him by faith.

By faith, then, Abel offers to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain-a sacrifice which (founded on the revelation already made by God) was offered in the intelligence which a conscience taught of God possessed, with regard to the position in which he who offered was standing. Death and judgment had come in by sin, to man insupportable, although he must undergo them. He must go, therefore, to God, confessing this; but he must go with a substitute, which grace has given. He must go with blood, the witness at the same time both of the judgment and of the perfect grace of God. Doing this, he was in the truth, and this truth was righteousness and grace. He approaches God, and puts the sacrifice between himself and God. He receives the testimony that he is righteous-righteous according to the righteousness of God. For the sacrifice was in connection

with the righteousness that had condemned man. The testimony is to his offering; but Abel is righteous before God. Nothing can be more clear, more precious on this point. It is not only the sacrifice which is accepted, but Abel who comes with the sacrifice. He receives from God this testimony, that he is righteous. Sweet and blessed consolation! But the testimony is made to his gifts, so that he possesses all the certainty, of acceptance, all the value of the sacrifice offered. In going to God by the sacrifice of Jesus, not only am I righteous (I receive the testimony that I am righteous), but this testimony is made to my offering, and therefore my righteousness has the value and the perfection of the offering, i.e., of Christ offering Himself to God. The fact that we receive testimony on God's part that we are righteous, and at the same time that the testimony is made to the gift which we offer (not to the condition in which we are) is of infinite value to us. We are now before God in the perfection of Christ. We walk with God thus.

By faith, death having been the means of my acceptance before God, all that belongs to the old man is

for faith; the power and the rights, of death are entirely destroyed—Christ has undergone them. Thus, if it please God, we go to heaven without even passing through death (compare 2 Cor. 5:1-4). God did this for Enoch, for Elijah, as a testimony. Not only is sin put away, and righteousness established by the work of Christ, but the rights and the power of him who has the power of death are entirely destroyed. Death may happen to us; we are by nature liable to it: but we possess a life which is outside its jurisdiction. Death, if it comes, is but gain to us; and although nothing but the power of God Himself can raise or transform the body, this power has been manifested in Jesus, and has already wrought in us by quickening us (comp. Eph. 1.19), and it works in us now in the power or deliverance from sin, from the law, and from the flesh. Death, as a power of the enemy, is conquered; it is become a "gain" to faith, instead of being a judgment on nature. Life, the power of God in life, works in holiness and in obedience here below, and declares itself in the resurrection or in the transformation of the body (it is a witness of power with regard to Christ in Rom. 1:4).

But there is another very sweet consideration to be noticed here. Enoch received testimony that he pleased God, before he was translated. This is very important and very precious. If we walk with God, we have the testimony that we please Him, we have the sweetness of communion with God, the testimony of His Spirit, His intercourse with us in the sense of His presence, the consciousness of walking according to His Word, which we know to be approved by Him—in a word, a life which, spent with Him and before Him by faith, is spent in the light of His countenance and in the enjoyment of the communications of His grace and of a sure testimony coming from Himself, that we are pleasing to Him. A child who walks with a kind father and converses with him, his conscience reproaching him with nothing; does he not enjoy the sense of his parent's favor?

In figure, Enoch here represents the Church. He is taken up to heaven by virtue of a complete victory over death. By the exercise of sovereign grace, he is outside the government and the ordinary deliverances of God. He bears testimony by the Spirit to the judgment of the world; but he does not go through it (Jude, 14, 15). A walk like that of Enoch has God for its object. His existence is realized—the great business of life, which in the world is spent as if man did everything—and the fact that He is interested in the walk of men, that He takes account of it, in order to reward those who have diligently sought Him.

Noah is found in the scene of the government of this-world. He does not, warn others of the coming judgments as one who is outside them, although he is a preacher of righteousness. He is warned himself and 'for himself; he is in the circumstances to which the warning relates. It is the spirit of prophecy. He is moved by fear, and he builds an ark to the saving of his house. He thus condemned the world. Enoch had not to build an ark in order to pass safely through the flood. He was not in it: God translated him-exceptionally. Noah is preserved (heir of the righteousness which is by faith, for a future world. There is a general principle which accepts the testimony of God respecting the judgment that will fall upon men, and the means provided by God for escaping it: this belongs to every believer. But there is something more precise. Abel has the testimony that he is righteous; Enoch walks with God, pleases God, and is exempted from the common lot of humanity, proclaiming, as from above, the fate that awaits men, and the coming of Him who will execute the judgment. He goes forward to the accomplishment of the counsels of God. But neither Abel nor Enoch condemned the world as that in the midst of which they were journeying, receiving themselves the warning addressed to those who were dwellers therein. This was Noah's case: the prophet, although delivered, is in the midst of the judged people. The Church is outside them. Noah's ark condemned the world; the testimony of God was enough for faith, and he inherits a world that had been destroyed, and the inheritance of all believers, righteousness by faith, on which the new world, too, is founded. This is the case of the Jewish remnant in the last days. They pass through the judgments, out of which we, as not belonging to the world, have been taken. Warned themselves of God's ways of government in the earth, they will be witnesses to the world of the coming judgments, and will be heirs to the righteousness which is by faith, and witnesses to it in a new world, wherein righteousness will be accomplished in judgment by Him who is to come and whose throne will uphold the world in which Noah himself failed: The words, "heir of the righteousness which is by faith," point out, I think, that this faith which had governed a few was summed up in his person, and that the whole unbelieving world was condemned. The witness of this faith before judgment, Noah passes through it; and when the world is renewed, he is a public witness to the blessing of God that rests on faith, although outwardly all is changed. Thus Enoch represents the Church, in figure; Noah, the Jewish remnant.

The Spirit goes on (verse 8) to produce examples of the Divine life in detail, always in connection with Jewish knowledge, with that which the heart of a Hebrew could not fail to own; and, at the same time, in connection with the object of the Epistle and with the wants of Christians among the Hebrews.

In the previous case, we have seen a faith which, after owning a Creator- God -recognizes the great principles of the relations of man with God, and that onwards to the end upon earth.

In that which follows, we have first the faith which takes the place of strangership on earth, and maintains it, because something better is desired; and which, in spite of weakness, finds the strength that is requisite, in order to the fulfillment of the promises. This is from 8 to 16. Its effect is entrance into the joy of a heavenly hope. Strangers in the land of promise, and not enjoying the fulfillment of the promises here below, they wait for more excellent things-things which God prepares on high for those who love Him. For such He has prepared a city. In unison with God as to His own thoughts, their desires (through grace) answering to the things in which He takes delight, they are the objects of His peculiar regard: He is not ashamed to be called their God. Abraham not only followed God into a land that He showed Him, but, a stranger there, and not

possessing the land of promise, he is, by the mighty grace of God, exalted to the sphere of His thoughts; and, enjoying communion with God and the communications of His grace, he rests upon God for the time present, accepts his position of strangership on earth, and, as the portion of his faith, waits for the heavenly city, of which God is the builder and the founder. There was not, so to speak, an open revelation of this, as was the case when Abraham was called of God; but walking closely enough with God to know that which was enjoyed in His presence; and being conscious that he had not received the fulfillment of the promise, he lays hold of the better things, and waits for them, although only seeing them afar off, and remains a stranger upon earth, unmindful of the country whence he came out.

The special application of these first principles of faith to the case of the Christian Hebrews is evident. They are the normal life of faith for all.

The second character of faith here presented is an entire confidence in the fulfillment of the promises: a confidence maintained in spite of all that might tend to destroy it. This is from ver. 17 to 22. We next find that faith makes its way through all the difficulties that oppose its progress (ver. 23-27). From ver. 28 to 31 faith displays itself in a trust that reposes on God with regard to the use of the means which He sets before us, and of which nature cannot avail itself. Finally, there is the energy in general, of which faith is the source, and the sufferings that characterize the walk of faith.

This general character belongs to all the examples mentioned -namely, that they who have exercised faith have not received the fulfillment of the promise; the application of which to the state of the Hebrew Christians is evident. And these illustrious heroes of faith too, however honored they might be among the Jews, did not enjoy the privileges that Christians possessed; God, in His counsels, had reserved something better for us.

Let us notice some details. Abraham's faith shows itself by a thorough trust in God. Called to leave his own people, breaking the ties of nature, he obeys. He knows not whither he is going: enough for him that God would show him the place. God having brought him thither, gives him nothing. He dwells-there content, in perfect reliance on God. He was a gainer by it. He waited for a city that had foundations. He openly confesses that he is a stranger and a pilgrim on earth. Gen. 33:4. Thus, in spirit, he draws nearer to God. Although he possesses nothing, his affections are engaged. He desires a better country, and attaches himself to God more immediately and entirely. He has no desire to return into his own country: he seeks a country. Such is the Christian. In offering up Isaac, there was that absolute confidence in God which, at His command, can renounce even God's own promises as possessed after the flesh, sure that God will restore them through the exercise of His power, overcoming death and every obstacle.

It is thus that Christ renounced His rights as Messiah, and went even into death, committing Himself to the will of God and trusting in Him; and received everything in resurrection. And this the Hebrew Christians had to do with respect to the Messiah and the promises made to Israel.

Observe here that when trusting in God and giving up all for Him, we always gain, and we learn something more of the ways of His power: for in renouncing-according to His will - anything already received, we ought to expect from the power of God that He would bestow something else. Abraham renounces the promise after the flesh. He sees the city which has foundations; he can

desire a heavenly country. He gives up Isaac, in whom were the promises; he learns resurrection, for God is infallibly faithful. The promises were in Isaac, therefore God must restore him to Abraham, and by resurrection, if he offered him in sacrifice.

In Isaac, faith distinguishes between the portion of God's people according to his election, and that of man having birth-rights according to nature. This is the knowledge of the ways of God in blessing, and in judgment.

By faith, Jacob, a stranger and feeble, having nothing but the staff with which he had crossed the Jordan, worships God, and announces the double portion of the heir of Israel, of the one whom his brethren rejected - a type of the Lord, the heir of all things.

By faith, Joseph, a stranger, the representative here of Israel, far from his own country, reckons on the fulfillment of the earthly promises.

These are the expressions of faith in the faithfulness of God, in the future fulfillment of His promise. In that which follows we have the faith which surmounts every difficulty that arises in the path of the man of God, in the way that God marks out for him as he journeys on towards the enjoyment of the promises.

The faith of the parents of Moses makes them disregard the king's cruel command, and they conceal their infant; whom God, in answer to their faith, preserved by extraordinary means when there was no other way to save it. Faith does not reason - it acts from its own point of view, and leaves the result to God.

But the means which God used for the preservation of Moses, placed him within a little of the highest position in the kingdom. He there came to be possessed of all the acquirements which that period could bestow on a man distinguished alike by his energy and his character. But faith does its work, and inspires divine affections which do not look to surrounding circumstances for a guide of action, even when those circumstances may have owed their origin to the most remarkable providences.

Faith has its own objects, supplied by God Himself, and governs the heart with a view to those objects. It gives us a place and relationships which rule the whole life, and leave no room for other motives and other spheres of affection which would divide the heart; for the motives and affections which govern faith are given by God, and given by Him in order to form and govern the heart.

Vers. 24-26, develop this point. It is a very important principle; for we often hear providence alleged as a reason for not walking by faith. Never was there a more remarkable providence than that which placed Moses in the court of Pharaoh: and it gained its object. It would not have done so, if Moses had not abandoned the position into which that providence had brought him. But it was faith, that is to say, the divine affections which God had created in his heart, and not providence as a rule and motive, which produced the effect for which providence had reserved and prepared him. Providence, thanks be to God! governs circumstances. Faith governs the heart and the conduct.

The reward which God has promised comes in here as an avowed object in the sphere of faith. It is not the motive power; but it sustains and encourages the heart that is acting by faith, in view of the object which God presents to our affections. It thus takes the heart away from the present,

from the influence of the things that surround us (whether they are things that attract or that tend to intimidate us), and elevates the heart and character of him who walks by faith, and confirms him in a path of devotedness which will lead him to the end: at which he aims.

A motive outside that which is present to us, is the secret of stability and of true greatness. We may have.-an object with regard to which we act; but we need a motive outside that object-a divine motive - to enable us to act in a godly way respecting it.

Faith realizes also (ver. 27) the intervention of God without seeing Him; and thus delivers from all fear of the power of man, the enemy of His people. But the thought of God's intervention brings the heart into a greater difficulty than even the fear of man. If His people are to be delivered, God must intervene, and that in judgment. But they, as well as their enemies, are sinners; and the consciousness of sin and of deserving judgment necessarily destroys confidence in Him who is the Judge. Dare they see Him come to manifest His power in judgment (for this it is, in fact, which must take place for the deliverance of His people). Is God for us the heart asks this God who is coming in judgment? But God has provided the means of securing safety in the presence of judgment (ver. 28), a means apparently contemptible and useless; yet which in reality is the only one that, by glorifying Him with regard to the evil of which we are guilty, has power to afford shelter from the judgment that He executes.

Faith recognized the testimony of God by trusting to the efficacy of the blood sprinkled on the door, and could, in all security, let God come in judgment- God who, seeing the blood, would pass over His believing people. By faith Moses kept the Passover. Observe here, that by the act of putting the blood on the door, the people acknowledged that they were as much the objects of the just judgment of God as the Egyptians. God had given them that which preserved them from it: but it was because they were guilty, and deserved it. No one can stand before God.

Ver. 29. But the power of God is manifested, and manifested in judgment. Nature, the enemies of God's people, think to pass through this judgment dry-shod, like those who are sheltered from the righteous vengeance of God. But the judgment swallows them up in the very same place in which the people find deliverance. A principle of marvelous import. There, where the judgment of God is, even there is the deliverance. Believers have truly experienced this in Christ. The Cross is death and judgment, the two terrible consequences of sin, the lot of sinful man. To us, they are the deliverance provided of God. By and in them we are delivered, and (in Christ) we pass through, and are out of their reach. Christ died and is risen; and faith brings us, by means of that which should have been our eternal ruin, into a place where death and judgment are left behind, and where our enemies can no longer reach us. We go through, without their touching us. Death and judgment shield us from the enemy. They are our security. But we enter into a new sphere. We live by the effect not only of Christ's death but of His resurrection.

Those who, in the mere power of nature, think to pass through (they who speak of death and judgment and Christ, taking the Christian position, and thinking to pass through, although the power of God in redemption is not with them) are swallowed, up.

With respect to the Jews, this event will have an earthly antitype; for in fact the day of God's judgment on earth will be the deliverance of Israel, who will have been brought to repentance.

This deliverance at the Red Sea, goes beyond the protection of the blood in Egypt. There, God coming in the expression of His holiness, executing judgment upon evil, what they needed was to be sheltered from that judgment, to be protected from the righteous judgment of God Himself. And, by the blood, God, thus coming to execute judgment, was shut out, and the people were placed in safety before the Judge. This judgment had the character of the eternal judgment.

At the Red Sea, it was not merely deliverance from judgment hanging over them; but God was for the people, active in love and in power for them. The deliverance was an actual deliverance, they came out of one condition to enter into another; God's own power bringing them, unhurt, through that which, must otherwise, have been their destruction. Thus, in our case, it is death and resurrection, in which we participate, in Christ, the redemption which He therein accomplished, which introduces us into an entirely new condition, altogether outside that of nature.

In principle, the earthly deliverance of the Jewish nation (the Jewish remnant) will be the same. Founded on the power of the risen Christ, and on the propitiation wrought out by His death, that deliverance will be accomplished by God who will intervene on behalf of those that turn to Him by faith; at the same time that His adversaries (who are those also of His people) shall be destroyed by the very judgment which is the safeguard of the people whom they have oppressed.

Ver. 30. Yet all difficulties were not overcome because redemption was accomplished, deliverance effected. But the God of deliverance was with them; difficulties disappear before Him. That which is a difficulty to man, is none to Him. Faith trusts in Him, and uses means which only serve to express that trust. The walls of Jericho fall down at the sound of trumpets made of rams' horns, after Israel had compassed the city seven days, sounding these trumpets seven times.

Rahab, in presence of all the as yet unimpaired strength of the enemies of God and His people, identifies herself with the latter before they had gained one victory; because she felt that God was with them. A stranger to them, (as to the flesh) she, by faith, escaped the judgment which God executed upon her people.

Ver. 32. Details are now no longer carried on. Israel (although individuals had still to act by faith) being established in the land of promise, furnished less occasion to develop examples of the principles on which faith acted. The Spirit speaks in a general way of these examples in which faith re-appeared under various characters of energy and patience, and sustained souls under all kinds of suffering. Their glory was with God, the world was not worthy of them. Nevertheless they had received nothing of the fulfillment of the promises; they had to live by faith, as well as the Hebrews, to whom the epistle was addressed. The latter, however, had privileges which were in no wise possessed by believers of former days. Neither the one nor the other was brought to perfection, i.e., to the heavenly glory, unto which God has called us, and in which they are to participate. Abraham, and others, waited for this glory; they never possessed it; God would not give it them without us. But He has not called us by only the same revelations as those which He made to them. For the days of the rejected Messiah, He had reserved some better thing. Heavenly things have become things of the present time things actually possessed, by the union of the church of Christ, and present access into the Holiest, through the blood of Christ. We have not to do with a promise and a distant view of a place approached from without, entrance to which was not yet granted, so that relationship with God would not be founded on entrance; within the veil, entrance into His own presence. We now go in with boldness. We belong to heaven; our citizenship is there;

we are at home there. Heavenly glory is our present portion, Christ, our head, having gone in as our forerunner. We have, in Heaven, a Christ who is man glorified. This, Abraham had not. He walked on earth with a heavenly mind, waiting for a city, feeling that nothing else would satisfy the desires which God had awakened in his heart; but he could not be connected with heaven by means of a Christ actually sitting there in, glory. This is our present portion. We can even say that we are united to Him there. The Christian's position is quite different from that of Abraham's.

The Spirit does not here develop the whole extent of this "better thing," because the church is not His subject.

He presents the general thought to the Hebrews, that believers of the present day have special privileges which they enjoy by faith, but which did not belong even to the faith of believers in former days.

We shall all be perfected, that is to say, glorified, together in resurrection; but there is a special portion which belongs to the church, and which did not belong to the patriarchs. The fact, that Christ, as man, is in heaven, after having accomplished redemption; and that the Holy Ghost, by whom we are united to Christ, is on earth, makes this superiority granted to Christians easily understood. Accordingly, even the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the greatest of those who preceded it.

Hebrews 12

The epistle now enters on the practical exhortations that flow from its doctrinal instruction; with reference to the dangers peculiar to the Hebrew Christians-instruction suited, throughout, to inspire them with courage. Surrounded with a cloud of witnesses like these of chap. xi., who all declared the advantages of a life of faith in promises still unfulfilled, they ought to feel themselves impelled to follow their steps, running with patience the race set before them, and above all looking to Jesus, who had run the whole career of faith, sustained by the joy that was set before Him, and having reached the goal had taken His seat in glory at the right-hand of God.

This passage presents the Lord, not as He Who bestows faith-, but as He who has Himself run the whole career of faith. Others had traveled a part of the road, had surmounted some difficulties; the obedience and the perseverance of the Lord had been subjected to every trial of which human nature is susceptible,-men, the adversary, the being forsaken of God,-everything was against Him. His disciples flee when He is in danger, His intimate friend betrays Him, He looks for some one to have compassion on Him and finds no one. The fathers (of whom we read in the previous chapter) trusted in God and were delivered, but as for Jesus, He was a worm, and no man; His throat was dry with crying. His love for us, His obedience to His father, surmounted all. He carries off the victory by submission, and takes His seat in a glory, exalted in proportion to the greatness of His abasement and obedience; the only just reward for having perfectly glorified God where He had been dishonored by sin. The joy and the rewards that are set before us, are never the motives of the walk of faith-we know this well with regard to Christ, but it is not the less true in our own case-they are the encouragement of those who walk in it.

Jesus then, who has attained the glory due to Him, becomes an example to us, in the sufferings through which He passed in attaining it; therefore we are neither to lose courage nor to grow weary. We have not yet, like Him, lost our lives in order to glorify God and to serve Him. The way in which the apostle engages them to disentangle themselves from every hindrance, whether sin or difficulty, is remarkable; as though they had nothing to do but to cast them off as useless weights. And, in fact, when we look at Jesus, nothing is easier; when we are not looking at Him, nothing more impossible.

There are two things to be cast off, every weight, and the sin that would entangle our feet (for he speaks of one who is running in the race). The flesh, the human heart, is occupied with cares and difficulties; and the more we think of them the more we are burdened by them; it is enticed by the object of its desires, it does not set itself free from them; the conflict is with a heart that loves the thing against which we strive; we do not separate ourselves from it. When looking at Jesus, the new man is active; there is a new object, which unburdens and detaches us from every other by means of a new affection which has its place in a new nature; and in Jesus Himself, to whom we look, there is a positive power which sets us free.

It is by casting it all off in an absolute way that the thing is easy-by looking at that which fills the heart with other things, and occupies it in a different sphere, Where a new object and a new nature

act upon each other; and in that object there is a positive power which absorbs the heart and shuts out all objects that act merely on the old nature. What is felt to be a weight is easily cast off. But we must look to Jesus. Only in Him can we cast off every hindrance easily and without reservation. We cannot combat sin by the flesh.

But there is another class of trials that come from without; they are not to be cast off, they must be borne. Christ, as we have seen, went through them. We have not, like Him, resisted even to the shedding of our blood, rather than fail in faithfulness and obedience. Now, God acts in these trials, as a Father. He chastises us: They come perhaps, as in the case of Job, from the enemy, but the hand and the wisdom of God are in them. He chastises those whom He loves. We must, therefore neither despise the chastisement nor be discouraged by it, We must not despise it, for He does not chastise without a motive or a cause; moreover it is God who does it; nor must we be discouraged, for He does it in love.

If we lose our life for the testimony of the Lord and in resisting sin; the warfare is ended; and this is not chastisement, but the glory of suffering with Christ. Death, in this case, is the negation of sin. He who has died is free from sin; he who has suffered in the flesh has done with sin. But, up to that point, the flesh, in the practical sense (for we have a right to reckon ourselves dead), is not yet destroyed; and God knows how to unite the manifestation of the faithfulness of the new man who suffers for the Lord with the discipline by which the flesh is mortified. For example, Paul's thorn in the flesh united these two things. It was painful to him in the exercise of his ministry; for it was something that tended to make him contemptible when preaching; and this he endured for the Lord's sake; but at the same time it kept his flesh in check.

Ver. 9; Now we are subject to our natural parents who discipline us after their own will, how much more then to the Father of Spirits who Makes us partakers of His own holiness. Observe here, the grace that is appealed to.' We have seen how much the Hebrews needed warning; their tendency to fail in the career of faith; the means of preventing this is, doubtless, not to spare the warning, but yet to bring the soul fully into connection with grace.

We are not come to Mount Sinai, to the law which makes demands on us, but to Zion, where God manifested His power in re-establishing Israel, by His grace, in the person of the elect king, when-as to the responsibility of the people-all was entirely lost, all relationship with God impossible on that footing; for the ark was lost, there was no longer a mercy-seat, no longer a throne of God among the people. Ichabod was written on Israel.

Therefore, in speaking of holiness he says, God is active in love towards you, even in your very sufferings. It is He who has not only given free access to Himself by the blood, and by the presence of Christ in heaven for us; but who is continually occupied with all the details. of your life, whose hand is in all your trials, who thinks unceasingly about you, in, order to make you partakers of His holiness. This is not to require holiness on our part-necessary as it must ever be-it is in order to make us. partakers of his own holiness. What immense and perfect grace! What a means! - it is the means by which to enjoy God Himself perfectly.

Ver. 11. God does not expect us to find these exercises of soul pleasant at the moment; they would not produce their effect if they were so: but afterward, the will being broken, they produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The pride of man is brought down, when he is obliged to

submit to that which is contrary to: his will. God also takes a larger (ever precious) place in his thoughts and in 'his life.

Ver. 12. On the principle, then, of grace, the Hebrews are exhorted to encourage themselves in the path of faith, and to watch against the buddings of sin among them, whether in yielding to the desires of the flesh, or in giving up Christian privileges for something of the world. They were to watch so courageously that their evident joy and blessing (which is always a distinct testimony and one that triumphs over the enemy) should make the weak feel that it was their own assured portion also; and thus strength and healing would be ministered to them instead of discouragement. The path of godliness as to circumstances was thus made easy, a beaten path to weak and lame souls, and they would feel more than stronger souls the comfort and value of such a path.

Grace, we have already said, is the motive given for this walk; but grace is here presented in a form that requires to be considered a little in detail.

We are not come, it says, to Mount Sinai. There the terrors of the majesty of God kept man at a distance. No one was to approach Him. Even Moses feared and trembled at the presence of Jehovah. This is not where the Christian is brought. But, in contrast with such relationships as these with God, the whole millennium state in all its parts is developed; according, however, to the way in which these different parts are now known as things hoped for. We belong to it all; but evidently these things are not yet established. Let us name them: Sion; the heavenly Jerusalem; the angels and general assembly; the Church of the first-born, whose names are inscribed in heaven; God the Judge of all; the spirits of the just made perfect; Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant; and, finally, the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Sion we have spoken of as a principle. It is the intervention of sovereign grace (in the king) after the ruin, and in the midst of the ruin, of Israel, re-establishing the people, according to the counsels of God in glory, and their relationships with God Himself. It is the rest of God on the earth, the seat of the Messiah's royal power. But, as we know, the extent of the earth is far from being the limit of the Lord's inheritance. Sion on earth is Jehovah's rest; it is not the city of the living God; the heavenly. Jerusalem is that the heavenly capital, so to speak, of His kingdom, the city that has foundations, whose founder and builder is God Himself.

Having named Sion below, the author turns naturally to Jerusalem above; but this carries him into heaven and he finds himself with all the people of God, in the midst of a multitude of angels; the great universal assembly of the invisible world. There is, however, one peculiar object on which his eye rests in this marvelous and heavenly scene. It is the church of the first-born whose names are inscribed in heaven. They were not born there, not indigenous like the angels, whom God preserved from falling. They are the objects of the counsels of God-it is not merely that they reach Heaven, they are the glorious heirs and first-born of God, according to His eternal counsels, in accordance with which they are registered in heaven. The church, the assembly of the objects of grace, belongs to heaven by grace. They are not the objects of the promises-who, not having received the fulfillment of the promises on earth, do not fail to enjoy it in heaven. They have the anticipation of no other country or citizenship than heaven. The promises were not addressed to them. They have no place on earth. Heaven is prepared for them by God Himself. Their names are inscribed there by Him. It is the highest place in heaven: above the dealings of God in government, promise, and law, on the earth. This leads the picture of glory on to God Himself, but,

(having reached the highest point, that which is most excellent in grace) He is seen under another character, namely, as the Judge of all, as looking down from on high to judge all that is below. This introduces another class of these blessed inhabitants of the heavenly glory: those whom the righteous Judge owned as His, before the Church was revealed-the spirits of the just, arrived at perfection. They had finished their course, they had overcome in conflict, they were waiting only for glory. They had been connected with the dealings of God on the earth, but-faithful before the time for its blessing was come-they had their rest and their portion in heaven.

It was the purpose of God, nevertheless, to bless the earth. He could not do so according to man's responsibility-His people even were but as grass. He would therefore establish a new covenant with Israel, a covenant of pardon, and according to which He would write the law in the hearts of His people. The Mediator of this covenant had already appeared and had done all that was required for its establishment. The saints among the Hebrews were come to the Mediator of the new covenant, blessing was thus prepared for the earths and secured to it.

Finally, the blood of Christ had been shed on earth, as that of Abel by Cain; but instead of crying from the earth for vengeance, so that Cain became a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, (a striking type of the Jew, guilty of the death of Christ), it is grace that speaks, and the shed blood cries to obtain pardon and peace for those who shed it.

It will be observed, that although speaking of the different parts of Millennial blessing, with its foundations, all is given according to the present condition of things, before the coming of that time of blessing from God. We are in it, as to our relationships; but the spirits of the just men of the Old Testament only are here spoken of, and only the Mediator of this new covenant; the covenant itself is not established. The blood cries, but the answer in earthly blessing has not yet come. This is easily understood: it is exactly according to the existing state of things, and even throws considerable light on the position of the Hebrew Christians, and on the doctrine of the epistle. The important thing for them was, that they should not turn away from Him who spoke from heaven. It was with Him they had to do. We have seen them connected with all that went before, with the Lord's testimony on earth; but, in fact, they had to do, at that time, with the Lord Himself as speaking from heaven. His voice then shook the earth; -but now,- speaking with the-authority of grace and from heaven, He announced the dissolution of everything which the flesh could lean upon, or on which the creature could rest its hopes.

All that could be shaken should be dissolved. How much more fatal to turn away [from Him that speaketh] now, than from the commandments even of Sinai. This shaking of all things (whether here or in the analogous passage in Peter ii.) evidently goes beyond Judaism, but has a peculiar application to it. Judaism was the system and the frame of the relationships of God with men on earth, according to the principle of responsibility on their part. All this was of the first creation, but its springs were poisoned; heaven, the seat of the enemy's power, power, perverted and corrupted. The heart of man on earth was corrupt and rebellious. God will shake and change all things. The result will be a new creation, in which righteousness shall dwell.

Meanwhile, the first fruits of this new creation were being formed; and, in Christianity, God was forming the heavenly part of the kingdom that cannot be moved; and Judaism-the center of the earthly system and of human responsibility-was passing away. The apostle, therefore, announces the shaking of all things, that everything which exists as the present creation shall be set aside.

With regard to the present fact, he says only "we receive a kingdom that cannot be moved; "and calls us to serve God with true piety, because our God is a consuming fire. Not-as people say-God out of Christ: but our God. This is His character in holy majesty and in righteous judgment of evil.

Hebrews 13

In the next chapter, there is more than one truth-important to notice. The exhortations are as simple as they are weighty, and require but few remarks. They rest in the sphere in which the whole of the epistle does; what relates to the Christian's path as walking here, not what flows from union with Christ-in heavenly places. Brotherly love, hospitality, care for those in bonds, the strict maintenance of the marriage-tie and personal purity, the avoiding of covetousness; such are the subjects of exhortation, all important and connected With the gracious walk of a Christian, but not drawn from the higher and more heavenly sources and principles of the Christian life as we see in Ephesians and Colossians. Nor even though there be more analogy -for the epistle to the Romans, rests in general, in resurrection, and does not go on to the ascension -are the exhortations such as in this latter epistle. Those which follow connect themselves with the circumstances in which the Hebrews found themselves, and rest on the approaching abolition and judgment of Judaism, from which they had now definitely to separate themselves.

In exhorting them (ver. 7) to remember those who. have guided the flock, he speaks of those already departed, in contrast with those still living (ver. 17). The issue of their faith might well encourage others to follow their steps, to walk by those principles of faith which had led them to so noble a result.

Moreover, Christ never changed; He was the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Let them abide in the simplicity and integrity of faith. Nothing is a plainer proof that the heart is not practically in possession of that which gives rest in Christ, that it does not realize what Christ is, than the restless search after something new, divers and strange doctrines." To grow in the knowledge of Christ is our life and our privilege. The search after novelties which are foreign to Him, is a proof of not being satisfied with Him, But He who is not satisfied with Jesus, does not know Him; or, at least, has forgotten Him. It is impossible to enjoy Him and not to feel that He is everything, that is to say, that He satisfies us, and that, by the nature of what He is, He shuts out everything else.

Now with regard to Judaism, in which the Hebrews were naturally inclined to seek satisfaction for the flesh, the apostle goes farther. They were no longer Jews in the possession of the true worship of God, a privileged worship in which others had no right to participate. The altar of God belonged now to the Christians. Christians only had a right to it. An earthly worship, in which there was no entering within the veil into God's own presence in the sanctuary, could no longer subsist, a worship that had its worldly glory, that belonged to the elements of this world and had its place there. Now, it is either heaven or the cross and shame. The great sacrifice for sin has been offered; but, by its efficacy, it brings us into the sanctuary, into heaven itself, where the blood has been carried in; and, on the other hand, it takes us outside the camp into shame and rejection on earth. This is the portion of Christ. In heaven He is; accepted, He has gone in with His own blood. On earth cast out and despised.

A worldly religion, which forms a system in which. the world can walk, and in which the religious element is adapted to man on the earth, is the denial of Christianity.

Here we have no continuing city, we seek the one 4; which is to come. By Christ we offer our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. By sharing also our goods with others, by doing good in every way, we offer sacrifices with which God is well pleased. (17.) He then exhorts them to obey those who, as responsible to God, watch over souls, and who go before the saints in order to lead them on. It is a proof of that humble spirit of grace which seeks only to please the Lord.

The sense of this responsibility makes Paul ask the saints to pray for him-but with the declaration that he had assuredly a good conscience. We serve God, we act for Him, when He is not obliged to be acting on us. That is to say, the Spirit of God acts by our means when He has not to occupy us with ourselves. When the latter is the case, one could not ask for the prayers of saints as a laborer. While the Spirit is exercising us in our conscience, we cannot call ourselves laborers for God. When this conscience is good we can ask, unreservedly for the prayers of the saints. The apostles, so much the more, asked for them because he hoped to see them again.

Finally, he invokes blessing upon them, giving God the title he so often ascribes to Him-"the God of peace." In the midst of exercise of heart with regard to the Hebrews, of arguments to preserve their love from growing cold, in the midst of the moral unsteadiness that enfeebled the walk of these Christians, this title has a peculiarly precious character.

The Spirit sets them also in the presence of a risen Christ, of a God who had founded and secured peace by the death of Christ and had given a proof of it in His resurrection. He had brought Christ again from the dead, according to the power of the blood of the everlasting covenant. On this blood, the believing people might build a hope that nothing could shake. For it was not, as at Sinai, promises founded on the condition of the people's obedience, but on the ransom which had been paid and the perfect expiation of their disobedience. The blessing was, therefore, unchangeable. He prays that the God who had wrought it would work in them to grant them full power and energy for the accomplishment of His will, working Himself in them that which was well-pleasing in His sight.

He exhorts them to give heed to exhortation-he had only sent them a few words.

He who wrote the letter desires they should know that Timothy had been set at liberty. He himself was so already. He was in Italy. Circumstances which tend to confirm the idea that it was Paul who wrote this letter-a very interesting point, although in nowise affecting its authority.

It is the Spirit of God who everywhere gives His own authority to the Word.

(Continued from, Vol. XI. p. 400).

Jacob's Last Words: History of Israel as a Nation in the Pre-Millennial Earth

Gen. 48 and 49 introduce us to a scene of great moral beauty; every element of which tells us how divine is its order, depth and harmony. Not only does it present to us a comprehensive range of the counsels of God, in connection with His earthly people; but it is invested with an additional interest, if we consider the one who declares these counsels, and the circumstances under which he declares them. It was a moment when life was ebbing fast, and earth receding from the view of the dying patriarch; he, whose previous course had not been bright, but whose end is here marked with all the brilliancy of a sunset - calm, blessed, and full of light and glory.

The history of Jacob had been eventful, checkered, and strongly-marked with crookedness; but he had, nevertheless, held fast the promises of God, and grounded his line of conduct thereon-though the means he had taken to reach them were, for the most part, carnal. He had passed from stage to stage in the divine school; Bethel, Peniel, and Beersheba had followed one another; - the anguish of the loss of Joseph had been succeeded by his resurrection from the dead (as it were); and, from thence, a marked restoration is discernible in his soul. The light then waxed brighter and brighter, until such a flood of illumination envelopes his death-bed, that, in company with the mind of the Lord, his gaze, after first resting on the promised land, and then reviewing his own course, and taking his position from thence, stretches far out into future ages and dispensations, and rests not till it has scanned the whole history of God's people, from the time of their redemption-out of Egypt, till Christ shall appear as their Deliverer; in fact, it embraces the whole range of Jewish history, from Exodus to Rev. 19.

Let us review this wondrous scene in detail. It is divided into three parts: the oath, the reviewal, and the blessing, or rather prophecy. The first seems to have taken place shortly before his death (47:29); the last two are, properly, the death-bed scene, with which we have to do.

Israel is about to die: and, on the approach of Joseph, he strengthens himself and sits on the bed, in preparation for what was to follow; but, ere Israel (the prince with God) can declare God's mind, Jacob, the man in nature, must review his own individual course, and acknowledge God's faithfulness therein. Thus we read "God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me." This was the starting-point of his course. Luz (signifying separation or departure), turned into Bethel (the house of God) by the Lord's manifestation to him, was where the Lord had met and blessed him. The scope of that blessing related to the earth: "Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee: and I will make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy seed after thee, for an everlasting possession." And, on the ground of this (dropping the narrative of his own history for a moment), he takes Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, as his own; he declares that as Reuben and Simeon they shall be his, and then he defines their relative positions, and marks out their portion and inheritance in the earth. But, ere he proceeds, one epoch more in his own personal history is to be reviewed: one, indeed, which was the pivot on which all the rest turned; and which is introduced here on account of its moral connection with the

moment. He had been detailing the earthly future of his grandsons, mapping out their respective allotments, and, in the midst of it, his own position and experience seems to rise before him in contrast: as he turns for a moment from them, and says, "As for me." It was a contrast; for in these Israel, individually, had no part. He was passing away from the earth, after having undergone experiences which had blighted, it to him, and he says: "As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath." How beautiful are those words "As for me!" What a tale they unfold, of a heart which has emerged from the crucible of suffering, which has been brought in spirit to the tomb, and has left there all most dear to its natural affections and instincts, but which is content to leave them there; and seeks no more for an outlet for them below. And how strikingly the manner and moment in which the dying Jacob utters this brief clause throws out into relief the contrast which we have noticed above. It is as if he said-" You have hopes and interests here: but, as for me, mine were buried at Ephrath." In Rachel all his human affections and desire's were centered; he had served seven years for her, and they "seemed but a few days for the love he had for her." In every subsequent action of his life, whether at the "brook Jabbok," or in his extreme fondness for her two sons, it is evident that she commanded his heart. She died, and his earthly hopes, died with her. But what then? Almost in the same breath he adds,- "the same is Bethlehem"; the very spot which had entombed his earthly affections was that from whence He should arise, on whom all the promises were based; and who should be the hope and satisfaction of every renewed heart. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Mic. 5:2; Psa. 132:6.) The royal seed -the hope of the nation did not spring from Rachel. Judah -the royal tribe- was Leah's offspring; but the place which enclosed the tomb of Rachel was the spot from whence that seed arose, and was preserved from generation to generation. Bethlehem was the birth place of Jesse, who sprang from Ruth the Moabitess; and the blessing pronounced on Boaz, in Ruth 4:11 (margin), is beautifully illustrative of the connection: "Get thee riches in Ephratah, and proclaim thy name in Bethlehem." There also was David born, and there arose the greater than David, on whom the prophetic eye of Jacob doubtless rested (if not intelligently, the Spirit in him pointed thereto), when he said "the same is Bethlehem;" the tomb of his earthly hopes was the birthplace of his heavenly ones -Ephrath and Bethlehem were one and the same place. Death and resurrection go together in the counsels of God and the experience of his people. As surely as Ephrath does the- work of death for us, so surely will it become a Bethlehem to us.

This episode is a precious link in the chain of Jacob's Utterances. Standing in remembrance on Bethlehem Ephratah-the scene of death and resurrection, the earth receding before him -he takes the place of a heavenly man, and, from this elevated position, declares "things to come." He can now turn again to the earthly expectants, as above them, but still identifying himself with them, as one who has done with self best can: "And he said, Bring them near, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them.".... "And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath showed me also thy seed." "And Joseph brought them out from between his knees." It is well to observe the attitude here described. Israel, having arisen at the approach of Joseph, was sitting on the bed while all that has been recounted took place, and, when he desired his grandsons to be brought near, they must have been placed "between his knees" while he embraced them. But, from this endearing

position, Joseph now removes them, for Israel is about to worship. He is going to perform that act which the Spirit of God takes special note of in Heb. 11; and every touch of this scene being in harmony, Joseph, it seems instinctively, draws the children aside, and he (i.e. Israel), bows himself, with his face to the earth. Israel had often bowed himself before. In the close of the previous chapter we read, "he bowed himself upon the bed's-head;" but that this special instance was an act of faith is plain, by the Holy Ghost's-comment on it. "By faith Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph,-leaning upon the top of his staff." Moreover, he bowed himself with his face to the earth. May we not say that it was at this moment that the counsel of God was imparted to him; at least, that full disclosure of it which his subsequent utterances declare. In the attitude of subjection to God's mind and will, having reviewed his own life, scanned the tomb of his hopes, and discerned in the spring-light the green blade that was to arise from thence -he now worships, leaning on his staff; the emblem of his pilgrimage, in which he had learned that God whose counsel he was about to declare. His action is emblematic of his mind, will, heart and affections, being in abeyance to God, and he is therefore, a fit vessel for God's counsels, which the Spirit now reveals to him. Now he knows well how to place Ephraim and Manasseh, though "his eyes were dim that he could not see." Joseph is far behind him in intelligence; he may place them in the order of nature, but Israel, in the power of the Spirit, will thwart his arrangement, and God's order must be preserved: Ephraim, the younger, must be first.

Israel continues: "Behold I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again into the land of your fathers." "Moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow." What portion was this? Was it not that parcel of ground in Shechem, which he bought from Hamm? Chapter 33:19. This seems probable from Josh. 24:32, where we find that this purchase "became the inheritance of the children of Joseph;" and again, in John 4, we read of Sychar or Sychem, "that parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph." But why does he say, "which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow?" This may be explained, by remembering the quarrel between Jacob's sons and the Shechemites, in Gen. 34, which may have occasioned the forfeiture of the possession. And if so, he must have regained it by force; i.e., by "sword and by bow."

This bequest closes the private part of the scene, viz., that which took place between Israel, Joseph, and Joseph's sons: But now it enlarges into one of wider range, and Jacob, ceasing to address Joseph exclusively, but still retaining the same attitude, summons all his -sons to hear the purposes of God committed to him concerning themselves. They were the nucleus of the nation; consequently, we have in his utterance a full epitome of the history of the Jewish nation from its call to its future restoration. His words are more a prophecy than a blessing; he is going to tell "that which should befall them in the last days."

Gather yourselves together, and hear ye sons of Jacob, and hearken unto Israel your father." Mark the double appellation he gives himself, indicative of the double communication about to be made. They were, indeed, the sons of Jacob; the failing crooked Jacob; the supplanter, and the history of their own evil and corruption, well attested their origin; but it was from Israel -the one who had "prevailed with God" -that they were to receive God's counsel, which was to drop from his lips; and in the light of that counsel, they might descry the bright end and consummation of their blessing, though the intervening parts were to be so dimmed and clouded by sin.

"Reuben my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength," etc. etc. Here we have the nation as Son of Israel:- God's first-born, called and chosen.

Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn." (Ex. 4:22.) But immediately failure and defilement comes in. Reuben, son of Israel, is God's chosen and first-born. Reuben, son of Jacob, is "Unstable as water," etc. And so it proved. No sooner had the people been redeemed from Egypt, and ere the song of deliverance had died away on the banks of the Red Sea, than evil comes in; idolatry and defilement of every form succeeds, and continues during the whole period of their occupation of the land of their inheritance.

Simeon and Levi (ver. 5-7). Israel (the nation) a step farther in sin, having committed a deed of murder, even that of their Messiah, of which the bloody deed of Simeon and Levi towards the Shechemites (chap. 34) was the type. The penalty uttered consequent on this is, "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." This double prediction has been literally fulfilled in the double sense in which it was uttered. As sons of Jacob; i.e., regarded as individuals, men in natural brotherhood; they were "divided;" their league, formed in sin, was not kept up by proximity or unity of inheritance. Simeon, we find by Josh. 19:1-9, had no distinct inheritance; the portion allotted to him being within the precincts of Judah; and Levi's portion was among all the tribes. On the other hand, they were scattered in Israel;" that is, regarding them, not as individuals but as a type of the whole nation, to which the murder of Christ bore the same relation as that of the Shechemites to Simeon and Levi personally. This deed filled up the measure of the nation's sin, and they were dispersed and scattered from that land, which was their rightful inheritance, not through their Jacob-nature, but through their Israel-calling.

Judah (8-12). Here we have the nation at that stage of its history which it occupied at the Lord's first coming. Christ personifies the tribe in its royal character; therefore the blessing and prophecy opens with Him, who is the root and offspring of David. "Thou art He whom thy brethren shall praise; Thy hand shall be on the neck of thy enemies; Thy father's children shall, bow down before Thee." He is the "lion's whelp"-the "lion of the tribe of Judah," who, after leading captivity captive, ascended and rests at God's right hand. "From the prey, my son, thou art gone up, He couched as a lion; who shall rouse Him up."

Verse 10 drops the personal aspect, and takes up the history of the tribe; and intimates that the scepter shall not depart from Judah until the Shiloh come. Shiloh is Christ in another character; not as the Lion, but the sent one-the Savior; not as embodying the tribe, but springing out of it. Thus we learn that the tribe should preserve its tribal character until the Savior should come; ■■■■■ translated "scepter," literally means "rod"; taken from Num. 17 where all the tribes had rods, and each rod was emblematic of its respective tribe. Judah, then, should not lose his rod or tribal character until the Lord appeared; Wand this was what actually took place. "And to Him shall the gathering of the people be." The whole of the present age is passed over between these last two clauses, and the two comings of Christ are linked together, showing their close connection one with the other. The "gathering of the people" ought to have been to Him at His first appearing, but it was not so; He was rejected; and the prophecy, omitting the notice of this, passes on to the day of His power, when it will be so; and still farther (v. 11), to the day of millennial blessing, resulting from Christ's power and rule, of which v. 11, 12, give us a vivid picture. Thus, the prophecy of Judah is that of Israel in its royal character, Christ being the rightful heir to the throne, it opens by

the tribe or nation being merged in His person. All who had rightfully occupied the throne of David were but types of Him who is to fill it throughout the millennial age, so that the real gist of the prophecy relates to Him.

Zebulun returns to the historical narrative which Judah had stretched beyond, and presents Israel, mingled with the nations, trafficking among them as they are now, and have been ever since their dispersion.

Issachar intensifies the picture; and shows us Israel in servile submission to the Gentile, "couching between two burdens." For the sake of ease and gain, he has "bowed his shoulder to bear and become a servant to tribute."

The rest of the prophecies reach on to the end; and the remaining five severally personate those who will bear the most prominent part in the scene during the last week of Daniel-" the end of the age" which will wind up the seventy weeks of Jewish history.

Thus we find typified in them the willful king,-the offspring and antitype of Dan, Christ, the suffering Lamb -the true Joseph. And between these two, the godly remnant (Gad, Asher, and Naphtali), under the pressure and persecution of Antichrist on the one hand but sustained "by the sympathies of Christ on the other. The position which these three tribes occupy, in the order of utterances, is indicative of that moral position which their antitypes will occupy during this period: exposed, yet sheltered; crushed, yet sustained; overcome, yet victorious.

We now return to the detail.

Dan, the nation under the willful king. A fearful phase in Israel's history is now reached, and ere it is unfolded, the Spirit of God, by way of relief, reveals what shall follow. "Dan shall, judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel." Notwithstanding the iniquitous picture about to be portrayed, grace shall triumph in the end; Dan shall recover himself and share in millennial blessing and rule.

Thus, we find in Ezek. 28 after the vision of the holy waters and when the earth becomes a scene of peace and blessing, instead of violence and evil, "a portion for Dan" is marked out in spite of his past history. But in the interval- during that period of which these prophecies treat -Dan develops that vein of blasphemy and idolatry which has been discovered early in his history." It was an offspring of Dan who "blasphemed the name of the Lord and cursed" (Lev. 24:11), and who, in consequence, was doomed by the express word of the Lord to be stoned, and "to bear his sin." It was "children of Dan" who set up a graven image (Judg. 18) while the "house of God was in Shiloh." And it is probable that the "man of sin," the full-blown fruit of blasphemy and idolatry will arise from this tribe, which is the only one of the twelve from which a company of holy ones-"servants of our God"-is not sealed or set apart for preservation in Rev. 7. At any rate, Dan is here presented as typifying that evil one who characterizes and leads the ungodly part of the nation during this fearful period, and is very fitly described as "a serpent by the way," "an adder in the path." Deceit and treachery attend his steps, and entrap all who are not kept by divine power.

At this point the Spirit in the dying prophet breaks forth: "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord!" This is the relief from man's full-blown and matured iniquity; -God and His salvation. This will be the utterance of -the holy remnant -that part of the nation which will be exposed through their godliness and faithfulness to the fury of Dan's offspring, and Jacob, in spirit with them, utters this

ejaculation; to the human eye, a break in the narrative, but to the spiritual mind, how beautiful a link This brief clause lifts the veil, and shows us what is so often found in the Psalms, viz.: the inner life, the experience, of these godly sufferers, whose outward position and character then follows:

Gad, Asher, Naphtali -present the faithful. Jewish remnant under different aspects. In Gad we see it in its suffering aspects, under pressure and persecution from the evil one, "overcome by a troop" in the first instance, but with the assurance given that he "shall overcome at last." However the enemy's power may prosper for a time, Gad shall overcome "through the blood of the Lamb."

In Naphtali we find the same company delivered; the victory promised to Gad is celebrated in Naphtali. He is "a hind let loose, and giveth goodly words." His lips open in testimony and praise. The victory has been accomplished "through the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony," and on the sea of glass these. victorious ones sing the song of Moses; and the song of the Lamb. Rev. 15.

Asher gives us another aspect of the remnant. The fatness of the earth shall be his.

JOSEPH -the Lamb, on Mount Sion. (Rev. 14) He who has sustained these godly ones through the strife. In communion with Him throughout that week of suffering, they know that He was once "sorely grieved and shot at," but His bow abode in strength, and the arms of His hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob." And "from thence is the Shepherd, the stone of Israel." Mark! those words "from thence." The suffering Messiah becomes the glorified Messiah, even as the suffering Joseph became the Shepherd of Israel. "The stone which the builders have refused has become the head of the corner." Thus we find this rich cluster of blessings for Christ are all in connection with His rejection and suffering. They are poured "on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brethren." All blessings are his, whether of the heights above or the depths beneath. (Ver. 26.) Moreover, the blessings brought on by Him prevail even over those of Abraham. Unlimited to earth and to earthly kingdoms, "they extend unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills"-the heavenly regions; and all are centered in Him, the once suffering and rejected, the sanctified and consecrated one.

Benjamin presents to us Christ in another character, not as associating Himself with the sufferers in sympathy, but associating them with Him in victory. He comes for the deliverance. of His people; and they, identified with Him in victory, form part of the antitype, that is, the prophecy to Benjamin points on to the nation (or the godly part of it) as victorious, merged in the person of Christ, who bears the character of conqueror and avenger. This is the action of Isa. 63 and Rev. 19. He comes forth "glorious in apparel in the greatness of His strength," &c. "In the morning He will devour the prey, and at night He will divide the spoil."

Thus, we have in this very comprehensive Scripture the whole historical narrative of Israel. It commences with the calling of the first-born out of Egypt, and pursues the history throughout, the subsequent evil and corruption -the coming of, Shiloh - the dispersion and mingling among the Gentiles -the nation under Antichrist-the remnant in suffering, testimony, and moral victory; and finally, the whole nation victorious in Christ, associated with Him in the day of His power; the gathering of the people to Him, and full millennial blessing brought in.

We have also the Lord in three different aspects, and in each aspect He is presented in full identification with the people at that stage of their history, and as the perfect expression of what they should be. He is the Lion's whelp of Judah (the royal tribe), the Lamb, the Shepherd, the Nazarite of Joseph; the Conqueror, Avenger, and Deliverer of Benjamin.

Here this interesting scene closes, and the voice of the inspired patriarch is hushed in death, after delivering the oracles of God, oracles which must have surpassed his own intelligence, but with which his spirit was in full company, and his lips a ready and fitting instrument for the Holy Ghost to use in giving utterance to them.

It may be interesting, in connection with the above, to glance for a moment at Deut. 33, where we find the same people made the subject of dying utterance and blessings, but in a very different aspect and connection. Moses was about to die also, and he knew well the character of the people whom he had led. Their evil and corruption he enters into fully in his song; but in his blessing (ch. 33) he views them from the height of God's thoughts and purposes, and in contrast to the actual history of the nation in its sin and failure, as declared by Jacob; he travels on in spirit to that age when a king shall reign in righteousness, and the law shall be in the people's hearts.

No doubt this blessing had a partial fulfillment in the possession of the land by the tribes under Joshua; Moses, on the borders of Canaan, views the people as already there, under God's government; but this was but a shadow of that full consummation which his eye of faith saw in the distance.

Thus the sentence on Reuben is exchanged for a blessing. "Let Reuben live and not die," etc.

Judah comes next, for the order of nature and of seniority is disregarded here, though carefully preserved in Gen. 49. He is not viewed in connection with the Lord as the Lion or Shiloh, but in his place among the tribes.

Simeon is omitted; his guilty league with Levi dissolved (Gen. 49), and Levi gets the honorable place of priesthood and separation.

Benjamin is in the place of safety, favor, and privilege.

Joseph is regarded in millennial blessing, the result of the suffering and separation portrayed by Jacob.

Zebulun and Issachar are freed from the yoke of the Gentile, and rejoice in liberty and plenty.

Gad is "enlarged" and delivered from his distress, and has "overcome at last."

Dan is no longer an "adder in the path," but a "lion's whelp." The simile of the willful king is exchanged for that of the King of Righteousness.

Naphtali and Asher -satisfied with favor, and replete with earthly blessing.

"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." The nation is here seen in the enjoyment of full millennial blessing. The Jacob nature is lost in the Israel calling. These are the days in which a "king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice on the earth. "In His days Judah shall

be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely." Jer. 23:5, 6.

James

The Epistle of James is not addressed to the Church; and does not take the ground of apostolic authority over the persons to whom it is sent. It is a practical exhortation, which still recognizes the twelve tribes and the connection of the Christian Jews with them, as Jonah addressed the Gentiles, although the Jewish people had their place before God. Thus the Spirit of God still acknowledges here the relationship with Israel, as, in the other case, the relationship with Gentiles, and the rights of God, which are unchangeable, whatever may be the special privileges granted to the Church or to Israel respectively. We know that, historically, the Christian Jews remained Jews to the end of the New Testament history, and were even zealous for the law. To us, a strange thing; but which God endured for a time.

The doctrine of Christianity is not the subject of this Epistle. It gives God His place in the conscience, and with regard to all that surrounds us. It thus girds up the loins of the Christian, presenting also the near coming of the Lord, and His present discipline - a discipline with respect to which the Church of God ought to possess intelligence, and activity founded thereon. The world also, and all that makes an appearance in it, is judged from God's point of view.

A few remarks on the position of Christians, i.e., on the way in which this position is viewed with respect to Israel, will help us to understand this portion of the Word.

Israel is still regarded as the people of God. To the faith of James the nation has still the relationship which

God had given it towards Himself. The Christians in it are addressed as still forming part of a people whose links with God were not yet judicially broken: but it was only the Christians among them who possessed the faith which the Spirit gave in the true Messiah. These only among the people, with the writer, acknowledged Jesus as the Lord of Glory. With the exception of verses 14, 15, in chapter 5, this Epistle contains no exhortation which, in its spiritual height, goes beyond that which might be addressed to a godly Jew. It supposes, indeed, that the persons to whom it speaks have faith in the Lord Jesus; but it does not call them to that which is exclusively proper to Christianity and dependent on its privileges. The exhortations flow from that higher source, and breathe the more heavenly atmosphere; but the effect they aim at producing consists in real proofs of religion here below; they are such as might be heard in the professing Church- a vast body like Israel, in the midst of which sonic Christians existed.

The Epistle is not founded on Christian relationships here below. It acknowledges them;- but only as one fact in the midst of others, which have rights over the conscience of the writer. It supposes those whom it addresses to be in a relationship with God, which is known, unquestioned, and of ancient date; in the midst of which Christianity has been introduced.

It is important to notice the moral measure of the life which this Epistle presents. As soon as we apprehend the position in which it views believers, the discernment of the truth on this point is not difficult. It is the same as that which Christ presented when walking in the midst of Israel and

setting before His disciples the light and the relationships with God which resulted to them from His presence. Now, indeed, He was absent; but that light and those relationships are retained as the measure of responsibility. And this the Lord's return would vindicate by judgment on those who refused to accept and walk in it. Until that day, the faithful were to be patient in the midst of the oppression they were suffering on the part of the Jews, who still blasphemed the Holy Name by which they were called..

It is the inverse of the Epistle to the Hebrews with regard to their relationship with the Jewish nation; not morally, but because of the nearness of the judgment when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written.

The fundamental principles of the position that we have, been speaking of are as follows: The law, in its spirituality and perfection, as explained and summed up by Christ. A life imparted, which has the Moral principles of the law; itself a Divine life. The revelation of the Father's name. All this was true when the Lord was on the earth, and was the ground on which (however poorly they understood it) He then placed His disciples. He told them that they were to be witnesses of it after His -death: distinguishing this testimony from that of the Holy Ghost.

It is this which James is here; with the addition of that which the Lord had also said, that He would come again. It is the doctrine of Christ with regard to walk in the midst of Israel, according to the light and the truths which He had introduced; and-seeing that He was Still absent-an exhortation to perseverance and patience in that walk, waiting for the moment when, by judgment on those who oppressed them, He would vindicate the principles on which they walked.

Although the judgment executed on Jerusalem changed the position of the remnant of Israel in this respect, yet the life of Christ remains ever our model; and we have to wait with patience until the Lord comes.

We have not in this Epistle the association of the Christian with Christ exalted on high, nor, consequently, the thought of going to meet Him in the air, as Paul taught; but that which it contains ever remains true, and he who says that he abides in Him (Christ) ought also to walk even as He walked.

The judgment that was coining makes us understand the way in which James speaks of the world, of the rich who rejoice in their portion in the world, and the position of the believing remnant oppressed and suffering in the midst of the unbelieving nation; why he begins with the subject of the tribulations and so often recurs to it; why also he insists on practical evidences of faith. He still sees all Israel together; but some had received faith in the Lord of Glory, and these were tempted to value the rich and the great in Israel. All being still Jews, we can easily understand that, while some truly believed and confessed their belief, that Jesus was the Christ, yet, as these Christians followed the Jewish ordinances, mere professors might do as much, without the least vital change being proved by their works. It is evident, that a faith like this has no value whatever. It is precisely the faith of those who clamor for works in the present day- a mere dead profession of the truth of Christianity. To be begotten by the Word of Truth is as foreign and strange to them as to the Jews of whom James is speaking.

Believers being thus placed in the midst of Israel with some who merely professed faith, we can readily understand the Apostle's address to the mass, as those who might share in the privileges

that existed in their midst; his address to Christians, as having a special place of their own; and his warning to those who called themselves believers in Christ. Most easy and perfectly clear is the practical application to all times, and in particular when a mass of persons assume a right by inheritance to the privileges of the people of God. Besides this, the Epistle has peculiar force for the individual conscience: it judges the position one is in, and the thoughts and intents of the heart.

James 1

The Epistle, then, begins with an exhortation to rejoice in trial, as a means of producing patience. This subject, in the main, continues to the end of verse 20, where the idea turns towards the necessity of curbing everything that opposes itself to patience, and towards the true character of one who stands in the presence of God. This address, as a whole, ends with the chapter. The connection of the reasoning is not always easy to find; the key to it is the moral condition with which the Apostle's mind is occupied. I will endeavor to make the connection more apparent.

The subject, in the main, is that we ought to walk before God, to show the reality of our profession in contrast with union with the world, practical religion.

Patience, then, must have its perfect work, thus self-will is subdued, and the whole of God's will is accepted; consequently, nothing is wanting to the practical-life of the soul. The believer may suffer; but he patiently waits on the Lord. This Christ did; it was His perfection. He waited for the will of God, and never did His own will; thus obedience was perfect, man thoroughly tested. Now, in fact, we often lack wisdom to know what we ought to do. Here, it says, the resource is evident; we are to ask wisdom from God. He gives to all liberally: only we must count upon His faithfulness and upon an answer to our prayers. Otherwise, the heart is double; there is dependence elsewhere than in God; our desires have another object. If we only seek that which God wills and that which God does, we depend securely on Him to accomplish it; and as to the circumstances of this world, which might make one believe that it was useless to depend on God, they vanish away as the flower of the field. We ought to have the consciousness that our place, according to God, is not that which is of this world. He who is in a low station should rejoice that Christianity exalts him; the rich, that it humbles him. It is not in riches that we are to rejoice; they pass away: but in the exercises of heart of which the Apostle had been speaking; for, after having been tried, we shall receive the crown of life.

The life of one who is thus tried, and in whom this life develops itself in obedience to the entire will of God, is well worth that of a man who indulges all the desires of his heart in luxury.

Now with regard to temptations of this last character, into which the lusts of the heart cause men to fall, it must not be said that they come from God: the heart of man is their source- its lusts, which lead, through sin, to death. Let no one deceive himself on this point. That which inwardly tempts the heart, comes from oneself. All good and perfect gifts come from God, and He never changes. He does nothing but good. Accordingly, He has given us a new nature, the fruit of His own will working in us by the Word of truth, in order that we should be, as it were, first fruits of His creatures. Father of Lights, that which is darkness does not come from

By the Word of truth He has begotten us to be the first and most excellent witnesses of that power of good which will shine forth hereafter in the new creation, of which we are the first fruits. This is the opposite of being the source of corrupt desires. The Word of truth is the good seed of life; self-will is the cradle of our lusts--; its energy can never produce the fruits of divine nature; nor the

wrath of man the righteousness of God. Therefore we are called to be docile, to be ready to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, to lay aside all filthiness of the flesh, all energy of iniquity, and to receive the Word with meekness—a Word which, while it is the Word of God, identifies itself with the new nature that is in us (it is planted in us) while forming and developing it according to its own perfection; because this nature itself has its origin from God through the Word.

It is not as a law which is outside us, and which being opposed to our sinful nature, condemns us. This Word saves the soul; it is living and quickening, and it works livingly in a nature that flows from it, and which it forms and enlightens.

But it is necessary to be doers of the Word: not merely to hear it with the ear, but that it should produce the practical fruits which are the proof that it works really and vitally in the heart. Otherwise the Word is only as a mirror in which we may perhaps see ourselves for a moment, and then forget what we have seen. He who looks into the perfect law, which is that of liberty, and continues in it, doing the work which it presents, shall be blessed in the real and obedient activity developed in him.

This law is perfect; for the Word of God, all that the Spirit of Christ has expressed; is the expression of the nature and the character of God, of that which He is and of that which He wills. For He wills that which He is; and this, necessarily.

This law is the law of liberty, because the same Word which reveals what God is and what He wills, has made us partakers by grace of the divine nature; so that not to walk according to that Word, would be not to walk according to our own [new] nature: Now, to walk according to our own nature, and that nature of God, and guided by His Word, is true liberty.

The law given on Sinai represses and condemns all the motions of the natural man, and cannot allow him to have a will, for he ought to do the will of God. But he has another will, and therefore the law is bondage to him, a law of condemnation and death. Now, God having begotten us by the Word of truth, the nature that we have, as thus born of God, possesses tastes and desires according to that Word, it is of that very Word. The Word in its own perfection, develops this nature, forms it, enlightens it, as we have said; but the nature itself has its liberty in following it. Thus it was with Christ: if His liberty could have been taken away—which spiritually was impossible—it would have been by preventing Him from doing the will of God His Father.

It is the same with the new man in us (which is Christ as life in us) which is created in us according to God in righteousness and true holiness, produced in us by the Word which is the perfect revelation of God, of the whole divine nature in man; of which Christ, the living Word, the image of the invisible God, is the manifestation and the pattern. The liberty of the new man is liberty to do the will of God, to imitate God in character, as being His dear child, according as that character was presented in Christ. The law of liberty is this character, as it is revealed in the Word, in which the new nature finds its joy and satisfaction; even as it drew its existence from the Word which reveals Him, and from the God who is therein revealed.

Such is the "law of liberty"—the character of God Himself in us formed by the operation of a nature begotten through the Word which reveals Him, molding itself upon that Word.

The chief index of the inner man is the tongue. A man who appears to be in relationship with God and to honor Him, yet who cannot bridle his tongue, deceives himself, and his religion is vain.

Pure religion before God and the Father is to care for those who, reached in the tenderest relationships by the wages of sin, are deprived of their natural supports; and to keep oneself untainted by the world. Instead of striving to exalt oneself and gain reputation in a world of vanity, afar from God, our activities turn, as God does, to the sorrowful, who, in their affliction, need succor; and he keeps himself from a world in which everything is defiling, and contrary to the new nature which is our life, and to the character of God as we know it by the Word.

James 2

The apostle now enters on the subject of those who professed to believe that Jesus was Christ the Lord. Before, in chap. 1, He had spoken of the new nature in connection with God: here, the profession of faith in Christ is brought to the same touchstone-the reality of the fruits produced by it, in contrast with this world. All these principles-the value of the name of Jesus, the essence of the law as Christ presented it, the law of liberty-are brought forward to test the reality of the spiritual life, or to convince the professor that he did not possess it. Two things are reprobated: having respect to the outward appearance of persons, and the absence of good works as a proof of the sincerity of the profession.

First then, he blames respect for outward appearance of persons. They profess faith in the Lord Jesus, and yet hold with the spirit of the world. He replies that God has chosen the poor, making them rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. These professors had despised them; these rich men blasphemed the name of Christ, and persecuted Christians.

In the second place, he appeals to the practical summary of the law of which Jesus had spoken, the royal law. They broke the law itself in favoring the rich: now the law did not allow of any infraction whatsoever of its commands, because the authority of the legislator was concerned. In despising the poor, they were assuredly not loving their neighbor as themselves.

In the third place, they ought to walk as those whose responsibility was measured by the law of liberty, in which-possessing a nature that tasted and loved that which was of God -they were set free from all that was contrary to Him; so that they could not excuse themselves if they admitted principles which were not those of God Himself. This introduction of the divine nature leads the apostle on to speak of -the mercy by which God glorifies Himself. The man who shows no mercy will find himself the object of the judgment which he has loved.

The second part of the chapter is connected with this: for he begins his discourse on works as proofs of faith, by speaking of this mercy which answers to the nature and character of God, of which, as born of Him, the true Christian is made a partaker. The profession of having faith, without this life- the existence of which is proved by works -can profit no one. This is plain enough. I say the profession of having faith, because the epistle says it: "If a man say he hath faith." This is the key to this part of the epistle. He says it-where is the proof of it? Works are the proof; and it is in this way that the apostle uses them. A man says he has faith. It is not a thing that we can see. I say therefore, with reason, "show it me." This is the evidence of faith which is required for man-it is only by its fruits that we make it evident to men; for the faith itself cannot be seen. But if I produce these fruits, then assuredly I have the root, without which there could not be the fruits. Thus, faith does not show itself to others, nor can I recognize it, without works; but the fruits of faith prove the existence of faith.

That which follows, shows that he is speaking of the profession of a doctrine, true perhaps in itself-that certain truths are confessed; for it is real faith which devils have in the unity of the

Godhead. They do not doubt it: but there is no link at all between their heart and God by means of a new nature-far indeed from it.

But the apostle confirms this, by the case of men in whom the opposition to the divine nature is not so apparent. Faith, the recognition of the truth with respect to Christ, is dead without works: i.e. such a faith as produces none, is dead.

We see, ver. 16, that the faith of which the apostle speaks is a profession devoid of reality; ver. 19, shows that it may be an unfeigned certainty that the thing is true; but the life begotten by the word, so that a relationship is formed between the soul and God, is entirely wanting. Because this takes place through the word, it is faith; being begotten of God, we have a new life. This life acts, that is to say, faith acts, according to the relationship with God, by works which flow naturally from it, and which bear testimony to the faith that produced them.

From ver. 20 to the end, he presents a fresh proof of his thesis, founded on the last principle that I have mentioned. Now these proofs have nothing at all to do with the fruits of a kindly nature (for there are such), appertaining to us as creatures, but not to that life which has for its source the word of God by which He begets us. The fruits, of which the apostle speaks, bear testimony by their very character to the faith that produced them. Abraham offered up his son; Rahab received the messengers of Israel, associating herself with the people of God when everything was against them, and separating herself from her own people, by faith. All sacrifice for God; all given up for His people before they had gained one victory, and while the world was in full power; such were the fruits of faith. Certainly the Scripture was fulfilled which said, that Abraham believed God. How could he have acted as he did, if he had not believed Him? Works put a seal on his faith: and faith without works is but like the body without the soul, an outward form devoid of the life that animates it. Faith acts in the works (without it the works are a nullity, they are not those of the new life), and the works complete the faith which acts in them; for in spite of trial, and in the trial, faith is in activity. Works of law have no part in it. The outward law which exacts, is not a life which produces (apart from this divine nature) these holy and loving dispositions which, having God and His people for their object, value nothing else.

James, remark, never says that works 'justify us before God; for God can see -the faith without its works, He knows that life is there. It is in exercise with regard to Him, towards Him, by trust in His Word, in Himself, by receiving His testimony in spite of everything within and without. This, God sees and knows. But when our fellow-creatures are in question, when it must be said "show me," then faith, life, shows itself in works.

James 3

In chapter. 3 the apostle recurs to the tongue, the most ready index to the heart, the proof whether the new man is in action, whether nature and self-will are under restraint. But there is hardly anything here which needs remark, although much that demands the hearing ear. Where there is the divine life, knowledge does not display itself in mere words, but in the walk and by works in which the meekness of true wisdom will be seen. Bitterness and contention are not the fruits of a wisdom that comes from above, but are earthly, of the nature of man, and of the enemy.

The wisdom that comes from above, having its place in the life, in the heart, has first of all the character of purity, for the heart is in communion with God, has intercourse with Him, therefore there must needs be this purity.

Next, it is peaceable, gentle, ready to yield to the will of another; then, full of good works, acting by a principle, which, as its origin and motives are from above, does good without partiality, that is to say, its action is not guided by the circumstances which influence the flesh and the passions of men. For the same reason, it is sincere and unfeigned.

These directions to bridle the tongue as the first movement and expression of the will of the natural man, extend to believers. There are not to be (as to the inward disposition of the man) many teachers. We all fail-and to teach others and fail oneself; only increases our condemnation. For vanity can easily be fed in teaching others-and that is a very different thing from having the life quickened by the power of truth. The Holy Ghost bestows His gifts as He pleases: the apostle speaks here of the propensity in one who teaches, not of the gift he may have received for teaching.

James 4

In all that follows (chap. 4) we have still the judgment of unbridled nature, of will in its different forms: contentions that arise from the lusts of the natural heart; requests made to God proceeding from the same source; the desires of the flesh and of the mind, developing themselves and finding their sphere in the friendship of the world which is thus enmity against- God.- The nature of man covets enviously, is full of envy with regard to others. But God gives more grace: there is counteracting power, if one is content to be little and humble, to be as nothing, in the world. The grace and favor of God are with such a one; for He resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Upon this, the apostle unfolds the action of a soul directed by the Spirit of God in the midst of the unbelieving and selfish multitude with whom it was associated (7-10). For he still supposes the believers whom he addressed to be in connection with the law. If they spoke evil of their brother, to whom the law gave a place before God, they spoke evil of the law, according to which his value was so great. Judgment belonged to God who had given the law, and who would vindicate His own authority as well as grant deliverance and salvation

Vers. 13-16. The same self-will and forgetfulness of God are blamed; the false confidence that flows from reckoning upon being able to do as one pleased, the absence of dependence on God. Ver. 17 is a general conclusion, founded on the principle already suggested (3:1), and on that which is said with regard to faith. The knowledge of good, without its practice, causes even the absence of the work which one could have performed to be a positive sin. The action of the new man is absent, that of the old man is present; for the good is before our eyes, we know what we ought to do, and do not choose to do it: there is no inclination to do it-we will not do it.

James 5

The two classes in Israel are distinctly marked here, in contrast with one another; with the addition of the walk which the Christian ought to pursue when chastised by the Lord.

The apostle gives the coming of the Lord as the term of their condition, both to the unbelieving rich oppressors in Israel, and to the poor believing remnant. The rich have heaped up treasures for the last days. The oppressed poor are to be patient until the Lord. Himself shall come to deliver them. Moreover, he says, deliverance would not be delayed. The husbandman waits for the rain and the time of harvest; the Christian for his Master's coming. This patience characterizes, as we have seen, the walk of faith. It had been witnessed in the prophets; and in the case of others we count them happy which endure afflictions for the Lord's sake. Job shows us the ways of the Lord: he needed to have patience, but the end of the Lord was blessing and tender mercy towards him.

This expectation of the coming of the Lord was a solemn warning, and at the same time the strongest encouragement, but one which maintained the true character of the Christian's practical life. It showed also what the selfishness of man's will would end in, and it restrained all action of that will in believers. The feelings of brethren towards each other were placed under the safeguard of this same truth. They were not to have a spirit of discontent, or to murmur against others who were perhaps more favored in their outward circumstances; "The Judge stood before the door."

Oaths displayed still more the forgetfulness of God, and the acting consequently of the self-will of nature. "Yea" ought to be yea, and "Nay," nay. The actings of the divine nature-in the consciousness of the presence of God; and the repression of all human will and of sinful nature, is what the writer of this epistle desires.

Now, there were resources in Christianity both for joy and sorrow. If any were afflicted, let them pray: God was ready to hear. If happy, let them sing. If sick, send for the elders of the assembly, who would pray for the sufferer and anoint him, and the chastisement will be removed and the sins for which, according to God's government, he was thus chastised, will be forgiven as regards that government; for it is that only which is here spoken of. The imputation of sin for condemnation has no place here. The efficacy of the prayer of faith is set before us; but it is in connection with the maintenance of sincerity of heart. The government of God is exercised with regard to His people. He chastises them by sickness and it is important that truth in the inner man should be maintained. Men hide their faults-they desire to walk as if all were going on well-but God judges His people. He tries the heart and the reins. They are held in the bonds of affliction. God shows them their faults, or their unbroken self-will. "The multitude of their bones is chastised with strong pain." And now the Church of God intervenes in charity, and according to its own order, by means of the elders: the sick man commits himself to God confessing his state of need, the charity of the Church acts and brings him who is chastised, according to this relationship, before God-for that is where the Church is. Faith pleads this relationship of grace; the sick man is healed. If sins-and not merely the need of discipline- were the cause of his chastisement, those sins will not hinder his being healed, they shall-be forgiven him.

The Apostle then presents the principle in general, as the course for all, namely, to open their hearts to each other, in order to maintain truth in the inner man as to oneself, and to pray for each other, in order that charity should be in full exercise with regard to the faults of others, grace and truth being thus spiritually formed in the Church, and a perfect union of heart among Christians, so that even their faults are an occasion for the exercise of charity (as in God towards us), and entire confidence in each other, according to that charity, such as is felt towards a restoring and pardoning God. What a beautiful picture is presented of Divine principles animating men and causing them to act according- to the nature of God Himself, and the influence of His love upon the heart.

We may remark, that it is not confession to the elders that is spoken of. That would have been confidence in men-official confidence. God desires the operation of Divine charity in all. Confession to one another shows the condition of the Church, and God would have the Church to be in such a state, that love should so reign in it, that they should be so near to God as to be able to treat the transgressor according to the grace they know in Him; and that this love should be so realized, that perfect inward sincerity should be produced by the confidence and operation of grace. Official confession destroys all this-is contrary to it. How Divine the wisdom which omitted confession when speaking of the elders, but which commands it as the living and voluntary expression of the heart.

This leads us also to the value of the energetic prayers of the righteous man. It is his nearness to God, the sense that he, consequently, has of that which God is, which (through grace and the operation of the Spirit) gives him this power. God takes account of men, and that, according to the infinitude of His love. He takes account of the trust in Himself, the faith in His Word, shown by one who thinks and acts according to a just appreciation of what He is. That is always faith, which makes sensible to us that which we do not see- God Himself who acts in accordance with the revelation that He has given of Himself. Now, the man who in the practical sense is righteous through grace, is near to God; as being righteous, he has not to do with God for himself with regard to sin, which would keep his heart at a distance; his heart is thus free to draw nigh to God, according to His holy nature, on the behalf of others; and, moved by the Divine nature that animates him, and which enables him to appreciate God, he seeks, according to the activity of that nature, that his prayers may prevail with God, whether for the good of others or for the glory of God Himself in His service. And God answers, according to that same nature, by blessing this trust and responding to it, in order to manifest what He is for faith, to encourage it by sanctioning its activity, putting His seal on the man who walks by faith.

The Spirit of God acts, we know, in all this; but the Apostle does not here speak of Him, being occupied with the practical effect, and presenting the man as he is seen, acting under the influence of this nature in its positive energy with regard to God, and near to Him, so that it acts in all its intensity, moved by the power of that nearness. But if we consider the action of the Spirit, these thoughts are confirmed. The righteous man does not grieve the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit works in him according to His own power, not having to set his conscience right with God, but acting in the man according to the power of His communion.

Finally, we have the assurance that the ardent and energetic prayer of the righteous man has great efficacy: it is the prayer of faith which knows God and counts upon Him and draws near to

Him.

The case of Elijah is interesting, as showing us (and there are other examples of the same kind) how the Holy Ghost acts inwardly in a man where we see the outward manifestation of power. In the history, we have Elijah's declaration: "The Lord liveth, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." This is the authority, the power, exercised in the name of the Lord. In our epistle, the secret operation, that which passes between the soul and God is set forth. He prayed, and God heard him. We have the same testimony on the part of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus. Only that in the latter case, we have the two together, except that the prayer itself is not given-unless in the unutterable groan of Christ's Spirit.

Comparing Gal. 2 with the history in Acts 15, we find a revelation from God which determined Paul's conduct, whatever outward motives there may have been, which were known to all. By such cases as those which the apostle proposes to the Church, and those of Elijah and the Lord Jesus, a God, living, acting, and interesting Himself in all that happens among His people, is revealed to us.

There is also the activity of love towards those who err. If any one departs from the truth, and they bring him back by grace, let it be known that to bring back a sinner from the error of his ways is the exercise-simple as our action in it may be-of the power that delivers a soul from death; accordingly, all those sins which spread themselves in their odious nature before the eyes of God, and offended His glory and His heart by their presence in His universe, are covered. The soul being brought to God by grace, all its sins are pardoned, appear no more, are blotted out from before the face of God. The apostle (as throughout) does not speak of the power that acts in this work of love, but of the fact. He applies it to cases that had happened among them; but he establishes a universal principle with regard to the activity of grace in the heart that is animated by it. The erring soul is saved; the sin is put away from before God.

Charity in the Church, suppresses, so to speak, the sins which otherwise would destroy union, and overcome that charity in the Church, and appear in all their deformity and all their malignancy before God. Whereas, being met by love in the Church, they go no farther, are, as it were, dissolved and put away by the charity which they could not vanquish. The sin is vanquished by the love which dealt with it, disappears, is swallowed up by it. Thus love covers a multitude of sins. Here it is its action in the conversion of a sinner.

John 1

In none of the gospels is the glory of the Son of God so fully presented to us as in that of John. The blessed name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, has indeed the very basis of its truth brought out to light in this gospel. Who could have understood that new name, that fresh revelation of Divine glory in that new name; of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, without some new, some fresh uncovering of the glories divine. This was done by the presentation to us, in this gospel, of the Son of the Father, as sent to open the way for the Holy Ghost.

He, thus sent of the Father, had a work to do ere the Spirit could come down according to the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and much truth to communicate with regard to the new position and its new relationships, which were about to be established,-but Himself was revealed:--and the new name, Divine, the new position, the new privileges and the coming glories, were all inseparable from Himself in that name of Son of the Father.

John 1

The First Chapter contains, as an introduction to the whole book, a list of the titles and glories connected with the work He came to do, not indeed unconnectedly following one another, as a paper drawn up by man, to describe one of the great ones of the earth would have done, but beautifully, and in an orderly way flowing forth, quietly and naturally, as a river fresh from God. 'Tis a string of priceless pearls; glorious beads of matchless beauty! Would that the saints knew how the power of their own calling consists in the aptitude, habit, and skill, of counting over such treasures. For truly the strength of a saint is not in the telling forth of my weakness, my leanness, my poverty, but in the treasuring up, delighting in, reviewing and declaring, the riches of the Lord in His grace.

I turn now to these titles of glory in the Lord. 1. "In the beginning was the Word." -The words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," (Gen. 1:1) evidently respect a time posterior to, or after, the time referred to by the words, "in the beginning was the Word." For the Word was before anything which was a result of its power. Indeed, the account given to us, in the first book of our Bible, is only of the generation of our heavens and of our earth. It declares their creation, in the simple yet majestic words: "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But it gives us no account of what had been previously created-as of those angelic sons of God who shouted for joy (Job 38:7), when the foundations of the earth were laid. It gives us no account of the creation of him who kept not his first estate, etc.

In the beginning was the Word. The word, was, here marks existence in our retrospect. We look back, and in thought we can do so before anything that now exists as a creature, in heaven or in earth, or under the earth, did exist: the Word then was. This Word is the whole mind-the very intelligence of God Himself.

2. "And the Word was with God." A little consideration will show, that this marks the personality of the Word. If the Word had been a faculty; then we should have had, 'the Word was in God'; if the

word had been an expression of mind only, then we should have had, 'the Word was of God.' Both of these expressions may be found in other connections than that which is now before us. But, here, speaking of a person-the Son -the proper expression is found:- 'And the Word was with God.' And this is again guarded by the expression-

3. "And the word was God."

As to His existence-eternal. As to His person-distinct. As to His abode - with God. As to His nature-God. Such was the Word. Not a mere faculty or attribute; not a mere power or expression of Deity-but the Word was eternal, divine, had individual personality (as man speaks), and was with God.

4. It is added, as giving emphasis and distinctness to the previous statement. "This same was in the beginning with God." (v. 2), When there was no creation of any kind, or sort, existing, ere ever any commencement of creation had taken place, "He was in the beginning with God." How perfect, how guarded, how blessed a marking out of the peculiar separateness, which had, in the beginning, belonged to Him whom men counted, in their gracelessness, the friend of publicans and sinners.

Thus, His eternal, His divine competency for all work, for every exigence, is shown. The Son, Himself the intelligence and the expression of God. From and of everlasting; - without beginning-God; and dwelling with God, for what work was not He competent and equal to?

Next, we have:

5thly. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

First, the statement that "all things were made by Him, the Word, and Secondly, the guard put upon the statement, so as to enforce its absoluteness, "and without Him was not anything made that was made."

But if the eternal power and godhead were witnessed in Creation; if He spake and it was done; if creation was thus the expression of His own mind yet was there another and a higher glory to be noted, viz.

6thly. "In Him was life." Creation below, Creation around Him, but "in Him was life," and-

7thly. "The life was the light of men."

Things might spring up into existence around Him and below, themselves originating in His perfect wisdom, coming into existence at His bidding, themselves the expressions of His own wisdom and power in their measure-but this was not the life that was in Him.

That Creation was not apart from Him, as the Living One in its origin and testimony, is clear, from the verse already quoted from the epistle to the Romans, (i. 20)- But as the works of a master show his existence and are proofs of his skill, yet fall altogether below, and are easily to be distinguished from, the life which he has; so, though in an infinitely higher degree, while Creation wide showed the existence of its Author, and was and is a witness of His eternal power and godhead; at first fully so in all its parts, and after the fall, still doing the same in measure, though itself a ruin -still the statement in Him was Life, goes altogether beyond Creation. He had a Life of

His own, and that life was the light of men. In Him was Life: and this life had moral character, certain traits and ways habitual to it wherever it displayed itself, which constituted the light of men. Alas! the Spirit of God has to add: "And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not."

Three things have now been brought before us as marking the competency of the One who is the subject of testimony for any work on God's behalf among men; viz. 1st, His personal essential competency before God, (ver. 1, 2).

2nd, His competency relative to creation wide (ver. 3.)

And 3rd, His competency in essential character (ver. 4), however little men might be able to appreciate that, (ver. 5.)

Here ends, in one aspect of it, the first part of our chapter: blessed and precious setting forth of the essential glory,-dignity,-and moral character of Him with whom we Christians have eternally and for eternity to-do in Jesus of Nazareth.

The next part, which begins with ver. 6, and ends with ver. 25, gives us the state of things in John the Baptist's days, as ushering in his testimony. Each fragment of it, however, glitters with some honor to be rendered to the self-same Jesus, or with some glory to be recognized in Him. The life who was the light of man-in coming into this world had a herald to usher His coming. Thus:

8th. "There was a man sent from God whose name was John,"

Among men he might be great-but in nothing did he boast of greatness in himself: no higher honor did he know than to be the unpretending herald sent from God to announce-Him that was to come. - "The same came for a witness of the Light, that all, through him, might believe. He was not that light but (was sent) to bear witness of that Light," (ver. 7, 8.) It was meet, and right, and worthy that such a Light should be announced, and most gracious, too, that man's inability to recognize and appreciate it of himself should be met. If the darkness comprehended it not, there was one that did and could speak of it, and did so faithfully, and the contrast is drawn between him and the light. He was not that light, but had the honor of being the witness to it. "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." How ineffable the grace and gracious purpose of Him who sent John as a messenger: "that all through him might believe."

Alas! the honor and glory of the Lord was not only marked thus, as we have said (8thly) by having such a fore-runner, but also as we see here by the power of detecting and making manifest man's darkness. Yes;

9th. All glory is His, so, among the rest, that one of being the Detector and Manifestor of man's moral evil. And, alas! it was not only thus generally that the light shining on men, men comprehended it not, but also in particular He made 'manifest Israel's state of alienation from God.

The Magi of the East, as coming to greet the newborn babe-Egypt, as giving Him a shelter-seemed More to comprehend that there was light, than did his own people, Israel. For the former could give Him some honor though it was written (9th). "He was in the world and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not," (v. 10.)-but the latter, though not only His by creation and upholding, but His in government and worship, knew him not. "He came unto His own

and His own received Him not," (v. 11.) He came in the hour of their extremity, in every way in the hour of their affliction; He came full of power, and wisdom, and grace: offered Himself just as He was to them just as they were; for He sought not theirs, but them-but they received Him not.

His truthfulness to God in a world of evil was a glory, and will prove, hereafter, a bud germinating with blessing, and blessed consequences, to the ends of the earth, and so-

10th. His full sustainment of Messiah's character and place at His first coming - in associating Himself with God, where God was in the end of that time, was His glory and honor, and will prove to Israel hereafter a fountain teeming forth every Messianic and Jehovah blessing. Had He not been true to Israel's God and Savior in the days of His humiliation, Israel would not have been detected in its state of evil: if one had come in His own name they would have received him: but because He came as the Servant of God they received Him not: but then, blessed be God for the unspeakable benefit! if He thus proved, that in the kingdom of Israel there was none righteous, no not one; none that could cleave to the King- that King stood forth then, faithful amid unfaithfulness-mid darkness only light-and the King abides yet to be and show Himself the glory of the house of Israel as well as a light to lighten their darkness. Oh how sweet amid all the failure of man-amid all the ruin of the creature-is it to find this blessed precious One, at once showing why there is no stability in us, even because of our untruthfulness to God; and yet, at the very same time, that the contrast in Him which humbles the broken heart in the dust, is a contrast full

, of light, and peace, and blessing for the poor and needy. And here (v. 12) comes out, another glory. His light not only as shining among men (9thly) detects their darkness, and shows it to be what it will be in blessing. to the earth hereafter, the Sun of righteousness rising with healing in its wings: nor (10thly) does it as the Star of Israel's hope, let Israel reject it and remain in its own sphere to return and bless Israel hereafter; but-

11th. It shows forth its own wealth of glory and resource.

If there to try and prove man wanting; if there to proffer help to Israel and to be rejected by Israel-He was there also with new truth and truth of a higher order and character than pertained to Israel.

Israel was the channel of promises from Abraham only. Government in the world, under God, was their blessing. He knew about the heart of God and the sons God would adopt, and He came to give power to as many as received Him; to whomsoever might believe in Him-to become Sons of God.

The wisdom of God is perfect. Man and Israel cannot wound the heart of the blessed One without, at the same time, thrusting Him, as it were, home upon God.

And this was indeed not only His glory, but, in a certain sense, God's reply through Him, but to a thankless world non-appreciating Him, and to a nonreceiving house of Israel-even this precious grace in Him-the eleventh brightness I have noted: "As many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

The world of darkness comprehended not the light, Israel, as such, received Him not-but whosoever did receive Him, to them gave lie power to become sons of God. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (v. 13). God knew how to

secure His glory in securing rich eternal blessing, relationship to Himself to as many as received Him-to them that believed in His name. It was in Him to give power to become sons of God, and though a thoughtless and senseless world might not trouble itself at the thought of rejecting its Maker, nor Israel in rejecting its prophet, priest, and king, as well as Jehovah-to those that did receive Him He gave power to become sons of God. This object of His coining, when once announced, introduces, most naturally, more truth about Himself, and the Word is referred to in the double glory of what was found in Him: He was a man -yet the only begotten Son of the Father, and the effect of this was to set aside Law and Moses, and freely communicate grace and truth. "And the Lord was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth "(ver. 14.) There is thus

12th. "The Word became flesh,"

13th. "And dwelt among us."

Man in Eden had been the center and head of a system; but lost it all through sin. Here was a marvel of marvels-the one, in whom all the glories we have been looking at Were found-He became flesh! Himself the spring and source of all that can be seen or known; He; the Word, became flesh. And this, clearly as Himself, the abiding center and head. of a new sphere and system altogether.

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren," (Rom. 8:29.)

"It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified (are) all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto my Brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee. And again, I will put my trust in Him. And again, behold I and the children which God path given me (Heb. 2:10-13) The Father's house (John 14) and the glory given by the Father to Him (John 17) given unto us. These verses may-suffice as to His place of center and head, as the Word become flesh.

One amazing consequence and blessing attendant upon this is the nearness, fullness, and completeness of the revelation to us: The Word became flesh. In Him, who is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead;-in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head bodily. In Him there is all fullness. And it is presented to us in Him as in Jesus the man once obedient unto death, the death of the Cross, but now ascended and glorified. What perfectness was lacking to Him the Word? What greater nearness Could He give to what He was, and had to pre- sent to man than by becoming flesh?!And-

"As such He dwelt among us."-It was no passing hurried appearance, as of a man. He made large experiences on the earth in His childhood, youth, early manhood and service; and the disciple that lay in His bosom could say, that, "which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; for the life was manifested; and we have seen (it), arid bear witness, and spew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John 1:1, 2). There was His life in the humiliation; there was, too, the forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3), when He showed

Himself alive-to the apostles whom He had chosen-after His passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God; and, thirdly, there is that revelation of Him ascended and glorified, which followed. The two first periods, however, alone come into the statement "He dwelt among us." Connected with this dwelling of His among us, there are several things noticed. Some of His ways of grace and wisdom are given us in the close of the chapter, but first comes His appearance, the traits and marks by which He was to be known. This gives us-

14th. "And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (v. 14.)

True simplicity (or what should be called such if it is not) and true transparency were never so presented. The eye single-God's will and His Father's pleasure were the simple purpose of His heart. And His whole being here below was so in accordance with this, so regulated by it, that this single simple purpose told itself out in every thought, word, or deed. It was a transparency which man could not read, which no saint can apprehend, save by the discovery of the harmony between that single simple purpose of His being and His ways.- But there it was, a glory-an all excellent, all transcending manifestation of moral beauty was His,-the glory as of the only begotten of the Father -full of grace and truth.

And mark the grace of this. The sons of God -this new class of privileged people -get an introduction. to God in the character of Abba -and that, indeed, after the very highest mode possible, viz. in seeing the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, yet in a way most suitably adapted to their own standing, viz., He became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory. To the heart that knows Him what induction more natural than one from such a Son to what the Father must be. Blessed and happy must be the Father of such a Son. Wondrous the blessedness of that Father who could show such a Son forth before a world and a people that had no hearts for Him: still more wondrous,- if possible, the grace of that Father that shows in Him all the competency to make sons by adoption and the new birth,- and then to do all the work needful to clear their way out of the world, and through the all that Satan can do against them, and right in homeward to the Father's home. We can say, indeed, in this connection, more than the old adage-Like Father like Son-Like Master like Servant-for it is written "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also-how sayest thou then, show us the Father." But this glory is not all told out in this that we have looked at, viz. that in Him there was glory -peculiar glory -the glory as of the only begotten of the Father -that He was the very transcript, the express image, the effulgence and the fullness of the glory of Abba; but-

15th. That He as such was beheld by man. I notice this the rather, because my soul finds a great difference between the effects of looking at Him- as the Word become flesh, and as according to that title under which He is then spoken of-we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father: "My Lord and my God," are my words of worship before Him as the Word become flesh. My heart swells with love and confidence, as He calls us brethren, and shows Himself to me as the First-born among many brethren. But, in either and in both the backgrounds, the Rock drops honey and living water, for He is-

16th. "Full of grace and truth" (ver. 14.)

Wherever He went, whatever He did, He was full of grace and truth. And the grace and truth, of which He was full, revealed themselves to the various parties with whom He came in contact all through His course on earth, but more manifestly so in the days of His service in testimony, and yet more fully so after His resurrection, though in a more restricted narrow circle.

It is one of the precious fruits of studying the gospels that we learn how that fullness of grace and truth which was in Him, proclaimed itself in circumstances nigh akin to our own, told itself out and let His glory shine out in scenes as dark as those through which we pass today. And if we have not the same displays down here as marked the time of His humiliation, we know where He is; where to find Him always; and that He Himself is the same yesterday, to day, and forever. There is something of a difference to be noticed between this, (16th) His fullness of grace and truth-known as such, both as (in 15th section) the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and (as in 16th) and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father-in either and both cases full of grace and truth-and that which follows in vers. 16, 17, 18. First-

17. "Out of His fullness have all we received."

The "all we" here, I take it, are the sons of God. John the Baptist could not say this. When he saw Jesus he knew Him-as the one of whom he had spoken, saying. "He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for He was before me." The words were weighty, and could apply but to one. Though He comes after.- me He is more excellent than I, for He was before me. John the Evangelist knew more than this. The Baptist called back to Moses and the Prophets as witnessing to the coming one. The Evangelist knew Himself as, even during the days of His early service, full of grace and truth. And more than this, for ere he wrote the gospel he knew Him risen and ascended, and had received out of His fullness himself, as himself a son of God by adoption and regeneration.

"Children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," (Gal. 3:26,) was not to be said by the apostles until the death and resurrection and ascension of the Lord had taken place. Nor was that word made good to them: "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father!" (4:6) until after the ascension of the Lord, when it could be said: "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Full of grace and truth was He to the Syrophenician woman, to the woman of Samaria; to the Jews; to the seventy disciples whom He sent forth, and to the twelve apostles whom He drew nearer still to Himself-but into none of them did He put forth that power that was His alone by title of right to hold, or right to give, the power of being and knowing oneself a Son of God. How do I know I am a Son of God? Well, not only because I have seen the Lord, but that my knowledge of Him has been by faith-He hid in the Father's throne, and I down here knowing the revelation of Him to be according to that glory. And according to that revelation of Him made in the word, but brought home to my soul by the Spirit-I learn those two words in Gal. 3:26, and 4:6, (just cited). This is connected with a new birth in me---He has quickened me, put forth the life that was in Himself to work with the light, and to communicate to me, not a corruptible seed but an incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. I have received out of His fullness.

The next clause adds,

18th. The enlarged range of the blessing so received out of Him so communicated unto us-" and grace for grace." Whichever way we render this, whether "grace distributively for every grace in Him," (so connecting the divine nature communicated to us, in its traits and characteristics, with that which He has as Son of man,) or "grace piled up upon grace," (so connecting the first touch of His blessing which gives life with all the free-gift blessings which follow on the first), the clause is surely a most remarkable one, and one pregnant with blessing. Oh, what a portion Jesus is to those who know Him! But there is another thing to be noticed, viz:-

19th. The personal connection of the testimony with Himself.

First, in contrast with the Law which was given through Moses, He was a servant, and handed out what was given to him to give. But grace and truth came as inseparable from the person of Jesus Christ. In Him was life, and the life was light, and He could not but tell what He was in Himself-grace and truth-Moses had told of the Creator's righteous requirements from the creature-Not so Jesus Christ, when He was there, grace and truth in unlimited fullness was there, and it shined out from Him. This, however, was connected with another thing, viz:-

20th. No man hath, seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.

That fullness of grace and truth which His presence brought with it, not only declared itself but declared God and the Father. For "He that was present was the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father."

Blessedly interwoven with these glories, we have the Baptist's testimony brought forward. John the Baptist's heart was true; and one cannot but believe fully, that that which, he counted his own high calling was the having been set apart and called of God to be the immediate harbinger of the Christ of God. His greatness was to be little, but to do God's bidding and usher in a greater one. It is remarkable how he, in his testimony, gets rid of everything save of being a voice, and nothing but a voice. "Who art thou" said the Jews to him, through the Priests and Levites from Jerusalem (ver. 19). "I am not the Christ" (ver. 20), was his bold answer. "What then? (said they) art thou Elias?" "I am not," said John. "Art thou then the Prophet?" (said they). "No," is his simple reply (ver. 21). And, when' pressed by them, that they might give an answer to those who sent them, and they rejoin, "Who art thou? What sayest thou of thyself?" (ver. 22), he said "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make, straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Esaias" (ver. 23).

But if John had little to say for himself; and that little negative in character-not the Christ, nor Elias, nor the Prophet, though he was baptizing (ver. 25)-he had a testimony to give to them. I baptizing with water, what is that when "there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is prepared before me, whose shoe-latchet I am not worthy to unloose "(vers. 26, 27). And not only thus, generally, but also he had to bear a specific yet blessed testimony to give to his Master, to the personal distinctions that were His, and to the great and new works He had come to do.

This positive testimony to the Lord by John the Baptist, extends from ver. 28 down to the end of ver. 34.

It contains glories of the Lord to which we must look in detail. But they are glories which attach to the works which the Lord came to do-works of so arduous and overwhelming a character, that if He had not been ushered in with all that glorious power and grace that goes before, no heart could trust its all to Him: but as to whom, having seen Him. to be such an one as He is, the believing heart not only says, the works are NOT above Him whom my soul loveth; but, it can add, what riches of grace and love in Him that being, such an one as I have seen Him to be, He should undertake these works, and do these things for us. The four things we have to notice are, as to His works.

1st. Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world; and,

2nd. He it is which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And then as to the honor God put upon Him, 1st, before John, in marking Him out by the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. • And, 2nd, by the testimony given thereupon by 'John, that this is the Son of God.

The works to be accomplished, were the removal of sin as connected with the old things, and the gift of the Holy Ghost as introducing new things altogether.

The first of these two statements is very little appreciated in its fullness. "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Atonement or forgiveness through the knowledge of the blood shed on Calvary, is not here the point. From the fall, downwards, sin had been upon the whole system of this world. And whenever the world or anything connected with it came before the Divine mind, sin was the first thought; Adam and Eve, to whom it had all been given and entrusted, had rebelled against God and sold themselves and it under sin. Now it is this redemption of the system as a whole, which is referred to here. Some will here, in time of the redemption, prize and rejoice in forgiveness: others may hear of the blood of God's Son and trample it under foot; but the system, as a whole, is claimed by God, and quite apart from the believer's joy in forgiveness, or the judgment of the wicked who will be cast out of it into the lake of fire prepared for the Devil and his angels-the system will be set free from sin-the world will be set free-there will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The Lamb once slain, alive again upon the throne, though sin may yet remain in detail, is the guarantee of this. And the scope of redemption is seen in this, the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Now this is the work the Lamb of God had to do, viz., to introduce it to God in another connection than as of sin being upon it -and eventually to remove every mark of sin from it. Sure I could trust no one but Jesus for my own forgiveness of sins through His blood: surely He alone has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood -but the work referred to here is of a wider range than that of a conscience purged and made perfect by His blood. Behold the Lamb of God, whose office is to take away the sin of the world. But the undoing of the evil brought into this system by sin, was not all; nor was it enough for the Son of God. The positive blessing is in the baptizing with the Holy Ghost. This was the act of One, and one alone to do. Who but He who is the Life-giving Spirit could do so? Here again, as in the taking away sing the thing is not looked at in its bearing upon individuals as such, but in its sphere. Had the blessing to the individual been in question we should have had the new birth (as in John 3); the nature and ways of the new gift (as in John 4:14), "The water that I shall give Him shall be in Him, a well of water springing up into everlasting life "; its full expression (as in John 7:37) "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water ": but we have none of these nor of other most blessed

and precious truths brought before us; but in contrast, though connected therewith, we have the same truth as is brought before us in the Acts of the Apostles, "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). This, as He explains it afterward, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me," etc., (ver. 8). The new birth; the new nature with its ways and world of its own; and its full expression all of primary importance to man as an individual, and all, together with the rich vein full of blessing in which they lie, expressions as they are of the almighty power and grace of Him of whom we speak, are not the same thing as His being able to give a power which shall form a system where God can dwell and which shall be associated with Himself in His works..Su-Ch is He as He-that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. Two things are connected with this revelation of Him to John the Baptist. John found Him not out by his own wisdom, but by this gracious and glorious mark, and John knew too well in what his own glory consisted, to hide this. "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him, and I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost "(ver. 33). This was the mark given from heaven; a simple one, yet one that had its deep full meaning as to the Lord Himself, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; and it was honor to John Baptist to have been thus singled out as the announcer of this Blessed One.

Attendant hereon, and closely connected too, with every part of the subject, is the glory which John announced as to the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world; the one alone that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost-And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God. And this title is a different one from that of Son of the Father-though both center in one and the same person. That there is a difference will be readily felt, if we consider that the Jews knew of God, and that the expression, Son of God, is found once and again in the Old Testament, Dan. 3:25; Prov. 8 comp. 30:4. But of the Father and the Son of the Father, they had heard nothing-even an apostle sometime after John the Baptist's testimony, and after he had been with Jesus, could say: Lord show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (John 14:3). And the Jews never could make out who Jesus meant by the Father.

These four truths connected with John the Baptist's distinct testimony contain these four more glorious confessions about Jesus, which we might add to the twenty previously noticed, viz.-

21st. The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

22nd. The Baptizer with the Holy Ghost.

23rd. The One marked out by the descent of the Holy Ghost.

24th. This was and is the Son of God.

The rest of the chapter forms, in a certain sense, a counterpart to that presented in the first 28 verses. 1st. These first 28 verses present the glories of the Lord, without which He never could have undertaken, 2ndly, these works referred to (29-34); viz., 1st: The setting aside of sin, and, 2ndly: the introduction of an entirely new and divine order of things under the Spirit's presence and power: Then 3rdly, we have (35-51) the blessed Lord presented as a man and among men-conscious of the possession of all those glories, and knowing His own responsibility to do the

works which He had undertaken to do, yet now, as a man among men, showing out all the loveliness of humanity and the most attractive grace, complete power, and all wise discernment conceivable. And this intercourse of His, as we shall see, brings into light other titles that belong to Him. For He shows Himself (ver. 41) as the giver of a new name-proof of His knowledge of the Divine counsels about Peter-Philip owns Him (ver. 45) as the Prophet foretold of Moses, and the Messiah, Deliverer, Son of Man predicted by the Prophets: Nathanael finds Him to be a reader of secrets of the heart, and confesses Him (ver. 49) as Son of God and King of Israel, etc.

When, the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples, and looked on Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The Lord laid hold of the two men's hearts by that word, and they followed Him. He turns round after a little, as if He were ignorant, and asks them, "What seek ye?" "Master (they reply) where dwellest Thou?" With what grace, when we think of who He was, and how attachment to His person and occupation with Himself is the very highest blessing and glory of a man - does He reply; "Come and see." What is there to a mere human mind in air this, save the strangeness of a man supposing that two men following Him must mean something and that something He would grant. But oh, when the heart knows Him, and has known a drawing after Him, the whole scene is radiant with light, and full of happy experimental reminiscences. And they came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day; for it was the tenth hour. The watchfulness of His love, the sensitiveness of His kindness, the quietness of His courtesy, and the openness of His hospitality, as a man toward these poor disciples of John, are all quite exquisite. Who would shrink from - who but be attracted by such a lovely gracious bearing of the Lamb of God toward poor sinners!

One of the two, Andrew, was not at all for keeping the good news secret-there is an impulsive power in joy - he goes and finds his brother Simon, and tells him what had struck his own heart the while. We have found the Messias! And he brings Simon to Jesus.

The Lord knew all about Simon, what he was to be, and what his character was; and it is remarkable how, in this first interview He takes up the conversation and reads Peter to himself. "When Jesus saw him, he said, Thou art Cephas, which, is by interpretation, a stone." Truly, if Simon had a future spread before him, such as he knew not of, and had a character such as he had but little measured, he had now met a master who was beforehand in everything and knew times, and seasons, and persons for to-morrow, better than we know ourselves of yesterday. He gives in divine title, to a stranger too, a new name here.

Next we find Him taking, even yet more decidedly, the initiative, and showing His authority. Meeting a fellow-citizen of Andrew and Simon, viz., Philip, He calmly says, "Follow me." Philip is His servant and the servant of His work at once. The claim of the Lord to be obeyed formed itself in Philip's mind differently from what it had in others-each heart is, drawn in a way peculiar to itself-to him this was the thought, "We have found Him, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." So Philip tells his joy forth (ver. 45) to Nathanael. But Philip had been Jesus- and heard His word, and Nathanael had not. Those that had seen and heard, and felt the drawing power of a living Jesus, found no blot to take notice of in His being of Nazareth. Not so Nathanael, to whom Philip told of his rich discovery. Nathanael was a good man, and a thoughtful-but when mentality is in sway and the heart not yet kindled by a personal knowledge of the Lord, this was felt as a difficulty, and a great one too. "Can there any

good thing come out of Nazareth?" saith he. One can sympathize with his difficulty. What! the Hope of Israel -the King of Israel be a Nazarene! And how blessedly too, can one's heart go along with Philip in his answer. Having seen and tasted for himself of the indescribable beauty and blessedness of the power of the Lord, the question, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth-daunts him in no wise-the Lord Himself seems to rise before his mind, and He says simply "Come and see."

Jesus' conduct as to Nathanael is remarkable. Himself surely was drawing Nathanael into His net. He waits not to see what effect the sight of Himself will produce, but goes forward lovingly, and yet aggressively, to make the new comer conscious that he was not coming to judge for himself about Jesus, but to be judged by Jesus. And what a contrast between the graceless questioning of Nathanael, whether any good thing could come out of Nazareth, when Jesus Himself, come thence, was in question; and the Lord's abrupt, but most gracious, estimate of Nathanael pronounced about him as he approached and ere ever he had spoken: Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! If Nathanael had been merely a mentalist, this would have thrown him back upon himself; but he had a heart, and a heart that was right before God, uninstructed as it might be-a heart which pondered things in secret before God, and therefore not himself and the suitability or want of suitability to himself of the word of commendation given of himself by Jesus, ruled; but the strangeness of the secret power by which One seen for the first time professed to know all about him. "Whence knowest thou me?" is his reply. He was in light; and whence had this Stranger that light. Jesus answers his inquiry by another statement, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee" (48). What is there in this-in seeing a man under a tree and telling him of it-nothing at all. Ah, but when the Lord is at work, and conscience is alive, a little word that has nothing in it, is full of light and life. So was it in this case; and Nathanael answers, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel."

Jesus said unto him: "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (vers. 50, 51).

How perfect are all His ways! Those whom He sees exercised in secret before God-to them He reveals Himself as knowing them; as Son of God and as King of Israel; and as Himself able to connect these secret hidden exercises of their hearts before God, with entrance into and perception of the glories which heaven shall open upon and pour down on Him as Son of man-the center, end, and aim of all divine counsels.

This is the Man whom God delights to honor! Let the happy setting to of our concurrence, that He alone is worthy, be found in a hearty AMEN AND AMEN.

Jude

The Epistle of Jude develops the history of the apostasy of Christendom, from the earliest elements that crept into the Church to corrupt it, down to its judgment at the appearing of our Lord. A very short Epistle, and containing, instructions presented with much brevity, and with the energetic rapidity of the prophetic style, but of immense weight and extensive bearing.

The evil which had stolen in among Christians would not cease until destroyed by judgment.

We have already noticed this difference between the Epistle of Jude and the 2nd of Peter, that Peter speaks of sin, Jude of apostasy, the departure of the Church from its primitive state before God. Renunciation of the most holy faith is the subject which Jude treats. He does not speak of outward separation. He views Christians as a number of persons professing a religion on the earth, and originally true to that which they professed. Certain persons had crept in among them unawares. They fed themselves without fear at the love-feasts of the Christians; and although the Lord would come attended by all His saints, so that the faithful will have been already caught up, yet, in the judgment, these persons are still accounted to be in the same class, "to convince," he says, "all that are ungodly among them." They may, indeed, be in open rebellion at the moment of judgment, but they were individuals who had once formed a part of the company of Christians; they were apostates. When it is said, "These be they who separate themselves," it does not mean openly from the visible Church, but they set themselves apart, being in it, as more excellent than others, like the Pharisees among the Jews. Jude points them out as being in the midst of the Christians, and presenting themselves as such. The judgment falls upon this class of persons; the taking up of the Church has left them behind for judgment.

Jude begins by declaring the faithfulness of God, and the character of His care for the saints, which answers to the prayer of Jesus in John 17 They were called ones, sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ. Happy testimony! which magnifies the grace of God. "Holy Father," our Lord said, "keep them;" and these were sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ. The Apostle speaks with a view to the forsaking by many of the holy faith; he addresses those who were kept.

He had purposed writing to them of the salvation common to all Christians, but he found it needful to exhort them to stand fast, to contend for the faith once given to the saints. For already was that faith being corrupted, by the denial of the rights of Christ to be Lord and Master. And thus, also, by giving the reins to self-will, they abused grace, and turned it into a principle of dissoluteness. These are the two elements of the evil which the instruments of Satan introduced; the rejection of the authority of Christ (not His name), and the abuse of grace, in order to indulge their own lusts. In both cases it was the will of man which they set free from everything that bridled it. The expression "Lord God" points out this character of God. "Lord," here, is not the word generally used: it is "despotees," that is "master."

Having pointed out the evil which had secretly crept in, the Epistle goes on to show them that the judgment of God is executed upon those who do not walk according to the position in which God had originally placed them.

The evil was not only that certain men had crept in among them -in itself an immense evil, because the action of the Holy Ghost is thereby hindered among Christians -but that, definitively, the entire testimony before God, the vessel which held this testimony, would become (as had been already the case with the Jews,) corrupt to such a degree that it would bring down upon itself the judgment of God. And so it has been.

This is the great principle of the downfall of the testimony established by God in the world, by means of the corruption of the vessel which contains it, and which bears its name. In pointing out moral corruption as characterizing the state of professors, Jude cites, as examples of this downfall and of its judgment, the case of Israel, who fell in the wilderness (with the exception of two, Joshua and Caleb), and that of the angels who, not having kept their first estate, are reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

This last example suggests to him another case, that of Sodom and Gomorrah, which presents immorality and corruption as the cause of judgment. Their condition is a perpetual testimony here on earth to their judgment.

These men are but dreamers, for the truth is not in them. The two principles which we have noticed are developed in them, filthiness of the flesh, and contempt for authority. The latter manifests itself in a second form; namely, the license of the tongue, the self-will that manifests itself by speaking evil of dignities. Whereas the text says, the Archangel Michael durst not rail, even against the devil, but, with the gravity of one who acts according to God, appealed to the judgment of God Himself.

Jude then sums up the three kinds or characters of the evil and of estrangement from God: - First. That of nature, the opposition of the flesh to the testimony of God and to His true people; the impetus which this enmity gives to the will of the flesh. In the second place, ecclesiastical evil, teaching error for reward; knowing all the while that it is contrary to the truth, and against the people of God. Thirdly, open opposition, rebellion against the authority of God, in His true King and Priest.

At the time when Jude wrote his Epistle, those persons whom Satan introduced into the Church, in order to stifle its spiritual life, and bring on the result which the Spirit views prophetically, were dwelling in the midst of the saints, took part in those pious feasts at which they gathered together, in token of their brotherly love. They were "spots" in those "feasts of charity," feeding without fear in the pastures of the faithful. The Holy Ghost denounces them energetically. They were doubly dead- by nature and by their apostasy; without fruit; bearing fruit that perished, as out of season; plucked up by the roots; foaming out everywhere their own shame; wandering stars, reserved for darkness. Of old, the Spirit had announced, by the mouth of Enoch, the judgment that should be executed upon them. This presents a very important aspect of the instruction here given, namely, that the evil which had crept in among the Christians would continue, and still be found when the Lord should return for judgment. He would come with the myriads of His saints to execute judgment upon all the ungodly among them, for their acts of iniquity, and their ungodly words

which they have spoken against Him.

It is quite remarkable to see the inspired writer identifying the favorers of licentiousness with the rebels who will be the object of judgment in the last day. It is the same spirit, the same work of the enemy, although restrained for the moment, which will ripen for the judgment of God. Alas, for the Church! It is, however, but the universal progression of man. Only that grace having fully revealed God, and delivered from the law, there must now be, either holiness of heart and soul, and the delights of obedience under the perfect law of liberty, or else, license and open rebellion. In this, the proverb is true, that the corruption of that which is the most excellent is the worst of corruptions. We must add here, that the admiration of men, in order to gain advantage by them, is another characteristic feature of these apostates. It is not to God that they look.

Now, the apostles had already warned the saints that these mockers would come, walking after their own lusts, exalting themselves, not having the Spirit, but being in the state of nature.

Practical exhortation follows, for those who were preserved. According to the energy of spiritual life, and the power of the Spirit of God, they were by grace to build themselves up, and keep themselves in the communion of God. The faith is, to the believer, a most holy faith; he loves it because it is so, it put him into relationship and communion with God Himself. That which he has to do in the painful circumstances of which the apostle speaks, (whatever may be the measure of their development), is to build himself up in this most holy faith. He cultivates communion with God, and profits, through grace, by the revelations of His love. The Christian has his own proper sphere of thought, in which he hides himself from the evils that surround him, and grows in the knowledge of God, from whom nothing can separate him. His own portion is always the more evident to him, the more the evil increases. His communion with God is in the Holy Ghost, in whose power he prays, and who is the link between God and his soul; and his prayers are according to the intimacy of this relationship, and animated by the intelligence and energy of the Spirit of God. Thus they kept themselves in the consciousness; the communion, and the enjoyment of the love of God. They abode in His love while sojourning here below, but, as their end, they were waiting for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. In effect, when one sees what are the fruits of the heart of man, one feels that it must be His mercy which presents us without spot before His face, in that day, for eternal life with a God of holiness. No doubt it is His unchangeable faithfulness,-but, in the presence of so much evil, one thinks rather of the mercy. Compare, in the same circumstance, what Paul says, 2 Tim. 1:16. It is mercy which has made the difference between those that fall and those that stand. Compare Ex. 33:19. We must also distinguish between those who are led away. There are some who are only drawn aside by others; others in whom the lusts of a corrupt heart are working; and, where we see the latter, we must manifest hatred to everything that testifies this corruption, as to a thing that is unbearable.

The Spirit of God in this Epistle does not bring forward the efficacy of Redemption. He is occupied with the crafty devices of the enemy, with his efforts to connect the actings of the human will with the profession of the grace of God, and thus to bring about the corruption of the Church, and the downfall of Christians, by putting them on the road to apostasy and judgment. Confidence is in God; to Him the sacred writer addresses himself in closing his Epistle, as he thinks of the faithful to whom he was writing. Unto Him, he says, who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us, unspotted, before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy.

It is important to observe the way in which the Spirit of God speaks, in the Epistles, of a power that can keep us from every fall, and unblameable; so that a thought only of sin is never excusable. It is not that the flesh is not in us, but that, with the Holy Ghost acting in the new man, it is never necessary that the flesh should act, or influence our life. (Compare 1 Thess. 5:22.) We are united to Jesus, He represents us before God, He is our righteousness. But at the same time, He who, in His perfection, is our righteousness, is also our life, so that the Spirit aims at the manifestation of this same perfection, practical perfection, in the daily life. "He who says, I abide in Him, ought to walk as he walked." The Lord also says, "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

There is progress in this. It is Christ risen, who is the source of this life in us, which ascends again towards its source, and which views the risen Christ, to whom we shall be conformed in glory as its end and aim (see Phil. 3). But the effect of this is, that we have no other aim: "this one thing I do." Thus, whatever may be the degree of realization, the motive is always perfect. The flesh does not come in at all as a motive, and, in this sense, we are blameless.

The Spirit, then -since Christ, who is our righteousness, is our life- links our life to the final result of an unblameable condition before God. The conscience knows, by grace, that absolute perfection is ours, because Christ is our righteousness; but the soul which rejoices in this before God, is conscious of union with Him, and seeks the realization of that perfection, according to the power of the, Spirit, by whom we are thus united to the Head.

To Him who can accomplish this, preserving us from every kind of fall, our Epistle ascribes all glory and dominion, throughout all ages.

Law

My Dear Brother, -I am not sorry to know with some distinctness what the views of those who maintain the law to be the Christian's rule of life are; and what the arguments by which they maintain their opinions. I desire, but without controversy, to consider the subject, which is really an important one, as calmly as I can. I Make allowance, or would endeavor to do so, for theological habits of mind. Taught exclusively by scripture myself, a multitude of expressions which are never found there appear strange to me, while they are at the base of the habits of thought of those whose views I have here to consider. Thus, "the moral law," "Christ's righteousness," and the like which lie at the heart of the subject, are never found in Scripture. But we must make allowance for these theological habits and expressions, see how far they are scriptural in substance, and hold fast the substance while preferring, as surely clearer and more excellent, scriptural forms of expression. I have no doubt that unscriptural expressions are the fruit of and lead to unscriptural habits of mind; on the other hand, it is not good to jeopardize substantial truths by making war on words which express them. The word "Trinity" is not found in Scripture; the expression "justified by faith only" is not found in Scripture. Yet I need not justify them to you as human expressions of essentially fundamental truths. I have no better words, and I use what I find commonly used, to express what I believe in my inmost soul; and I would not shake the faith of those who hold fast the truth expressed in these words, to quarrel with the words by which thousands of saints have expressed it before me. So with the word "Person" applied to the Godhead. It is not Scriptural; but I have no better word, for one who sends, is sent, comes, goes away, wills, distributes, and does distinctive acts.

The Father sends the Son, the Son does not send the Father. I doubt that anyone will give me a better word than that which has clothed the deep divinely given convictions of faith in saints for ages. If a person quarrels with the word always used to express a truth, without having a better, I dread a little his quarreling with the truth it conveys. I say this, that you may be assured, that I do not seek to unsettle any simple soul by captious difficulties about words, or by resistance to expressions formed in the schools. If a servant of God merely sought to insist on the danger of what is vulgarly called antinomianism, that is the wickedness of making liberty a cloak for maliciousness - and we know from Scripture, that flesh is perfectly capable of doing so-certainly he would not have me for an adversary. If they called this the moral law, in urging godliness as the necessary fruit of a living faith, I might have regretted the vagueness of an unscriptural phraseology, -the want of spiritual point and power in not making Christ the substance of moral teaching, as of doctrinal, as the Scripture surely and blessedly does; but, in the root of the matter, I think I may say I should have cordially joined with what was intended. Such exhortations have their place and their necessity. That a Christian should walk according to the precepts of the New Testament, and all the divine light he can gather for his walk from the Old, be it the Ten Commandments or anything else, no consistent or right-minded Christian could for a moment deny. I could not own as being on Christian ground one who would. I may not be his judge, but I am bound to be so of the principles he professes. But I suppose such are rare if such are to be

found. At any rate he would receive no support from me or from you. I need hardly dwell on it otherwise than to reject it as utterly evil and Unchristian. It is one of the distinctive marks between heresy and any advance in true divine knowledge, that the latter always holds the moral foundation fast; the difference of right and wrong, immovable and fixed, as it is in the divine nature and revealed in the word. The Heretic slights or loses sight of it. This is remarkably shown in Rom. 2, ver. 6-10, found at the outset of an epistle where justification by faith and by grace is so largely, methodically, and blessedly insisted on. The Apostle does not stop to inquire there how the good is to be arrived at, or to weaken fundamental principles, by explanations to prove their consistency with other doctrines so as to enfeeble them. Other Scriptures may teach us this, and do, I doubt not clearly, and these we have to compare; but there is the great truth in all its immovable and unalterable firmness, founded in the nature of God and responsibility of man. The divine fines bonorum et malorum, if I may use a heathen expression in divine things, are not to be overpassed. I may see that, in myself, I must, in my state of nature, be condemned on this ground, and fly for refuge to the hope set before me, and find a life which does continue in well-doing, as is here demanded, and find righteousness in Christ, and know I can find them nowhere else; but immutable righteousness is there to make it necessary. I should find them, however unspeakably the grace and glory which I do find may be beyond the measure of the responsibility which has forced me to find them. These will never destroy nor enfeeble that. My objection to the way, in which the moral law is spoken of, where Christians are put under law, is not the maintenance of moral obligations. That is all right; but, that, by using the term moral law, and then referring to law as spoken of by the Apostle, the teaching of the Apostle is subverted and set aside, and that, in practically most important points. And as this will lead me to some very vital truths, I desire to take the question up, which for mere controversy's sake I should not. If I speak of moral law (which scripture does not), by the very expression I make it a fatal thing to be delivered from it. Yet Paul says, the Christian is delivered from the law. If I make of the law a moral law, including therein the precepts of the New Testament, and all morality in heart and life: to say a Christian is delivered from it, is nonsense or utterly monstrous wickedness. Certainly it is not Christianity. Conformity to the divine will, and that, as obedience to commandments, is alike the joy and the duty of the renewed mind. I say obedience to commandments.

Some are afraid of the word, as if it would weaken love and the idea of a new creation. Scripture is not. Obedience and keeping the commandments of one we love, is the proof of that love, and the delight of the new nature. Did I do all right and not do it in obedience, I should do nothing right, because my true relationship and heart-reference to God would be left out. This is love, that we keep His commandments. We are sanctified to the obedience of Christ. Christ Himself says, "The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me; but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment so I do." His highest act of love is his highest act of obedience.

But this it is that just makes it so mischievous to put the Christian under the law, and change, the scripture phraseology to another, and speak of the moral law being given as a rule of life; and, having no passage in which "moral law" is used, quoting Paul's statements as to "law," from which he says, and insists on it as one of the chief topics of his teaching, we are delivered. Not merely that we are not justified by its works (yet we should be if the moral law were kept, and so he declares, "the doers of the law shall be justified;") but that we are delivered from it. A Christian is

delivered from it, because it is ruinous in its effect, whenever applied to men who are fallen. Not clearly the ceremonial law: that he could fulfill, however burdensome-it might be. It is the moral law which is ruinous in its effect to every fallen son of Adam. Is it morality that is ruinous, or obedience to Christ's precepts? That were a blasphemy to say, and shocking to every Christian mind. But it is of law, the Apostle declares, what was ordained to life he found to be to, death, Rom. 7 It is a ministration of death, and ministration of condemnation, 2 Cor. 3:7-9. As many as are of its works-on the principle of it-its works are not bad ones-are under a curse, Gal. 3:10. That is, law means, in the Apostle's teaching, something else than a rule or measure of conduct. It is a principle of dealing with men which necessarily destroys and condemns them. This is the way the Spirit of God uses law in contrast with Christ, and never in Christian teaching puts men under it; but carefully skews how they are delivered from it, are no Longer under it., Nor does Scripture ever think of saying, You are not under the law in one way, but you: are in another; you are no-t-for justification, but you are as a rule of life. It declares you are not under law, but under grace. And if you are under law, you are condemned and under a curse; it must have its own proper force and effect. Remark, it puts it as a principle contrasted with grace. But will a man say: You wrong us in saying we hold that a Christian is under law. I ask how is that obligatory which a man is not under - from which he is delivered? No; the Apostle carefully insists that the law is good, that it is not the fault of the law that we are condemned, if we have to say to it, but he as carefully declares we are if we have; and that, in fact, we are delivered from it. That if led of the Spirit we are not under law. He uses it to express a principle, a manner of dealing on the part of God contrasted with grace. That is the way he speaks of law. I repeat it, scripture speaks elaborately of being delivered from the law as ministering death and a curse, declaring that we are not under it. Use the term moral law, and say so, and see where you bring us. But, that this may be before our eyes, I will quote some Scriptures that we may see that this is no light subject, nor strained assertion,-" As many as are of the works of the law are under a curse." "The law entered that the offense might abound." Mark the word entered (παρεισηλθε). It was a principle, a system, a way of dealing that came in. "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under the law but under grace." "The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law." "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Is the Apostle speaking of the ceremonial law? Far from it; he is speaking of the law in its moral nature and essence. He says, I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet (lust). And when he had said that sin should not have dominion over us, because we are not under the law, he immediately adds: What, then, shall we sin, because we are not under law but under grace? Showing that the introduction of the notion of the ceremonial law has no place at all here. Nor is it justification he is speaking of here, but serving sin or the contrary. No. He treats the whole question of law in a way totally different, and contrary to that in which it is treated in much evangelical teaching. I continue, "Sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." "Sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." Is this ceremonial law? It is a principle on which God placed man "four hundred and thirty years after the promise," which "was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made." But now the seed is come to whom the promise was made, and "now we are delivered from the law." What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God has done in another way. How we are delivered from the law, so as not to allow sin, I shall speak of just now. I am now showing that Scripture treats the question of law in, another way

from that I am here examining. Before faith came we were kept under the law. But after that faith came we were no longer under the Schoolmaster. If the inheritance be of the law it is no more of promise, but God gave it unto Abraham by promise. The law was added. Further, if there had been a law given which could have given life, righteousness should have "been by the law. But the Scripture has concluded all under sin." "I, through law," says the Apostle, "am dead to law, that I might live to God." "If I am led of the Spirit I am not under law." "Ye are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye might be married to another." "It is the ministration of death written and engraven in stones." How is it possible, if law could be used as the moral law, by which a Christian is bound, that the Apostle should say, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ." It would be, as Paul says, making Christ the minister of sin. Let it not be attempted to be said, Oh, but He is speaking of justification by works of law. He is doing nothing of the kind. His words are -Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that ye might bring forth fruit unto God. Being dead to the law is, the way to bring forth fruit. So in Gal. 1, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. If I would bring forth fruit and live to God, I must be dead to law. Law is a principle on which we cannot live to God any more than we can be justified. No doubt we cannot be justified by works of law, but there is much more than that. It condemns us positively if we are under it. It "works wrath." It cannot give life, but that is not all. It is a ministration of death-is found to be unto death. It is "the strength of sin." By it, as an occasion, sin works in us all manner of concupiscence - bringing forth fruit unto death. The motions of sin are by the law. It makes sin exceeding sinful. Is all this Scripture or is it not? Will it be said that this was the effect of law, out of and before Christ? Let the reader remember that the Apostle is writing to Christians, and reasoning against a tendency and an effort which beset Christians everywhere to bring in the obligation of the law after Christ. And he chews the working of the law, for any that took it up to bring its obligations upon them when they were Christians, and declared that he who had been under law was delivered from it, and that it was a Schoolmaster up to faith; but that when faith came men were no longer under it. The subject he is everywhere treating is law in its nature, or specifically an attempt to place men under its obligation after they had received the faith. Law has its own proper effect. This leads me to the text constantly quoted: "Yea, we establish the law." And here I would pray you to weigh what I say. I declare, according to Scripture, that law must always have its effect as declared in the word of God, always necessarily upon whoever is under it; but that that effect is always, according to Scripture, condemnation and death, and nothing else upon a being who has in him a lust or a fault. That it knows no mercy; but that it pronounces a curse upon every one who does not continue in all things written in it; and that whosoever is of the works of the law is under a curse. Now, in fact, the Christian has sin in him as a human being, and alas! fails; and if law applies to him he is under the curse, for it brings a curse on every one who sins. Do I enfeeble its authority? I maintain it, and establish it in the fullest way. I say, Have you to say to the law? Then you are under a curse. No escaping, no exemption. Its authority and claim must be maintained. Its righteous exactions made good. Have you failed? Yes, you have. You are under the curse. No, you say, but I am a Christian, the law is still binding upon me, but I am not under a curse. Has not the law pronounced a curse on one who fails? Yes. You are under it. You have failed, and are not cursed after all! Its authority is not maintained. For you are under it; it has cursed you, and, you are not cursed. If you had said, I was under it and failed, and Christ died and bore its curse; and now, as redeemed, I am on another footing and not under law, but under grace,

its authority is-maintained. But if you are put back again under law, after Christ has died and risen again, and you are in Christ and you fail and come under no curse, its authority is destroyed; for it pronounces a curse, and you are not cursed at all. The man who puts a Christian under law destroys the authority of the law, or puts the Christian under the curse, for in many things we all offend. He fancies he establishes law. He destroys its authority. He only establishes the full immutable authority of law, who declares that a Christian is not under it at all; and therefore, cannot be cursed by its just and holy curse. What the measure of Christian conduct is, I shall show from Scripture before I close. I only remark now, that, in point of fact, what we specially need, is not the rule. of right and wrong, though that be most useful and necessary and in its place, but motive and power for our new nature. The law gives neither. The Scripture declares, it is an occasion for sins working concupiscence in me, that the motions of sin are by it, that it is the strength of sin, and that sin shall not have dominion over me, because I am not under it but under grace. Let a bowl lie reversed on the table. Who thinks of it? Say: 'no one is to know what is under it'. Who is not wishing to know? The law is the occasion to lust. If we only remember that the Apostle is speaking of law, is speaking of its effect on every one that is under it, and particularly on Christians putting themselves under it, after they are Christians, and not merely (though he does that fully) of being justified by it, but of its own proper and necessary effect in all cases, and the question, if Scripture be an authority, is soon decided. How then is a conscientious man delivered from the law without any allowance of sin. First, they that sin without law shall perish without law, so that he is none the better for setting aside the law in order to sin with impunity. Secondly, the law is no help against sin. Sin has not dominion over us, according to the Apostle, because we are not under law but under grace. What then does deliver from sin and law? It is death, and then newness of life in resurrection. We are in Christ not in Adam. Let us first see the legitimate effect of law, for it is good if a man use it lawfully. It condemns sins, but known in its spiritual power, it does more. It condemns sin. It first condemns all transgressions of its own commandments. Here, as to outward conduct, a man, as St. Paul, may escape its fangs in the conscience. But, known spiritually, it condemns lust. But lusts I have. Yet I see the law is right. I am self-condemned. It judges the working of my nature in lust, but gives no new one. It condemns my will, claiming absolute obedience as due to God; and, if my will be right, I discover that under law I have no power. How to accomplish that which is good I find not. Acts, lusts, will; all I am morally is judged and condemned to death, and I have no force to accomplish what is good. Such is the effect of the law on one when it does take effect in the conscience. It kills me. I have, as to my conscience, died before God under it. But, then, law applies to man as a child of Adam living in flesh. It condemns and brings death into me in this way, because I am such. As such I have died under it; but, then, that to which it applied is dead under it, and it applies no more. A man is put in jail for thieving or murder; he dies there, the law can do no more, the life it dealt with is gone. I, through law, am dead to law, that I might live to God. As regards my conscience before God, it has killed me. It can do no more. But there is more than this, because I got at the intelligence of all this by faith, by being a Christian, and could not else thus see or reason on it. Hence I am dead to the law by the body of Christ. The death it sentenced me to in my conscience has fallen on another. I have died in Him, in Christ. The sin has been thus put away from my conscience. Had this come upon me, it would have been everlasting misery. But, Christ having put Himself in this place, it is everlasting love; and I have a right to reckon myself dead, because Christ is, and I have really received Him into my heart as life; and he is really my life, who died for me and rose again. I am alive by the life

of him who is a life-giving spirit; and hence have the right, and am bound to account myself dead since He in whom I live did die. On this, the Apostle founds all his reasonings and exhortations, as to sin and the law. He looks at the Christian as dead and risen again, because his true life, his "I," the life he has got, and in which he lives as a Christian is Christ who has died and is alive again. After saying, "I, through law, am dead to law," he adds: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "If you have died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living (alive) in the world, are ye subject to ordinances"... "for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Let us see how he applies this doctrine to sin and the law. In Rom. 5 he had applied the resurrection to justification. Christ (4:25) was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. It is justification of life; not merely the putting away of sins, but the putting us in a quite new accepted place before God. This connection of life, the power of life in Christ, and justification in him that is risen after dying for us, is it (and not the law) which, in the Apostle's doctrine, assured also godliness, 6:2. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" We cannot if we are dead to it. But such is our place in Christ, dead and risen, and that a real thing, by having a wholly new life in Christ who is our life. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin." Then he shows how Christ died and is risen again and lives to God, and adds, "Reckon ye yourselves likewise to be dead, indeed unto sin and alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." "Let not sin therefore reign," he continues, "in your mortal bodies," adding what I have already quoted. "For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace." He then refers to the abuse the flesh would make of this; but, instead of insisting that the moral law was binding, shows them to be freed from sin, and servants to righteousness and to God, yielding their members servants to righteousness unto holiness. Thus, by being dead and alive in the life of Christ, are we freed from sin. In chap 7, he applies the same truth more elaborately to the law. You cannot, he insists, have two husbands at the same time. You cannot be under obligation to Christ and the law. Well, how is freedom to be obtained for the man under the law? He dies in that in which he was held. The law could only assert its claim on the man as a living child of Adam. The "law has power over a man as long as he lives;" but I am dead to law by the body of Christ; the bond to the law has absolutely, wholly, and necessarily ceased, for the person is dead; and the law had power over him only as long as he lived. Hence he says, in such strong and simple language, When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law. The law applies to man in the flesh; but we have died, we are not in the flesh. When we were, it applied. It applied to flesh, provoked the sin, and condemned the sinner. But he died under it, when he was under it - died under it in Christ, and lives delivered from it in a new life, which is Christ risen out of the reach and place of law. He is not tied to the old husband; death has severed the bond, his own death and crucifixion in Christ; for he has owned that that was his affair as a sinner. He is married to another -Christ, who is risen from the dead, that he may bring forth fruit to God. He is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of Christ dwell-in him. If not, he is none of His. You will say, Yes; but the flesh is still there, though he has a right and ought to reckon himself dead; and, therefore, he needs the law, not to put away sin, but that it may not have dominion. But I read, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because you are not under law." When I was in the flesh, the law was the occasion of the working of sin in my members have died in that, and the law cannot pass death. Godliness is in the new life, which lives by the faith of the Son of God. It is death -conscious death -in Christ, and my being in Him, so

that I am no longer in the flesh at all, but have Him for my life, which is the scriptural way of godliness - righteousness, with its fruit unto holiness not the being under the law. Living in a risen Christ, as one who has been taken out of the reach of law by death. That is Christian life. The measure of that walk is Christ, and nothing else. He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk as He walked. Let us consult Scripture as to this point - the Scripture rule of life. I have given it. We ought so to walk as Christ walked. Again, it is written - "He has left us an example, that we should follow His steps." He is life, motive, and example too; He lives in us, and the life which we live in the flesh we live by the faith of Him. He has trod the path before us. He is all, and in all. It is as beholding in His face unveiled the glory of the Lord (2 Cor. 3), we are changed into the same image from glory to glory; and thus, He being engraved on the heart by the Spirit of the living God, we become the epistle of Christ (2 Cor. 3). And mark, it is there in contrast with the law on the tables of stone. We are to put on Christ, to put on the new man. This goes so far that it is said, 1 John 3, "Hereby perceive we love, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." The law knew no such principle, no such obligation as this. Was it the law made Christ come and lay down His life for us? Does not this example show the extreme poverty of the thought, that the law is the rule or measure of our conduct. The truth is this, there were two parts of Christ's life. Man's obedience to God's will, nay; to the law if you will; for he came under the law. But there was another, the manifestation of God Himself in grace and graciousness. This is not law. It is God in goodness, not man in responsibility. It is mischievous to confound the two. Will any one say, But we are not called upon, and cannot be, to follow Christ in the latter? I reply, We are expressly called upon to do so, and never to follow Him under law. What Scripture says on this last point is, that if I love my neighbor as myself, I shall fulfill the law, so that I have no need to be under it. And again, that in walking after the Spirit the righteousness of the law will be fulfilled in me, and produce what the law could not do, because it was weak through the flesh. The Spirit will produce fruits against which there is no law. It is a new nature, guided by the Spirit and formed by the word, growing up to the head in all things which walks worthy of the Lord. The commands of law do not produce this; but looking through grace at Christ does change us into the swine image,, But in this path of Christ manifesting God, He is expressly set before us as our example. "Be ye followers [imitators] of God as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ has loved us, and given Himself for us as a sacrifice and an offering to God of a sweet smelling savor." We are called upon 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, not according to law. We are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us. See this character described. "Put on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." If any one desire to have a complete exhibition of Christian life, the life of Christ risen, in us, let him read Col. 3:1-17.

I believe I have said enough and-quoted enough to show the mind of Scripture on the point that engages us-What its views of law and its operation and effect is, and what the Christian rule of life is, too, as one who has died and is associated with Christ risen, and who lives through Him. Law is, the measure of man's responsibility as such to God. It is perfect as such and no more, and could not have been more than the measure of man's walk. Christ was perfect in this as in everything; but He went further, and displayed God Himself in His own sovereign grace and goodness, and we ought to follow Him here, as in His perfect obedience to God. He, and He

alone, is our pattern and example, and nothing else. He is the object for the heart to rest on and is to govern it, and which it is to grow like, and nothing else. He is the motive and spring of conduct in us, as well as its perfect model, which the law cannot be; for it is not life, nor gives it, nor feeds it. But there are other points connected with this subject as to which a great deal of the evangelical teaching seems to me unsustained by Scripture, and not according to its teaching, all on material practical points. And, first, as to the essential oneness of the Church in all ages, and under all dispensations. That a sinner at all times since the fall is saved in the same way, no Christian can doubt for a moment. But salvation is not the Church, nor the Church salvation. If it be said, Must not a man belong to the Church of God now to be saved? I say, Surely. That is, if he is saved he does belong to it, because that is God's divine order; but what saves him is Christ, not the Church. Christ saved a Jew, who was saved; but he belonged to Israel as the order of God at that time, not to the Church; and the Jewish Church, as men speak, is an utterly unscriptural idea. So far as an individual was saved, he was always saved by Christ; but that did not constitute the assembly. There never was a Jewish Church. There was a Jewish nation, and to that the man, called by grace as a Jew, belonged by faith, and was bound to adhere. Now, he is not; because in the Church there is neither Jew nor Greek. A man was a Jew by birth, and a Jew in orderly fellowship when circumcised. The Church, even in its outward profession, stands by faith - is never composed of natural branches. The Jews were natural branches. They did not, in their divinely ordained place as Jews, stand by faith. A Jewish Church is an unscriptural fallacy, Christ gave Himself for the nation, but not for that nation only, but to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad. That formed the Church; the church or assembly is the gathering together of "such as should be saved." This was never done in Judaism. The unity was a national unity, and no other. They were a holy people in their calling. When Christianity was founded, the Lord added to the Church such as should be saved. He never did this before. That was the Church, God's assembly in the world. If before that a Jew came to believe, he was added to nothing; he was a godly Jew, instead of an ungodly one; he belonged to what he belonged before. There was nothing to be added to. By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. But the baptism of the Holy Ghost is positively asserted to be after Christ's ascension; in a word, the Day of Pentecost. The Church invisible is no scriptural or tangible idea. It is an invention, particularly of St. Augustine, to conciliate the awful iniquity of the professing Church with the truth and godliness necessary to the true Christian. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Ye are the light of the world. What is the value of an invisible light? A Church under a bushel? There is no community in the invisible Church. That the Church is become invisible. I admit fully; but I admit it, as the fruit of man's sin. But this has no application to Judaism. There the nation - the children of Jacob - were the public visible body, and meant by God to be so; and individual saints' were never otherwise gathered. In Christianity they were. He gave Himself to gather into one the children of God who were scattered abroad. If they were gathered before as a Church - an assembly, how could He gather what was scattered abroad? Christ gave Himself to gather together the children of God which were scattered. They were children of God, but were - not a Church, an assembly. They were scattered, and Christ came to introduce another state of things. If they were a Church gathered before, how did Christ come to gather the scattered? If it means that He was to save in one body at the end of time all the redeemed, they were never scattered. But the nation here is contrasted with the scattered children of God, and Christ came to change this state of things to gather the scattered children of God; that is, to found the Church, or assembly. Therefore He says, "On this rock" - the confession that He

was the Son of the living God - "I will build my Church." Had He been doing it before when it was not, and could not be confessed that Jesus was the Son of the living God? Both Christ and the apostles speak of the Church and the gathering the children of God as a distinct and newly-introduced thing. All the reasoning relative to a Jewish Church conies from Judaizing Christianity, or rests on the utterly fallacious idea, that because men are saved in the same way, that, therefore, they form a visible community, and even the same community. Why so? Men could be saved without forming a community. Individuality is quite as important as community; nay, more so in divine things. Conscience and faith are both individual; son-ship is individual. The Jews were. a community, but not of saved persons, but a national community of the sons of Jacob. The Church is a community, but not in any way of the same kind, be it profession or reality; it stands by faith. Individual salvation does not affirm the existence of a community, and there may be a religious community which does not imply salvation. The Jewish nation was such. The whole theory on which the idea of a Church in all ages and dispensations rests is utterly false. Facts fail equally. Up to the time of the Jewish nation, there was no community of persons making a credible profession: Abel offers his sacrifice in faith, but there is no community of those who make a credible profession; nor in Enoch, nor in the case of Noah. It is all a; dream, the idea of a visible community before the flood. When I turn to the time after it, I find Job alone, and no visible community whatever; and of Abraham it is carefully stated, "I called Abraham alone, and blessed him" (Isa. 51:2). The point there urged being that lie was alone, and that numbers were not necessary for blessing. When I come to the first religious community, I find it founded on a wholly different principle than a credible profession of faith. A man was of it by birth before 'he could make any profession. He was of it, ipso facto, and could not be anything else, only his parents were bound to circumcise him the eighth day. The principle on which the visible Church stands is faith (Rom. 11). The principle on which Judaism stood was birthright, though not such as to destroy God's sovereign rights. If Scripture be true, though salvation was always the same, the Church, or community, or unity of the body of believers, never existed till Pentecost. Nor did its Head, in that condition in which He could be its Head, i.e., the exalted Man, who had accomplished redemption. When thus exalted, God gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all (Eph. 1:20-23) He has made of twain one new man builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:14-22). God dwelt in the nation of Israel in the temple of old. He did dwell, through the Spirit, in a habitation formed as a new man from Jew and Gentile by faith, and that only is the Church; a mystery which, from the beginning of the world, had been hid in God, to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3). The heavenly powers, at any rate, could not see it, visible or invisible: It was (Rom. 16) kept secret since the world began-was not made known nor revealed to the sons of men before. Men were not builded together, for a habitation of God, through the Spirit. It was a mystery, hidden from ages and from generations: Did not exist in fact. It is founded on the breaking down the middle wall of partition, and having one new man; the old thing was founded on strictly maintaining the middle wall of partition, and having only the old man. If Scripture have any meaning, the Church did not exist till Pentecost, when Christ had been exalted, as Head over all, to the right hand of God, and sent down the Holy Ghost, to gather into one body on the ground of faith. All men are saved alike, but all men are not assembled alike. Now Church means assembly.

I now turn to the ground of a common justification giving a common place with Christ. It is alleged from Rom. 3:20, and affirmed, that the righteousness of Christ is the only ground of our justification. This is incorrect. The apostle has proved as a fact, that on their own ground all-Jew and Gentile-are under sin, and that no flesh is justified by deeds of law. But the righteousness of Christ is not spoken of at all, but that God hath set Him forth to be a propitiation (propitiatory).through faith in His blood, to declare His (God's) righteousness for the remission of sins, that are passed through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, His righteousness, that He (God) might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. That it is God's righteousness in justifying is declared positively, and that as distinguished from Christ, in ver. 21, 22. The righteousness of God is manifested, the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ towards all, and upon all them that believe. God was proved righteous, in forgiving Old Testament saints as to whom He had exercised forbearance; and this righteousness was now manifested for our souls to build on. Yea, we are it in Christ. To say that all saints from the fall are righteous in the same way, is scriptural - to say that they are all the Church, is contrary. to Scripture. God forbore with them, knowing what He would do; but righteousness was not manifested. Now at this time it is manifested, that God may be just, and the Justifier of him that believes on Jesus. The difference made by the manifestation of righteousness is a serious one as to our practical state.

I now turn to another point, that the same rule of conduct must be given of God at all times. It is a theory founded on a theory. No doubt God's nature is immutable, and certain principles are-immutably true in one who is a partaker of the divine nature; but to say that the law is this, or that the rule given to us to follow is the same, is false. This is the effect of an unscriptural use of the term, moral law. God did give another rule to His creatures for their obedience. Did He not give the Law of Moses? the only law, remark, He ever gave (save the prohibition to eat the forbidden fruit). That is, the only law God ever gave to His creatures for their 'obedience was another from the present rule of walk. It had commandments given, because of the hardness of their hearts, which Christ abrogated. "The law made nothing perfect" (Heb. 7:19); and, therefore, "there is a disannulling of the commandment going before." "It was said of so and so," says the Lord, "but I say unto you." To allege that it is impossible that a holy just, good, and perfect God can give us any rule but one, is contrary to the plain facts and declarations of Scripture. God did give another, which He has disannulled, because it made nothing perfect; and there is the bringing-in of a better hope, by the which we draw nigh to God. Christ knew how to draw out from the inner chambers of this law the two great principles on which all hung; and these do present the perfection of the creature supreme love to God, and loving our neighbor as one-self. But even this is not in any way "the transcript of the divine character;" and it is a mere fallacy to talk in an abstract way of love, as commanded in it. I deny altogether that the law is a transcript of the divine character. It is the absolutely perfect expression of what the creature ought to be; and that is evidently what ought to be given as a law to the creature. I believe the angels in heaven fulfill it, and are blessed and happy in fulfilling it: But because it is the perfection of a creature, it is not the transcript of the divine character. Can God -I would, speak with reverence- love His neighbor as Himself? or even, in the sense here used: rightly of a creature, Himself, with all His heart, and all His mind, and all His strength? These two commandments are the perfection of a creature in blessedness, and not the transcript of the character of God. The idea is fundamentally false. And further, it is not in this that the perfection of divine love is shown, or the nature of divine love, as commended in its own

excellency to us. The love required, commanded by the law is a duty flowing from the relationship in which the objects of love stand to us, and in virtue of which they have a claim upon our love-God supremely, and my neighbor as myself. It is the adequate measure of accomplishing a duty which is perfect happiness from an adequate motive. God's love, as specially known and commended to us, has its excellency therein, that there was no motive, no claim, no worthy object, but, on the contrary, an utterly unworthy object. He loved sinners; sent His Son, when we were dead in sin, that we might live through Him. Herein is love; not that we loved God - that is what law required - but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. In a word, God commendeth His love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Legal love is based, as law must be, on this, that there is a claim. Divine love, as revealed to us, has its essence in this, that there was none-yea, the very opposite to one. The only possible analogy to such love, and that it becomes us not to introduce in what we are speaking of here, is "the Father loveth the Son," or, "therefore cloth my Father love me;" but that is infinitely above all our place and thoughts; and if we are, in any sense, admitted into it, as, blessed be God, we are, it is only by sovereign grace, which has given us a place in Him and with Him. The law is not the transcript of the divine character. It is the perfect rule for a creature, and cannot, therefore, in the nature of things, apply to God Himself, because He is not in the relationship of a creature; and law is the expression of what becomes these relationships. If it is the expression of what we owe to God, it cannot be that of God's character. Adam was put under a law which required no knowledge in his mind of what 'was good and evil, or right and wrong in itself. There was no evil in eating the forbidden fruit, save as it was prohibited.

It was not good or evil in itself, he acquired the knowledge of good and evil by eating it; the introduction of sin and conscience came together. God did not allow man to go out as a sinner from Paradise, to commence this world, without carrying a conscience with him. It may have been corrupted, hardened; but it is there to be corrupted and hardened. Hence the apostle reasons as to the Gentiles on the ground of conscience, though not on that only; but he speaks of no law written on the Gentile's heart. If that were so, they would be under the New Covenant. It is not the law, but the particular works which. their natural conscience approves or reproves that is written on their hearts; a work found in the law too. It is often said that Adam was created in righteousness and holiness. This is all erroneous. He was created in innocence. It is the new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness, which we are, called to put on - Christ, not Adam (Eph. 4:24). It is wholly new- *κατ'νέον*, created. We are therein created again in Christ Jesus; at least, so Scripture says. So in Col. 3:10, "We put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." The common statements on this subject confound Christ and Adam-the new creation and the old. Adam was innocent, had not the knowledge of good and evil. As to this, the testimony of Scripture is positive; it is the essence of the history of the fall, hence could not have righteousness or holiness, which imply the knowledge of good and evil. If God declares "the man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil," he did not know good and evil before. Hence what is commonly stated is equally erroneous, namely, that Adam was righteous and, holy, made after the image of God in righteousness and holiness. By the fall, man acquired a knowledge of good and evil, which gives him -or rather, is a sense of right and wrong, suited to the state in which he the duties of various relationships in which he stands. These, in the main, the Mosaic law maintains, though not all in its details, according to God's original institution. From Adam to Moses, men were not placed under law, but they had the knowledge of good and evil- were a law thus to

themselves. But we must not confound this with a revealed or given law; because in a law revealed or given of God, there is the express authority of the Lawgiver; and the disobedient is guilty of express transgression of the Lawgiver's authority. Yet sin was there, from Adam to Moses, but not transgression; for where no law is there is no transgression. Hence it is said (referring to Hosea, where it is said of Israel, "They like men [Adam, in Hebrew] have transgressed the covenant") "Death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Israel had broken the law, as Adam had; and had not only sinned- done what their conscience condemned, but violated the authority of God exercised in imposing the law. But it is the greatest mistake, as to the reasoning of the apostle Paul, or the Christian's relationship to law, to make the difference which is attempted to be made between moral, and ceremonial, commandments. There is a difference assuredly. What natural conscience condemns as wrong makes guilt, if done without, a law; a ceremony does not, as is evident. But the apostle goes much deeper into the question, and shows the effect of all law as a principle of relationship, when a sinner is concerned in it. Hence he mingles up moral and ceremonial altogether, not as indifferent to the distinction, for he is not, but as treating another question. Using the law to convict of sin and kill the soul when it is looked at morally, and is known spiritually, and delivering from it as so known by death and resurrection; and showing that it puts man, if applied after redemption, under a fatal responsibility. It is a system, viewed as a whole, of which circumcision was the, initiatory pledge, and man must do all, or be cursed, for such were the terms of the law. Law, according to the reasoning of the apostles, was a distinct and definite dispensation of God, according to which life was promised consequent on obedience, and had its whole nature from this, a righteousness characterized by this principle; obedience first, then life, therein righteousness. The gospel goes on an opposite principle. It does not give life as a consequence of obedience; nor is righteousness obtained in this way, or on this principle - to bring it in after divine righteousness is made ours by faith, is to upset and annul divine righteousness. It is, as we have seen, bringing in the law after Christ that the apostle resists. It is not merely ceremonies he sets aside. Doubtless they fell as the shadow of good things to come, of which the body is Christ; but the apostle reasons" on the application or use of what is called the moral law, of the use of the ten commandments, or tables of stone, as being ruinous to the Christian - save to convict and condemn.. He sets aside the dispensation of the law, referring specifically to the ten commandments, and yet mixes up the whole system with them as inseparable as parts of one great whole, to the end of which: Israel could not look, and which was to be abolished. It was given to have life by, but was found, from man's sinful state, to be death. To put man under it after redemption is to destroy, not man, but redemption itself, and bring in final ruin. Hear now what he says, 2 Cor. 3 "But if the ministration of death, written and engraven on 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 that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." Besides the contrast of law and gospel, I have two things collaterally here: The separation of the tables of stone, the ten commandments, as a dealing of God, from all the rest. Moses gave is negated. The apostle speaks of the tables of stone as a ministration of death, and of the whole system received by Moses, and which the glory on his face" accompanied, as one whole; any distinction made between the first tables broken,

and the second placed in the ark is futile. It was when Moses came down the second time that his face shone, not the first. The first time Israel never got the tables of stone - that is, what is abolished, because it was deathful, is that which was put in the ark. Let the reader consult 2 Corinthians.

And the fact here referred to is one of no small importance. For though the apostle, distinctly refers to law, yet the ministration of grace does not help out the case, if man be put under law afterward. God had revealed grace (I do not say redemption) when Moses went up the second time, but put Israel back under law because Moses could not make atonement (see Ex. 32:32, 33). And it is this putting man under law after grace, when the law was in the ark, that the apostle says is condemnation and death. For Israel was only thus definitely put under law, gracious forbearance in sovereign mercy, and life consequent on obedience or blotting out of God's Book;-this was condemnation and death. Israel never received the tables the first time. They never came into the camp. After God had spoken to them out of the midst of the fire, Israel had made the golden calf; and Moses' face did not shine at all the first time he came down. Law after grace and provisional forgiveness is death and condemnation. As to gaining life by the law as put forth by Moses, the apostle says: "For Moses described the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth these things shall live by them" (Rom. 10) That is, Moses proposed righteousness and life by the law. Hence, in Rom. 7, the apostle says, in his experience, "The commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." The reader, also may consult Heb. 7, already quoted, and Heb. where the apostle insists on the disannulling the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof, and bringing nothing to perfection, "made nothing perfect:" that the first covenant, for covenant it was, of Sinai was not faultless, and hence a new one was to be made with Israel. No Christian supposes he is at liberty to kill or steal. That is not the question. But does he refrain from killing or stealing, because it is forbidden in the law. Every true Christian I am persuaded will answer, No; though he recognizes the prohibition as quite right. The man who refrained from killing, simply because it was forbidden in the law, would be, no Christian at all. I have only to add, that the apostles do not refer to the law as the great standard, nor do all the duties they enjoin form part or parcel of it; for they enjoin duties which flow from grace. And grace is not law. We must not, then, confound the law with-duties to God and our neighbor, imperfectly given in the law, and perfectly given in Christianity, along with the duties which the knowledge of God's love in Christ added to the others, the duty to be an imitator of God as manifested in grace in Christ. Being under the law gave sin dominion over me. The grace of God - is that law? - hath appeared, and teaches me to live soberly and righteously and godly. But that is just the reason why I do not want law, because I am better taught by grace, which gives me power as well as rule. Under grace we are taught of God to love one another in the very nature and spirit we have. Hence, loving my neighbor as myself, I fulfill the law, not by having it; but by having love wrought in me by grace, and not being under law. That the written word from one end to the other guides this new nature, and leads it in obedience that is blessedly true. That, when born of God, which I am not by the law, for a law cannot give life-that life is formed, directed, instructed, yea, commanded by every word that comes out of the mouth of God, and especially by those of Christ as the actual expression of that life in its own perfectness in man, I own with my whole heart. But that is not the law. It tells me I am risen with Christ, and that I am to seek those things which are above, where Christ sits; that I am an epistle of Christ, graven in my heart by the Spirit of the living God, in contrast with the law graven on tables of stone. But there is another

portion of Scripture which is relied on to put Christians under the law, I mean the sermon on the Mount, and in particular v. 17; but I apprehend the Lord's words are wholly misapprehended here. I do not believe the law or the law's authority is destroyed. I believe those who have sinned under it, will be judged by it. I believe it will be written in the heart of Judah and Israel hereafter under the new covenant, the substance of which we have in Spirit, though not in the letter. It will never pass till it be fulfilled. But Christ is the end of it -the τέλος the completion and end of it for every one that believes. We are, not under it, because we are dead and risen in and the law has dominion over, a man as long as he lives, applies to man in flesh, and we are not in flesh, but in the Spirit in Christ risen - "If ye be dead with Christ... why, as though living (alive) in the world," etc. says the apostle. In flesh a man must be under law (which is indeed death and the curse, because the flesh is sinful) or lawless, which is surely no better; but in Christ he is neither. He is led by the Spirit in the obedience of Christ. But we must remember that the kingdom of heaven was not come when the Sermon on the Mount was given. Redemption is not touched on in it. The kingdom of heaven was at hand...And here the Lord gives the character of those who would get in, in no wise of the revelation given to a Christian as in the Church. That this is not merely an idea of mine will be at once evident to the reader, if he continues the verse after those quoted, where the Lord gives the application of what he has been saying, "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom was going to be set up. It was neither for lawless ones nor Pharisees; but for the poor in spirit, and such like. But this is not the description of the state and responsibilities of those who are dead and risen in Christ. It is not the language of the gospel to a sinner to say, "Except your righteousness exceed, etc. you shall in no case enter"; though that remains always true in principle. Then it was the humble, godly, converted remnant who would enter; not the lawless, nor the proud. When the kingdom is set up, sovereign grace to sinners is preached. Yet it is certain, that he who really enters will have a practical godliness which is of the character here described, because he receives a new nature. And that the precepts here given will suit and guide him, because they suit Christ, and are his mind: but not as putting him under law. Hence, when it is said, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill," it is a false deduction to say, that I am come to call upon Christians to fulfill it. Christians are associated with Christ where He is now. The apostle's statement is, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. The law itself is not abrogated; but we are not under it. It is good if a man use it lawfully; but it is not made for the righteous, but for ungodly and profane. That is not for Christians, surely. Useful to convict of sin, to bring in death and condemnation on the sinner, to make the offense abound, and sin exceeding sinful. Christ is all for the believer; while every word of God is good, rightly- used. I have spoken of the seventh of Romans. The apostle is contrasting the Christian's state with that of a man under the law. I am carnal, sold under sin; never once doing the thing I would, always the thing I hate. To say "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not," is not the Christian state; or, is not the Christian state rather described when he says, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death?" The apostle is comparing the state under two husbands, the law and Christ; and the doctrinal statement is that, being dead by the body of Christ, we are delivered from the law, no longer bound by it. Subjection to the first husband is the experience, practically, of the seventh, though viewed from a higher point, when a man is out of it; the eighth, the experience of one who is married to Him who is risen from the dead to bring forth fruit unto God. Mind, I do not say the

seventh is not a converted man; but it is one who has yet to say, Who shall deliver me. The eighth is one delivered. In the seventh, consequently, the Spirit is not named; the eighth is full of it. To quote, under the law to Christ, is mere want of reference to the Greek. It is *εννομος Χριστω* duly subject to Christ. "Fulfill the law of Christ," is a plain appeal against the law. The Galatians would have the law after Christ; and the apostle would not hear of it; hardly knows whether he is to own them as Christians; will not salute one at the end, or at the beginning; is severer than with all the abominations at Corinth. They were, it seems, biting and devouring one another about it. And he says, "Bear rather one another's burdens." If you want a law that is Christ's; that's what he did; that will suit you better. It is exactly the contrary of the bringing them back to the law. The same neglect of the original has alone given occasion to making sin the transgression of the law. It is *ανομια* lawlessness, not *παρβασις νομου* transgression of the law. It is a defective, very defective, view of Christ indeed, to see only fulfillment of law in His walk. God's grace and man's obligations, as such, are not the same; nor was even the obedience of Christ limited to fulfilling the law. The law forbade sin; but could not command the Son of God to give Himself for sinners. This whole view of Christ's life is, it seems to me; an exceedingly low one. It is true that to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. But to say that following Christ, in laying down our lives for the brethren, is fulfilling the moral law, is an unscriptural and unhappy confusion of terms. It will be alleged that Psa. 119 speaks of the law in a general way (and I desire to weigh all Scripture, as far as I am able, for the good of our souls, and not merely reason as a controversialist), as to what may be expressed by the term moral law; and speaks of the saint's delight in it. This seems to me to be the strongest ground which can be taken. Psa. 19 also may be referred to. I apprehend that this is much more than the moral law being a rule of life. The whole power of the word of God is referred to in 19, as the means of conversion, giving light to the simple. It refers in some passages to the law written in the heart, the true desire of a godly Israelite; the promises are trusted in; the threatenings of, God's word, His judgments, looked at and counted on in the world; the Word, as furnishing an answer to the reproach of men,- it is looked at as quickening the soul. It is the Word of God - the confidence and guidance of the saint in Israel; not the rule of life of a saved Christian. What I would insist on, is not that the Word of God is not used by God now for every effect in the soul; but it is not as law. It is a different thing from the law being a rule of life. The Word of God is called law there.

This is plain if we look at Psa. 19, The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. It is quite evident that this speaks of the Word of God, as then known as the law in a much wider sense than a mere rule of life. So Christ says, "It is written in your law," whereas the passage quoted was in the prophets. It was the word of God known in its capital and characteristic designation. If an objector complain that I speak of the form and character of the word as then given to Israel (while admitting in the fullest way, yea, with the most earnest insistence, the divine inspiration and authority of all), I answer unhesitatingly, I do, looking to be guided by the Spirit, view it as adapted to Israel, because given to Israel; I must rightly divide the word of truth. And I think it very important we should so view it. Am I to say, "Of thy mercy, slay mine enemies." "Happy he that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." (Psa. 137:9.) "That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of enemies, the tongue of thy dogs in the same." (Psa. 68:23.) When the earthly government of God is executed, this has its place. I, a Christian, see, as a general truth, the righteousness of it; and as regards that government, when God's patience, as it will, has done everything, I can rejoice in wickedness being removed. Still, this language is not, nor is meant to be, the present language

of the Christian. Christ is presented in Psa. 69 as demanding the most dreadful vengeance and judgment on his enemies, vers. 22-28. Did He, when revealed in the gospels as a pattern for us according to grace, ever express such a wish. His words were at the very time the psalm speaks, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Is that, "pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold upon them." Both will be fulfilled. One is the gracious personal desire of Christ, as we know Him revealed in the gospels. And to this the Holy Ghost answers by Peter, "And, now, brethren, I wot that, through ignorance, ye did it, as did also your rulers. Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send Jesus," etc. And this will, surely, be accomplished in the end of the days. The other is the association of Christ by the prophetic spirit with the Jewish remnant-connected with the government of God, which Will bring a just and righteous vengeance on the nation who rejected Him, and with all who clung and shall cling to the word of His servants. And this shall be accomplished, too, fully, as the foretaste' of it has already come upon them- wrath to the uttermost εἰς τέλος. But if we confound the Jewish spirit of the Psalms with the gospel, and take it as the expression of our feelings, we shall falsify Christianity. No doubt I shall find lovely confidence in the Lord, in respect of His government of this world, the comfort of forgiveness, the happy confidence of integrity of heart, and remarkable prophecies as to Christ; but where shall I find heavenly hopes, or the union of the Church with a glorified Christ, or even the out-flowings of divine grace, as manifested in His person on earth, or the blessed affections which flow from hearts acquainted with these. Where the blessed spirit of adoption? Every saint knows the touching expressions of piety which the Psalms furnish to us; but no intelligent Christian can turn from the writings of John to the Psalms without finding himself in a different atmosphere. It is monstrous to suppose, that, if the disciples, in seeing Jesus, were blessed as no prophet or king had been, and yet, that it was expedient for them that He should go away, because otherwise the Comforter could not. come," when He is come He should not have given us in joy, piety; intelligence, motives, knowledge of God, even of the Father, and the Son, the spirit of sonship, consciousness of being in Christ, and Christ in us; communion with the Father and the Son, which the old Testament saints did not possess. The Heir, so long as He was a child, differed nothing from a servant, though He be Lord of all. This, the apostle diligently teaches, is the difference of the state of Old Testament saints - God having reserved some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect, so that the least in the kingdom of heaven should be greater than the greatest of those before born of woman. Life or incorruptibility are brought to light by the gospel. I do not see piety or respect for the Word in denying or undervaluing the revealed gifts of God unfolded to us in the New Testament. Is it nothing that the Comforter is come? Where, in the Old Testament, are saints called on to yield themselves to God as those that are alive from the dead? Is that no rule of life? Is it the law? It is a mere abuse of words to say so. I have only a few words to add in closing. I am quite aware that it will be said, and is said, that it is not just to confound seeking justice and life by the law with making it a rule of life; but the whole theory on which this distinction is based is a delusion. Who has authorized us to take the law for one thing, and leave it for another, when God has presented it specifically for one. The apostle's statement is, that if we have to do with the law, it takes us. It puts us under a curse, ministers death to us, and condemnation. It does not ask us how we take it. It pronounces its own sentence on us. Is it transgressed? It curses. The effect of the law on all under it is the curse. I see no allowance in Scripture for saying I do not put myself under it in that way: Scripture puts you under it in that way,

if you are under it. If, indeed, faith is come, we are no longer under the schoolmaster, and, of course, not under its curse. To be under the law, and not be under its curse when broken; is an unscriptural fancy and pretension of men. Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. If ye be led of the Spirit, you are not under the law. Such is the language of the Word of God.

But I have a yet happier aspect of the subject to touch on before I close: the positive side of it. What is the rule of life? I answer, Christ. Christ is our life, rule, pattern, example, and everything. The Spirit our living quickener, and power to follow Him. The Word of God, that in which we find Him revealed, and His mind unfolded in detail. But while all Scripture, rightly divided, is our light as the inspired word of God, at least to those who have an unction from the Holy One, Christ and the Spirit are set before us as. Pattern, Life and Guide, in contrast with law; and Christ as exclusively everything. And power accompanies this (see 2 Cor. 3), "We are declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by, us; written not with ink, but with the Spirit, of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables- of the heart.... But we all, with open face beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." I ask is not Christ here in contrast with law; and if this be not exactly what I am to be, an epistle of Christ; and if there be not power in looking at Christ, to produce it which cannot be in a law? So Gal. 2:20; 5:16, where, in contrast with law, he skews the Spirit to be the power of godliness; that if led of it, we are not under law, and that against the fruits it produces there is no law. We are to walk in the Spirit; but that is not law. So Rom. 13, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill it in the lusts thereof." It is an object governing the heart, which is life, and at the same time the object of life. One to whom we are promised to be conformed, and one to whom we are earnestly desirous of being as conformed as possible now -One who absorbs our attention, fixes it to the exclusion of all else. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the first-born among many brethren. My delight in Him is the spring of action and motive which governs me. I cannot separate the person who is the example and the motive. My love to the person; and the beauty I see in Him is the spring of my delight in being like Him. It is not a rule written down; but a living exhibition of One who, being my life, is to be reproduced by me; always bearing about in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal body. No doubt the written word is the means of showing me what His mind and will is. But it is not a law which is a rule, and Christ only an example how to follow it. It is the word, showing me what the perfection of this heart-ruling example is. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy. As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

"We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; and he that hath this hope in him purifies himself even as He is pure" Then He is a source to me of all in which I long to be like Him. Beholding, with open face, the glory of the Lord, I am changed into the same image. No rule of life can do this. Of His fullness we have received, grace for grace. A rule of life has no fullness to communicate. Hence He says, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." It is the Spirit taking the things of Christ, which thus forms us into His image. What a blessed truth this is. How is every affection of the heart thus engaged in that which is holiness, when I see it in One who not only has loved me, but who is altogether lovely. Hence I am called to "walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing," to "grow up to Him who is the Head in all things." Paul seeks to present

every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Christ is all, and He is in all saints as life to realize the all that is in Him. I am called, moreover, by glory and virtue. The object I am now aiming at is not now on earth. It is Christ risen. This makes my conversation to be in heaven. Hence he says, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those 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." It is by looking at Christ above, that we get to be like Him, as He was on earth, and walk worthy of Him, for so He walked. We get above the motives which would tie us to earth. We are to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; to walk worthy of the Lord. No mere rule can give this. The law has no reference to this heavenly life. So we are to discern things that are excellent. Even Abraham did not, in the most excellent part of his life, walk by rule. He looked for a city which hath foundations; and was a stranger and pilgrim in the land of promise. Reduce me to a mere rule of life, I lose the spring of action. The discernment of a Christian depends on his spiritual and moral state, and God means it to be so. He will not be a mere director, as it is expressed. He makes us dependent on spirituality even to know what His will is. It is not that there are counsels of perfection, for the discernment of the inward life makes what it discerns at once a delight and a duty; and the perfection of Christ we are not very likely to get above. Yet, that is set before us as attainment; the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, our measure, our model, our rule, our strength, and our help in grace; the object of our delight, and our motive in walking, and one who has an absolute claim on our hearts.

I see, in reading this over, one thought wanting which may make a point more clear. We must not confound obedience and law. The character of Christ's obedience was different from legal obedience. When a child desires anything, as to go anywhere, and I forbid, and it at once obeys, I speak of its ready obedience. Christ never obeyed in this way; He never had a desire checked by an imposed law. It was never needed to say to Him, Thou shalt not, when He willed to do anything, He acted because His Father willed it. That was His motive, the only cause of His acting. He lived by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. When there was none, He had nothing to do. Hence the will of God, whatever it was, was His rule; obedience to sovereign will is not a limited law. There may be no revelation to us of particular duties; but such things are recorded in Scripture; and the readiness to do whatever God's will may be, is right; and spiritual discernment becomes a command. St. Paul was not to go into Mysia and Bithynia. He used also the 49 of Isaiah, and called it a command when it applied. We may have none of the first as He had it, and much less of the discernment; but the principle of readiness to any will of God is right. Again, there is the active bringing forth of fruit to God which characterizes Christianity in contrast with the law. The fruits of the Spirit, the bringing forth fruits, and much fruit. Gal. 5:22, which is impossible to ascribe to law. Rom. 7; John 15; so Phil. 1:11, "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God." Surely these are not according to a rule of law.

I would just refer, with more preciseness, to Gal. 2 - Its reasoning is this. If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor in destroying them. Now, I have left the law, argues the apostle, to come to Christ. If I set it up again, I was wrong in destroying it: but Christ led me to do it, and thus He has brought me into what is wrong. Thus, in setting up the law again, you make Christ a minister of sin. It is setting up the law again after Christ that the apostle has to combat everywhere. We have seen that it was not only justification which was in question. They

had abandoned the law because it could not justify, but they had left it altogether. And they were charged with Antinomianism. Thereupon, the apostle answers not by setting up the law in another shape again, but by declaring that there is a new nature, and walking according to this rule, Christ, looking to Him, and walking as He walked, and the Spirit, in following which they were not under law, but produced fruits, against which there was no law. Patience with sincere souls, who are under law, is all right. God only can deliver them; but clear scriptural truth is all important for the glorifying of Christ, even for their sakes who are under law.

Light and Love

It is very important to have this one thing ever before the mind, that the Holy Ghost is working steadily towards the separation of the Bride not only from what would defile, but from all that would enfeeble attachment, -to Him who is worthy. Christ cannot be satisfied with divided affections. And if His own personal place is not paramount, no matter who come in between, they are seducers, and corruption is the fruit. If Satan puts saints between, it is all the more dangerous. What ties, for example, are more holy than those which bind to father and mother? And yet the Lord Jesus demands to be followed even to the hating of father and mother (Matt. 10). For if mere nature is the link, it never leads to God, but is the strongest bond Satan has through sin to draw from God. True, I am to love father and mother, and it is a joy and delight to do it, but it is in God; I am not to have affections to any which have not their source in God, and not their source only but their strength and the sphere of their activity. In His presence I am to enjoy and live in all my relationships.

Suppose a relative-a Christian-suffering his spirit to be defiled by fellowship with evil. Am I therefore, to love Him less? No; but more if possible. But would it be love to admit into my bosom the defilement he has admitted into his? Or would it be love, to start with horror from the contact and entreat its rejection, and, if this is refused, keep separate from it? What blessing can there be if I am away from God? All unrighteousness is sin. And all sin separates from God as to communion. What communion hath light with darkness? The opposition is absolute. We cannot suppose it to be modified without degrading and ruining everything. Well, I, as an individual, must for myself be near God, and on no consideration go away, no matter who or what entices. All contact with sin, except in the way of fleeing from it defiles; all palliation of it defiles. Only in absolute separation from it in will and purpose can I be near God so as to be a vessel of His precious grace. God is love, but God is light. And if love gave the Son, it was light that required the gift. If love gathers, it is out of the darkness, it is to be with itself. There only can love unfold itself.

Of course the affections which cannot run out where Christ is dishonored can turn to Him to restore. And when Christ simply is the object, with the firmness of separation there will be patient grace, and tenderness, and longing for the restoration of the erring one as precious to Christ, for whom He shed His blood.

Lord Jesus, Come!

Lord Jesus, come!

Nor let us longer roam

Afar from Thee, and that bright place

Where we shall see Thee face to face.

Lord Jesus, come!

Lord Jesus, come!

Thine absence here we mourn;

No joy we know apart from Thee,

No sorrow in Thy presence see.

Come, Jesus, come!

Lord Jesus, come!

And claim us as Thine own;

Our weary feet would wander o'er

This dark and sinful world no more,

Come, Savior, come!

The Maintenance of the Truth as Revealed

The maintenance of the full revealed truth is the only true testimony; or means of restoration in failure. This is the point which I propose to dwell on for a little; and the principle which I desire to authenticate is this; that man knows nothing of God but. from His own revelation of Himself; that, according as this revelation was enunciated, so was the servant of God bound to adhere to the terms of it, and that whenever he failed to maintain those terms accurately, he so far failed to secure his own blessing, and still more, he thereby ignored his ability or title to declare the true God; for he was behind the revelation.

That the maintenance of the full revelation should be the grand and necessary means of restoration, is plain and fitting, so to speak, when we consider the nature of man's alienation from God. Having at the serpent's suggestion, believed a lie, and acted on it, he was deceived into an entire misapprehension of God. He did not deny God's existence, but he accepted from Satan a false idea of Him: knowing His power, but distrusting His intentions towards man.

Hence, the natural mind is at enmity against God; there is really no knowledge of the true God. The fall while it enlarged the human mind, did so at the expense of its previous knowledge of God, and it would have to be deprived of much of its present power of comprehension if it were possible for it to return of itself to a condition in which it could simply trust in God, in a word to a state of innocence, which is impossible, for we are born in another state of nature. The more the human mind is exercised to attain a knowledge of the true God, the more is it made cognizant of its estrangement from Him, in the very state of its nature; for the very power which exercises it is Owing to the act which corrupted it with respect to Him. The greatest philosopher, after the most intense study, only produced a system, which, while it admitted man's need, declared that the true God was not apprehended. They attributed to the Supreme Being the best attributes which they found active in man's nature; but they did not discover, and could not, the nature of God in His love to man, because their own minds denied it.

God Then Must Reveal Himself

But this revelation is entirely outside the human mind -it is not intuitive, and never could have been derived from it. Thus the voice of, the Lord announces to Adam His true mind and interest for man, and Adam's restoration, peace, and blessing depended on his reception and maintenance of this revelation. True, he required a new mind (i.e. regeneration) in order to receive and retain it; but the more fully he maintained the scope and spirit of the revelation, the more he not only assured himself of restoration and blessing; but thus alone could lie worthily testify of his Creator. Let him depart from an item in the revelation, and not only did he find to his cost that he lost blessing, but he failed to be a renovated witness for God on the earth. Eve, whom Adam had so called in the light of the revelation, departs from the express terms of that revelation-the only chart by which she could steer through the uncertainties by which the natural mind obstructs the course of the new man-and designates her first-born son as the promised man; and how much sorrow and humiliation does she engender for her family! The natural mind is not only ignorant of the revelation, but it cannot be trusted with the interpretation, of it. God's voice must pronounce the one, and God's Spirit must ensure the other. It is all outside man; though all accomplished in the human vessel, sensibly and intelligently. Thus, any variation from the revelation must be of the natural mind, and must not only mar blessing, but deny the effect of it in the way of testimony to the true God.

If we see this so distinctly marked, with regard to the first revelation, how much more important shall we find it to be as the revelation enlarges and more fully unfolds to us the God from whom we have departed, and of whom we have presented so untrue an idea in His own world.

Let us trace this subject for a little through the scriptures.

In the close of Gen. 8 and 9, we find an additional revelation; the terms being that God will not again curse the ground for man's sake; that man is to have dominion over everything on earth, but nothing is to have dominion over man without adequate retribution. The bow in the cloud was the witness of the covenant. Had Noah and his descendants adhered to the terms of this revelation accurately, they would have ensured blessing for themselves, and have maintained a testimony for God in the now expurgated earth. But Noah fails. He is subjugated by the fruits of the earth; and his own son declares it; -11-6-falls a prey to what-was-appointed-to-be subservient to him. His position is thus forfeited, his testimony for God annulled, and a curse falls on his own child, for an infraction of a subserviency which his lust had propagated: the revelation was not adhered to, and the tower of Babel was the matured fruit of the aberration from it. In such a state of things, the previous measure of revelation, however valuable, could not meet the exigency of the moment, or supply the testimony God wished to afford of Himself; therefore, in Gen. 12, a new revelation is communicated to Abram, as soon as he had entered on the path which God had called him to; even that of separation from his country and kindred, to be a witness for Him in a world where He was unknown. The terms of it describe the circle of Abram's blessing and testimony. God would make him a blessing, and gave him the land, although the Canaanite was still there. While he

maintained these terms accurately, he continued a faithful and happy witness for God in Canaan, but when he lost sight of them and went into Egypt, he, for the time, forfeited the one and denied the other. And mark his restoration is dictated by his return to the terms of the revelation, "he came to the place of the altar which he had made there at the beginning." By adhering to these, he was enabled to refuse the plains of Sodom, to be a successful helper to his deceived and worldly brother in his distress; in short, to be an honored witness for God throughout his course. Melchizedek can crown with blessing the man walking in the light of the revelation. Lot, in forsaking it, remains unblest; but Abraham, triumphant through the truth, devotes the tithes, the spolia opima, to the king of righteousness and the king of peace. How great was the blessing and testimony which the adherence, even by one, to the terms of God's revelation effected! The promise of Isaac was part of the revelation and the rite of circumcision connected with it. Abraham and Sarah must both avow this truth (Gen. 4-8), and then their joy and testimony are secured. And the adherence to this continues peremptory even after subsequent revelations for these do not always confirm previous ones. If Moses in Midian disregard circumcision, the moment he takes the place of testimony he must repent of his negligence, and know the danger of his act. If Israel neglected in the wilderness, the first day in the land is devoted to their submission to it. While it was possible to disregard a later revelation by confining themselves to a former one, the former could never be disregarded by strictly and distinctly maintaining the later; which is very important and naturally follows; because each revelation is only a larger unfolding to us of the true God of whom we are intuitively ignorant. Even as all revelations lead, in the aggregate, to the Lord Jesus Christ who alone declared the Father. But to continue-

Before Moses was able assuredly to undertake the responsibility of leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, his soul was confirmed by a new revelation (Ex. 6), "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him I am the Lord, and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them. I have also established my covenant with them," etc: God reveals Himself to Moses as the Covenant God, and we shall find that by adhering to this revelation depended Moses' success and testimony. In his greatest extremity he could say, "The Lord shall fight for you." And his first altar he called "Jehovahnissi," "The Lord my Banner," in remembrance of the deliverance of which he was the channel. The truth which was involved in this revelation was ever a ground of confidence and stability to Moses in moments of perplexity, and difficulty, and sin. To maintain the terms of it is the only path to restoration, though it be by only, one man! Thus, when Israel sinned in the matter of the golden calf, the intercession of Moses for them is on the ground of God's covenant. Still more significantly in their sin at Kadesh-barnea (Num. 14), he pleads with the Lord as to how the testimony would suffer if He did not realize His covenant, or in other words be true to the revelation of Himself. And what was the result of one man fully maintaining the revelation and pleading it before God? Israel found mercy, and God was vindicated on earth.

Again, I repeat, that no former revelation, however comprehensive, would have suited the exigence, and that in failing to maintain it the most valued servant would be set aside. Moses, after having endured for so many years, failed on the very borders of the land, and is thus disqualified for entering the covenanted land, the land promised by Jehovah. Moses alone, not once or twice, faithful to the revelation, saved Israel, but failing himself he alone is the loser:

To Joshua, the revelation was, that as surely as the waters of Jordan were to afford a passage to the people, so would the Lord without fail drive out from before them the seven nations of Canaan. "The ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan." If Joshua adhere to the terms of this revelation, all will be smooth and triumphant for Israel, and honoring to the Lord. All Israel's deficiency in blessing in the land, sprung from disregard to these terms, now first communicated to them. They forgot or disbelieved that God was among them and would, without fail, drive out the nations from before them. Joshua - just before his death - called for all Israel, their elders, their heads, etc., in order to revive and fix in their souls the terms of the revelation which he had dispensed. And again, in Shechem when they presented themselves before the Lord, he renews his exhortation; he labors energetically to rally the people, to maintain the, truth as it had been revealed, showing them the blessing consequent on their doing so; and the irreparable loss they must suffer by departing from it; and then sums up, by evincing such an appreciation for the truth of God that, assuming all and each will fail in maintaining it, he sets up a stone as a witness against them, lest they should deny their God: "Behold this stone shall be a witness unto us, for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which He spake unto us; it shall therefore be a witness unto you lest ye deny your God."

This stone, the antitype of which was the Lord Jesus Christ, was more to be trusted than any man in Israel; and is the only resource as an effectual and imperishable witness amid the failure of the people. Just as we shall see in the appeal to Laodicea, the church being then in a corresponding condition of failure and ruin, Christ is presented as the faithful and true witness, that being the aspect of Him which the times and condition of things required, and He being alone worthy of the appellation. The anxiety of every faithful servant must be to maintain the truth, and nothing short of it; and here Joshua seeks to vindicate the name of God on earth, not by falling back upon any past measure of revelation, but by maintaining intact that which was committed to himself and suited for his times. To this day, the terms of the tenure of the Moral Canaan are identical; and dereliction with regard to them entails the same sorrows morally as it did afore time, physically. Now, as then, the faithful servant may singly and alone vindicate God. Christ, as the Faithful Witness can always be reckoned on, and God and His truth must not be denied, though the whole congregation be recusant and Demas-like.

The chief revelation to David was with regard to Solomon and the Temple; and he winds up his eventful life preparing and ordering everything in relation to this. The permanency of his kingdom and the glory of God depended on his unswerving adherence to the truth communicated to him, and he remained faithful to it. He terminated his labors on earth working to this end; declaring how devoted his heart was to the revelation committed to though he should pass out of the scene before his preparation would be appreciated. It is the brightest moment of David's life, for in it he maintains the fullest revelation that had yet been made known to man, and in this light of it he departs, leaving his kingdom to the type of Him who was to come, in expectancy of that glory which to this moment is looked for. To be a revealer of God was all engrossing to him; and to this object his latest strength was devoted with a zeal never equaled until the true David-the only begotten son-appeared, who could say, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up." I do not believe that this revelation committed to David was surpassed by any subsequent one, until He, the fullness of it, came. Every prophet and servant who filled up the interval was distinguished for faithfulness and service in proportion to his accurate maintenance of the terms of it. Be it an Isaiah

or an Ezra, or an Ezekiel or a Nehemiah, a Jeremiah or a Daniel. Each in his measure and line looked forward for the King of glory and the temple, as the enduring relief from their present trials, as well as the surest and unfailing testimony for God. During this dreary interval, long and humbling trials befell the people of God, but as with Haggai, so with all; the truth which restored and renovated their testimony was this revelation; and the more they maintained it, in all their failure, expatriation and powerlessness, the more they surmounted present obstacles, and were found once more God's witnesses on earth. Every measure of truth is valuable in its appointed place, but it is plain that no other line would have effected this for them, either as the amelioration of their condition, or as to their testimony for God on the earth. And how much this wrought for them in the days of Haggai, where we see them rebuilding the temple, and listening with eager ears to the words of Zechariah touching the King of Glory, and the glorious - sanctuary.

At length, in the fullness of time, He came, who was the sum and substance of all previous revelations. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father; full of grace and truth," He, the fullness of all revelations, superseded and surpassed all that had gone before. John the Baptist proclaimed His coming; but when He had come, the revelation was "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost; and I saw and bare record that this is the Son: of God." Everything now depends on the faithfulness with which this revelation is maintained. "He that honoureth the Son honoureth the Father," He is the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and if there be any defect in adhering to Him as the full and perfect revealer of the mind and counsels of the Father, there must be great damage to one's own blessing, and an end to testimony for God, inasmuch as its great feature is annulled. Christ being come, the strictest maintenance of any previous measure of truth cannot be the true testimony; for the more zealous it be, the more does it imply that there is no greater or better, and how can a servant presume to imply this with regard to any previous measure; when the fullness of all has come? Christ, the Son of God. He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost is thee only relief to man in the lowest condition of failure, the only sure and speedy power of restoration. But to the Corinthians, overcome by worldliness, "I determined (says the Apostle) to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." To the Galatians -corrupted by false doctrine-" Of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." When we speak of Christ, let us understand what we mean. Christ, the Son of the living God was down here a man, revealing the Father's heart towards men, and in the end so responding to His love, that He endured on the cross the penalty of death for which man was liable; and having borne it and satisfied every claim of God, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High, maintaining the perfection of His people's acceptance in the presence of the Father. He is the one who expressed and substantiated every desire of the Father's heart toward man; the perfect servant of God; the perfect Savior of men. This is Christ, the revelation of God; and to present Him as such I must not mutilate Him. I must not present Him as on earth, however glorious and full His services here were. I must also present Him as He is in heaven. I must present Him now as from heaven to earth. And the lower the condition of the church, the more accurately must I (if I would restore it and renew its testimony) maintain the revelation of God, which He is, in all fullness. The fuller the revelation, the better for man; for the better God is declared, the more confidently can man draw near, and the more distinctly can he renounce the prepossessions of nature.

And here let me ask; What is the extent of the revelation now made known to us? Are we acquainted with it? Do we seek to maintain it in its fullness and extent? I do not mean, do we grasp the whole truth contained in it? for that is infinite. But can we trace the outlines of it and aim at nothing short of its full extent? What then are the outlines of the revelation of God unfolded by the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son; The revelation itself may be said to be embodied in those words, "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him; "because, as every previous measure had been but a fore-shadowing of Him, so all that has been declared since His coming is an elucidation of what He is in Himself. The Son is the center and. core of all revelation; the most that any one can know; a knowledge which we find in 1 John 2:13, is the attainment of fathers or the most advanced.

But in what manner did the Son thus reveal the Father? We know that the answer is, by His life on earth, death, resurrection, and ascension. The life of the Lord Jesus on earth declared the Father in its manifestation of His interest for man, the heart of Him whose compassions fail not, was brought near to man. Every human infirmity was relieved, unbelief was rebuked. God was made known. The Lord could say, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." In death He responded to the love of God. Grace and truth came by Him, He bore the judgment of Sin, His words are "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it." He was once offered to bear the sin of many; still further disclosing to us the true God and His interest in man. The disciples could appreciate the revelation of God, as they walked with Him on earth; but the thief on the cross knew it, as unfolded in His death and nothing short of this could have suited his own necessity, or supplied the right testimony.

But not only did Christ walk as a man, and die for man on earth, but He rose again, testifying that He was the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness; and herein is still further the Revealer of the Father.

Delivered for our offenses, but raised again for our justification, His death is our ransom and His resurrection our ground of peace. Mary Magdalene, and the disciples going to Emmaus, both knew a measure of the revelation. They knew what He was on earth, and that He had died; but they did not know that He had "risen and become the first fruits of them that slept," and therefore they neither had the blessing of the fuller truth nor were able to express the testimony suited and necessary for the moment, until they are instructed therein by Himself in His own gracious way, and then with what blessing to themselves, and what effectual testimony!

Still further was the ascension of Christ to the right-hand of God, the occasion of a fuller revelation of Him who had revealed God, because consequent on that was the descent of the Holy Ghost, whose peculiar mission was, and is, to "testify of me."

What this testimony is, comprises the fullest revelation committed to the church; and necessarily includes what the Apostle Paul terms "the counsel of God." "I have not shunned (he says) to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." The first great truth of which the Holy Ghost testifies is the perfectness of our acceptance in the presence of God. Christ Himself is the pattern of our acceptance; the Holy Ghost is the seal of it. He testifies that though we were dead in trespasses and sins, we are raised up together with Christ and made to sit together with Him. How wretched and unhappy are souls, and how unable to testify of God's grace, if they are not assured that God so met His own mind and the desires of His heart in Christ, that He can be just and yet the justifier

of every one who believeth in Him, The Holy Ghost declares this. He does not work assurance, but He testifies of the risen Christ with the Father to the regenerated soul; and this is a sealing or confirming of the fact, that when He had purged our sins, He sat down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high. The Father's love is satisfied the more I appreciate it.-the more I respond to it, the more I honor Him. The self-same Spirit is to us the earnest of the inheritance which as joint-heirs with Christ we shall enjoy, and therefore the one and the selfsame Spirit seals my acceptance and pledges my future glory with Christ; so that while I am happy in my nearness to God, as a saved sinner, I am also by the self-same Spirit introduced confidently into heirship with Christ; and, therefore, necessarily waiting for His coming and glory-seeing they are indissolubly connected. It is plain, that no previous measure of revelation could by any means confer the blessing, or supply the power for testimony commensurate to or of a quality like this.

Again-the Holy Ghost, in a world which rejected the Son of God, is building an habitation for God; the body of Christ, the fullness of Himself. This truth, kept secret until now, is the one most personal and most glorious to Christ. First, that the Holy Ghost, as the fruits of Christ's work, should build souls together as a habitation for God in a world that had rejected Him; and still further, that this building, these monuments of His grace, though composed of many members, should be baptized by the self-same Spirit into one body as the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. What could be more important or blessed than the revelation that the Body-the fullness of Christ-now in heaven, should be formed by the Holy Ghost?

It is the greatest-the most perfect of all revelations-the most honoring to Christ, the most glorious to us. It is the real full scope of the Holy Ghost's mission down here; All His other work is only a means to an end, to this end. Thus truly does He fulfill the saying, "shall testify of me;" and thus does He testify, by molding and fashioning souls into one body, and baptizing them thereto, to be Christ's body and the fullness of Him.

If this great and consummate work and action of the Holy Ghost be not apprehended, how can there be the blessing which He is here to confer; or how can there be a testimony at all corresponding to the nature of the counsel of God?. Can any previous measure of revealed truth supply the place of this, either as to the effect it has on the soul, or the character of the testimony for God, which it imparts? None surely.-This is the fullness of revealed truth. Let us look around, and notice the different measures of life and intelligence among the many believers in Christendom, and ask what truth could bless souls in such a distracted state of things? Could any previous or any partial revelation of Christ? I may be told it is Christ they want, in which I most heartily concur; but, Christ is testified of by the Holy Ghost, first, as to our peace; and secondly, as to our responsibility to Him. If I have not this full and perfect revelation, I cannot know either the one or the other. For, what other revelation could afford me assurance of peace but that which tells me that Christ is at God's right-hand; and of this the Holy Ghost testifies. He alone can make it sure to my perceptions, because He tells me of God's satisfaction, not of my own. Again-What other line of truth could unfold to me my responsibilities as does this-that I am a member of Christ's body, baptized into one body-all members contributing to the blessing of one another-not only to be the habitation of God, but the fullness of the rejected Christ?

Marvelous grace to grant us such' a calling! If walking according to the mind of Christ in the light of this revelation, I could not think only of the awakening of souls, but while rejoicing at their

awakening as a mother would at the birth of her first-born; I should provide with all parental anxiety for their future health and nurture.-Discerning life there, I should, if in sympathy with Christ, seek that it may answer its end as a member of His body. I must see that it be up in heaven with Christ, and down on earth for Christ, as the filling up of Himself. Does the Holy Ghost desire to see all His members happy in union with Him, and as such united with One another, answering each to his own proper place in the Body? Was the body of Christ personal a matter of interest and care? Assuredly it was. And is His mystical body to be one of less care?

But how can we show our interest and care if our eyes are not enlightened by the revelation He has afforded of Himself? If we be engaged with one previous to it, we are behind His mind and cannot be His witnesses. The awakening or quickening of souls, or the healing of souls is the work of the Holy Ghost, but if we stop there, we neither apprehend nor act up to the full revelation of Christ. There is a declaration of His work, and a certain amount of blessing to souls; but the affections of Christ are not acknowledged or responded to. There is no link to Him as bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh; no testimony for Him as the rejected and ascended One. In fact the great intent of the Holy Ghost is overlooked, if not set aside. It is true that conversions are for Christ and cannot be without the power of God-yet they are but means to an end. The Holy Ghost is not more interested in quickening souls, than in making them sit together with Christ in heavenly places. He is not content with merely giving them birth; He seeks to advance them to the measure of the revelation of God, which He has unfolded as the proper testimony of the Church for Christ. I may be told, the Church has failed: most true; but the Holy Ghost is still here to testify of Christ, His work is still the same; His aim can never be lowered, or brought to the level of surrounding failure; and that aim and work is to form us into a habitation for God as the Body of Christ, as members of one another, because baptized thereto by Himself.

What is failure, but a departure from the revelation communicated? This being the center, focus and kernel of all blessing, departure from it, is failure; return to it, restoration. By losing sight of it, testimony is marred; by maintaining it, failure corrected and testimony renewed. Every witness that has gone before us has proved this; and a great cloud of witnesses has there been!

One word in conclusion. Every spiritual gift is conferred on the church only. The gifts belong to the church; and that of the Evangelist, as much as that of the teacher. All are from the church, and for the benefit of the church; so that if I am possessor of any spiritual gift, and exercise it without reference to the church, I am denying the true center of my service; and consequently the church cannot receive help from me; as we often see she does not from very gifted men. They are exclusively occupied with their gift and its effects, and not with the mind of the Lord from whom they derive it. True, they may love and serve Him, but they do not seek His mind and counsel with reference to their gift; and therefore while the gift produces effects, and even to a certain point, blessed ones, the church- the special object of the Holy Ghost's care and interest- is not edified thereby.

May the Lord enable us, not only to apprehend, but to maintain this full and perfect revelation, which, hidden in all past ages, is now made known, as the unerring chart by which to steer in the darkness that is gathering over this earth.

Christ Himself-personal and mystical-being the center and scope of it; adherence to it, will render our path right and clear though narrow: for it will put us in company with His mind, His sympathies,

His relation to things around; and in the direct line of the Holy Ghost's action—who is here to testify of HIM.

S.

New Life

My relationships with God are entirely on the footing of Christ, the Second Adam. I can have none of my old life, or extraction, or doings, -have anything at all to say to it. Flesh cannot be in relationship with God. As a natural man I am only flesh; and not only is flesh enmity against God, and so incapable of relationship, but it is under judgment. The judgment of God rests on it. Now, it is plain, that if this whole condition is not met, I can only suffer the desert of my sins away from God, and that forever; for how can I escape? Well, when God came to undertake our case, it was no partial, deliverance that He accomplished. The whole entire condition I was in He took up, and met in the cross AND ENDED. As to relationship I begin afresh entirely out of the old life and condition altogether. I get a new life from God consequent on the ending of the old in judgment on Christ; and this new is the very delight and joy of God; for it is Christ. See Gal. 2. I have no existence before God now, except in Christ. There is an everlasting break between the two conditions. I was in my sins; I am made the righteousness of God in Him. I was alienated, I am reconciled. All in Christ. Thus we make our boast in Christ. Thus we joy in God; for all is, grace, free grace and love.

The great point is that I cannot be before God at all, except on the footing of Christ; and on that I am before Him in perfect acceptance.

Rahab

"By faith Rahab perished not with them that believed not."

How forlorn and hopeless was her condition before the spies had visited her. Death was written on everything. The land - and its inhabitants were given over to utter destruction. She believed all this. All hope as to her then condition was over; nothing but judgment was before her. There was, it is true, a turning of heart to the God of Israel, for whoever bows to God's judgment (and the woman bowed to it; her people feared but resisted), is drawn irresistibly to the very God whose claim is acknowledged.

But how could she be connected with this God? Where could she find Him? Israel were as yet on the other side Jordan, and, when they should cross, it would be in judgment. Well, God sees this poor woman, and He so orders it, -that, ere a stroke of judgment falls, mercy should reach her, and the assurance of salvation. The spies are guided to her house, and through them she is bound up with Israel's God and with the fortunes of His people. She transfers all her confidence and all her hopes and expectations to a new scene altogether, which as yet did not exist; for Israel were not yet in the land. But faith calleth the things that be not as though they were, even as God does; and so this woman of precious faith bowed to the judgment and death, her due and portion by nature and by works, and fled for refuge to the God of Israel, and cast in her lot with His people. Sihon and Og she knew were utterly destroyed. They resisted God's claims, and opposed Him in the establishment of his kingdom. But she knew that it was a vain opposition: for He was God in heaven above, and God in earth beneath. The idols were no gods. So she gives her whole place, and possession, and inheritance of the land under the god of this world, and looks for a name and inheritance under the God of Israel. For if Jericho is to be destroyed, it is to make way for the God and people of Israel, and, in faith, she transfers herself to a city that hath foundations, to an inheritance that fadeth not away. Moreover, her life she begs from God: from "Deliver our lives from death." And in the name of their God does she ask it: "Swear unto me by the Lord."

What a change to Rahab in a few hours! The shadow of death is turned into the morning. The coming of Joshua, instead of being black with judgment is bright with hope; for she has the token of the God of Israel that his coming will be salvation to her.

How this not only changes her prospects, but her life and business! All her plans and pursuits in Jericho are uprooted, and now they all have reference to the coming day. Her one object would be, to get beneath the scarlet line all dear to her. And of what a secret between Rahab and God, and the people of God, was this: scarlet line the sign and symbol! Who in Jericho knew its import but herself? So is it with us in all these particulars. The world knoweth us not. It is as really under judgment now as was Jericho then, though heedless of it as they were. But we look for the coming of Jesus, to take us to Himself on that day.

Note also that Rahab risks her life for this people, even before she has any assurance that they will have mercy on her.

The two chief points in this precious narrative, are-first, the tender grace and compassion of God towards this one solitary woman, under judgment, and a harlot, but a vessel of mercy and bright specimen of the sovereignty of His Grace. The spies must find her out; Israel's march must tarry until the scarlet line has sheltered this woman of Canaan. And, second, she perished not with them that believed not. All would have been saved by faith as well as Rahab. God will be justified in His sayings, and clear when He judges.

Revelation 1

This chapter contains a most magnificent chain of glories which are connected with our adorable Lord and Savior.

As in the gospel of John, so here; - all that we read has Jesus the Christ for its center; but the glories in the gospel were more connected with Him looked at as the Life-giver; here He is presented rather as the bearer of responsibility before God as to the light possessed by those who are subjected to Him, and pre-eminently so for those that know they have in Him eternal life.

The word of His grace - committed unto man - not only communicates eternal life to those that receive it, but also places man in present responsibility. The Word of God - He in whom the eternal life is - is the great responsibility-bearer, both as to the light and the life which are connected with the word of His grace. The glories of Him in that position are the subjects of consideration for us now, as they form the substance of the chapter before us.

1st. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John" (ver. 1).

There are two things to be noticed here, viz., 1st. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ according to things to come, and not, as in John 1, a present salvation. The subject is the glory of Jesus; not as the only Begotten of the Father, etc. - though that He Himself, necessarily, always is - but, according to His title of "the Christ," anointed Son of Man, and the things to come which connect themselves with that name.

Jesus the Christ is now hid in God. But there is the revelation of Him; and this, with the object of making known unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass. This is the bright gem which first meets us in the chapter.

2nd. The second is, that it is given unto Him by God.

The Lord and all things that concern Him - must ever be dear to His people, and so, therefore, necessarily, any revelation of Him; but this one has a peculiar mark upon it, one which gives it a peculiar place, too it is the revelation which God gave unto Him.

3rdly. The next thing which I would notice is the full, and fully recognized, association of this Jesus Christ with that which is essentially divine; in ver. 4, Grace and peace from [God described as] the One that is, and that was, and that is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ. Yes, Jehovah-a-saving, the anointed Man - from whom, and through whom, divine and eternal gifts, as of grace and peace, can and do flow-is God, and is fully owned as such.

4thly. Then we get the cluster of titles under which He is here more definitely presented as being those which connect Him with the work in hand. Each of them is a glory in Him, and, therefore, the

subject of admiration for His worshippers.

The Faithful Witness.-The scope and range of the testimony of this, the Faithful Witness, is according to the person and position of Him who is the Faithful Witness. Everything that He said and did when He was on the earth was as the Faithful Witness; everything that He does or says, now that He is in heaven, is as the Faithful Witness; and so everything that He will hereafter do or say, in the heavenlies or in the earthlies, will be so too. That is, His course, run as Son of Man, has been, is, and will be as the Faithful Witness. In all the positions in which the Son of Man is found He is the Faithful Witness. But, far more than this is true; for not only is He the Faithful Witness in word and deed, but Himself in His person is the Faithful and True Witness. In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; yes, there is nothing that "the fullness of the Godhead "supposes, but is in Him the Son of Man: it dwelt in this Jesus Christ, and shined out of this Jesus Christ, truly presenting in Him a man, and as a man, and in every position and office held by Him at any time, that same fullness. I say not, that those to whom He is presented can understand or receive all that He is; but I say, that 'wheresoever He is, there is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and none but God can be a perfect representation of God.* The testimony which we receive is one thing, the fullness of that which He testifies-whether by word, deed, or in His own person-is another thing. The next title is--

5th. The First Begotten of the dead.-The Holy Ghost settles in a very simple way what the pre-eminence is which belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:15,16). He is necessarily before and above all creation, for the very simple reason, that all things were created by Him; "all things that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible: all things were created by Him, and for Him."

The Creator is certainly above, as He was necessarily also before, His works. The truth is, that in all things He has the pre-eminence. Whose sorrows were like unto His? Who was the Man of sorrows? "Whose joys shall be equal to His? Who shall be anointed with the oil of joy and gladness above His fellows? As perfect in patience as in power. And, if we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son, it is, that He may be the Firstborn among many brethren. He alone is the resurrection and the life, though that glory in Him may need and require us also, as those in and by whom its power will be expressed,

"Thy name encircles every grace

That God, as man, could show;

There only could He fully trace

A life divine below."

And when we stand around Him on that day, right fully shall we know and own that the Father chose us in Him before the foundation of the world; and that He is the One who, having made ready the Father's house, will then be come back to receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also. But the preeminence is altogether His declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.

Creation, Providence, Redemption, all pay their tribute to Him; and it is due to Him alone.

6th. The Prince of the Kings of the Earth.-The term Prince (archon) is one that implies relationship. Chief of the kings of the earth. This is more than His Lordship. Now, indeed, and in truth, inasmuch as He is the Center and End of all the divine counsels and plans, the kings of this disordered world cannot get away from the effect which His glory has over everything. Hereafter, too, He will, as King, put down and lift up those whom He will. But there is a royal priesthood, in direct relationship to which, as its Head or Prince, He will in that day be displayed; and I judge that it is this which is here referred to. He will be the Chief and supporter of the royal priesthood, whose residence is to be in heaven, as also their priestly service, though they are to be associated with Him in His rule over the earth.

This comes out more fully in detail in the two verses which follow, in which, seventhly, His grace in having made associates for Himself, and the considerateness of His love in so doing, is opened up. For that which opens up the song of praise, "Unto Him that loved... Amen" (ver. 5 and 6), is the mention of Him as the Prince of the Kings of the earth.

How should John write to the churches, of grace and peace being to them from Him, as the Prince of the Kings of the earth, without the grace in Him, which had displayed itself in giving to John and us a special place in connection with that title, moving his heart, and drawing forth a burst of praise from him.

He is not only, as we have seen, 6thly, Prince (archon), but this has, 7thly, a tale of its own as to the kings of the earth.

The Firstborn from among the dead has a place of universal Lordship pertaining to Him (Acts 2:36, Phil. 2:11). Title over all is His; title, also, to all, as the appointed Heir of all things, is His. He has also a place of peculiar honor and glory belonging to Him, as Head before God, for the direction of worship and government among men. This headship is His alone; but, in grace, He shares the honors of it with one peculiar class. His will is, according to divine counsel, to have a royal priesthood with Himself, when He, in one aspect of His glory, shall be "The priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6:13).

When His eye lighted, so to speak, upon the children whom God had committed to Him, sin was in them, and on them; and nothing but sin in nature. To meet their need in this respect, that they might be able to stand before God, He washes in that blood which Himself has provided. By nature, we had nothing but sin. God claimed us, and the sin would have excluded us from His presence; but He loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. But His love, who had taken us up as at the hand of God, stopped not there; sin set aside was set aside in order that His heart might have its joy in associating us with Himself, as the Priest upon His throne- Head in government and worship in a world yet to come before God. Surely the rays of a glory burst forth here-the glory of His own unselfish, divine love; the light descends in fullness enough to return an answer of praise and thanksgiving from John.

8thly. The glory of His return, as to man on earth, is spoken of-Ver. 7. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen."

If man now shuts out His light, and denies His faith, the Lord's coming will be the irresistible answer to this when He rises up; and, if a present faith can rejoice in the glory to come, unbelief

may well be alarmed at the thought of that coming, and its effects upon the heart found then in unbelief. Faith has, already, its praise because of Him. Unbelief knows Him not now, but will wail when He comes. The expression, "Even so, Amen," is the expression of the servant of the Lord's faith. Faith can, and does enter into the righteousness of God in sending forth His Son a second time; faith's one great interest is the Christ of God - the triumph of this seed of the woman; and while its own side of the truth is in joy and peace, in believing, and in the tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, yet can the believer be so subdued to his own right place in Christ-be so enlarged in his own soul as to the place which Christ has in the counsels and plans of God as to take his place with God and with Christ in every glory that pertains to Christ, and say, as to every detail of His counsels, "Even so, Amen!"

Remarks on Revelation, Inspiration, Scripture, Infallibility of Scripture

I have thought that a few remarks upon these subjects might, at the present moment, tend to help some to discern things that differ. In conscious weakness (such, indeed, as none but the God of all grace could stoop to use and own), I make the attempt.

1.-Revelation

By revelation, so far as man is concerned, I understand the uncovering before man of truth which man is capable of recognizing, but which he could never have attained to the knowledge of by his natural faculties as man. The nature of that which is thus made known (whether things past, present, or to come,-persons or doctrines, etc.), matters not; neither, as we shall see, does the mode in which the knowledge is communicated, etc., enter into the definition of revelation.

It must be clear to any simple mind, that a man does not, and cannot, intuitively know what preceded His existence here on earth, or what will follow after the moment actually present. And man-Adam in the garden of Eden-could not know intuitively, of the creation of that part of the world which preceded his own existence, as the account of it is given to us in Scripture (Gen. 1:1-26). If Adam knew it at all, it was by a divine communication. So, again, as to the revelation given to John in Patmos. The great mass of the things revealed were lying in the distant future. It was only by a divine communication, that John could know them.

Now, how Moses learned about the creation of the world we know not. Were it through a vision, in which the scenes were made to pass before him; or were it by tradition, handed down to him from Adam, of what God revealed to him; or were it by thoughts breathed into him by God, through a "Thus saith the Lord," as in Old Testament times; or were it that God told Moses himself about it, as one man speaketh face to face with a friend -as, indeed, He did communicate to Moses all about the tabernacle, etc., when on the mount-the mode of communication matters not; the how the revelation was made to Moses, who wrote the account of it for us, this is not the important thing. Again, John, in the Apocalypse, learned by seeing and hearing, and so far, the mode of the revelation being made to him was unlike the mode in which the Spirit of the Lord came upon a Balaam, a Saul, an Isaiah, etc., with a "Thus saith the Lord." Balaam and Saul had, though they were wicked men, a flow of truth breathed through them, of truth which no mere man could ever have attained to as mere man. It was a divine communication. Now, the mode of communication to Moses in the Mount, and to David (as to the patterns of the tabernacle, the temple, etc.) were of other kinds altogether from a "Thus saith the Lord." Again, the four evangelists saw and heard all that they wrote, apparently, as following their Master upon earth, and conversant with others that did so likewise. Much of what they wrote about was perfect as a revelation. They had seen and heard; "God manifest in the flesh, full of grace and truth." They had, as men in the body, had the Christ of God as their Leader and Master. HE was the revelation of God in the highest sense of the term. But then there were a number of outside facts which were not in themselves revelations (Acts 1:21,22), which, also, they had to write about.

Enough has been said to show what revelation is. And, if we consider the person of our blessed Lord while upon earth, we shall see how the purest, fullest, most perfect revelation, even that of God himself in His Son (Heb. 1), can exist and be before man in open display quite independently of inspiration, or of sacred scripture. No man hath seen God at any time. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him (John 1:18; 1 John 1:1,2).

Inspiration

We have seen, then, that there may be revelation without inspiration. The blessed Lord Jesus was in His own person, as God manifest in the flesh, a pure revelation of the truth. Yet because of his very fullness-in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily- we could not say he was inspired. To say so, would' be an injurious limitation to His glory; for. He was not one merely breathed into; but the One who could breathe upon and into man. Of whom but Himself alone could it have been written, "Then said He to them again, Peace, be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:21-23). Again, I think it may fairly be said, that inspiration is based upon revelation; so that wherever there is inspiration, there, of necessity, revelation is presupposed. There may be, as was shown before, revelation independently of inspiration; but there is never inspiration independent of revelation.

When Paul wrote (2 Tim. 3:16), All scripture is (θεοπνευστος) given-by-inspiration-of-God (God-inspired; literally, breathed of God), he gave us, from God Himself, a very solemn peculiarity of the scriptures. He is speaking of the scriptures, they are God-breathed. The essential distinctive quality "θεοπνευστος" attaches there to scripture; and so is distinguishable from what is written in 2 Peter 1:21, "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy MEN of God SPAKE as they were moved (carried) by the Holy Ghost." For here-in a retrospective view taken of prophecy, and prophecy as spoken in olden times to Israel-he speaks of the inspiration of the speaker. In the other passages (2 Tim. 3:16) it is said the scripture-all scripture-is inspired. The words of a man God-breathed, and the writings of a man God-breathed, are very distinguishable. To the faith of an individual believer, Scripture is much more; for, as used by the Spirit of God, it is, as the breath of God; giving life, nourishment, defense, etc., all instrumentally that faith needs (2 Tim. 3:17). I notice this, here, because it is important, and is connected with inspiration, not in the action of inspiring, but in an effect which is of immeasurable importance to man. There is a standard measure of truth; standard and touchstone which was given by inspiration, in the highest, and, as I believe, purest sense; there is one Book, the writing of which, and the book as written, is inspiration, and inspiration without alloy. The movement, by the Holy Ghost, of holy men, who spake, was, in itself, both divine and pure; but over and beyond this-grace gave A BOOK which contained all that truth which God saw was instrumentally needful for His glory-Satan's defeat, and man's blessing.

Holy men of old, and, in later times, Peter and Paul, were, at times, inspired to -say things which were inspired; but, also! they were able and did say, and do, things at times, which were not inspired. I have to judge Peter and Paul's conduct in every way by their doctrine as written. Holy men of God were divinely moved to write a divinely inspired record of Satan's antagonistic conduct to the Gospel; of man's treacherous dealing against God; and of God's grace, works, and purpose. For the thing written about is not necessarily of God, because the writer is inspired, and his writing inspired too. A record may be pure inspiration; it may be through a movement of inspiration in a

man, who is, however, a man of like passions as ourselves; and the subject treated of may be of that which is most antagonistic to God, as the world, the flesh, and Satan. All, alas! all this we wanted.

All Scripture is inspired of God. If God had been pleased to write the Bible, as He wrote the two tables which Moses brake, there could have been no doubt that "God's book" would have been a correct name for it, just as "God's tables" was a correct name for the two tables of the Law (Ex. 32:15,16). The tables themselves and the writing were both God's in this case. These were they which Moses brake (Ex. 34:1). But the second edition of the tables of the Law was not less God's when written, and had not less authority and weight than had the first. They were prepared by Moses, but written upon by God (Ex. 34:1; Deut. 10:1-4). They were a divinely accredited transcript of the Divine mind upon the subject then in hand, as much as were the first.

Just so, though God did not write with His own finger the Bible, the book was God's book; the writing was divinely-breathed, and it was thus a divinely accredited transcript of the Divine mind upon the subject in hand, quite as much so as if His own finger had traced it on a rock, and that rock was before us.

It is clear, both as to a Moses and a Paul, that they were fallible men; it is clear, too, that they did speak at times unadvisedly with their lips: but God not only revealed to them thoughts of His own, but also inspired them to write; and, not only that, but inspired the writing. I rest on this, because I find so few mark the importance of the differences alluded to. I could not say of a Moses or of a Paul, that he was the perfect transcript of one single truth in God (that can be said only of Him, the Son of Man, who is the truth); but of Scripture, given by a Paul or a Moses, I can say, This is as much and as purely the transcript of the Divine mind, as if the finger of God had written it.

If God thus wrote, through the instrumentality of man, about Satan, or the world, or man, the record is divine: the subjects treated of might be (as I said, and. as we wanted God's explanation of such as were in violent opposition, as Satan; or a system in which man can intoxicate himself with the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season (and so sin away the day of grace), as the world, or man, in his imbecility, vibrating between opposite influences, yet, like a stone rolled down a hill or cast into a pit, always descending, as man's flesh: subjects in insubjection to God, yet of which He has given a divine exposition, in the past, present and future of their histories.

As we have seen, revelation may be without any inspiration: also, as in the case of a Balaam and an Agabus, it might be through inspiration. The prophetic Spirit might move in a man, and make revelations through him: There is an interesting point to be noticed, and that is, the action of the Spirit in inspiration, when gleaning up for writing revelations which had been made otherwise than by inspiration. It is illustrated in the four gospels, as much as in a Moses, an Ezra, etc. The Spirit brought to the memory of each evangelist the very things which he, in particular, was to record; when Truth, which had been revealed to sight and hearing, was brought afresh by the Spirit to the mind of each evangelist who had to write it-this bringing to mind was inspiration (John 14:26; 15:26, 27; 16:8-11, 13-15, 25). It is often quite separable from revelation, as in the historic facts recorded in the four gospels. But then, as I have urged before, there is another thing here besides that Divine recalling to mind of past revelations and facts, as doubtless Peter had when preaching at Pentecost,-and that is, such a full power put forth, somehow or the other, as to enable the writer to pen down that which contains nothing but what God would have inscribed, and yet contains all

that infallibly present.

The distinction, then, between revelation, inspiration, and scripture, with its infallibility, is evident. A remark or two more on this part of our subject may suffice. One has said, "All scripture, then, is given by inspiration of God. Yet some scripture, by no means all, is given by revelation of God."

If I look at Peter-a godly Jew, fearing God, and listening, perhaps, like Timothy, to Jewish scripture from childhood; inquiring about Messiah, and then following Him as a disciple-he saw and heard the blessed Master and, all the circumstances through which they passed.

If I turn from Peter's case to Paul's, what a difference meets me. He had been a bitter persecutor, ignorant of God, and a blasphemer of Christ-but all was revealed directly to him by Christ in ascension glory. Then if I think of myself-with nothing but God and the word of His grace: no sight, no hearing of the Lord as a man upon earth; no open vision, no fresh revelation; but the means, of all my blessing found in God and the word of His grace-I see no difficulty in tracing vast differences in the modes of God's dealing-differences, too, which throw light upon the distinctions of revelation, inspiration, and the characteristic of the word of the Lord, in the light in which we have looked at it.

I would now turn to consider my subject in a somewhat different connection.

There are several deeply important purposes connected with the revealed mind of God. 1st. The revelation of it was and is the vindication of the divine glory in a world of sin; 2ndly, the committing of the oracles of God to a people, however formed upon earth, constituted an intelligible ground of responsibility; 3rdly, the application by divine power of His word, is His means of connecting man with Him in blessing for time and for eternity.

1st. By the word of the Lord not only were the heavens made, but, it was by the word of the Lord that. Adam's charter of blessing was fixed, and that the continuance of blessing was made to hinge upon his continued subjection and obedience to that word so spoken. But, while the higher parts of the testimony were thus fixed by the word of the Lord, there was also that-a creation all around-which rendered a testimony to Him in His eternal power and God-head, in the very works which He had previously called into being. When, however, sin had entered through man's disobedience, the creation-testimony did not suffice any longer. It would not have been per se, even in its best estate, a sufficient testimony for God Himself when dealing with sinners; and man's rebellion against God left the creation, in a measure, under the power of one who was an enemy; and the conscience of man, when estranged from God, could find no answer in creation to the new need which sin had created. There was, in truth, nothing the voice of which could meet the sinner's need. When God announced that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, there was introduced in this word that which vindicated God fully in His new work, and in the circumstances. It had a testimony, too, in it, before principalities and powers, which spake to man of that purpose of God in redemption, which alone could meet the sinner's need. It was a word spoken by God and spoken to the serpent, though in the presence of man, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (Gen. 3:15).

Now this was the germ of that which is the perfect vindication of God and Godhead under the new circumstances, both in itself and in the way of putting it forth; it contained everything that man

needed as to his position and self; and it presented that which could give blessing. That God could pass by what had just occurred, was impossible. Creation told of His eternal power and Godhead; His truthfulness was pledged by the word of warning which He had spoken to Adam. He might have vindicated Himself against this new inroad of His adversary the devil, by putting forth destroying power. But He was God; and He drew His motives from within Himself. He had plans and counsels of displaying the exceeding riches of His grace, which would not have been answered by destroying judgments: He took up the question as one of controversy with Satan. Man had lost, thrown up, the first place in that scene-yielded it to Satan. The seed of the woman whom Satan had beguiled should bruise the serpent's head.

Here was a vindication of Himself before all intelligences. Satan, the destroyer and the liar, should find the destruction of his power and the vanity of his own lie, through a feeble one whom he had betrayed to destruction by a lie, and should himself work out his own destruction. The Paradise made to display the eternal power of Godhead in a creation placed by the Word of God under Adam, but which Adam had betrayed, Satan should he allowed to turn to a trap and a snare in which to cage himself. Man had sunk to a place of zero. He must now choose between God and Satan. If he listened to self and circumstances, he would go on under Satan, and having made choice of him, would share his fate. If he would, even amid inward and outward ruin, receive and own the Word of God, he would find himself rescued from Satan, and identified with God in blessing. Such was the divine plan. But as he had 'lost all through neglecting God's warning, man could alone be rescued from his lost estate by the God, who, in his hearing, had declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and by honoring that Word. This declaring things to come-the end from the beginning-is much rested upon in Isaiah (as in ch. 40-43) as an indisputable mark of divine glory. And if we think of Adam and Eve in Eden, ruined in them, selves, under Satan, and of the Lord having then and there dropped a word which was to contain a seven 'thousand years' history of man upon earth, and then to issue in a new heaven and a new earth; and Satan bruised in the lake prepared for him and his angels, we can well see the propriety of this setting forth of God's consciousness of the worth of His Word, and of His determination that man should bow to it. As to the handing down of the Word of God, doubtless it was handed down from Adam to Moses. But the writing of that which had preceded, so far as God was pleased to have it put on record, was quite a new thing, and involved inspiration... 2nd. It was not done, so far as we know, until Israel was owned of God as a people, who were the center of His governmental plans for the earth. They were made the keepers of the Oracles of God. The deposit to them referred to in Rom. 3:1, 2, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the Oracles of God," is one thing. The consequence of this, in certain dispensational dealings of God with them (as referred to in Rom. 11) is another. Thus, the nation Israel became witnesses of God upon: earth (Isa. 43:9, 10, 12; 44:8). The responsibility in time is quite separable from the question of the bearing of truth upon eternity. This is true in the Old Testament times, and may be proved in various ways.

"Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore. I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:1; 2) [see also Isa. 1; Balaam, Num. 22; 24 and Jer. and Ezek.]. So, also, Paul separated between a dispensation of the Gospel, having been committed to him (1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2), and his own faithfulness (1 Cor.

9:27), and broadly states that his ministry had an end, independent of the kind of effect which it took upon the souls of his hearers (2 Cor. 2:14-17): "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." This is, in principle, the same as Ezek. 2:5: "And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them." This responsibility exists now—little thought of as it is. There is among men a class which has had the Oracles of God committed to it; and those oracles so committed to the nominal church, constitute a responsibility: a responsibility which will be distinctly judged (Rev. 22:11-15).

3rd. The application, in divine power, of the Word of God, or His means of connecting man with Him in blessing for time and for eternity.

It will be seen, that I make a distinction between revelation, inspiration, and infallibility. I do so, because they differ in themselves. I must now call attention to another difference. We may not forget that the connections of a truth, often modify, qualify, and affect its force. For instance, if I speak of the Bible, I say of it, absolutely and without qualification: "A revelation from God; a divinely inspired book: infallibly perfect."

If I knew how to express, more strongly than I have thus done, the absolute perfection of Scripture as a standard of truth; that the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible is owned by me as alone the standard of truth; that it contains revelations of things, such as none but God could make; that it was (in the writing of it)—fully and divinely inspired, and, therefore, infallibly perfect; I say, if I knew how to express myself more strongly on these matters than I have done, I would gladly do it. But if I have to speak of myself as a man, I cannot forget that a perfect standard of truth, while it is enough to vindicate God, and to condemn men, and every man, is not enough to save a soul.; not enough in itself and without the Spirit's blessing, to make me now a servant of God, and hereafter a possessor of glory. And again, if I speak of myself as a saint, I am not, because I cannot apply the terms Revelation, Inspiration, and Infallibility to myself, in the same way as I can apply them to Scripture, I am not", I say, to deny that I am taught of God; have an unction from the Holy One, whereby I know all things; that I am dependent upon the inbreathing of the Spirit, and upon his revelations of truth to my soul. True: in all these actings toward me and towards His saints, He who acts is divinely perfect, for the Holy Ghost is God; and He is subserving the present glory of Christ in so acting in me. But I am an earthen vessel, with a law of sin and death in me, and much dross. The Teacher is a living Teacher, and is infallibly perfect; and, having given a standard of truth, He applies such parts of it to my soul as grace appoints. Am I infallible then? No. An Infallible Teacher may teach infallibly that which a fallible pupil may learn but defectively. There is the revelation of the truth in itself as a whole to a soul, by the Spirit, as giving life through the spiritual knowledge of the Lord Jesus. This is a thing done once and at once; and there is the development, in detail, of the truth in the affections, conscience, and understanding of the believer. In teaching the saved child, the Infallible Teacher may, in grace, only breathe in parts of truth at a time; and the most fallible disciple may not receive the part so presented to him, perhaps, without adding on something of his own to it, or dropping some portion.

But to see the infallibility of the Teacher, His perfect power to breathe in, and His perfect power to reveal fully and perfectly, and in every detail, to such an- one as I am-all truth-you must wait a little. God has His own ways of acting. He will not, on the one hand, let you condemn me; because, having taken me up in grace, He has reserved the full expression of what His apprehension of me is, until the Lord Jesus comes; nor, on the other, will He allow me either to accredit myself with having wrought that which He has wrought in me, or to entertain the shadow of a doubt as though His promise were not as sure of fulfillment as it is of having been spoken and written.

The perfection of Revelation, Inspiration, and Infallibility of God's standard (among men) of truth in the Scriptures is, to any simple mind, easily seen to be quite distinct from the glory of the Holy Ghost as an infallible Teacher, Revealer, and Inspirer of truth to the believer. And pitiful it is to find, that, while they who are babes in Christ find no difficulty, some that count themselves wise, see no alternative for them but to decide that the saints are either infallible in their views, and enjoyers of new revelations; and perfectly inspired, or can have no moral spiritual certainty in their souls, because of their being still in bodies of sin and death. There is but one thing more sad, and that is the ecclesiastical fallacy of supposing that both experiences exist. "I, the infallible teacher, and my fellows, the taught, dependent upon me." What is man!! Dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1); a child of wrath (ver. 3); having the devil for his father (John 8:38-44) and god (2 Cor. 4:4); at enmity with God (Col. 1:21): and fully under the power of the world, the flesh and the devil, was Saul. of Tarsus when grace picked him up. And, truly, in this case Christ was found of one that sought Him not; was made manifest to one that inquired not after Him (Rom. 10:20). Yea, more; there was aggressiveness in love on the part of Christ, towards this poor lost one (see Acts 9).

Nothing could meet the needs of the case, save the free gift of a new life; eternal life in the Son (Col. 3:3); free pardon (Eph. 1:7); and acceptance in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6.); the adoption of children (ver. 5.); translation into the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1. 13.); the spirit of adoption, crying, Abba, Father (Rom. 8.15), sent into his heart (Gal. 4:6), as a token of the relationship which faith in the Son involved (Gal. 3 and 4) There is nothing homogenous between God and Satan, or between the state of a child of wrath and that of an adopted son of God. No grace of congruity between a Saul of Tarsus and a Paul. Contrast-well and strongly defined-and not similarity-marks the opposite extremes. When I look at a Saul of Tarsus, the bitter persecutor and destroyer of the faith, and then look at Paul, as he shall be hereafter in glory, most highly owned and blessed, in the glory given by God to Paul's Master, "mercy, from first to last," is all that I can think or say of the golden cord and the divine conduct, that passed him from one position and state to the other.

To originate life, to sustain and uphold life (in any form of it), is not work for a creature, however highly blessed. But to give fellowship with the eternal life that is in the Son of God; to quicken one who was dead in trespasses and sins, is clearly a work pertaining to Him alone, who is the Second Adam, life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). And this life, the source of which He, Himself, is (Col. 1, 2, 3) the communicator of which He is (John 4:14) - the divine nature communicated (2 Peter 1:4) - is a blessing of such a nature, that it is debtor in nothing to the party to whom it is given; and, when given, owes its sustainment, preservation, and guidance, entirely to God. This, as we shall see, does not prevent God from subjugating all that was in the man to the new nature; nor His using certain things which were in the man for His own glory. Let us not be unstable and unlearned, and wrest scripture to our own destruction: for some, because God dwells and works in man, would

accredit the flesh and themselves thereby; so putting self above God and His grace, and that to their own dishonor: for He will not give His glory to another.

The verse, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:6)," proves that the blessed Lord owned not only two sources of being, "flesh," and spirit;" but also two channels of wisdom, energy, and purpose.

I would now look (first), at the birthright portion of an individual so blessed; and, then (secondly), at his place in the body; and (thirdly, and) lastly, at the bearing of the teacher.

The doctrine of the Lord (Matt. 6:16-34) teaches us that the purpose of the heart decides its state and its condition. If the glory of God, and subjection to His will, is the purpose -of my heart-light, with all its attendant blessings, is mine. If, on the other hand, my inward purpose is to serve myself in any way, then dark, tress, and want of blessing, is mine. This flows out of the reality of Divine glory: God cannot deny Himself. If any have found grace to seek to subserve His pleasure, they hold their proper position as creatures, and they will find that He will 'not deny Himself if any man will do God's will he shall know as to the doctrine. How many a. soul has found a buoy in that declaration, as well as a just ground of humiliation as to itself, and a complete uncovering of the awfulness of its past voluntary insubjection to God. But, when so exercised, it learns that "this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom hath sent." (John 6:29.)

"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. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:22-24).

Paul's word (Gal. 3:26.) settles summarily both the principle on which we are blessed, and the character of the blessing: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." The principle is faith-wise; the position into which we are brought is, that of being children of God. This is authoritative, and obliges us to judge all our doubts and fears as being dishonoring to God [Rom. 3:4, Heb. 6:18-20], and as proofs of the contrast between us and Christ. All blessing is ours already in Him; and are we too much occupied with our own feelings to think about Him? Nay; there is to the ruined, rest in Him. In Him, there is, to faith, Divine certainty of salvation for the lost. So also as to the blessing which they have as children, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). The cry of "Abba" comes, even before they know the truth which justifies to their understandings its being addressed by them to God? Whence comes it? The Spirit in them is the spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:16), and they are all taught of God (John 6:45). They have, as babes among the children of God, an unction from the Holy One, that they may know all things (1 John 2:20), and the Spirit has his own thoughts and modes of deduction (Rom. 8:17): "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with. Him, that we may be also glorified together."

2ndly. The believer's place in the body.

Life and blessing are my own: life and blessing too which set me apart in isolate Nazariteship to God, even the Father; to Christ who is the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete; and this, ere ever I have to do with another man. And more than that, the whole flow of my life and service is as

an individual before God. I cannot, for a brother's sake, or for a fellow servant's sake, forget whose I am and whom I serve. In saying this, I am not losing sight of the Father's heart being upon all His children; or of Christ being Head of the Body His Church; or of the truth of the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost making the church an habitation of God, through the Spirit, and displaying the union of the members in one body. Not so; but I am guarding against a very common abuse of these precious truths, by the which the individual acts towards the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, according to the low sunken state of those around Him, instead of acting towards his associates and before the world, according to that which is true in Christ in God; and true to my heart, at least if I have faith, through the Holy Ghost.

I now cite a few verses, as showing the individual dealing of Christ with the saved people, and the revelation to them of a Father's love.

Matt. 10:19,20: "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

John 14:19-23: "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Eph. 5:18,19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord."

1 Thess. 4:9: "But as touching brotherly, love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."

I must now notice a jealousy which exists in some minds against the use of the word "revelation," in one sense and connection in which it certainly is used in scripture. Now, clearly all jealousy against what is scriptural, is prejudice and prejudicial, and flows from defective light and knowledge; it is prejudicial to the party under it, and leaves the soul exposed to error. In a day like the present, when the lightness and irreverent levity of man's self-sufficiency has impugned the reality of God's having written a book, which is a revelation-one can quite understand how a reaction has been produced in an opposite direction to that of the current of avowed infidelity; so that I attribute no wrongness of intention; yet, as a matter of fact, Christian men are often jealous of, one scriptural use of the word reveal, and by their jealousy prepare fresh weapons for the enemy's hand against themselves and others.

My statement, then, is this: not only did God by revelation bring out truth, and place it by inspiration in the Bible, which truth man could never have guessed at without revelation-and this in vindication of Himself, and for the condemnation of man-whether men will hear or whether they will forbear-but, also, if the individual is to be blessed, God has to reveal the truth to the soul of the individual believer. For man (and much more--fallen man) is not competent to take to himself, to

understand, and to appropriate, even the most palpable, most distinct, truth which God has disclosed. But I will give some of the texts.

They are texts which I present to the simple reader, and leave them with him before the Lord, with the single remark, that they seem to me to prove that the use of the words "revelation," "reveal," etc., is not in: scripture limited to God's bringing out, or setting forth, truth which could not otherwise have been known-but is extended also to the action of Christ, or of the Spirit of Christ, in pouring into individual souls truth which had been divinely revealed previously.

Matt. 11:25,27: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son Will reveal him" (Corn. Luke 10:22, etc.).

Phil. 3:14,15: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

Matt. 16:17: "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Eph. 1:15-17: "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not. to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him."

Gal. 1:15,16: "But 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."

1 Cor. 14:30: "If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace." (See also 1 Cor. 2:20.)

The reader may further examine for himself, the difference between, 1st, "The shining out from God, of truth;" and 2nd, "Its shining in to many hearts, and sometimes out again therefrom." (Luke 10:22; 17:30; Rom. 1:17, 18; 8:18, 19; Eph. 3:5).

3rdly. The teacher given of God.

There is, in all true teaching, a present action of the Holy Ghost in the teacher himself. I say not discernible to him; but still it is there; for, if it be not there, then the energy that is there, is that which is born of the flesh, and, is flesh; and human intellect is left to use known Scripture, and the gift of aptitude to talk.

Ex. 3:11-4:16; Jer. 1:6, 7; 2 Cor. 2:6; 10:10, show with what weakness, and fear, and trembling, and (alas!) even guilty unbelief, the service of the most highly-endowed may be mixed.)

It has been quietly assumed by some, that the truth of God is a theory which is committed to man's care to hold, and to the teacher's intellect only to communicate. Because, in natural things, a man

cannot give you what he does not possess, or teach that which he does not know, I cannot assume this to be true in divine things. I admit that I could not give the first principles of Hebrew grammar, and arithmetic, etc., unless I possessed them and knew them thoroughly myself. But is this true as to divine things? I say No: a young believer, whose heart and conscience has been reached by truth, through the Spirit of all grace, will often (if he does not go beyond his own experience, but, modestly, presents merely what himself has felt) be found to be a wise teacher. He cannot speak as a doctor; but he speaks of that which he has felt and known. Then, again, some of the best teaching that I ever heard was impromptu; the teacher learning in his chapter as he taught others. The Lord giving quite as much to him in teaching; yea, sometimes, more than to the taught, though all might get a portion. And, again, when I am taught, that which the teacher presents may blend itself with matter previously in my mind; matter which is altogether beyond the teacher's ken, or even standing, and which elicits truth new to me: truth which the teacher, never thought of.

To degrade a teacher given of God to a mere communicator of mentally known truth, is not to honor God, or to exalt oneself as His servant.

God has His own way of making a standard of truth- set forth, in vindication of Himself and in warning to all, before all. But He never left that standard to accredit itself, nor His servants (prophets, apostles, or gifted men) to themselves in applying it.

"Paul may plant, Apollos water; it is God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6). "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit" (Zech. 4:6). Apollos-how was it that he came to listen to an Aquila and a Priscilla (Acts 18:26), disciples of Paul, as they were (ver. 2)-when he afterward had no ear to hear Paul (1 Cor. 16:12)? I suppose, that Paul was not one whit behind the chiefest of the apostles; but he found, with all his knowledge, gifts, and faithfulness, that he could not breathe into any soul, either gospel for sinners or truth for saints. He had to be faithful; and God was honored, and man's wickedness was shown out, when he was faithful: for he was a sweet-smelling savor to God, both in them that are saved, and in them that perish. But the being a savor of life unto life; the building up, too, in the most holy faith, supposes a present action of the Holy Ghost attending the word, and this may not be ignored any more than the overruling and suggestion, by the Spirit, in the teacher.

Note on Inspiration

In English, the word inspiration, usually, and not incorrectly, drops from the lips and pens of common people, and of accurate scholars too, as meaning "a breathing into."

The Church of England Prayer-book may fairly be quoted in this connection; viz., in proof of what both learned and unlearned mean by "inspiration."

"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy name, etc. See the Collect in the Communion Service.

The idea is simple, and, as stated here, is scriptural: we need not only the written word, but, also, the inbreathing of the Holy Ghost, if love and, holiness are to be perfected in us. Each believer is a temple of the Holy Ghost- truly: but who can read Rom. 8:26 and 27, and Heb. 4:12 and 13, without admitting that, the Scripture theory is, that the Holy Ghost does form desires and prayers; and does apply a word to the heart, in secret; and that this is not of, man but of God. See, also, Phil. 1:19, "through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ;" also 2:12, 13.

The address to God, as Inspirer and Hearer of prayer, is commonly known; and is not, that I am aware of, unscriptural.

Again, in Bunyan, we find this same idea. He describes one of his experiences, ere he found peace. A thought possessed his soul, which seemed breathed into him, concerning the Christ; the thought was Sell Him, sell Him, sell Him, sell Him." Which he endeavored to outspoke, and speak down by the words: "Not for a thousand worlds, not for a thousand worlds, not for a thousand worlds." But in vain; for the thought which Satan had breathed in (it was a Satan-inspired thought) could not be smothered by Bunyan's words. Satan's spirit was stronger than his. And are not fiery darts often spoken of as Satan-inspired, breathed into us by Satan.

The damsel possessed with a spirit of divination (Acts 16:6) was Satan-inspired.- So were the oracles of old. See also Acts 5:3; and 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 11:14; 12:7; 2 Thess. 2:9, etc., etc. And what is witch craft (Gal. 5:20) as still practiced in the dark corners of the earth?

What, again, in the better sense, but inbreathing from Christ, does Matt. 10:19, 20 refer to? And who, that is Christ's does not know what it is, when sometimes a light surprises the Christian on his road." How, when heavy and cast down, some new thought will come like a breeze o'er his soul,-thought about Christ and heaven; and how, when fully set upon some coming action, a thought of danger and warning will come over him, which, in the end, proves to have been of God.."

There is nothing' superstitious in trusting to GOD and the word of His grace. And it is not soundness of faith to despise impression and do violence to impulses without first judging them in God's presence by the word. If they are against His word, let them be despised.

I have no doubt that sober Christian men are quite correct in speaking of inspiration in the sense referred to; as a privilege of the believer; and yet, at the same time, dividing, as the intelligent do, between this and that fullest kind of divine inspiration, in which not only God breathes with the truth, but in which He adds quite ANOTHER THING; and that is infallible perfectness; so as to enable a prophet of old to say, and to say correctly, "Thus saith the Lord;" so as to enable a Stephen to be so full of faith and the Holy Ghost, when he was a-dying, that (as I suppose) all that he then said was not only divinely breathed into him, but divinely expressed by him. This is what people mean by plenary inspiration. All Scripture is God-inspired (2 Tim. 3:16).

2 Peter 1:15-21 brings before us a variety of things connected with this same subject -

(1) Apostolic handing down (2) of teaching, (3) concerning a special revelation, (4) communicated in a most wonderful vision, (5) when Christ was on the Mount of Transfiguration, (6) according with a more sure word of written prophecy, which (7) came through a direct movement of the Holy Ghost as to the speaker.

2 Peter 1:15-21: Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His Majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Thoughts on Revelations

In pursuing the present explanation of the Apocalypse, I shall endeavor to give all the light which I may have acquired; but with the fullest acknowledgment, that many parts remain obscure; and explaining, what I judge to be clear, without, in all things, teaching it as ascertained truth, as in many parts of Scripture the Christian ought to do. Further, I shall here consider the whole defined period to be one half week, not two. The facts and personages, in this point of view, remain unaltered; it is merely the relationships of detail as to time, and the particular force of certain passages which are affected by it. Many treatises have been published, viewing the Apocalypse as revealing the distinct events of two half weeks; the comparison the reader will be enabled to make of the explanation of the book after the two methods, will lead to a fuller judgment of the connection of the various parts of it.

Besides the direct blessed witness of God's love and of personal salvation, there are two subjects which Scripture presents to us as a whole. The government of this world; and the Church. The latter is now, through the Holy Ghost, the recipient and depository of divine knowledge.

The Church's portion is heavenly: to be in heaven in spirit now, and when the fullness of times has brought in the accomplishment of God's purposes; to be there, in fact, associated with Christ the government of the earth. Her own proper place is the bride and body of Christ. But the Church has also an outward and responsible existence on the earth. She ought to be the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men; and present thus the character of God before the world. In this respect, she is looked at as a responsible dispensation in the world. God's husbandry; God's building, where men may build badly, though the foundation may have been well laid. Christ will build His own work, through all phases of the Church's existence; and have the Church, as His house, of which He will be the light and glory, perfect in glory. Against this work on earth, or its result in heaven, no power of him who has the empire of death can prevail; but, as entrusted to man's responsible service on earth, the Church stands in the position of a dispensation: to be rejected and cast off, if it does not maintain its faithfulness and manifest the glory entrusted to it; it is like all the various ways and dealings of God with men; sinless man at first, the promises, the law, the priesthood, the Jewish royalty in obedience with the law, Gentile supremacy without any, have respectively been trusted to men; man has failed in them all. All will be set up in grace, in or under Christ. The second Adam will be there, of which the first was but an image; the promises fulfilled, the law written in the heart, priesthood in its excellency made good, Jewish royalty in the Son of David, supremacy over the Gentiles, in Him who shall rise to reign over them. The Church-though forming no part of this series of dealings, yet, as the sphere of the manifestation of Christ's heavenly glory, by man's faithfulness on the earth, as the house of God, through the Spirit - is subject to the same divine law, first or responsibility in man, failure, and divine accomplishment in grace and power. Local assemblies - candlesticks - come under the same rule. In their normal state, they locally represent the normal state of the Church, that which is manifested of Christ's body on earth; but, as is the case with the general assembly, they may be so corrupt as to require that the candlestick should be removed. There is this difference, that the removal of the

candlestick leaves the assembly in general subsisting on the earth; whereas, of course, the closing of the responsibility of the whole assembly removes it as the scene of God's dealings on earth. Hence, we are sure, that the latter never can take place, till the time for the bride and body of Christ to have a better place in heaven be come also.

The Apocalypse reveals to us Christ as Son of God, or Ancient of days, in His divine title of judgment; and it contemplates the judgment of the assembly, and the judgment of the world, particularly of the last apostate power. In this point of view we must read it, or we shall never understand it. Hence, the communications are prophetic in their character. The direct relationships of the father to his children, and of Christ to His bride and body, are not before us; though, at the close, the bride be spoken of in order to identify the city with her. The saints have the consciousness of the grace in which they stand, as also the Church at the end of its own relationship; but these are in no way the subject of the book, but distinguish themselves sharply from it. The book is prophetic, because it is occupied with government and the world; and the assembly itself is viewed in its responsibility on earth, in which character it will finally be rejected; not, surely, as the body of Christ united to the Head in heaven. It is all-important not only in respect to the Apocalypse but as to truth' in general, to enter clearly into this distinction. Without it, the Church will never be known; as the knowledge of the Church, on the other hand, makes it instantly and necessarily felt. All belonging to Christ, save His relationship to the Church, is found in the Old Testament, that could not be. All was open, publicly revealed, that concerned Himself. The Church could not be. It lay at the foundation of the Church's existence, that the Middle wall should be broken down. It lay at the very foundation of the existence of Israel and the law, that it should be kept up. Indeed, the responsibility of the first man would not have been otherwise fully tried. The Church, and our relationship to God, repose on the fact, that that responsibility is closed by our being wholly lost, and a wholly new place taken by the second man risen from the dead; His work being accepted, and thereupon Himself also accepted and glorified, and we in and because of Him.

Our responsibility, even, is of another kind. It is to walk as lie walked, not to live up to what Adam ought to have been, or what the law required; but to let this life of Jesus be manifested in our mortal body as dead to sin, the world, and the law; and living in that life which came down in the person of the Son from heaven. I must, however, add here, that the revelation of the Father by the Son, as dwelling eternally in His bosom, is not to be looked for in the Old Testament. The relationship of son is, doubtless, found therein, so that the thought is not foreign to it; but it is sonship employed in a conventional way (I do not mean, of course, not a true way), or viewed in time, and not founded in the nature of His Person in the Godhead; but as a relationship formed on earth. "He shall be to me a Son, and I will declare the decree, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee," This is in time on the earth. The glorious and true title and character of Messiah. So, in the passage referred to, "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son. I will make him my first-born, higher than Agag; greater than the kings of the earth." But in the New Testament we find the Son in His own proper relationship to the Father. No man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; He hath declared Him. He has declared, even when on earth, the Father's name. He came forth from the Father. By the Son God created all things. He puts us in this relationship of children and sons, adopted no doubt, but by becoming our life. So that life is never said to be in us, though we have it, and are said to have it. But God

hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. This leads me to examine, more nearly, the nature and character of the Apocalypse; because it is specially John who brings forward this last point of view, while speaking of the truths connected with our salvation, especially the presence of the Holy Ghost, and, in the epistle, of propitiation. In his gospel, it is the Son who is come as life; the life being the light of men. In the epistle, this is taken as the ground-work; and the life communicated to us, and its existence tested by its true character to guard us against deceivers. It is remarkable, that, save in a few passages coming into complete the truth here and there -and they are very few and short-John never sees this life carried up to its ultimate result in the purpose, of God; but manifested in this world, whether in Christ Himself or in us. The fact, that we shall go up on high to the Father's house, is blessedly stated in the beginning of chapter 14, and desired in the end of 17; but it is no where the general subject. Paul, who was born out of due time, between the first and second comings of Christ; who knew Christ only in the glory in which He was in heaven, man glorified, the result with God of His accomplished work, who was not to know Christ after the flesh, Paul, who was especially apostle of the Church, the minister of the Church to complete the Word of God, who was converted by the revelation of the heavenly glory of Christ on one hand, and of the union of the saints, with Him so glorified, on the other. Paul puts us, perfectly accepted, in the glory in Christ, and sees this life in the risen and glorified one and in us, crucified with Him, but alive; not "we live, but Christ lives in us." -But-John, and hence the exceeding sweetness of the writings he has given to us by the Holy Ghost, presents the Divine person of the Son in life (and that in grace in flesh, Divine love showing itself, and the Father), in His blessed superiority to evil, and as Divine love does, adapting itself to the want and sorrow around it, to everything the human heart could need, yet light all through. We do not get man up to heaven, so to speak, in John; but we get God Himself in grace, the Son revealing the Father down on earth. The gospel-and epistle, as we have seen, reveal this life in itself or in us; but the gospel (for the epistle gives us the life between the departure and return of the Lord) gives us a hint at the end; of the apostle holding on a testimony to the coming of Christ. He did not say he should not die; but if He would that he tarried till he came. Paul might build the Church, or lay its foundation as a wise master-builder; Peter teach a pilgrim how to follow Him that was risen, and had begotten Him again to a lively hope by it-how to follow his master through the wilderness, in which, after all, God still governed. These, and others, warn too of coming evils. But he who was so personally near to Christ, Jewish in his relationships and full of them; but in whose eyes, at the same time as taught of God, a person who was, in Himself, above all relationship, save with the Father, and who had a place in which He could be in the Father's bosom, yet walk as man, in the title and manifestation of the Son, upon earth, and withal a place in his own, heart; through grace, which attached him to His person, and life in it, -such an one (and such an one was John, the disciple whom Jesus loved) could watch, with the power of divine love, over the departing glories of the Church on earth in the energy of a life which could not fail in it, and pass on with prophetic vision to establish the rights of the same person (out of and on the part of heaven, yet still) on earth (rights, whose establishment should bring peace on the earth, and set aside the evil, and make these rights good, where the prophet had seen them despised, in One he so loved, as manifested on earth), and connect the blessing of a rescued world, which grace could bless through Him, though it had once rejected Him. The ways of bringing about this, with the failing Church's previous history, is What is given us in the Apocalypse, with the prophetically known person and glory of Christ connecting itself, first,

with the responsible assembly on earth, though then judicially, and then with the earth.

From the beginning of the book, we have the revelation given treated as a prophecy. It is a revelation given of God to Christ to show what must shortly come to pass. The churches themselves thus come in merely as a kind of necessary introduction, their rejection by Christ as to their testimony on earth, as yet the subject of prophecy and warning, was needed for Christ's assuming the government of the world. Christ sends it by his angel - not exactly an angel, but one who specially represented Himself, - to His servant John. He bears record. It is the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ and a vision. This sentence is important. It is, no doubt, the character, except the being a vision, of all Scripture; but it gives us the fact that the present prophecy is the testimony of Jesus, and the suffering in the time of, and according to this prophecy, is suffering for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. It gives us, moreover, what indeed is evident and cannot be otherwise, but an additional proof of the same, that the prophecy is addressed not to the people of God or saints, as in their normal state, like the epistles, but is a revelation about them to another. In the prophets, those who prophesied when the people were warned, carried the word directly from God to the people immediately addressed by Him. So in the epistles, though in another form, the Holy Ghost addressed Himself directly to the saints for their good and instruction. In Daniel, it is for the people, but not to them; and even in Zechariah, and in a measure in Habakkuk; so in the Apocalypse. It is something given to John, of course as all the New Testament, for the Church, but not directly to the Church in its own natural state. The Church on earth is itself looked at as the subject of prophetic address, and as in relationship with the God of Prophecy who governs the world, not with the Father. The Son of Man who is Judge walks in the midst of the churches. Grace and peace is wished from Him who is and was and was coming-from the seven spirits' in which the fullness of all His attributes in government is developed, and from Christ as connected with the earth, though risen. But the time of the Church as such is left out in this greeting of grace, i.e. the character of Christ at that time. He is faithful witness, that He was in manifestation on the earth. First-begotten from the dead, He is risen (that, too, on earth, not ascended) -then prince of the kings of the earth, what He is indeed, now, in title, but one in which the passage springs over, from His resurrection to His governmental title when He comes again. We have no church-relationship; but all that He was, has been, and will be, as to the earth, and what gives Him His right in the kingdom set up in right and power on the earth.

I have no doubt there were these seven churches in the state thus alluded to; and in the language used, we must keep this in mind. But I cannot think that with this number seven, the character of the addresses, and details of expression, it is possible not to see that a wider sphere of thought is before the apostle's prophetic eye. But subjects previously spoken of by the apostle; call for our attention first. We have Christ in three positions, or characters, in the Apocalypse. Walking robed down to His feet in the midst of the candlesticks; the Lamb in the midst of the throne; and Christ coming forth on the white horse; not to speak of the description of the city, of which He is the light-bearer.

The character of God here is Jehovah, the Ancient of days, who was, and who is, and is the coming One. This is, in fact, the character in which God is revealed, as the One who is to be a great King over all the earth. He was Almighty for Abraham -will be Most High over all that is. But Jehovah is His personal, name, in which He takes the rule as One who had counsels, purposes, and would fulfill them by His own power, and has given the revelation of it.

As is said in Psa. 83:18, "that men may know that thou; whose name is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth." So Psa. 87 and 91, where the three names are brought together so beautifully and strikingly, when the power of the Almighty is promised to secure him who knew the secret of the Most High, and it is answered (by Messias) I will take the God of the Jews; "I will say of Jehovah, He is my fortress," the Psalm then going on, speaking in the person of the godly Jew, to celebrate the rightness of the answer; Jehovah Himself closing it with His approbation: "Because He has set His love upon me, therefore will I deliver him."

It is in this name that blessing is now wished to the "seven churches which are in Asia."

Next, we have it wished from "the seven spirits, which are before His throne." This last word may be remarked, We are in presence of a throne on which Jehovah is, and seven spirits are before it. It is not froth the Father, and from the Son, in their communion, and from the Divine nature, in its own blessedness, but from Jehovah, the Supreme Governor, upon His throne. And the spirits, as the lamps in the tabernacle, all before the Throne. The Spirit itself has its place as the perfect development of governmental power in exercise from God. The spirits are the manifestation and display of this before the throne.

The characters of Christ are also of importance here. I have already spoken of their being in connection with the earth; but there is something more. We have all that was needed to give the rightful place of government over the earth, with which He is here in connection He is, but much more, He was, the faithful witness of God upon the earth. He spoke what He knew; testified what He had seen. He declared righteousness in the great congregation, did not refrain His lips; that Jehovah knew; at all cost to Himself bore witness to what God was, made good the witness of it before men. That was an immense service. He made good the perfect witness of light in the world. "While I am in the world I am the light of the world; and God is light." And that in spite of hatred and opposition because of it. So that men had to say, "This is the message which We have heard of Him, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." And what He declared He was in manifestation, He was in every sense - a faithful Witness. When asked what He was, He could reply, "In nature and principle what I said unto you;" τὸν ἄρχοντα, τὸ λαλῶν (John 8.25). His words were the witness and expression of what He was; and this and its rejection is just the subject of that chapter, and the proof of man's guilt; they loved darkness. No. doubt His witness was a witness of life in Himself, too; for the life was the light of man; but this remained in abeyance, so to speak, as to its revelation to us', and the part we could have in it till after His death, when we have the Spirit, blood and water (which flowed out of his side when slain, as the Spirit came because he went away), as witnesses that God hath given unto us eternal life, and that this life is in His Son. The life was the light, and the light of men, properly of men as such; but except a corn of wheat fell into the ground and died; it remained alone. Hence He was straitened till that baptism was accomplished. And the witness of all this was consequent on His death, a witness about Him rather than by Him. Hence I do not speak of the witness that eternal life is given to us in the Son, (that springs out of death, and as to any persons who are such, His servants are, with the Spirit, His witnesses), but of Christ Himself as the faithful Witness. There is always this necessary difference; as for reconciliation, in 2 Cor. 5, God was in Christ reconciling; then, Christ being rejected, a ministry is committed to Paul and others, Christ having been made sin for us.

Christ, then, has made good His title as against the world for God and as of God, as the faithful Witness. It is, when, we have eyes to see (that is the ninth of John), an immense blessing for us. Light has come into the World, yea the veil has been rent, and we have the light of God Himself, yea the revelation of God as light (and we are also light in the Lord, He being our life), so as to walk in the light as He is in the light. Oh, that that light may penetrate utterly through us, so that all may be light in communion with Him. But this is a great thing to say; but the perfection of the Christian, not to say, perhaps, attained, but seen and, in the nature given to us, sought after.

But there was more. He was a faithful man; but there was an adversary who had the power of death over man, and ruled the world, and could bring the world against this witness as having the power of death. No doubt in Christ, as the faithful -Witness, he had nothing; but then, if Christ had not' subjected Himself to death, He must have remained alone, as we have seen, must have gone to heaven with twelve legions of angels, in the right of his own perfectness, but left us out, and the world under Satan's power. But these were not his thoughts, nor the counsel of God, nor suited to His glory: the Scriptures had spoken differently, and they the expression of God's mind, and what could give them greater authority than this reference to them of the Lord's, must be fulfilled. "How, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Christ Himself, the Son of God, was to die; the Scriptures, the witness of God's mind, the truth, had said it; and He gave Himself, drank, in blessed obedience and love to His Father, the cup He had given Him to drink. But it is the special side of this which regarded His power and title over the world, and victory over the prince of it, which we are here to consider. Satan committed himself completely in the exercise of this power of death, and dominion over the world; but it was all he had:

He was the prince of this world, and it was the hour of darkness. And Christ, in obedience, subjects himself to this last and absolute pitting forth of Satan's whole power over men and in death, a power sustained, too, by the pronounced judgment of God. But it is with the former we have to do here, though it were nothing without this latter. But the prince of this world was judged. By death, Christ brought to naught the power of him who had the power of death. In the resurrection, He comes up that power of life which left no trace of Satan's power behind. Indeed, according to His trust in Jehovah, no corruption passed upon no moment's trace of anything that was not the power of the Holy Ghost. He gave Himself up to death, His spirit to His Father, and never saw corruption. In Him, so to speak, resurrection and transmutation were united. In resurrection, according to divine righteousness, He took the condition to which power belonged in grace; He died, and rose that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living, and was competent and had the title to have all power in heaven and in earth. In the passage we are considering, His ascension is not touched on, but His coming forth from the whole result of Satan's power through sin, through the work which gave Him the place and power of man in the new estate in which the power of God would place him. He is the first-begotten from the dead, the Man who has made good, in this final and conclusive conflict, the title of God in spite of sin, and against sin; and baffled all Satan's apparent success, so that God is perfectly glorified in respect of that in which man had dishonored Him, and in which, so to speak, to the creature's view, all that God was, all His moral glory, was brought into question. Christ has taken thus the place divinely prepared for man, the headship of man according to God, the whole question of Good and Evil having been resolved by his subjugation to the whole power of evil in death (in life He had ever kept it at a distance in the power of the Holy Ghost), and, divine judgment being glorified, made it

possible, yea necessary, for God to bring up Him (and, blessed be God! all in Him) into the perfect place of blessing; where divine goodness could have its absolute flow, and that in righteousness, -yea as due to Christ, and so to others as redeemed. But here, we take it as the place of power and right, according to God's counsels, in man. The Head of every man is Christ, and He will take all men out of the power of death, and Satan's power, though for the wicked it will be for judgment. He is the first-begotten from the dead.

Our book treats of the throne, and of the government of the world. Hence the third title of Christ applies to that. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth. This title is so plain, that I do not enlarge upon it. The making it good is, after the letters to the churches, the great subject of the book; first, by God's power in preparatory dealings, and then by the exercise of Christ's own power when He comes. We may remark, that so entirely is government the subject of the book, that when the Bride itself is mentioned and displayed in glory, it is as a great city, the capital, so to speak, of God's kingdom.

But here the Church breaks in. When Jesus is mentioned, it cannot be otherwise. So at the end of the book (22:17), and necessarily, in both cases, with the sense and feeling of her own place and blessings in connection with Him. If a general entered in triumph, if a judge was celebrated as the wisest of his race, the wife's and child's feelings would be, when it was seen or spoken of- "That is my husband -that is my father." Such is the necessary, effect of the feelings which the consciousness of the relationship gives, and it is beautiful to see. -"To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood!" He may be the greatest above all princes of the earth, but that is what He has done for us. His own blood has cleansed us. He may be great, but He loved us. He may be great, but He would, have us great with Him, and near Him. "He has made us kings and priests to God and His Father." This last is the association with Christ in the royal place He has connected with the earth. It is not children, sons, His bride, but kings and priests; royal, and nearest, under God, to a divine place in government; and nearest in access to Him, when the world is in relationship with God. It is not Children at home in the house. It is official glory, though in its highest character and conformed to Christ's own, for He is King and Priest. The exact words are "a kingdom," "priests," as in Ex. 19, and pretty nearly literally, as in the Hebrews. This only confirms the character in which all is seen here. The saints ascribe glory and dominion to Christ forever. Here, remark, we have John himself, the Spirit in the name of the saints on earth: "loved us." In the following verse the Spirit announces His coming to the world, when every eye shall see Him coming in the clouds of heaven-the Jews, too -and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. All this is closed, I apprehend, by the Amen of God Himself as first and last Jehovah, Elohim, Shaddai. These are the three names I have already noticed, and which are the well-known names of revelation in the Old Testament. God, who was revealed to. Abraham by His name God Almighty (El Shaddai) -to Moses and Israel as Jehovah. Only He who speaks affirms here, as in the prophets, that as He was at the beginning and the Alpha of all else, so is He the Omega when all is brought to completion by His power, embracing all things and subsisting in Himself, embraced by none. This closes the introduction; and the revelation of the book itself begins in what follows.

In the address of John, we find the same character relationships, and order of thought as that which we have already seen. We have neither an apostle, nor he that is of God hears: He is a brother and companion in; the tribulation, kingdom, and patience of Jesus Christ. His ideas range

in the kingdom, and Christ's waiting for it. Christ sits at God's right hand, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. At present, His saints are in tribulation. The persecution of John was for that which is found through, the book - the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. All the word is such, but it takes this character when it becomes prophetic. does not say the Gospel, though that is, of course, the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. It would not do here at all. He is not teaching among the saints, but alone in the Spirit seeing visions. On the Lord's day is entirely different, to my mind, from what many take it to mean. It is Κυριακή ■ μύρη, not μύρα το ■ Κυρ ■ ου; the Lord's day of the week, the position in which Christianity [set us] as risen. And thus, though the apostle's testimony was prophetic, it was as personally in his risen place he -stood, when he gives it. This is always true. No prophet now can cease to be a Christian. When he gets out of a Christian place, it is false prophecy. His prophecy may have the character which belongs to the subject of prophecy, that is, God's government of this world; but He is on the Lord's day. I do not say this is reference to prophecies given now, as if there were actually such, unless they be false ones, but as to the necessary position of one who has been, or should pretend to be, one in Christian times. It is not that the prophet was in the day of the Lord, at most the nineteenth chapter is such; but on the Lord's 'day he was in the Spirit. He then receives his commission. A voice as of a trumpet, but now speaking on the earth. He does not at this moment see, but hears a voice behind him.

The voice tells him to write what he saw in a book, and send it to the seven churches in Asia. He turns to see who speaks to him, and sees, first, seven golden candlesticks, that was the substantive object of the vision; but, for the moment, his attention is attracted to another object. In the midst of the seven golden candlesticks he sees one standing like the Son of Man. Here we have the vessel of responsibility for light on earth, corresponding to the unfolding of power in government above. The seven spirits were before the throne; and, later, we find them as eyes in the horns of the Lamb. Here we have seven candlesticks which should give light by one Spirit on the earth. It is not the unity of the body of Christ: that is perfect, and belongs to heaven. It is the responsible vessel of Light on the earth, of the state of which, as we shall see, Christ judges. This is the key to the apprehension of this part of the revelation. God's throne carries on all secretly, and in the time of this book in revealed ways and power, according to the sevenfold excellency of the Spirit. Christ, too, as taking the kingdom. The candlesticks are vessels of light. Do they give it? Nor is it here Christ interceding for the weakness of individual saints on earth, nor representing them before God or the Father. He is standing with no garments of service (He is clothed to the feet) but taking cognizance of their state. Next, though the details are important, He is the Ancient of days. It is remarkable how we are brought ever into millennial connections, kingdom associations. I do not say, millennial times. That is only. at the end-and Daniel, with whose prophecy this so closely connects us, is never in millennial times, but he is always in millennial connections, only in the times of the Gentiles which precede them, - and then the judgment. We have Christ's character here, not His going about amongst the candlesticks. He stands there. That is His place; and His character is such and such. The prophet sees one who answers to the idea of Son of Man. It is not, I apprehend, any personal acquaintance of John with the Lord as an individual, but he sees one in the character of Soli of Man; and He is, as I have said, not in service with His loins girded, but His garments down to the foot. He is at ease with power to judge. Girt under the breast with divine righteousness. Then we find Him, just as in Dan. 7, to be the Ancient of Days. But further, His eyes are the all-seeing, piercing power of judgment His feet, the firmness

and perfectness of divine judgment as applied to men according to God's glory; His voice as the overwhelming sound of majesty, out of the reach of man's power: He held in His hand all subordinate authorities, who represented Him in light in the church, and the word as Judging men's hearts and intentions: His countenance witnessed supreme sovereign glory.

There is a threefold expression of character and dignity here. First, The garment, girdle, and the hair of His head apply to His person and personal state. Secondly, His eyes, feet, and voice, what He is in divine judgment and majesty towards man. The stars, the sword out of His mouth, and countenance like the sun. Thirdly, His official authority and glory as man.

Let the reader remark this character and various glory of Christ here. The apostle -and this also is man in flesh before the glory, characteristic of visional prophecy-falls at His feet as dead. The reply is the fortifying witness -not of an angel-messenger, as in Daniel -but of the prophet's well-known Lord and Savior, strength for them that are His, in Him that has overcome. He laid His right hand on him, saying, "Fear not." It is not peace, but dealing with man on earth, as when Jesus was on earth, only that now He possesses the dominion. "I am the first and the last." It is still the Jehovah of the Old Testament, but more, the Living One. But this is not all; He has the victory over the prince of evil and weakness. "I was dead, and am alive for evermore." It is Jehovah; but it is man victorious over all the evil and death itself into which man had fallen; and lie held the place of victory forever. And not only was He in His person victorious, but He held the power over what had been the sphere of the enemy's -Death and Hades. No angel could have said this to Daniel. Power-power that had wrought deliverance was there; power superior to all that the enemy could do; and a power which John knew and now felt to sustain him, and make sure the blessing which God's will purposed to bring in, before the evils, and sorrows, and trials of the saints came before his mind.

The prophet then receives his commission. There are three classes of things which he is to write. "What thou hast seen" - "the things that are"; and "the things that shall be hereafter": but the two first are closely united together. "The things which thou hast seen," and "the things that are;" then what is to come afterward. He had seen Christ standing in the midst of the candlesticks. That was not "the things that are"; but the developed state of the candlesticks is so, and Christ's judgment as walking among them; so that the connection is very close. Besides, this was connected with Christ as John had now seen Him, and as he knew Him himself. Not the highest knowledge of Him, but a present one-the Church on earth. Not properly prophetic, i.e., entering into the direct government of the world, though it might, as moral threatening, foretell many things as to the Church. Still, all here was "things that are," belonged to the Church-period and state, though to the outward form of it. It has been remarked, that "the things which are" is plural; and "the things that shall be hereafter," singular. This is quite in place here. "The things that are" in detail before the prophet's mind here. The future, yet distant, as one short whole.

It may be well to notice here the use made of the 'characteristics of Christ in the Churches, as confirming the interpretation of them. The first two give the state He was in as Son of Man generally; the second that He is the Ancient of days. Neither of these are specifically used; nor is the sound of many waters, which is also personal greatness and majesty, nor His countenance as thus seen, sheaving in its strength the vastness of His divine majesty, beyond man's reach and control, and His personal supremacy as man. Those applied, are His eyes as flames of fire, His

feet like burnished brass, His sharp sword out of His mouth, in his right hand seven stars, and His reply to John when he fell down. The relative qualities, so to speak, chiefly in judgment; but also in sustaining power. We shall see that they are all employed-in the first four churches, and none, save his title over the seven stars, found in the three last.

The angels stand as moral representatives of the churches. They are addressed -not the letter sent by them-and they are owned of Christ. They are stars (that is subordinate authority, but in the character of heavenly light and order' in the darkness) in His hand; so that we must see that which should stand as a representative authority before Christ, and in His hand. But the church is that which is judged, and, as has been remarked by another, whenever judgment is threatened, it is not on the angel; it is, in fact, on the church, or a guilty part of it. The angels stand, therefore, as the accepted representatives of the churches: Both they and the churches are seen in the mind of Christ, and of God. The stars are in Christ's right hand, and the candlesticks are golden. Both are looked at abstractedly. The candlestick may be moved out of its place; but, in God's mind, it is a golden candlestick of which he speaks.

So the star is that which has the authority of Christ in the church, and stands before Him as representing it, but cannot be separated, in idea; from the church itself. I say this, because I find "Thou hast left thy first love," Who? the angel. So it is said; but surely the church as such. Yet it is "thy candlestick" that is its public acknowledged status before the world as light-bearer. So that what the ear that can hear is to hear, is what is said to the churches, but all is said to the angel. So to Smyrna, "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; Satan shall cast of you," etc. Similar things are found in Thyatira. So in Pergamos, "Antipas was slain among you." Indeed, it is impossible to read the epistles to the churches without seeing that the angel and the churches are identified; only that the angel is looked at abstractedly in its representative character, the churches dealt with in their actual state, and composed of individuals. The whole body is responsible, and dealt with in detail of judgment; but Christ looks at the ideal responsible personage-a thought which will be in fact realized by every one that hears His words. An individual may be in this, if he be the intelligent vessel of Christ's mind, in the midst of an assembly; so all those who are so. But the assembly is responsible, and all that hear Christ's warning.

The history given to us is the moral state of the church, and applicable to every assembly; and, indeed, to every Christian at all times, according to spiritual wisdom in application. This state I shall refer to, and it will, as a consequence, give its historical application in the succession of churches. The first has left its first love; the last is to be spued out of Christ's mouth. They follow thus;-

1. Ephesus: The church has left its first love, and if it does not repent will be removed out of its place.
2. Smyrna: It is persecuted. Those who pretend to be the ancient people of God are specially in view.
3. Pergamos: Martyrdom has been going on, and the church is there where Satan's throne is-the world who has thus persecuted. But corruption of doctrine and practice. is beginning within, particularly in associating with the world,
4. Thyatira: We find devotedness and labor, but withal, on the other side,- along with it 'a-Sad- state of things-Jezebel, who not only seduces, as Balaam, to mix the world with Christianity, but commits adultery, and begets children. The evil is active and fruitful in its own way. This reaches to the end; and the Lord's coming is the resource of faith. Judgment will be special and terrible.

5. In Sardis we find a name to live, but death; and, if repentance does not come in; its judgment just as the outward world. 6. In Philadelphia, little strength, but faithfulness to the word, and in the patience of Christ. These are encouraged by Christ's speedy coming, and will escape the hour of temptation which will come on all the earth. 7. Laodicea is to be spued out of Christ's mouth as nauseous; being neither cold nor hot; yet warning is given,

These are the things that are. I have no doubt that in the Revelations, as in all New Testament prophecy, while the prophecy, properly speaking, takes up the close, when God begins again to interfere directly with the government of the earth, or at least to prepare the way for it, what is analogous in spirit is viewed by the Spirit of God as a matter of His instruction and warning. There is Babylon, and what is unmistakably Babylonish, before it is fully revealed. There is Antichrist; and yet many Antichrists, the τὰ τοῦ ντιχρῆστος of whom we have heard; and, as Jude presents it, the manifestation in apostolic days, of those of whom Enoch spake, who are to be judged at Christ's coming. Barriers would be taken away which hindered the public manifestation of the wicked one; but the mystery of wickedness was already at work, and how has it ripened since! This is an undoubtedly scriptural principle, and I have no doubt it applies to the Apocalypse. We may take the churches as the then state or the province of Asia, a picture of the general state -specimens, samples of all -and God's history of the world thenceforth unto the end; or we may take the things really-signified, and the prophetic part as God's history at the, close of things.

In the twelfth chapter, where a new part of the book begins, the prophetic character is absolutely according to the form of Old Testament prophecy, Israel coming symbolically directly in scene. Christ's first coming, as in Isa. 8:19, is directly associated with His second. The man-child is born -the church been taken up in him, and the last close is then there. Analogies may be found in what follows, and identification with subsisting elements under other -forms, as Babylon; but the history is the history of the end. I return to the churches most rich in moral instruction and warnings; but I have, however imperfectly, treated of this elsewhere. I now turn rather to interpretation as more immediately in place.

In Ephesus, the Lord appears entirely in his general relationship to the responsible church. He holds seven stars in his right hand, has the authoritative control of all in power, and is occupied with the inspection of all. He walks about among the golden candlesticks. The failure of the church is also seen in its first principle, not in consequent details. The judgment is the general and absolute one, if repentance do not come in. The result of overcoming, also; is the general one of eating of the tree of Life in God's Paradise. This general character of the first church, its statement of general principles, in every respect, is a strong confirmation of the successional character of the churches. It is much commended; but O how weighty a notice for all! It had left its first love. The measure of self-judgment is its first estate. It is not a fallen church awakened up to Christ's coming, and by it; but a falling church reminded of its first planting in blessing. In the responsible church; individual responsibility comes in. He that has an ear is to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The promise is the calm and peaceful one belonging to a walk with God, of full enjoyment of the ripened fruit which belongs to His paradise-not a special one in special danger. In Smyrna, trial sets in, the natural conservative consequence, under God's hand, of growing cold; and the natural portion of the saints, too, yet often not coming in till coldness begins, as God holds the first planting safe. But it is measured. The pretensions of those who set up to have a hereditary title to be God's people, is the commonest feature of persecution, and the church is in a very low

and despised state in such. Of the rest men durst not join them. But it is rich. Hence of them, the angel representing the church, as we have seen, would be cast into prison. God permitted, though he measured, the persecution. Did death ensue the crown of life would follow it. Overcoming, may our souls remember it is still, and always, the path. They that did would not be touched by the second death; of the first they might. Here Christ -as Satan seemed to have power against and above the church, -is presented in a divine character, "first and last," and in evident special application to the circumstances he had been in -dead, and had lived again. He did not put his people through what He had not gone through Himself before them. He would assure them, in that path, of divine perpetuity and of life through death.

In Pergamos, He has the sharp two-edged sword. Here worldliness comes in, when the first love had already waxed cold, and when persecution was over, and a hostile world had ceased to drive the church from itself, and force a difference on the church, though not always driven it into its own place-into those joys and hopes which were its own. The motives, the thoughts and intents of the heart came under the searchingness of God's word in Christ's hand. The church found itself now in the public place of the world. Not a first action of the Spirit in living beauty, but unnoticed out of its little sphere of testimony; not a Gentile persecution, stirred up because it jostled old prejudices in its progress. It dwelt now, had a position and standing, in the world, of which Satan was the prince -where his throne was. Your fleets and armies are filled with us," says Tertullian. "If we leave your cities the empire will become a desert." Could Peter and Paul have said that, or those who were of one heart and one mind? It was another kind of testimony, not a first love. It had grown to this, in spite of martyrdom through Gentile persecutions. Then it had stood firm and weathered the storm. Now, Christ's sword, not Nero's, must be applied. Inward corruption, the seduction to association with the world, and to lead those who bore Christ's name to go in the public path of the world, away from God, when, as an enemy it could not curse and destroy them, - this was now the danger -more than the danger. It was going on, and corrupt practice was taught deeds Christ hated had become a doctrine. The Lord would interfere if they did not repent, and apply his own judicial power within the church, give his word judicial action in their midst; against those who sinned, no doubt, but so as to act on the conscience of all. It was His coming to the church in judgment though; His war, by the sword of His word, was made on the guilty. The word, despised as instruction and warning, and correction becomes judgment in the power of Christ. He is Son over His own house. But if the sword distinguishes in judgment, faith does in receiving the warning and Word in the heart, and receives its reward according to this spiritual faithfulness. That word which would come judicially to distinguish and sever in the church, wrought in the heart of the faithful; and the spirit and character of Christ was distinctively realized, and communion with Him in His separate path on earth enjoyed. To this the promise answers, they would have the hidden manna to eat; that is Christ as known in his walk down here, though now in glory,-the corn of that heavenly land. The hidden manna was not the daily manna, but the manna which had been laid up in the ark, and kept as a witness in Canaan. They would have the distinguishing white stone of Christ's own approbation, and on it a name, a term of relationship with Him in this approbation which they only would know.

We now come, in Thyatira, to the general public state of the corrupt church, yet accompanied by long and unwearied devotedness. Christ as we see his servant Paul ever doing, first notices all the good He can. The saints have done the same when their hearts were Tight with God. How have

the sorrows and sufferings, and labor, and painful devotedness, of the hunted but persevering witnesses in the dark ages occupied the mind and feelings of thoughtful Christians! Nowhere, perhaps, is there a more deeply interesting story; nowhere longer and more unwearied patience; nowhere truer, or perhaps so true, hearts for the truth and for Christ, and for faithfulness to Him, against a corrupt church, as in the saints of the middle ages. Through toil and labor, hunted and punished in spite of a system far more persevering, far better organized, than heathen persecutions, violent as for a time they surely were; with no fresh miraculous revelation, or publicly sustaining body, or profession of the church at large, clothed with universal acknowledgment as such, to give them confidence; with every name of ignominy that people or priest could invent to hunt them with, they pursued their hemmed but never abandoned way, with divinely given constancy, and maintained the testimony of God, and the promised existence of the church against the gates of Hades, at the cost of rests and home, and life, and things earth could give, or nature feel. And Christ had foreseen, and had not forgotten it. Weakness may have been there, ignorance have marked many of their thoughts, Satan may have sought to mix up mischief with the good, and sometimes succeeded; and men, at their ease now, delight in finding the feeble or faulty spot, and perhaps succeed too; but their record is on high, and their Savior's approbation will shine forth, when the books ease-loving questioners have written on them will be as dust on the moth's wing when it is dead; and shame, if shame can be where we trust many of them may meet those they have despised, cover their face. This the Lord owns in Thyatira. It made no part of the church for men then. It makes none- for many wise people now. It is the first part for Christ. And here we have a larger scene, a general condition, going on to the end.

I do not think at all that this refers, as some have thought, to the principle of works as found in Popery. The nineteenth verse speaks of what is approved of; the twentieth, of what is disapproved of. We have now. one who takes the woman's place, symbolical of a state; not individual responsible activity, but a state, as long ago remarked in the types of the old Testament. I do not think it matters much if σου be in or not, as the name is moral, and the wife of the mystic representative must be the public general state. But those who were morally responsible, as actively representing Christ in the church, suffered this state of things. It had grown into a settled system. She pretended to express the mind of God, to be the authorized expounder of His mind, having the Spirit; and she deceived, and taught Christ's servants to go on in worldliness and corruption. It was not seducing them when the seducer was separate from the body, putting a stumbling block before them. It was an allowed state; all let to go regularly on. Corruption and idolatry in worldliness characterized the state. This had gone on long. It is looked at as the thing with which God was dealing. He had given her time to repent; and she would not repent of her fornication; she was teaching it but she was committing it. It characterized the public state of the outward church. She would not repent. It was the present state. I have given her, and she will not. If those who were committing it with her (all who entered into the spirit of her ways, and carried them on with her) did not repent, they would be cast into great tribulation. And her children-those whom she had begotten and formed in these principles God would destroy, and would be known as the Searcher of hearts and Judge. I do not take this as necessarily the judgment of Babylon as such further on, but the application of God's judgment to all the religious part of it; though the scene be substantially the same. The character of Christ here given (the reader may see, I believe, justly given) in what precedes, the all-seeing piercing power of judgment, and the firmness and perfectness of divine judgment as applied to men according to God's glory. He that hath an

ear is here first seen apart from the general body of the church, contemplated apart. Up to this, he that hath an ear to hear comes before the promises to them that overcome: here after.

When the state-the woman- is the thing to be dealt with in judgment, the ear to hear is not associated in God's mind in the same way with that which is judged. The prolonged state of the professing church is looked at here. It is not, as at Ephesus, the general idea, "I come quickly, and remove the candlestick," because it did not exactly answer His mind, and He expected that. That supposes, in a certain sense, confidence that all will be exactly as it ought to be, otherwise the relationship ceases. Here, as to the public state, all was very bad, though there was personal devotedness. And God, as one going to judge it definitely as bad, and as an object of judgment, has long patience.

Abraham must go down, or his children, to Egypt, for the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. Moses He was going to kill; because Eliezer was not circumcised. This is God's way; jealous when He admits to confidence; infinite in patience when He must take His character of judge. Here He is Judge-He gives to every one according to his works. How solemn a thing is it, when the public professing body of the church becomes the direct object of God's judgment! In verse 24, "to you, the rest in Thyatira" i.e., those who had nothing to do with Jezebel and her ways, her doctrine, who held the church-the woman-to be (no prophetess, but) apart from the world, and pure for Christ; they had but to be faithful to this. God did not expect from them in this darkness the light of other days. Only they must hold fast what they had. Remark here, they were only a numbered and distinct rest'; confirming the idea that Jezebel represents the public state. Not knowing the depths of Satan, i.e., what they called so, I apprehend to be plain morality and separation from the world. They indulged in corruption and idolatry. It characterized them; pretending to see a liberty which their acquaintance with the depth of Satan's wiles gave them; and pretending to look on the others as seduced by the deep wiles of Satan, to hold aloof from the church's path, from what God owned on the earth, and where He had placed His Spirit and Word; for all this Jezebel pretended to. They said, they did not know the depths of Satan, in making them think outward morality and holiness was called for in the church. So the true saints got the character of being led of Satan; and the instrument of Satan that of possessing the word and Spirit of God. They were to keep Christ's works, that was the depth of truth at any rate. Knowledge they had little of, even in respect of justification by faith. The saints of that day were very ignorant.

George, who began the practical separation in Bohemia and Moravia, after the fall of the Hussites, began with morality, knew nothing of justification by faith as to clearness of doctrine. It was introduced later among them, and through much opposition, and alas! through the Lutherans, with great relaxation of practice.

So with the Waldenses; practice was their great theme. And this was in its place according to God. Not that the truth was mighty as afterward to deliver countries, but conscience was found in those holding Christ as the one foundation, which, through grace, made them suffer and live for Him.

The promises here are important. They are not simply special promises for those faithful within, though suited to them; but the whole scene of promise and millennial glory to come, as belonging to the whole church. This is notable and connects itself with the view we have taken of the passage, as presenting the whole public state of the church in which corruption had become the mother of children, and its public state.

The Greek church comes little in scene here, though partaking of much of the corruption, because it did not stand before the eye of prophecy (as it has not been, in fact), as that which represented the church in the World. No doubt the accession of Russia has given a large population and importance to it. But this is quite modern; and all the East was, overrun with Saracens, and then Turks-in a word, with Mahommedans; and these stood in God's eye as holding the population there-the world's religion; and the western system as that which was the church before the world. So, we know, it has historically been.

The promises given to the church are the power of the kingdom, but, besides that, Christ Himself. This is so simple and distinct, that what is called for is not interpretation but spiritual understanding. Only remark, that the subject here is not Christ's universal power over all things, but over the nations. It is the rule of the world when the outward church has been the world, and falsely "reigned as kings," falsely set up the millennial reign, and faithfulness has caused suffering; and Christ himself, as the world will never see Him or know Him, as the Morning Star. As Sun He will reign over the world-as Morning Star, He belongs to faith alone, and is never seen by the world. As Sun, the saints will be seen with Him; as the Miming Star, they will see and enjoy Him themselves. Thus, both answer to the trial of the saints in the church; though it is the general glory of the church -all glory; save, indeed, as Christ is over all things, and such to the church His body. Here it is the world. The promise of the second Psalm made to Christ as Son of God is conferred on the over-comers. But besides that, there is the proper Christian privilege. That which the watching eye, lie who watches in the night, sees when the sleeping world enjoys itself and sees nothing, to be awakened by sudden judgment as a thief in the night-the Morning Star which Christ declares Himself in this book to be-that is given. Christ Himself thus known, known to the heart in the trial and difficulty of faithfulness, is given to him that overcomes.

The reader will remark, that this church professedly continues on to the end. Here first the coming of Christ is introduced. In fact, the others were passing states of the Church. Here God's loving patience waited, and the saints were called to hold fast what they had to the end, till Christ came.

As a distinct form of existence, the Jezebel character marked it, when there was nothing else. It is the state before God's eye without, as yet, any other (the three last churches were not yet come up before Him), and to this state the instruction directly applies. But, in a secondary way, the fact, that such a state of things would continue comes out, as the saints are called to hold fast till Christ comes, and the promises are directly and openly the Church's at Christ's coming.

The Church of Sardis presents Christ to us in a striking manner. He is in the very fullness of His power in respect of His relationship to the Church -the fullness of power in Government -the fullness of spiritual energy to work. He has this; but it is merely the fact. The stars are not seen in His right hand. It is not the regular formed order in its right place, but all spiritual power of working, not mentioned in His relationship to the Churches, nor what had been seen in the things that were (1:13-20).

But although thus far seen in a general character, and not a special one, Christ is not presented here as walking in the midst of the candlesticks. I do not mean that Christ had ceased to do it; but He is not so presented here. He is the source of all spiritual power, the possessor of all spiritual authority; all that actively represents Him on the earth belongs to Him. But the previously existing relationship is not expressed.

It is further to be remarked, that the seven Spirits of God belong to the comprehensive qualities and power of the Spirit in connection with bringing about God's will, not the Holy Ghost dwelling in the Church; of that we have nothing here. The seven Spirits are seen before God's throne, and they are seen as eyes in the Lamb. We have got into new characteristics of Christ, in reference to His own power and rights, not what was already revealed of Him as walking amongst the candlesticks. His coming has been announced, and the outward successional Church followed to the end. It was a system wholly corrupt, a mere Jezebel, a mother and source of wickedness. The Spirit now takes up Christ's personal character and rights, and, in this respect, looks out beyond Church-scenes.

The story of Sardis is soon told. We have no corrupt state, though there was much personal individual evil. On the contrary, there was the reputation of a moral activity, which had delivered from evil -a name to live. But the real character of the Church was a state of death. And here remark, that the work of the Holy Ghost is itself not, and cannot be, the object of judgment. This is evident. God does not judge His own working; nor Christ, the Spirit's. It is the result in man's hands. Thus, the work which produced Protestantism was God's work, the action of His Spirit; the result is the use man has made of this blessing. Some things remained; and they were exhorted to strengthen them, for they were ready to die. The Lord had not found their works complete. There was something failing -lacking. It had man much in it. Christ had not found them complete before His God.* It was not anything corrupt or superstitious exactly, but wanting in their character and motive. Activity, but not such as met the relationship of Christ -with God on the earth. They were not Christian enough. Yet they had received much, and were to remember this, hold fast, and repent. If the Church did not watch -this was the great point -they had got into the ease of the world, and were living as if things were settled, and to go on forever; it was not corruption and superstition, but deadness and worldliness -if they did not wake up and watch, they would be treated as the world. Christ would come on them as a thief in the night, and they would not know when. I have remarked elsewhere the extreme importance of this threat. Because it is directly declared in 1 Thess. 5 that those whom the Lord owns as Christians would not be so treated; "Ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief." And they are exhorted to watch. But on the world that day would come unawares, as travail on a woman with child. The professing Church, in its Sardis state, would be treated as the world if it did not watch. Not only is the judgment most solemn, but it shows that the spiritual judgment that professing Christianity in this state is, morally speaking, the world in God's sight, is just. And note, here, that if we connect (as we should) 1 Thess. 5:1, with 4:14, this judgment will take place when the saints come with Jesus. Protestantism, for such I doubt not it is, sad as the thought may be, will be found as, and judged as, the world at Christ's coming with the saints. It is not terrible tribulation and special judgment as with Thyatira, but found to be the world. Here, too, the true saints are treated as a remnant. I have a few names in Sardis who have not defiled their garments. They had practical Christian walk. The white linen is the righteousness of the saints. "They shall walk with me in white." The church's works were not complete before Christ's God. There was a lack of what was properly Christian in them. Those who kept themselves in their walk as Christians would walk with Him in white. The same is repeated to him that overcomes, with the addition, that he would not be struck out of the registers of God's people. When the once nominal Church was treated as the world in judgment, it would not be even in the register. All professing; Christians are, and in that sense, in the Book of Life. They have not life, surely, unless born of God, but they all stand on the public registry of life.

A Jew, a Mahomedan, an open apostate, does not. When the saints were gone, and the nominal body visited as the world, that would have no real meaning, perhaps no nominal existence. The saint, faithful while it went on, would not lose his place on the register. Christ would confess His name as really His before His Father, and before His Father's angels. Here we have the saints very definitely individualized, as to Christ's owning them, and in contrast with the professing church judged as the world below, confessed by Christ above in the presence of His Father and His angels. The warning, as in Thyatira, comes after this distinction.

The Church of Philadelphia is the rich and unqualified encouragement of that which was feeble but faithful. There is little Church-character, I may say none. All is statement of what Christ is and will be for them; only that they have the comfort of knowing that Christ has fully taken cognizance of their state, and that, satisfied of that, they are to go on, encouraged by His own grace. "I know thy works." That is all that is said. This character of the address to Philadelphia is very remarkable. The Church, the saints, have to think of Christ, not of themselves. Faithfulness to Him, however, is noticed. His Word had been kept, His name not denied, the word of His patience also kept, that is, of the way in which He awaits the time of His glory and power, through the long-protracted evil of the professing church, in the accomplishment of God's ways.

In this also, they are specially associated with Christ: This association characterizes all the promises made to Him that overcomes also. Hence what He is personally with respect to such relationship, and His availableness, so to speak, for those seeking so to walk, is presented in the revelation of Him. He is holy. This character must now specially be responded to. It is individual conformity (though in the common body and walk of all) to Him that is looked for in this near personal relationship. He is true, the one who is truthful in all; the true Son of God, the truthful revelation of what He is, and we are sanctified by the truth; true in His word, so that it can be counted on. But "true" especially here refers to the power of the truth, but the truth seen in Christ's nature and person, and so known to us. "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth... and for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." So is He the Holy and the True One; and it is especially where all has failed, but a people are yet called to be faithful in special connection with Him, that this character of Christ has its application. So it is in John's Gospel, as regards Christ Himself in the midst of Israel; and in his Epistle, where seducers were leading men astray, and piety became individualized. Not, of course, as if brotherly love and union were not to exist, but that personal adhesion to Christ, the Holy and True One, was needed for it. Out of twenty-six times the word is used, it is used twenty-one times by John, as a kindred word is sixteen times out of twenty-five. It is the personal character of Christ separated to God from all evil, and the true and living expression of all that He presented Himself as; as that manifested also the nature of all that was not it. The next point is that He has the authority of the house and government to which, as Christ, He has a title, "and opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens." An important word in present service. So to Him the porter opened. No human power, nor Satan's either, could hinder it. So now for those who hold fast to Him. And He had set an open door before them and no man could shut it. But little strength they had, but, with the door open, if there was faithfulness, the service was easy. This, "Thou hast a little strength," is real approbation. There was not Pauline energy, nor God mighty in any one as in Peter. Not the energy that led to martyrdom, or brought kingdoms under its sway; but love to Christ and His word, that gave desire for the good of souls, and His being known. He was held to, had authority over,

the heart. Hence, there was a little strength, a great thing where all was loose as to Christ, and His word was held fast, and His name not denied. People might pretend to be the ancient people of God; but Christ had His place in the heart, and hold on the walk and conduct of those whom Christ here approves. His word was kept, His name owned. Two evils were before the eye of the Spirit in these times:-the synagogue of Satan, those who founded religion on ordinances and not on Christ; a present and pretentious evil they say." The other a judgment of the Lord Himself; the hour of temptation which was coming on the whole world, to try those attached to the earth, as it had been formed under the eye of God. As to the first, their judgment, after all, was light, but a great strength to the saints, who might seem to act for themselves, and despise the old traditions and truths; or what were said to be such, sanctioned for ages. They would be brought to own, by God's ways and dealings, that it was those who had little strength, but were faithful to Christ, His word and name, whom He loved. They would have to come and bow before the feet of the despised remnant of faithful ones, weak as they might have been, and to confess, at any rate, that Christ had loved them. And this is, what contents and satisfies the heart-the approbation and the love of Christ is what is presented by Christ, and what constitutes the ruling principle of the heart of the faithful here.

The first point, then, was Jewish principles invading the church outside her Jezebel character. That is, ordinances, traditions, and human authority in contrast with Christ. The second is connected with the consciousness that the world is going on to a scene of confusion and judgment, a time of universal trial. In the light in which Philadelphia stands, this is clear to those who have the understanding given by the Spirit of God. Christ is coming. Christ has to be confessed and held to fast, when all principle is loosed. God setting an open door before faith, but the world itself uneasy. The saints who hear with the ear given to faith, will escape the hour of temptation. The reason is given. Christ is waiting for His allotted crown, and maintains His exclusive heavenly character, till He rises up from His Father's throne, But the mass of professors, are dwellers upon earth, not pilgrims; have not their conversation in heaven waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. But there are those who have kept the word of Christ's patience, who know that He must wait until His enemies be made His footstool, and wait as strangers in heart on the earth till then. Christ has taught them this, and given the word that, in teaching directs the path, and spirit, and conduct of him that waits. They wait with Christ, according to the word of His patience. It is into this, connected with the love of God, that Paul prayed the Thessalonians might be directed (2 Thess. 4:5). They are thus in the spirit of their mind, separate from the world, as He is, associated with Him. It is not needed to try and prove them as dwellers upon earth. Here, therefore, His coming is given as direct encouragement and joy. "You have to keep the word of My patience. Have patience, but I will keep you out of the hour of temptation which is coming; and not only so, I am quickly coming. Hold fast what thou hast [an earnest and important word] that no man can take thy crown." In a time when there is little strength, and nothing but the promise of Christ's approbation. to encourage, and the return to Jewish principles in those who profess to hold anything, it is a great thing to hold fast that that one has, the word of Christ, not denying the name of Christ, to keep the word of His patience.

The open door is before us, and it is a great blessing, and none can shut it. But the special exhortation is to hold fast that we have, and remember that keeping the path of Christ's patience, who now waits the day when His Father shall cause Him to rise up, and take the power, is that

which gives the assurance of being kept out of the hour of temptation. It will come on all the world, but we be out of it. This must not be confounded with the great tribulation which comes on Jerusalem especially, from which the-remnant flee. It is far more general-on all the world.

The promise is very special, as is the relationship with Christ. The character of the saint's relationship, if he knew what his place was, is that of Christ's. A heavenly man in the midst of pretensions to be the people of God, which made nothing- of Him, his only part personal faithfulness along with them that clung to Him, the whole weight of human traditional religiousness being against them, else all death around him, yet an open door to serve. The glory which follows on this answers to the glory Christ takes in consequence of His walk. I do not mean exactly with the Father, as in John 20, but in the time of His coming glory, walking in communion with Him. The former was-the means of possessing the latter. "He shall be a pillar," says Christ, yes, he who was weak "in the temple of my God, and go no more out. I will write on him the name of My God, on the faithful one who had not denied my name on earth, when there was naught else for him; and the name of the city of my God-the place of glory and power which God had prepared, for he had looked for a city which had foundations, that new Jerusalem which comes down from heaven, from my God, there his thoughts had been; and my new name." He shall be fully and openly associated with me in the glory as he was by faith in littleness overlooked when there was nothing but Christ - but Christ for him was all. In God's day he will be all, such is the promise, so closely associated with Christ himself in the Philadelphia state of things. I pray the reader to fix his attention on the close association with Christ all through this epistle. Let us look around and see if we cannot see elements such as these-no Jewish principles formed in Protestant countries after a name to live, but death there? No looking out for a time of trouble on all the world? No truth in there being but little strength but an open door? If there be, let the reader mark what the warnings and exhortations of Christ are.

The closing state of things comes next. Church, as to its place in the world, it yet is. It stands with its angel before Christ to be judged as such. He takes its works into consideration as such. But it has settled down into taking things quietly. It has not a name of excellence compared with Jezebel, but death. The living elements have been concentrated in the Philadelphia state. It would not renounce Christ, would keep up profession, would sacrifice nothing for him; would keep the church's place and credit, yea, claim it largely on many grounds as a body; but spiritual power in individual association of heart with Christ, or trouble for Him, was gone. Christ abhorred such a state. It was as lukewarm water, which would be spued out of his mouth. Such was the judgment unconditionally pronounced on the church of Laodicea. But, as ever till actual judgment comes, God continues to work, if any man may have ears to hear. So in Jeremiah; the plainest declaration that they would go to Babylon, yet continual calls to repentance, and a statement of God's way in this respect on repentance:

In Laodicea, all that they professed to have, all that man could estimate the value of, was false and human. I do not mean mere outward riches, but all that could give a large pretension to wisdom and knowledge and learning, perhaps a fuller view of Christianity itself. Self-satisfaction in what was possessed: this characterized the professing church in Laodicea, but utter poverty as to Christ, nothing of Him - a name to attach to learning and human thoughts, but of Him nothing. Hence His counsel was to buy of Him gold tried in the fire; true divine righteousness in Him never separated from life, for it is His nature; and white raiment, the power of this association with Christ

in what is displayed in man, living righteousness; and to have that true intelligence of the Holy Ghost which makes us see, the unction of the Holy One. In a word, the divine gifts and power of Christianity in contrast with what man possesses as man, that of which he can say, "gain to me," man's conscious possession of that which gives importance and value to man in his own mind. The relationships of Christ to the professing church here are remarkable. The Christian is a new man -a new creation in Christ, risen into a wholly new place, on the utter rejection and proved insuperable evil of the first man-proved insuperable in the death of Christ. Man's and Satan's business are to exalt and give a place to the old. It is not here in the world, not at any rate in his own eyes. The professing church goes decidedly back here into that out of which we are taken into Christ by faith. Hence though this has still the name of the church, and professes to be Christian, it is really wholly in its own, claimed, moral place, though thinking itself wiser than ever, off the ground of Christianity, and on that of the world or natural man, which consequently comes on the scene in its own place; and the church closes. What was wholly wanting, was what was divine and new in man. It was the first man enriched, even if Christ enriched him. That would be admitted. There was no divine righteousness - no specific Christian clothing, the righteous life according to Christ, of a new nature to be had only in Him. The teaching of the Holy Ghost was wanting. Man's intelligence was wonderfully and wholly in play. The things counseled to be got, make this character of the evil clear; they are specifically divine things connected with man's rejection and acceptance in Christ alone, to be had only in Christ, and from Christ, and nowhere else. Not an improvement of man, but what was divine found in and obtained from Him.

To this, and the fact of its being the closing state, all answers. Christ reveals Himself as the "Amen" who secures every promise of God, now man has failed even in the church. He is the faithful and true Witness in Himself. The witness of the church as a witness of Him is gone. He is the beginning of that new creation, of which, indeed, the church ought to have been a witness in the power of the Holy Ghost; but of which He, in resurrection, was the Head, the spring, and manifestation; all taking, in the new creation, its starting point of existence from Him, its place under Him. Adam had such a place, in the old, the image of Him that was to come -Christ, in the new, of which the saints are the first fruits. But here, the church, which on profession as founded on His resurrection had this character, having wholly failed and gone back in professed riches of human nature to the old, Christ comes forward as the beginning of it all, the one in whom it had its rise and its truth; all the rest being wholly dependent on and flowing from Him: The AMEN maintains the promises now to be fulfilled-the faithful and true Witness -One who had, and now would fully make good the character of God- which man, His image, and the church, too, had failed to do-the beginning of the creation of God, one who, when God made all things new, as He was now about to do, was the ἀρχή the fons and principium of it all, the first in, and the first from, whom it all flowed. The position He takes, in respect of the church, shows the same relationship to it. He was practically without it looked at it as gone, though it were not yet spued out of his mouth. It is a question, though He warned it yet, of individuals hearing His voice that they may escape, may have fellowship with him, and He with them. He has not given it up; but it has become wholly human in its real state, as judged by Him; so that He has to come in to the individual if he has anything to say to Him, or Christ to him. "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." The whole body of members of the professing church were judged' to be men now, not sons of God, Christians, though judgment was not publicly executed, but Christ still acting in grace. Divine things (the alone true ones) recommended; human things boasted in. If the individual heard

him who still called and knocked, though as outside at the door, He would have communion with him. The promise answers to the bringing in of the new order of things, not heavenly joys, still a share with Christ. As they had listened in time, they would be on the throne in the kingdom. It was immense grace, but no more is promised; not the tree of life, no hidden manna, no white raiment spoken of to the soul, to encourage it in faithfulness within; they would not miss the kingdom. Blessed surely, and wonderful grace. But only just not shut out.

This, of course, necessarily closed the church's history. The reader will remark, that the instruction being moral, state that is judged, promises ever precious, the warnings and exhortations are available to the saints at all times. The special application may be more or less seized. The words of Christ have power at all times for the heart and conscience, and this is the force of the exhortation at the end to every church. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

We now come to the government of the world. The failure of the church as a professing outward body, founded on human responsibility (for as built by Christ for His glory, it never can, but that is in heaven in purpose, and judgment certainly does come in this world), had left only this, and brought in necessarily the intervention of God in judgment.

The prophet is called up to heaven; for no government of God was yet manifested on the earth, and the church was no longer owned as witness; and the first voice which he had heard as a trumpet, the voice of the Alpha and Omega, the "first and the last; the voice of Him who was behind him in the midst of the golden candlesticks, now called him up to where His power and activity was to display itself-the Ancient of days, whom we shall now first have to see on the throne; but whom we shall also perceive as a distinct person as the 'Lamb. We have a throne in heaven, instead of candlesticks upon the earth. In the things after these, or hereafter, we find evidently the last part of the verse which gives the division of the book; and, whether translated "after these" or "hereafter," the sense is the same; as the preceding things were "the things that are." The judgment of Dan. 7, is here largely developed. The Jasper is divine display. I go no farther. It is not essential nature, though that be what is displayed; but display of divine glory in government and judgment -what secures and protects from evil. I say this merely from its use, not from any notion as to the stone (compare 21:18, 19, and 11). It characterizes divine display thus in the book. The rainbow is covenant with creation. The throne thus gives the government which secures from evil, and blesses creation. The saints, kings, and priests, are seen in glory enthroned and crowned as kings (in the next chapter, priests), and decked with the ornament of righteousnesses in life. The throne was one of majesty and judgment (not of grace) Sinai-like, and before it the perfection of attributive power; the seven spirits of God were seen. And that which erst was the means of feet-washing, and cleansing before judgment came in, was now solid purity on which cleansed-ones could walk and find no uncleanness to take up. The cherubim, four not two, completeness not witness, were in the midst of the throne and around it, characterized it in its inward nature, and surrounded it with what was their peculiar character. That character is judicial power, as I have elsewhere remarked, and as all the cases, in which they appear, show.

But the details show other elements in their attributions here. They are heads of the four parts of created existence on the earth. They have this under their power as their attributions, so to speak; man, beasts of the field, cattle, and fowls of the air -not the sea- every one characterized by

rapidity of flight, and power of inward perception. In verse 8, their service is referred to, and the eyes are within; this characterized their intelligence, its nature: a figure easy to comprehend. We know more or less what it is to have within us a clear perception of what is, of the nature and motives of what is, around us. These were full of eyes before and behind; they saw all things on every side. The administrative knowledge of the throne was not a partial knowledge. It was not a mere outward knowledge of circumstances which governed. The eyes were within. God, in His Old Testament characters, -Jehovah -Elohim -Shaddai -God, the Supreme Governor, and God once of promise, always of fulfillment, and the Great King over all the earth, the Creator who faints not, neither is, weary, was unceasingly celebrated by the administration of His power in providence and creation. But they do this in a peculiar character-Holy! Holy! Holy! In that character, which allows no evil to be near it, but will be sanctified in all that were nigh to Him. But this is celebration, not worship. The elders fall down and worship. Nor only so; they, give, and that characterizes in general the worship of the elders -they give motives and reasons for it. It is intelligent reasonable worship. They worship, Him that sits on the throne -Him who has title over creation-by whom and for whom all things were created -" For Thy will, they were and have been created."

Redemption is not yet touched on. I have largely noticed elsewhere, but must not here pass over, the exquisitely beautiful character of the moral state and position of the elders. When the throne of judgment is set, they are on thrones. The lightnings, and thunders, and voices left them in unmoved peace. Why should they not? Their place was the witness and result of divine righteousness in which they sat there, which had crowned them; and the exercise of this judgment left them necessarily in the peace it gave. But when He who sat on the throne was celebrated, then were they all activity. They leave their thrones, they cast down their crowns, and ascribe all glory to Him who alone was worthy. He that sits on the throne is Christ, but viewed as Jehovah, and sitting as such, not as a distinct person peen apart from Godhead, nor as a Son with the Father in Godhead; but the Jehovah of the Old Testament revealed in the Son. It will be remarked, there is no manifestation of angels here.

We may remark here, that the whole scenery is taken from the Temple, a remark which aids in the intelligence of the structure of the book, only it is changed in several particulars, and though permanent, answers in some details more to the Tabernacle -the shadow of heavenly things.

In the right hand of power of Him that sat on the throne, was a book, the unfolding of the counsels and purposes of God, according to his power, It was filled with these, but perfectly sealed up. The personal glory of the Opener is brought into evidence by the inquiry, who could unfold and give effect to them. None anywhere could be found; but the heavenly elders have intelligence of the ways and mind of God. Christ can. He is spoken of in his Jewish character, -but in the way of divine power-the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David -the source of promise, and the Mighty One to prevail; but, after all, it was redemption; and suffering for the glory of God, which had given him the title. Blessed thought! The prophet must see a Lamb as it had been slain. Full power and competency to execute it according to the perfection of God's attributes were in Him-seven -horns and seven eyes. He was the center of all that expressed Divine power and its displays and results-the throne, the beasts, and the elders.

The beasts and elders are distinguished here: The Lamb was-in. the midst of the throne and the beasts; and in the midst of the elders. That is, the power of government, providence and creation,

whoever instrumentally wielded it; and in the midst of the crowned and enthroned company, who were as added heirs to this; the redeemed kingdom of priests. The seven spirits which were before the throne, part of God's glory on it, are seen in the Lamb, but as sent forth to accomplish the divine purposes in all the earth under the Lamb's authority. He comes, and takes the book. Now redemption is celebrated. I would here make some remarks, as regards the beasts and elders, not with the certainty of teaching but submitting them to inquiry, in which state they stand in my- own mind, though the inquiry be based on elements settled in my own mind.

In the fourth chapter, creation- and providential power were brought before us as such, and no angels. Here redemption and the angels are seen. Further, in this whole book (indeed in all Scripture), the cherubic animals hold the place of judicial power, and administer it providentially. The elders everywhere have divine intelligence of the motives for praise. This belongs to the -saints as such, and, indeed, especially to Christians, who have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things, but to the saints as such. The administration of governmental and judicial power is not exclusively theirs. They get it in consequence of redemption. Further, in chapter 4, the beasts celebrate the glory of Him that sits on the throne-announce His character-the elders only worship thereupon. The angels are not seen. I have supposed, then, that redemption not being yet manifested, the administrative power is not viewed as taken out of the hands of the angels, for we know that the world to come is not subjected to them. Creation and all its glory is seen as such, the living creatures are not yet the saints; and the angels are not seen apart from: that glory of which they have been the heads. When the Lamb is manifested, those associated with Him must take the first place as connected with Him, and the angels delight in it. This we have in chapter 5. Redemption brings in the reign of man in Christ (compare Eph. 1:20-23 and 1 Peter 3:22). The Lamb being now manifested as Redeemer, this also is manifested. The beasts worship with the elders, are now associated, and the angels are seen, as such, apart. As we go on to the further parts of the book, we shall see that the beasts recede, and the elders take the first place. Here, the beasts and elders, the heavenly saints, I apprehend, in their double character of heads of creation, and kings and priests, exercise distinctly the office of priests, not in interceding, but in offering up the prayers of the saints. The intelligence of the elders, the saints, viewed in this character of priests brought near to God, whose lips keep knowledge, celebrate the Lamb as Worthy to take the book, and open the seals, and why he is so; namely, that He has gone through death and wrought redemption-redeemed to God. I suppose the "us" is justly rejected. It is not who are redeemed that makes Him worthy; but that He has redeemed people to God out of every nation, and made them kings and priests, and that they will reign. It is His work, and its effect and character, that make Him worthy. Who should open that book of the kingdom, or the ways of God in bringing it in, but He who had brought it into existence and all in it, by sacrificing Himself. And here the angels come in with willing chorus in a beautiful way, owning the effect of this work, and standing further off; but in the best of places since it was the one that owned and gave glory to the Lamb in His work. They stood in a circle around the throne, and the beasts, and the elders. So every creature joined in the chorus. And the four beasts say "Amen" to the creature. It was their place. The twenty-four elders fall down and worship. This is their own worship. It is more than the "Amen" of the beasts to the praise of the creation. This, though we have made progress as to the facts in the prophetic history, for the book has been now taken by the Lamb in order to open it, yet gives an anticipative expression to universal praise. John hears it prophetically. The twenty-four elders and beasts made part of the subsisting glory from which all was to follow-crowned and

enthroned before there was any history.

For the history to begin, the Lamb must take the book. This is all-important as to the saint's place when the Lamb takes the book. To the prophetic eye and ear, the angels fall into their natural place in the kingdom; and then his ear hears the voice (as Paul's before, the groans of every creature everywhere) celebrating the glory of Him that was on the throne, and of the Lamb. Seen they could not be yet thus; but it was, so to speak, the natural result of that which was now taking effect. Many a groan would go up, and many a sorrow be felt. But the book the Lamb had taken, the elders were manifested in their redemption-place, the angels joyful in that which redemption gave them; the Lamb not yet, indeed, seen as having taken His kingdom on earth, but His title to it loudly proclaimed above by those who knew, and were the first fruits of it, and 'the ways ready to be unfolded which led to it. The voice of the result is prophetically heard, and, as heads of government and creation, the beasts says "Amen." The voice is true and right. As Elders, the saints worship Him that never fails in promise, but makes good in immutable nature what He has purposed in grace. It is not "Him on the throne" here; the creatures were not yet in actual relation with it; but He lives to make all good.

All this is introduction; to put all in their places for the kingdom and ways of God -creation and redemption each having its due glory. And now the history itself will begin. As yet the beasts are in the foreground -providential dealings- the (to man) hidden ways of God are going on. The Lamb opened one of the seals. And one of the four beasts, these leaders of the governmental ways of God, of His judicial power, speaks with thunder. It is known that many leave out "and see." Should they remain, it is clearly a call to John; but I hardly see why it should be a voice of thunder. The idea that it is the voice of creation looking to Jesus to come, seems to me wholly out of the way. The groaning creation, or longing creation, does not speak in thunder. It seems to me more naturally as the expression of God's thunder and power-a call to the horses to come forth. The reading must first be determined, of course; but if this be right, it is not without importance, as settling what I have; at the same time, never doubted, without any such ground, that the four horses have the same character. The horse is always the action of divine power, gone forth into the earth, accomplishing, whatever the agent may be, divine purpose and providence. A white horse characterizes triumph, as is well known-such is the white horse here, triumphant conquest. The next is a state of war and conflict which takes peace from the earth. In the third, God calls for famine on the earth. In the last, all His four sore plagues (Ezek. 14:21). It is not special dealings with a revealed antagonistic state, which is presented to us. It is history, history of the condition of the earth, the special scene of God's dealings, where he has been made known, but where man does not care about God, or perhaps favors his enemies, and persecutes his people. God deals with them, and though, at first, all seems fair and prosperous in his hands where active 'power is, the judgments of God soon reach the scene. For the force of horses as a symbol, see Zechariah, chaps. 1, and 6, and then Rev. chap. 19. It will be seen, in all these cases, that it indicates a matter of public general dealing of God, something that characterizes the state of men and God's dealing with them.

The opening of the seal brings no longer the cry of beasts. John sees those who had been martyred among men, had offered up their lives for God's word, and for testimony which they held. Hence they were seen under the altar. They looked not for peace themselves, but for judgment on the earth. We are here not in the gospel-scene or spirit of things, but of the throne of judgment and

government, as we see in the Psalms. The time for executing judgment and avenging their blood was soon coming, but not yet come. Their faithfulness was owned. White robes were given them, the witness of accepted practical righteousness -the witness of its acceptance before others, but they must rest a little while. Others must yet suffer in the last days. God has begun to deal with the earth; but, the last scenes are not yet come. But another character given of God to men here comes in view, already prophetically introduced in the promise to Philadelphia- "them that dwell on earth." They are settled, and have their habitation there. It is not necessary to be of the church, in order not to have this character. It is true of the church; but in Dan. 7, also, we have saints of the high places. And before Daniel, Abraham "looked for a city, which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God." He declared plainly that "he sought a country that is heavenly," so that God was not ashamed to be called his God. So it was with him, who could say for himself and others, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with Thee, as all my fathers were." It may be that the very departure of the church may have stamped this character of saints of the high places on many that are left behind. At any rate those who have been slain for their testimony easily know the settled worldly character of those who had slain them, how they had the earth for their place, and name. Remark, that we have no time or date as yet here, only there is but a little season to follow. How long the horses have been pursuing their career in accomplishing God's will, since the book was opened, is left wholly untold; only they were, when the church was present and owned of God, future things. How the witness is given to them, the white robes, is not said. The cry is for vengeance on others, not for blessing on themselves. If it be, not resurrection, there is no reason why even those of the church and all saints martyred for God's word may not be there. I apprehend it is since the church's rapture. The date of the passage is wholly forward, there is none as to the time they were martyred. There is -as to getting the white robes, and evidently confirmed by what follows -an intimation of the closing-in of God's ways. They are going to become direct, with revealed, yea evident, causes of judgment, not providential.

The next thing is a general break-up of all established, authority, and general confusion; everything that seemed stable on the earth ruined and broken up, so as to produce bitter terror in the minds of men. But the end was not yet. They think it is the day of the Lamb's wrath, and of Him that sat on the throne. The martyred saints knew that others were to be slain; but men had a bad conscience, and they feared the judgment of the throne and of the Lamb. I think this marks conscious enmity, too, to them. It is hardly a state of superstitious service; while the character of their fear seems to intimate that it is the fear of them that dwell on the earth, when Christianity, the profession of the knowledge of the Father and the Son is gone, and is known in conscience to have been rejected. The throne they had to do with, and the Lamb, speak of wrath to them, not worship. Why so? We are here surely in another scene of things where this, is on the conscience when it awakes through fear. If the great day of His wrath was not come, the harbingers were soon to break in, in rapid and terrible succession, on the unrepentant earth; but meanwhile God must have and secure a people through them all. This securing of His people is what the seventh chapter sets before the servants of His power holding the elements ready to devastate the earth. But another servant of God from the rising of the sun, I suppose in connection with the blessing of Messiah, the light of God in the midst of Israel (Luke 1:77-79), who has authority over the four prepared to hurt the earth and the sea, charges them to hold back the elements of destruction, till the servants of God are sealed. I have little doubt this intimates Christ (though in a new character, and in connection with the earthly people) and the saints. He holds the seal of the living God. Of

course, he alone could; but the saints are associated with Him. He says, "till we have sealed the servants of our God." He cannot now be separated, in the accomplishment of God's ways, from the heavenly saints. Not that this is yet manifested, but is here revealed for the intelligence of faith. What is preparing, is the gathering of all, things in one in Him, as Head, the heavenly saints at least. The church, all save those exceptionally to be killed in- the last tribulation, are gathered to Him. His own proper heavenly company are there. And He intimates their association with Himself, and must now provide, according to the will of God, for the people of the saints of the Most High. He does not yet come to secure their bodies, but to mark them irrevocably for God. His elect people in Israel. Trouble of every kind might come, but they were marked for God. In general, indeed, even temporal security is here assured (compare 9:4).

In the special tribulations of the last day, I do not see that God's servants in Israel are slain. At any rate, in the plagues immediately coming here, being judgments, the sealed saints are not the objects of them (see 9:4-6 and 20-21). I speak here of Israel, for with that we are occupied. The woes are on the inhabitants of the earth, the opposite exactly of the sealed ones. This sealing is a usual thing from the time of Christ's coming, when righteousness existed which could be sealed. He was sealed by God, the Father. This was the Holy Spirit. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, He being our righteousness on high. But this is in association with heaven; though Christ was as yet associated with earth. It is the living God whose seal it is here; not exactly the seal or promise of the Father, but that their sure part is from the living God in connection With the dayspring rising on the earth. The elect number of the (δωδεκα φυλων) twelve tribes, is sealed - the 1000 x 12 x 12. But there are others who are characterized as Gentiles. The associations and character are quite different here, and partly in connection with this point, of their going through the tribulation, and leads to a remark, which facilitates the apprehension, of the order and contents of this part of this book. We have, to the end of chapter 9, three distinct classes of persons. The sealed 144,000 of Israel, the multitude who praise God in white robes, and the dwellers on the earth, men who are not sealed. If we take out the white-robed. multitude (7:9-17), the rest is angelic care and judgment. All is in angelic hands. We come down to providential secret care, and God's ways by outward means, of which we may have the secret here, but which are providential. Nor is anything seen of the Lamb. Indeed, this is the case as regards anything being in the scene, though with a very special revelation of the beast, and we are in Israel, and do not find the Lamb again, till the fourteenth chapter-a chapter which gives the closing scenes of God's ways. It is not that the dealings of 7:1-8, ch. 8 and 10-12 are the same, but they are the same in this, that we are in angelic scenes, and Jerusalem and Israel is everywhere the center, though the oppressing power might be Gentile. I do not think 13 an exception to what I have said. The Lamb is not in the scene, only the names are written in His book before the foundation of the world. Those saved and spared could not be in any other way, or on any other account: But we shall see all this more clearly in following the different facts of the chapters.

Chapter 12:10,11, is a confirmation of what I mean. It is the celebration in heaven of what took place at another time.

I return to chapter 7:9. It is entirely a distinct vision from what precedes. The difference, I apprehend, in their character, is this. The vision of the 144,000 sealed ones is their being marked by God, so as to secure them for Himself in grace, through the coming trials. It is wholly prospective; they are there marked for this. The vision Of the Gentile multitude is prospective too,

but they are seen simply in the result coming out of the trial, so that no time of commencement is set. Whenever the time of tribulation began, those who were in it are found here. The slain ones have been seen (6:9). It may be that this tribulation begins with the universal break-up of the end of chapter 6; but it may have gone on in the previous seals, for aught that is said directly, as far as I am aware. Doubtless it continues afterward in the following chapters. At all events, those seen in the vision belong to the time of tribulation.

We have now to consider a little more closely their character. In 14, the 144,000 are with the Lamb. Those of Israel, I apprehend, who have passed through circumstances analogous to those through which Christ passed in Israel, and are associated with Him in His Israelitish royalty on Mount Zion-the remnant of the Psalms. The white-robed multitude are before the throne. They have suffered for Christ more than the Jewish remnant, but are not associated with any special place of His. They have overcome. Their conduct is fully owned as righteous. Their relationship is with God who sits on the throne, and the Lamb -that is, the God of power and deliverance of the earth, the Judge after the Church is gone-they stood before the throne. They are not sitting on thrones around it, nor even standing around it, making part of the heavenly circle. This the angels did, though the outer circle. They stood around the throne, the elders (who have here the first place), and the beasts; and these worship God, falling on their faces before Him. It was now, in truth, a new scene and display of God's working, and there must be new worship. When of God's working; and there must be new worship. When the Lamb was revealed, these celebrate His praise. Now they praise the God whose glory they own, and who is about to make it good on the earth. The intelligent Church has now, as such, the first place. The immediate activity will be in what has the character of being creation's providential power. But another interesting element is found here. He who has the Spirit on earth is associated in intelligence with the heavenly saints, only He receives it here prophetically; that is, not by the presence of the Holy Ghost, the unction by which we know all things. That is the elders' part -the Church of glory as such; but it is communicated to the prophet according to the intelligence of these, and they are interested in the Christian prophets' knowing it. One of the elders says to him, "Who are these?" and the prophet says "Thou knowest." The intelligence of the Spirit is ever found with the elders.

Another point is brought to light by this intercourse between the prophet and those, who represent the Church, as such, on high. The white-robed multitude are entirely another class. They are not the Church on high. They are not those who, in the time of millennial peace, knew nothing but its enjoyment. They have passed through the time of trial in the time when the throne was now set, but the Lamb was in the midst of it, and had not yet come to exercise judgment on the earth, to put down oppression, and to claim His rights in power. Hence they have a special place -a place, even in the time of blessing, in connection with their faith in the time of trial; and this is, I suppose, the general order of God's ways. They are manifestly redeemed-those who belong altogether to the millennial time, yet exposed to trial. Then, having gone, by grace, faithfully through the trial are manifestly, and manifested, as sheep. Their robes are white, washed in the blood of the Lamb. They are publicly owned as redeemed and approved, as in Matt. 25. This is a very great and distinctive privilege, though they are not in heaven. They serve the God to whom the throne belongs, always in full access to His presence in His temple. In heaven, there is no temple; but they have association with the true temple. Christ has not come again, and received them to Himself where He is in the Father's house; but they stand in the presence of God, as on the

throne, in full acknowledgment and blessing, and always. They have a fixed and blessed, and acknowledged place, which even the saints of the millennial time have not. He that sits on the throne, tabernacles over them, as over Israel once, in the revelation of His presence (not dwells among them), and they are forever secured by His own care from all trial and evil. The Lamb shall feed them, and lead them to fresh springs of living waters. God shall remove every remembrance and trace of sorrow; for they have had sorrow for Him, though surely to their own blessing and gain. Still God owns it. The suffering for Christ, in whatever time or circumstance it may be, Old Testament saints or these, always implies participation in redemption and special privilege, though the peculiar relationships may be different for the various displays of God's glory, and blessing from His hand. So it is with the white-robed multitude. God's state is various.

The unfolding of God's ways on the earth is now prophetically proceeded with; and we return with it into angelic or providential dealing, though, as carried out by angels, of more distinct and direct judgment. The seventh seal is opened. There was a lull for a time. No open dealings to call men's or the prophet's attention; a short lapse of quiet. But God's ways are preparing in secret (revealed to the prophet). The seven ministers of God's power stood before him, and seven trumpets, loud announcements of the interference of God, were given to them. But this intervention follows on what goes on below. The great High-Priest -still here seen as an angel - comes and stands at the altar (of incense), and gives efficacy to the cry of the saints who suffered on earth; but he was the minister of power; not here as sounding the trumpet, or as sent, but as giving the answer in judgment to the cry of suffering. He casts the fire of judgment on the earth; and the signs of God's terror and judgment, and, actual convulsions on earth, follow.

But specific judgments were ready to follow; and the seven angels prepare to sound. Such is the connection of the ways and dealings of God with the saints. All is prepared for judgment; but as they, however feeble, represent God on the earth, the wickedness of the wicked, which must be judged, is directed against them and their cry brings the judgment, being offered up by Christ, according to the efficacy of the incense He can add to it;

Remark here, that when the saints (verse 8) act as priests, they add no incense at all -privilege enough to have such a place, but they can add nothing. The odors are the saints' own prayers on earth. Here the Angel-High-Priest adds much incense to give efficacy to the cry of the saints.

I have nothing very distinct to communicate to my reader on the character of the Judgments, revealed as coming on the earth in this chapter. Our best plan is to follow the symbols as a language. I apprehend it is in the western Roman earth. The ninth chapter not, but in the east. At least, the seat of the prophetic agents is there. It is not a mere state of things under God's providential ordering as in the early seals, but positive judgments inflicted in a public way by signal historical facts. On the other hand, the working of these on men is direct. In the woe-trumpets direct -on "the inhabitants of the earth." Hail is judgment, what I may call violent stormy judgment; fire, judgment in general, but in its penetrating character discovering and reaching evil. The judgment here had this double character. Both were mingled with blood. I am not quite so sure what this symbol means, but in general it seems to me to be death, not in the sense of being simply killed outwardly, but of the power of death, death in a moral way; the spirit of: death in a shocking and revolting way; death as connected with sin as its character and cause. It was the power of death working as evil in man. The outward effect of the judgment was the destruction of

the great in the western earth, of what was elevated in dignity, and the universal destruction of prosperity.

The second angel brings a great mountain burning with fire into the sea. A mountain is great established power. This is cast, but in the way, and with the effect, of heart-discriminating judgment (it burned with fire); into the mass of people, and they are filled with, brought into, a state characterized by this deathful power. of evil.

They become blood. All however, did not die everywhere among the peoples, but it reached, in the wide expanse, to what answered to the extent of the seat of the evil. I suppose "dying" here, to be departure from the profession of association with God, public separation from Him, or apostasy.

The next is, a great star falls from heaven -a mighty though subordinate authority, which should have been the means of light and order from on high -a star (not the sun), but who loses his place, is apostate from his place of with God as such; and this with Mighty and ardent brightness and heat, and falls on the sources of popular moral existence. It was bitterness itself, and exercised the influence of what it was upon the spirit of the people, so that they were completely animated by it. They became wormwood; and it brought death, too; it was destruction and ruin to individuals, from the way it worked according to its own nature in them.

In the fourth trumpet, sovereign authority is smitten, and all dependent on or subordinate to it, and cease to regulate the order of 'the human course of things within the sphere assigned to these plagues, of which I have already spoken. I suppose the third part to be the Roman earth (west), because the dragon with seven heads and ten horns sweeps the third part of the stars, and they are cast to the earth-they lose their place of connection with God, carried away by Satan's power. Not only the public course of things was cast into confusion and darkness-the day in sunlight darkened; but the more private and hidden life of man lost the light that guided it. There was darkness and stumbling, no perception of God's will, and no way or light to walk by, which the human understanding (faculty of seeing) could profit by.

The last trumpets or woes are to fall on the inhabitants of the earth, those attached to this world and its course, not on the state and circumstances of the Roman empire. The two first trumpets must first occupy us, as they are spoken of apart. A word on the structure of this part of the book is necessary. The course of the prophecy, passes over evidently from the end of chapter 9 to chapter 11 verse 15, and this part closes at the end of verse 18. Chapters 10 and 11, to the end of verse form a parenthetical portion, the communication of the little book. We have, from chapter 11:19, the fully revealed final dealings of God, and the evil in respect of which He so deals. The resolving of the great question; whether Christ and the saints with Him, or Satan and the powers under His control, are to have the upper hand in this scene of the conflict between good and evil.

The first of the woe-trumpets brings forth a peculiar power of Satanic evil; the second, a more earthly distress, though both were woe. When the fifth angel sounds, one who rules, or should rule, on high, becomes apostate, loses his place of connection with God as such; and becomes the instrument of letting loose the power of Satan; he has the key of the bottomless pit. Sovereign authority was obscured, and the whole atmosphere of men's minds darkened, and in confusion. Out of this the destructive activity of evil was let loose upon the earth. Its instruments were deadly and tormenting to men. But they did not affect the general prosperity, nor the grandeur of those

that were exalted-but those who were not sealed with the sealing of chapter 7. But the object of this judgment was not to put to death, but such, as that death would be a refuge from the torment that these instruments of Satan's malice and God's judgment inflicted on men, men who, servants of Satan and the world for their lusts, were now so to their pain and grief. Those who were not openly God's servants were subject to it. We are here, I doubt not, in the East, and I suppose especially in Canaan and in Israel. This was the woe. But identifying characters are given of the instruments of torment. The general idea is warlike instruments of God's providential power in the earth -horses prepared for battle ravaging as to devouring power, but not independent (their hair was woman's hair), though in appearance they came in their own strength and intelligence. They swept with violence forward, as a rush of chariots of many horses. But whatever outward character they had; there was one definite and distinct -they were directly led by the power of darkness; the angel of the bottomless pit, the destroyer. It was God's judgment by outward means, but by Satan's power on the ungodly on the earth, who sought their portion in it. Men might persecute the saints, and would grievously, the Lord using it for blessing. But His hand would be now upon the ungodly, not yet in final judgment, but a witness of His penal anger against wickedness. The stings in the tails seem to me principles and doctrines which they disseminated and-left behind them. The second woe was of a more outward character; not devoid of Satanic power, but not so directly so. It was not so absolutely characterized by its subtlety and power. There was more brutish violence; men were killed by them. Still the men mounted on the horses were far less important than the horses themselves. Men, though instruments, did far less than the orderings of God's Spirit in providence, and His ways on the earth. Fire and brimstone are, no doubt, judgment, but not by the word not by chastenings, or actings of God in the earth on men. The lake of fire burns with fire and brimstone. It is God's judgment, inflicted, but having in its own nature a consuming power of evil. Scorpion-work was poisonous, the devil's tormenting mischief, a, terrible judgment, too, to be exposed to it; but this had the character of human violence and hellish misery and ruin. It seems to come on members of the Roman world, though its action be from, and especially in, the East. The destructive power of judicial evil was connected with what they announced before them. They killed by that which they proclaimed, where it reached. It cost people their lives. But they had, besides, mischievous teachings, teachings concentrated in a power by which -they did mischief on the earth-they had heads on their tails. Their defense was from hell and its power-their breastplates were fire, jacinth, and brimstone. It was hell's, destructive power, as God's judgments before...It was the serpent's mischief behind, but concentrated in a head of power. But no repentance was wrought. Put men, so to speak, in Hell's hands, they do not repent. Idolatry and wickedness, wrong against God and man, still characterized them.

I would remark, that the objects of the first woe were the unsealed ones, which carries us, in effect, eastward to Israel. The point of departure of the second, was the East, its objects the inhabitants of the Roman earth. Thus the whole Roman world has been judged: the West, in general, in the first four trumpets; the East in the first two woe-trumpets, including the Jews. The final conflict, and their judgment is yet to come; and the prophet must prophesy again.

This properly begins, I apprehend, in 9:19, which is, in effect a new prophecy, though it connects itself; of course, with what precedes in the chronology of the matter, and is thus interwoven. Indeed, the place of much of it, of its main historical parts, is given in the parenthesis. It is to be remarked, that the voice which calls out the second woe comes from the golden altar, is the fruit of

the intercession of the Lord, in favor, of course, of His saints. This gives a distinct character to the judgment, as in favor of the saints, which is, indeed, given as a general principle, at the beginning of the trumpets; but distinguishes this from the first woe-trumpet, which was distinctly on the unfaithful, as contrasted with the sealed ones-on those who were not servants of God. The four angels give the second woe a very general and sweeping character, as we have had four seals of judgment, four angels at the four corners of, the earth who hold the four winds, four trumpets of devastation on the Roman earth, so here the cry comes from the four horns of the altar, and the four angels are loosed. I suppose the Euphrates is to be looked at as the natural, and, till God so interferes, the maintained, barrier of the Roman earth.

In chapter 10, we come to the parenthetic communication of the little open book. It had not seals to be opened; it was given open. It was no longer mysterious and providential preparatory ways, to introduce the Lamb, to unfold which redemption was needed; nor among mere Gentiles, where God had no direct government, in respect of Israel. Nor does the Lamb appear here, as hidden in the throne. Christ comes to assert His own rights, by His own title and power. Not that it was yet made good but this was the ground He took and from which the revelation that was given flowed. The hidden times were going on before over the empire which was the subject of the course of prophecy had yet appeared. Now the question is openly raised-Is Christ to rule? And He openly lays claim to the title. On the other hand, the beast, the great public subject of historical prophecy of the "times of the Gentiles." comes forward, too. Along with this Jerusalem and the Jews come upon the scene. This could not be otherwise, when the earth, and the beasts, and Christ, are the subjects treated of. They are then the necessary center of God's ways. But this gives a distinct character to this part of the prophecy. The character here given to Christ represented by the angel, is, in covenant with creation, supreme authority, and the firmness of discriminating judgment. The source of it is heaven, and, I apprehend, as "clothed with the cloud." He still maintains this character, though He comes down. He holds in his hand now the open book of prophetic revelation, and claims the wide-flowing mass of nations, and the ordered government of earth. The perfect expression of the divine authority and power which was to make it good accompanied it, but the expressed detail of this was not to be revealed. There was now to be no longer delay. There had been long patience with failure and evil, to gather men to blessing. The time to close it was come. Two angels had sounded, and in the days of the seventh or third woe-angel, when he would sound, as he was about to do, the mystery of God would be finished. It would be the plain manifestation of His government, and order, and blessing on the earth, and known authority, where it ought to be. John was to take the book and eat it -sweet in his mouth, to receive the communications of God, but bitter for every feeling when its contents were digested. He was to prophesy again in view of peoples and kings. I should hardly think the prophecy begins with what follows. It affords the character and place in prophecy of that which is afterward opened out in all its bearings -the internal history of the scene itself at the close, not its origin, relationships, judgments, etc., which are afterward unfolded. The language of this chapter 11:1-18, though sometimes figurative, is not symbolical, but literal in its general character. The prophet was given a reed; and he was to measure, to put under God's care, and in his acceptance, the: Temple of God, the true inward place of His worship where priests could come, true worshippers among the Jews and in the consciousness of it, and the altar (I suppose of incense), and those that worshipped there-the true Jewish worshippers of that day. The court outside was not accepted; and the Gentiles trod under that the holy city forty-two months. But as heart-worship, it would be there in

the remnant, so would testimony, and for a like period. Day by day, the two witnesses, the adequate testimony of God, prophesy in the midst of trial. They bear witness to the order and blessing of the Jewish state, when Messiah shall reign, but they are not in that state. Not a candlestick with two olive trees, but two candlesticks and two olive-trees. But they are before the God of the earth. God preserves them to complete their testimony. The very terms, "holy city" and "Gentiles" lead us at once to Jewish associations here. All is a testimony to the state of things which exists before He who could put His right foot on the sea, and His left foot on the earth, whose voice the seven thunders accompanied, makes good His power in the earth, and makes the Jerusalem which He loved the seat of His power on the earth-before the God of the earth makes His rest-giving power known there. The power of judgment proceeds out of the mouth, i.e., their word brings it on their enemies, according to their testimony, to devour those 'who would prevent their testimony. They have great power in this way. Verse 6 ascribes to them the same order and ex, tent of power as was possessed by Moses and Elijah. The latter shut up heaven; the former turned water to blood, and smote Egypt with plagues. To this latter there is no limit-every plague whenever they will. This is great power; but they are in sackcloth -in sorrow and suffering- only this power in their hand in time of need. But it is only to secure and maintain their testimony, not to set aside the power of the beast itself.

When the witnesses have completed their testimony, the beast that is known as the one ascending out of the bottomless pit, shall make war with them, overcome and kill them: It is very likely there may be literally two witnesses, but the main point, I apprehend, in the mind of the Spirit, is, that there is, during the time of the beast's power, and the treading down of the Gentiles, adequate testimony to the title of the God of the earth. There was an owned worship and an owned testimony, though only narrowed up to the straitest limits which preserved it, the house and the altar of incense, and an adequate witness. What was really priest and really prophet, the little remnant, was guarded of God: The beast was in his last form, here anticipated in expression, as is the whole passage (see 17:12), when animated by, and deriving his power and being from, Satan. It does not follow from what is said, rather the contrary, that the witnesses are killed the first moment. The beast Makes war against them and overcomes them, as soon as their testimony is complete, and kills them. But it does not, on the other hand, suppose any lengthened period. The triumph of evil seems complete. They were to be likened, in a great measure, to their Lord. Only their bodies are exposed in a public way in the great street of the city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. Israel is expressly called Sodom spiritually, and Egypt is the world. Utter corruption on the one side; and the Oppressing power of the world or Gentiles, on the other that idolatry and independence of God, out of which Israel had originally been called. The victory seemed complete, and the dwellers on earth rejoice over the witnesses slain, and make merry; for the two witnesses had tormented them.

A God of the earth about to take His power and claim His rights over the earth, was no resting-place for those who dwelt there at ease, defying Him. But the triumph of the wicked is short. After three days and a half, the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood up to the dismay of those who saw them. They ascended up, too, like Christ, in great measure, only with this difference, answering to the full insult heaped on them even when dead, which God could not allow as to Christ, to whom, save in the moment of atonement, God gave ever testimony (however He suffered), namely, that their enemies beheld them. The likeness, atonement apart, of

the history of these witnesses to that of Christ is remarkable. They suffer for their testimony in Jerusalem - become Sodom and Egypt. They lie dead awhile, stand on the earth, and then go up to heaven. But we have the solemn truth that, on the one hand, a testimony is given to the Son of God, which could not fail, that is to His person; and on the other, He remains in His own holy power, not seen of His enemies, but giving comfort and a place of testimony to His friends. All this is fitting. Further we find, that as to outward human evil, things had ripened. There is more insolence, more joy, more open contrast, more public power of testimony; but the evil more openly unrestrained. A violent revolution on the earth accompanied the call of the witnesses to heaven: a tenth part of the city, the great city I suppose - the city, fell; the organized system of the earth, a complete number of men known of God, the fullness of his then purposed judgment, but not further-the rest are affrighted, and turn back in ignorance (not repentant or converted), to give glory to God in a relationship in which He no longer stood to the earth. They think to save themselves. This proves that they do not know God at all, nor His ways. But these men were not the public enemies of God. Still, a suitable outward effect is produced, as turning men outwardly towards the true God.

The second woe, that of the horses and riders let loose from the Euphrates, was now closed. But how serious were the events of another kind which had happened in the period allotted to it of God. The holy city trodden down, the testimony of God raised up, and for a time stopped by the power of Satan exercised by the beast. But this gives occasion to the last intervention of God, not now by instruments in mystery providentially ordered, for there had been open testimony, and open rebellious opposition. This testimony had been rejected, and the time for mercy, long displayed, now closed.

Judgment was come. The seventh angel sounds. We have not, as yet, any details of the closing dealings of God, by which His wrath is exercised; but it was come. "The worldly kingdom of our Lord," say the voices in heaven, "and of His Christ are come." Such is the song which sounds out of heaven. It had been announced, and heaven knew what that trumpet announced. The elders then come in, and, as usual, give the reasons for praise. God is again proclaimed as at beginning- Jehovah, Elohim, Shaddai, the God of Israel and of the fathers, of the world, of the promise, and of power.

Only now He had taken to Him His great power and the kingdom. The nations were angry, but how uselessly! Jehovah's Messiah and Son would be set up in Zion; the dead would be judged, the prophets and the God-fearing rewarded, and the destroyers of the earth destroyed. It is the general statement of the close of God's ways; of judgment and of its effects; the government of God made good in its final results.

The time of the dead seems to be taken absolutely, and is a very important element. The time of this world's activity is not the time of the dead. There is no device nor understanding there; but when God's time comes, it is the time of the dead - but to be judged (only here the spirit turns more exclusively to what, in fact, will then come to pass, the case of the saints) to be judged, and "give the reward unto Thy servants, the prophets," and to all who have been faithful. The order of thought or revelation runs thus. "The nations have got angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead to be judged" [or that there may be judgment] and the reward given," &c. The force, I apprehend of the passive κριθῆναι is, that judgment may take place. I should not exclude at all

those, properly speaking, judged at the end, the wicked dead. But, save what is done at the beginning of the thousand years, all is given exceedingly abstractedly. What does happen at the beginning precisely? It is not του κριθηναι τους νεκρους ορ εις το κρινειν τ. ν., but "the nations angry and Thy wrath come." This last sentence, though general, is the way God treats the open rebellious anger of the nations. The time of mercy is now closed, and the wrath is come. "The time of the dead" is wholly general, so is "to be judged." The giving reward is definite, and so is the destroying them who destroy the earth. The objects are precisely named. The first point is the contrast of time. It is not the time of mercy and patience, but of wrath and judgment; also, of reward to prophets and the just, and the putting away evil on the earth. I confess this looks little like the precise time of the setting up of Satan's great power and wrath. It closes the whole unfolding of the seven seals, and the ways of God. His providential dealings with the earth are now over. His direct governmental dealings now begin. Not that many other events had now to be revealed. Their place had been shown in the little open book; but they were a new and distinct prophecy, a prophesying again. But still, and yet more clearly and openly, in connection with the Jewish people. The brief summary of the same history brought in in the trumped period, though the direct object be clearly Jerusalem and Palestine as a center, is so expressed, that what is called a spiritual application may be made of it. Here, unless in the vaguest generalities, it seems impossible. To this prophesying again, the special religiously viewed result of the last days, I now turn.

The Temple of God was opened in heaven. The book was open. It was a direct prophetic revelation of events according to the known tenor of prophecy, when the known relationships of prophecy were renewed, and God occupied Himself according to them with the earth, though it were in judgment. The temple, too, was opened. Heaven was to be in relationship with the earth; not in the secret way of providence, the bearing of which was revealed as a result, not the things or agents in relationship with God, but in dealings in which the objects were owned; in which, though heaven might be wonderfully brought in and was, God, in His ways, had to say directly to the earth. But then He must have, as we have said, to do with Jews. The ark of His covenant is seen in-the temple. God's infallible connection with the Jewish people, only now according to heavenly counsel, purpose, and perfection. This was accompanied by all the signs of God's power in judgment with resulting convulsions on the earth, and positive judgment falling on men on the earth.

The vision now begins. What precedes only characterizes it. A woman is seen in heaven. All is in divine thought and counsel here, not yet manifestation on the earth. It is as it stands in the divine mind. The woman, as remarked elsewhere, is a state of things, not an agent a subjective vessel of God's display of His purposes. Here the Jewish people; but they are seen as in the mind of God, clothed with supreme authority, all the mere reflected light of the previous state of Judaism under her feet, and crowned with the emblem of complete authority in man, twelve stars. Twelve is complete ordered rule in man as of God, the stars are the light and witness authority gives, i.e. authority viewed in its character of light and moral order. But she was in travail to bring forth. Here was one side of the picture. On the other, the power of evil still having his place in the sphere Of power, in heaven-a great red dragon. He had seven heads, Completeness in an inward way, constituted completeness in a thing in itself, not in relationship to others. Not compounded but constitutive completeness. Seven cannot be divided; it is the highest uncomposed number that

cannot. Twelve is the most perfectly divisible of all. I attach no importance to this, save as the way scripture uniformly uses these numbers denotes their character. The dragon had ten horns, power or kingdoms, very much of it, but not complete. There were not twelve. The heads were sovereigns, were crowned. The dragon had influence over the third part of those subordinate or lesser powers which should have given light and order from God on earth, and had cast them out of this down to a merely earthly, dark and subject condition. They ceased to lighten or govern the earth. He stood to frustrate God's purposes, and to devour the child of which the woman was in travail. Here we must, properly speaking, see all the church-saints in Christ Himself. If we seek the church in Old Testament prophecy, we shall find only Christ (compare Isa. 51, and the end of Rom. 8). Christ is to rule all nations with a rod of iron (Psa. 2). This He has imparted to us, to have it with Him (Rev. 3). Hence the catching up of the man-child is our catching up, too. There is no separating Christ and the church in God's thoughts and purposes. It would be the head without the body. This then was in the counsels of God; not to make good power in the male child at the beginning, but to have it caught up to God. Next the woman, the Jewish mother of Christ, and, in Him, of the church, has thereon her place in the wilderness. It is not what is united to Christ which has this but what preceded Him, out of which he sprung. This closes the ordering of the scene, and persons; their taking their places in God's order. What follows is historical prophecy. There is war in heaven. And the dragon called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world, is cast out of heaven never to return, and his angels with him. This is before the beginning of the twelve hundred and sixty days of the woman's being in the wilderness. The first dealings of the dragon, before his casting out, was seeking to devour the child; that is met not by acting on his position or his being cast out, but by the child being caught up. All this embraces the whole time of Christ's rejection from earth, and being taken up, and our being caught up. Then, the saints being with Christ, and the heavenly Man who is to rule complete and with God, after this, Satan and his angels are cast out of the place of rule. When cast out (verses 13 and 14), he persecutes the woman; and the date on earth begins with the commencement of her staying in the wilderness. Historically, we are only, as yet, at the time of his being cast out (the ninth verse), but this casting out of Satan (the angels have nothing to do with this, the heavenly or accusing part) calls out praise and gladness in heaven. In truth, it was a great change. Satan was cast out of heaven, and all his deceit and work as in heaven was over forever. He might raise up the earth in open war against the Lamb, or, subsequently, from all quarters the deceived nations on the earth Against the Lamb and the beloved city, but his deceits connected with heaven and his accusations, his carrying on a system pretended to be heavenly, but where his power was developed, His working under the name of the true God, but against the true God, and true Mediator, and true saints, -all this was closed forever. This was the great fact, the blessed and all-important fact, full of rest to the spirit in hope. But several details must here be entered into, for the interpretation of the book. The loud voice which often occurs has the natural force of a great public fact, to which universal attention is called. It carries authoritative announcement from heaven. But we have further to inquire who speaks here, because he says our God and our brethren, and the voice is an abstract idea, so that it does not in itself determine the person or persons who utter it. They are various in the Apocalypse. Here it is not without importance. It is a voice in heaven, yet it is naturally of many- "Our God, our brethren." It contemplates, however, others on earth who are their brethren. Those who speak have the consciousness of near relationship to God, and celebrate the setting up of the kingdom of their God, and the power of His Christ. Christ, however, is seen in other

relationships than with themselves. God was setting up the power of His Christ. Thus we have three classes or subjects. Those whose voices are heard, their brethren, and the kingdom set up. Add to this, that the event they celebrate is followed by the manifestation of a distinct body of persons belonging to God on earth, before the kingdom is established there-the woman and the remnant of her seed. That is, we have those who utter the loud voice, their brethren, and the woman and her seed subsequent to this period, but before the kingdom on earth. This is important as to the order of events, too. Those who celebrate the event with a loud voice, are a class already exempt from the difficulties from which the accused ones are only as a class delivered. The saints who have part in the rapture, as it is customarily called, who form part of the man-child, who are actively associated with Christ, while that association is carried on by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven in its proper power, until the moment that this whole process of union is closed by their going to meet the Lord in the air -these who have their glorified position are corporately placed in it, united to the man-child. These it is who celebrate the deliverance of brethren, just escaped from trial upon earth, associated with heaven, for Christ was not yet manifested for earth, nor the last public trial of His title there begun. Satan had been yet on high till now to resist before the throne of God the blessing of those whose hearts looked up there, so as to be ready to suffer anything rather than deny the truth and the Lord. Grace had given them the victory. Their victory was martyrdom. Satan accused these saints, and exercised his power from heaven over those that were not saints. He is cast down; and this accusing work ceases, and he loses this place of power. Power is exercised in heaven to drive him from this seat of power. The kingdom of God and of His Christ was set up in the seat of power. The effect would follow on earth when the time was come; but the power of the kingdom of God was set up in the sovereign place of authority; for Satan was cast down. The brethren were the saints who had been on earth, faithful in testimony, between the rapture and the casting-down of Satan. For the church is here looked at as a complete thing in itself (of course united to Christ) before the government part of the book begins. The brethren are the saints of the Apocalypse, whose prayers for example, were presented chapter 5, who were under the altar chapter 6, till now that Satan is cast down. Now all that is in heaven, all who dwell there can rejoice. There is "peace in heaven;" but, as yet, terrible things on earth. For as yet the king was not yet come there in the name of Jehovah. The saints had been killed, perhaps, of him that had the power of death; yet they had overcome him. So had Christ, who died too. "By the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony," does not mean their instruments in the warfare, but the cause of the victory. It is because of, not through. How far they may have used both, is not the question here. But they were in conflict with Satan, the-accuser. They did render testimony, and that brought death, as it had the Lamb's; but His word and the word of their testimony, were the cause of their moral victory, though, as in the body, they might succumb. There is no fixed time here till the casting-out of Satan, or rather the woman's flying into the wilderness, which begins the last half-week. Outwardly, the ascension is the only point of departure as to time. So it is in the twenty-fourth of Matthew. It goes from the ascension to the abomination of desolation as one time, because it speaks only of the remnant's testimony in Palestine, adding the fact, that, before the end it would go to all nations: Then a precise date in the setting up the abomination of desolation. In Matt. 10, it goes from the mission of the twelve, then setting forth, to the Coming of the Son of Man without any supposed break, leaving out the sending to all nations. For prophecy the church was a mystery. Here, then, we have the same order as in Matt. 24. But as the church is already gathered and on high, and John sees from

heaven, we have the additional element of its heavenly apprehension of the effect of the casting-down of Satan. Their brethren's toils, too, are closed -the victory won.

We now turn to the present effect on earth. The dragon, thus defeated and cast out, has the consciousness that his time is short, and has great wrath, a source of woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea of the ordered scene of God's government and light, and of the general mass of nations. The efforts of the dragon are directed against the woman who brought forth the man-child-against the Jewish people. God grants a mighty and, rapid escape from this attempt of Satan. The woman has the eagle-wings. That is, she has no power save of rapid escape, and this she does, and is nourished in the wilderness (deprived of the present resources of the civilized earth) three times and a half (forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days) from the face of the serpent. The serpent sought to overwhelm her by a flood of people under his influence, in vain. The earth, the scene of divine order in the world, opened its mouth, and swallowed it up- absorbed, in some way, the flood of people who would have overwhelmed the Jews. But the body to be preserved is removed from the scene of witness; and the dragon proceeds to make war with the remnant of the woman's seed: those Jews not hidden away with the body, but who kept the commandments of God -godly Jews- and had the testimony of Jesus Christ; that is, the spirit of prophecy, which speaks of and reveals Jesus, and is His word. This is the Jewish aspect of the scene. We now turn to what, in the Gentile world, is connected with it, at any rate in what regards Daniel's monarchies, or the beast. The prophet sees a beast rise up out of the sea; the origin of the Roman empire, now viewed, however, in its end. So it was in chapter 12, where the origin of all in the exaltation of Christ to heaven, and the consequent wilderness state of the Jews as God saw them, was brought forward, but really for their history at the end. Only there, the purpose of God, and object of the prophecy in the glory of Israel, is first brought into view, because they were the objects of purpose. The beast is seen as coming out of the mixed mass of peoples. But the heathenish state is not before us. The heads are not crowned, but the horns. The distinct kingdoms subsist, and are in view as such. The seven heads identify it with the Roman empire as a whole,-but it took in the previous empires; not necessarily in extent of territory, but it absorbed them, and had the seats of their power in its possession-the horns with the kingdoms into which it had been divided. But now the dragon, Satan's power in the world, gave it his throne, and power, and great authority. One of the forms of the government of the beast had been slain, but it was healed -I suppose the imperial and all the earth (not world) was in admiration. They acknowledge the dragon the prince of the world, in his Roman form. The Latin world revived; and the new revival of it, the beast. "Who was like him? Who able to make war with him?"

But more, the beast, thus in scene, used great words against God. It is the beast of Dan. 7. Not only oppressor of men and of saints, but one who exalts himself openly against God. He was to continue forty and two months, the same time the woman was in the wilderness, a half-week. He is then presented to us as active in blasphemy, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, His heavenly Church, and those who dwelt in heaven, all saints who belonged on high and were on high, even if they could not be called the tabernacle of God. The dragon could yet give him a throne upon earth; but he was out of heaven. The beast, inspired by him, could only blaspheme those out of his power and reach. This confirms greatly, its being after the dragon's being cast down, if that were needed. But earth, for a little and a measured time, was more within his power.

He makes war with the saints and overcomes them. Here detail is not given. It is characteristic. From other passages, we know that there will be those slain who will go to heaven; those who, persecuted and driven out, will escape his hand on earth. He has the general dominion of the beasts over kindreds, tongues, and nations. It is remarkable how the Russian and German nationalities are ignored here. As a general thing, in the world at large, power belonged to the West, to the beast. Finally, all that dwell on the earth will worship him, save only those written in the Lamb's book of life. Remark here, that the dwellers upon earth are not an evil class in contrast with what was to be supposed heavenly - the assembly. But the heavenly saints, as such, being in heaven, all who remain are held dwellers on earth, with the exception of an elect remnant.

I have elsewhere remarked, that it is "written," not "slain," from the foundation of the world. All this is more descriptive than historical. It was what was needed. They who have to do with him know the features of this deadly enemy. If any had an ear he was to hear. But physical opposition by violence was, not God's way. Power was left with evil till He judged. Then the beast of violence, and his followers, would be killed. Meanwhile they must possess their souls with patience. And here was where their patience and faith would be tried. But another power rises up; not out of the mass of nations, but out of the ordered scene which -has professedly to say to God. He had the forms of Christ's power, but his voice, to a discerning ear, displayed the dragon. He is the proper Anti-Christ; false prophet and king in Israel. The heavenly anti.-priestly character of Satan was closed by his casting out. He gives the same proof lyingly of his power, and the beast's title, as Elijah did of the divine supremacy of Jehovah. He makes fire come down from Heaven, in the sight of men. He exercises all the power of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth, and those dwelling on it, to worship the renewed Roman empire. I do not say he does not deceive the nations; that I suppose 2 Thess. 2 proves. Still I find myself here in a specially Jewish circle. In 2 Thessalonians it is more amongst Gentiles, who have not received the love of 'the truth. They are given over to strong delusions, to believe a lie; and there the signs referred to by Peter, as given by Jesus to prove He was the Christ, are attributed to the man of sin, of course lying ones. Here it is the proof of Jehovah. But I should doubt that the Gentiles trouble themselves about His being the Christ, save as a rationalist might; but they believe a lie, for they are given up to it. His testimony they will receive, of course. A Jewish Christ is not for Gentiles; but in Judea he will be an Antichrist. He denies that Jesus was the Christ, and he denies the Father and the Son. Those who have hated true Christianity willingly accept this, and his other pretensions with it. Of course, the Jews as well. Indeed, both his negations and pretensions, so that he takes Antichristian and, withal, Jewish ground. But, in connection with Christianity and the truth, it is negative and a lie; while in Judea and in the world's scene of government here, we have the positive side, (the historical in Dan. 11 -the king) he is a false prophet (so found at the end); and here especially, pretending to the royalty of Him that suffered, he is Messiah, the king, but linked with the Satanic power of the revived Roman empire, and setting that up. This goes so far, that he leads the dwellers upon earth to make an image to the beast, and gives breath to it; and it speaks and causes those who would not worship it to be killed. Thus idolatry is set up, and Gentile power, as set up by Satan, honored. Times and laws are given into the beast's hands, and the abomination that causes desolation set up; but the glorious empire protects Jerusalem, and God is cast out. All are forced by the second beast to have the stamp, in public avowal or service of the beast, upon them. I cannot but think that the proper subject of the history of the second beast, and here we have history not merely character, is Palestine - Jerusalem - in connection, no doubt, with the

Roman empire, but still, centrally, Palestine. The first beast comes up out of the sea at large. The second beast out of the earth. He shows his power in the sight of men. But those spoken of are not merely characteristically dwellers on the earth, but those who dwell therein, where earth seems land. I see power in Palestine or Judea; deception going wider. The world, as such, was running voluntarily after the beast; but here, the setter-up to be Messiah, the king, compels them to own and worship him. There was not readiness to do this where he was. Still, in general, while power was in the hands of the first beast, deception and wickedness were exercised by the second. The result would be the blasphemous renewal of the Latin empire, with general power over the world, blaspheming against God and persecuting the saints, and in Palestine, a false Messiah, denying Christianity altogether, and the claims of Jesus Christ, who deceives men by false miracles, leads them under his power, and sets up an image of the beast, and forces them to subject themselves openly and avowedly to the beast, and that with extreme governmental tyranny. He enchains men in his deceptions, and has his local character and sphere in Palestine: It is not difficult to conceive one setting up to be Messiah, having power in Palestine, and also religiously deceiving men in general.

Such is the last scene of the prophetic world, as far as under the original beasts' power, the times of the Gentiles. We have now the intervention of God in respect of this power, and of all evil. But first we must have the earthly saints owned; as before the heavenly ones. The prophet sees a Lamb standing on Mount Zion. He who suffered takes His royalty, and particularly the royalty on Mount Zion, or of David, and with Him companions of the royal sufferer, 144,000, with His Father's name written on their foreheads. Having suffered like Him, they are associated with Him in the royal place of earthly glory. They have the place in principle, in which Christ was revealed on earth. He was Lamb, but revealed His Father's name. They, though late, had taken this place, and they had His Father's name on their foreheads. It is not said, "their Father's"; that is, they had not had the Spirit of adoption on the earth; but they had walked in the Lamb's steps, who had this relationship, viewed as born on earth. They were associated with the Lamb, who was to reign as king on the holy hill of Zion, and held His title by that word: "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten Thee"; that Son whom all the kings and judges of the earth were to kiss, or perish. But there is connection now with heaven. It is the Lord from heaven, who establishes the throne in Zion, where His followers are seen anticipatively; for the throne is not seen there yet. But the voice of glory and of praise sounds from heaven. They sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and before -the elders. This is a remarkable statement; for who are the singers? There is a general idea (as in chapter v. verse 9), "there was sung." Still there is here added, "before the beasts and elders." So that we have another class of singers. It is in no way the song of the church-saints. Those who sing, sing before them.

The Church-saints are viewed apart, identified in position with the throne. As contrasted with chap. 5:9, we have power, might, praise; that is the public testimony of this, but no priestly intercession, nor reason given for distinct praise. The celebration of incoming power is in its place here. The intimacy of worship, service, and priesthood belonged to the living creatures or elders. What was heard from heaven now was the former. This the 144,000 could learn. They had gone through the tribulation on earth, and could understand the heavenly song of this kind, though not the beasts' and elders' association with the throne. It would seem to be the heavenly and earthly portions of those faithful, after the rapture of the Church; some in heaven who praised there; others, who

having faithfully passed through the same circumstances, can learn their song though on earth. These last are the first-fruits of earth (not the Church, but for the millennial earth before the harvest), first-fruits to God and the Lamb; that is, to God as known in the display of Government, which is the subject of this book. They had not been mixed up with the Jezebel or Babylon, or heathenly idolatrous systems, which had gone on; their hearts were fresh for God. Nor was there guile in their mouth; they were without fault; they had been kept pure, and pure (truthful) in heart from all by which Satan had seduced men.

Next, in these ways of God, the everlasting gospel is sent out into the earth and every nation before the judgment comes. Such is ever God's way. It is not the special witness of heavenly salvation and the church. But the old glad-tidings belonging to the course of God's dealings with the earth-that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, and the kingdom and final blessing be brought in to the creation. Hence men were warned of the judgment just coming in, and called to own Him who made heaven and earth.

Next, the fall of Babylon is announced-the idolatrous fornicating system; but the beast was not yet destroyed. Hence, in the fourth testimony of God's ways, or third angel (for the first was not the acting of God, but the manifestation to the prophet of those who had been previously faithful, and had a special place), in the fourth testimony men are warned, that if they own the beast they will have God's wrath. Those who had rejected the beast had been exposed to his wrath; now, God's judgment was just coming in, and woe to those who owned the beast. Here was the trial of the saints' faith. This closed the testimony of God, nor would any more now be killed for the faith, but the dead receive the public reward of their works. It is not the church's special place which is noticed here, but the condition of those who have died in the Lord, as connected with this book.

I doubt not that all departed saints will come in; but the direct occasion is the closing of the time of suffering on the earth, and the public reward of labor in the appearing of Jesus. Hence the Lord is immediately introduced, coming in the cloud. And the two following and closing testimonies give the double character of His judgment. The Son of Man comes crowned, with a sharp reaping sickle. The earth is reaped. Here He gathers in judgment on the earth, i.e., the mixed wicked ones are dealt with in judgment, and the righteous spared, and the wicked taken by the judgment. But there was another character of judgment-that which had a special religious character. It is not the earth was reaped -the judgment of the general state of the world, the population as it stood in the earth; but that which, before God and at Jerusalem, held a religious character; had, however apostate, been the seat of religious profession and fruit-bearing in the earth -what Israel had been of old. Christ alone on the earth in truth, by a certain analogy the professing church for a length of time; and, lastly, Israel joined with Antichrist, and the beast (in religious matters) at the close. In this last state, it was judged; and here there was no sparing, as in harvest. All was cast into the wine-press of God's wrath.

Thus we have, with the counsel of God as to Israel, the whole history of the period from the ascension of the Lord, and of the church to be with Him, to the public destruction of His apostate enemies on the earth. The heavenly church is only seen as caught up -and the history is the history of what passes afterward, till all is closed essentially of the last half-week of the beast, and God's actings on the earth during the same period. This is a complete portion in itself.

In the fifteenth chapter we have another distinct revelation, complete in chapters 15 and 16, but a part of which is developed in 17 and 18. The general subject is expressly the seven last plagues, in which the wrath of God is filled up, closing with the destruction of Babylon, before the marriage of the Lamb and His public manifestation in the earth. But, before their pouring out the -spared remnant-are seen secure. The 144,000 were Jews who, faithful in the time of trial, had a place with Christ in His earth by royalty. These, in chapter 15 are not Jews - "whoever had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image." And, without excluding a Jew to whom it might apply, these having been noticed in 14, it applies essentially to Gentiles. The reader will remark another thing-chapter 12 to 14 is of far wider extent. It reaches from the rejection and ascension of Christ, to His appearing, and executing judgment, and includes, as a period, all that is here, and far beyond. This, the special judgments of God (not of the Lamb) within that period, and towards its close.

God is celebrated as the King of nations. The Song sung is in connection with God and the Lamb. It is again Jehovah, Elohim, Shaddai exacting judgment in righteousness on the earth, and on the Gentile power, which had oppressed His people. Hence, the Song of Moses. But it was, withal, the victory of the rejected Lamb. God's ways were shown in it. Erst, only shown to Moses,. His works to the people, but now made manifest, and that not to mere destruction, like that of Pharaoh, but to bringing the nations-all nations-to come and worship Jehovah, whose judgments have been made manifest. For the earth this is all of the last importance. It is the result of all its history. A word as to the place where the overcomers are found. They are on the sea of glass mingled with fire. They are not sitting on thrones round the throne, nor have they suffered previous to the manifestation of the beast's power, at any rate had not been martyrs and brought to heavenly joy, before the half-week of his power came. But they had gotten the victory over him, his mark, and every form of subjection to him. They had been purified and saved -still, through fire. They stood on what was the sign of purity -the sea of glass. Where it was water it was the sign of purifying; but here it is the result; and it is purity; but they had passed through the fire of God's judicial tribulation to obtain it. These are the owned ones of God, the overcomers, even to death, of the time of the beast's power, having part in the first resurrection. After the vision of these the preparation for the execution of God's judgment comes. It is not, as in 11:19, the ark of God's covenant, His sure relationship with Israel: yet it is immediately connected with it, and in view of that people. The "testimony" means strictly the two tables of the law. Thence even the ark, as enclosing them, was called so. It was the throne of God, withal, who had this as the testimony and witness of His governmental requirements in the world. The sprinkling of blood on it made it a true propitiatory; but with that we have nothing to do here. The house is opened, not to look into it, to see covenant-relationship with Israel, but for the seven angels to come out with judgments on those who had heeded neither the throne nor the rule according to which the throne judged. It was the house of the Tabernacle of the Testimony. It was not Christ as Lord who was coming out, but providential ministers of God's power. We can readily understand how these vials were the expression of the judgment of the throne of the Lord God Almighty-of the wrath of Him who never changes, 'and must, according to the testimony of what He is, put down corruption and iniquity and oppression on the earth. It was not yet giving the throne to Christ, to govern as Prince of peace in righteousness, but it was providentially the righteous judgment of the throne of God. And this, though coming from heaven (for the throne was not yet established on earth), yet was associated with the whole character of the testimony given when the earthly throne was set at Jerusalem. The

nations would come and fear the God revealed in the Old Testament, Jehovah, Elohim, Shaddai, for His judgments were manifested. His earthly throne had been, we know, in Jerusalem, and would be again in Christ. This judgment characterized the whole scene. God displayed His glory in this way, so that none could approach Him. As when the cloud was on the Temple in Solomon's time.

The judgments fall on the same spheres of human existence (only not solely the third part, or Roman empire), as the first four trumpets, save that, instead of destroying the prosperity of society and the great of the earth, the first judgment falls on the men who had received the mark of the beast, bringing them into a wretched and distressing state. The next judgments fall on the mass of the peoples; and all who abandoned God, that is, in profession, died. Then all the sources of popular influence, which characterized peoples and nations became deathful. What they drank in was death, the principle of alienation from God. In the fourth, the supreme power on the earth became consuming and oppressive in the highest degree. These, like the first four trumpets (as it was of the seals, too) stand apart from the last three, which have a peculiar though judicial character. Penal judgment falls on the throne of the beast. The Euphrates being dried up, the way of the kings of the East is prepared, and the kings of the world are gathered, by the threefold form of evil, for judgment; and, finally, Babylon is brought to remembrance for the cup of wrath, while convulsions rock the earth, and judgment from above provokes their rage. This last, vial was poured out into the air, the whole circumambient influence that acts on men. The judgment on the beast's throne (fifth vial) is felt in the extent of his empire. His enterprises are not arrested, but his kingdom is full of darkness; and "they gnaw their tongues for pain." And now the forces are gathered for the great final battle of good and evil. The principle of Satan's power as the enemy of Christ in the Latin empire -the renewed form of imperial power- and the false Messiah in Palestine, a prophet-king -are the sources of this gathering power. They promote and proclaim the principles that gather. It is a notable fact here that the excessively miserable state of the beast's kingdom does not hinder his pushing his war against the Lamb, Under the influence of these three spirits of evil the apostate armies are gathered to the battle Of the-great day of God Almighty, the final conflict of good and evil heaven and earth. I suppose Armageddon refers to Judges 5:19, 20. This gives occasion to the solemn warning to the world that the Lord was just coming as a thief. When the seventh vial is poured out, there was a universal subversive convulsion, such as never had been in the world. And the great city, the public confederation of the civilized-earth was broken up into parts; and Babylon came into remembrance, to give her the cup of the fierceness of God's wrath. The details of her judgment are in the eighteenth chapter. Men were plagued with the terrible judgments of God falling on them; but they only blasphemed His name. We have three parts of the effect of this final judgment of God. The city is divided into three, the cities of the nations fall, and Babylon comes into remembrance. The great city I have alluded to-the practically unified association of European civilization -the other centers of social life- fell. Babylon is the third. It is more particularly western civilization viewed in connection with its corrupt religious side.

We are now arrived at the important chapters which describe the connection of Babylon with the beast, and the destruction of the former. One of the ministers of God's judgments calls the prophet to see' the judgment of the great whore who sits on many waters; that is, the grand corruptress of religion, who turns away souls from the truth of God -who exercises wide-spread influence over the masses of population. The kings of the earth had had intercourse with her, cultivated it in this

prostitution of Christianity; and the inhabitants of the earth -those settled in the sphere of the civilized order where God's ways and dealings were known, had been mentally steeped, besotted with this corruption of Christianity. Rich as all was to man's eye, and pious and religious, to the Spirit all was wilderness, desolation, and drought- anything but the garden of God. She sits on a scarlet-colored beast, the imperial Roman power in its last blasphemous form. She herself was enriched with luxury, power, and splendor; in her hand a cup of gold, full of that with which she corrupted and made drunk the earth. To a spiritual eye, her character was stamped upon her forehead, though a mystery to those who were not. She was judged, however, as a mystery by the spiritual man; that is, he was spiritual enough to judge her -saw how, if unrevealed, her true character was not understood. She was the heir, as the great moral characterizing capital of the world, of that great city, which first was the seat of idolatry antagonistic of the true God, the fertile source, of all - corruptions of primitive Christianity, and of all idolatries in the earth. She was drunk with the blood of persecution in a double character; first of saints, and then of the witnesses of Jesus. This was the character of her who rode. The riding it, or the time of that, was a distinct thing - the saints she could not bear - the witnesses of Jesus she could not bear. The prophet was astonished at seeing her. This astonishment clearly intimates, I think, something special and extraordinary. And so it is, that what should call itself the church should be drunk with the blood of the saints. The foolish notion of the rationalists (and what have they taught, that is not foolishness?), that all this is the history of Pagan Rome, makes this astonishment without any sense. It is Rome, but Rome under special circumstances.

Here the reader will remark what aids us in the apprehension of these symbols, that the beast, now that the explanation is given to the prophet, wholly fills this scene. At the close, we find the destruction of the woman, and who she is. Her name at the beginning of the chapter had fully told what she was; her own character as such, independent of the beast, though seen sitting on the beast. Verses 5 and 6 give the proper character of the woman herself. When I come to the history of the beast, though identified with the whole Roman empire, I get the special history of its last form-of the very last days, and of the fact, that as beast it had ceased to exist, yet was found again. The woman may have been all that she was described in ver. 5, 6, while the beast was not. But we have now to consider the beast in its full description, as seen at the end. The beast carries her. No doubt she thus exercises influence over him, but it is not her strength. She sits on him, but he carries her; and to the beast the prophet now at once turns. It is the seven-headed, ten-horned beast, known as the old Roman, but now ten-horned beast. But its character is followed out more precisely. It was - is not - and is going to ascend out of the bottomless pit and go into destruction. It had been, had ceased to exist, and at the end would ascend out of the bottomless pit, have a distinctly devilish character. In this it is we have seen him persecute and slay the witnesses; in this he goes into destruction. The deadly wound the beast had received in one of his heads was healed, but now he was in his last form going into perdition. All but the elect pay homage to him in this last form, seeing the beast, who had ceased to exist, now present again. This gives, in general, the history and character of the beast. But there are more particulars as to the heads.. The seven heads have a double application; first they are seven mountains, on which the woman sits. We may learn here how, while giving much more light as to facts, a symbol cannot be literally taken. The woman was sitting on the beast. So Rome is seated on seven hills, as well as on the Roman empire by its influence. But, besides this, the heads of the beast were seven forms of power which characterized it. Five had already passed away when the angel spoke to the prophet;

one was existing, the imperial form. Another was to come and subsist for only a short time (perhaps Napoleon I.; in the protracted system, Charlemagne); and then an extra head, the last beast, but which is the same as one of the seven; in which form the head and beast, and all, is destroyed. Seven complete the form. But the beast that reappears after ceasing to exist, the renewed Roman empire, with its confederate vassal kingdoms, is a distinct and special existence of the beast, a resurrection form of the Roman empire come out of the bottomless pit, Satanic, - a substantial devilish existence, in which, though peculiar in form, the Roman empire reappeared, i.e., the Western, as the empire historically was. In this state, the beast would be destroyed; The ten horns did not exist at the time the vision was given, but would subsist one same, period with the beast the prophet had before his eyes, i.e., the beast in his last Roman form. These ten kingdoms would give their power and influence to the beast - would exist, but play entirely into his hands. But this brings us to a point of the greatest importance. The formation of this beast, the empire or imperial, head of power, with the ten helping kingdoms brings evil up to the point of open war on the part of the kingdoms with the Lamb who now appears again. Here the kings are mentioned as making war, because the object is to give the character at this time of the great body of nations who form Western Europe. In the end of chapter 19 we find the beast who is at their head engaged in the war, but the ten kingdoms shall make war with the Lamb. But the Lamb shall overcome them, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Here we have, not the governmental dealings of God by angelic power, or in a providential way, but the Lamb Himself manifesting His power, to the destruction of those who rise up against Him. But He is not alone. They that are with Him are called chosen, faithful - the saints of God, not angels,(though they may be, too); angels are not called - with this war they have not to do. Of the waters we have already spoken. It is the influence of Rome over the populations. Finally, the ten horns and the beast shall hate the whore, make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh and burn her with fire. I think that this statement marks that the beast and the kingdoms' dealings with her are not instantaneous destruction, in an historical point of view. God's final judgment at the end may be. They hate her. It is a change of mind and feeling which takes place as to her, and makes her desolate and naked. There is progress in this; they deal actively with her - next they eat her flesh. This is more - they make her contemptible, expose her first; then deprive of her wealth and possessions, what formed her personal body; finally destroy herself, burn her with fire. They join the beast in this. Their mind, what was unnatural for these kingdoms, who might have been jealous of the beast, is governed by God, to unite all of them to give their kingdom and power to the beast; but that was not giving it to the woman. And the beast, being a power on his own score, they join in destroying the whore. The prophet then states in the distinctest language that it was Rome.

I think, then, that the statements as to Babylon imply a human desertion and confiscation of wealth first, and then the utter destruction. To this, I judge, chapter 18 answers. It is a distinct vision: the display of power, not Christ; God's instrumental glory, yet signally displayed -He had great power, and the earth was lightened with His glory. The second verse, I apprehend, to be, not the final utter destruction of what had been glorious Babylon, though anticipative of it in her evidently losing her pre-eminent place and fair show. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit." This was not yet her ceasing to exist, though to exist in power and rule it was. Yet, I apprehend, this is only the general announcement of her judgment, when she loses her place of power, just as in chapter 12. Salvation and the kingdom was announced when Satan was precipitated from heaven. She had had the supremacy, by her

idolatry and fornications, over the beast and the horns; she was now a cast-off harlot, degraded and fallen; and the beast is the leading power. The details then follow, where her burning with fire is not the first and immediate thing. But before the final judgment, (but, I think, applicable at all times, when the character of Babylon is spiritually seen). God's people are urgently called to come out of her, that they may not partake in her sins, and so in her plagues. Hence, I think, the absence of precision is notable here, and, like all difficulties in Scripture, introductory to light. The time of destruction is precise enough. It is at the close of God's judgments, and before the coming forth of the Lamb. It is when the seventh angel has poured his vial into the air, for final judgment on the part of God, (16:17-19), and before the rising up of the beast and his armies against the Lamb coming from heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords. But the woman, as to her place and seat, could be pointed out to John them; not her state (17:18). And if there was spirituality enough to discern, the mystery could be left, (perhaps at the expense of life-all the blood of saints was found in her) at all times. But there is a special character and special time, the character that she rides the beast with seven heads and ten horns. A long while she contended, so to speak, with the beast, or it was wounded to death, and she took practically its place. Towards the end, (having seduced the horns for years and centuries -her habitual character- and made the people drunk), she rides the beast, the beast having taken a blasphemous character, "the woman drunken with the blood of saints. The beast had been, was not, and then appears again. The elements may have been there before, but when the subject of the vision is complete, you have ten horns during the same period with the beast, and at first the woman riding her, I suppose in this state, but I am not yet quite clear upon this point, when the beast has ascended out of the bottomless pit, i.e., is directly under the guidance and influence, of Satan. At first I have said, the woman rides the beast; but this changes, she loses her influence and power, and is deprived of her wealth, and everything, and destroyed; and the beast acts, the horns having done with the woman, giving all their power to the beast, in open opposition to the Lamb. The heavenly voice must be heard to get out of Babylon. We may remark, that the saints are seen here entirely on governmental, and in this sense, Jewish grounds. Not that they are Jews; I speak of the spirit. They are called out to execute wrath. I do not at all believe any saints on earth do this work. Here the horns and the beast do it. But these judgments are the avenging of God's people, their cry has brought it. They rejoice in it as righteous judgment in their favor. The sixth verse is not, I think, an appeal to the saints to act necessarily-(the "you" is left out after "rewarded") but it is in the mind of the prophet in thinking of them. Evil comes suddenly on Babylon, still her burning is not the first thing; still I doubt not it is very rapid; but famine for one literal day would not be much; but it comes in one day- "and she shall be burned with fire." The cry of this self-styled civilized world- all the classes of modern civilization- is, however, on her burning. The ten horns are the ten kingdoms. The ten kings are the kings of those kingdoms who had committed fornication with her. These mourn, as all those interested in modern civilization. The fall, and the final ruin of this great system, of which Rome was the center; is a grief and a pain to them. The apostles and prophets rejoice. God has avenged them on her. Terrible judgment for her who had professed alone to have their teaching! Babylon would be violently thrown down, and not found any more. This is an allusion to Jer. 51, which I refer to as skewing that is met, by ordinary providential judgment. Here, perhaps, more summarily than ancient Babylon. Note the whole system of Western papal Europe is not punished for, but in, its wealth- and civilization. No doubt this slighted Christianity had an apostate character, would order, and moralize, and embellish the world excluding Christ; but the idolatrous character

of Rome was the cause of judgment. The nations, deceived by her sorceries, had turned wholly to this world, and their moral condition was met by a judgment falling on this state of civilization and prosperity, There is no judgment on the merchants and kings and navigators; but they mourn the loss of the great city. The system is all broken up with her. The royal commercial civilized world falls with the upset of Rome, the people's power not; but it is given to the beast: But another secret was found there by divine light: the blood of prophets and saints, and of all the slain upon the earth. She had corrupted the earth with her sorceries; this, though mysterious, was hardly a secret; but Babylon had inherited the sad place or fallen Jerusalem. The blood of saints, and prophets, was all of it found in her. Religion without God is the cruelest and most relentless enemy of all testimony to God. But she who was essentially characterized by this in the world, in whom all the blood of the slain was found, was now in her final judgment, utterly and forever destroyed.

In chapter 19, I find, for the first time, a reason for praise given by others than the elders or body of saints, the church called up on high. But there this is intelligible because they praise for accomplished judgments, in which they are avenged. The elders and beasts only fall down, saying "Amen;" and worship. Those who praise, speak of the salvation and power and glory of our God; so that they are in heaven as His heavenly saints, who are not the elders or beasts. They have suffered, and are in the place to celebrate the avenging of the blood of God's servants. Compare the souls under the altar, in chapter 6. Their joy is, that Babylon is judged, and in fact, her smoke goes up continually.

God is here praised as on the throne, not as He that liveth forever and ever. He is seen in government. A voice out of the throne then goes forth, but which associates him who speaks with the saints below. "Praise our God." I suppose that it is the voice of Christ; but what characterizes it is that it comes out of the throne. It is a summons to praise, addressed from this center of authority to all the servants, and whoever feared His name. We shall see the subject of it in their praise, which on this summons, sounds forth as thunder. I should say, "subjects," for there are two distinct, though connected ones. Jehovah-Elohim-Shaddai is the subject of praise, according to the summons, "our God;" and the praisers are viewed as servants and fearers of His name, not the church or children as such. On the other hand if this thought be just, and it is the Lord, we see Christ associating himself with the whole company of singers in heaven, not bearing the character of the church, and we get an insight into their place. The two subjects of the song are- "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and the marriage of the Lamb is come." One is "Hallelujah;" the other, "let us be glad and rejoice." These two, indeed, are as to the setting up of divine government, the great elements of its establishment, direct and accessory, in God's counsels. The Lord God omnipotent, Jehovah-Elohim-Shaddai. The names of the Old Testament are revealed in power, He has set aside all that He judged, as God, of corruption, and now was actually introducing Christ as King of kings, and Lord of lords, before whom the beast's power was to disappear. But, further, He must have His bride, His spouse. No doubt His rule goes further, but that is not the subject here. But the church must be associated with Him, when He takes the power and the rule. He could not be alone in it, though He alone has the power and the rule. We have thus, in these verses, the source, Him whose authority He represents and wields, and the associate by the counsels of God; not yet the actual ruler coming forth -the Lord God omnipotent, and the Lamb's wife. The marriage of the Lamb was come, this purpose of God now accomplished, or in the act of being so; and "His wife had made herself ready." She was arrayed in fine linen, the righteousnesses of saints. Note,

that this individual excellency adorns the whole church. We have then, indeed, another class - assistants, those called to the marriage-supper, of the Lamb. I suppose all the saints gone up, save the church. This closed the revelation here. The angel talking with John declares that these were the true sayings of God, and forbids the homage he was disposed to offer, He was a fellow-servant, and of those who had the testimony of Jesus; for the angels must serve Him. And, (what might have been called in question, because of its different character, from the usual manner of the Holy Ghost acting as the witness of Jesus in the church), "the spirit of prophecy was the testimony of Jesus." The proper testimony of Jesus was that of the Apostles and Paul, and the Holy Ghost, in the church; but this prophetic part was the testimony of Jesus too.

Now heaven opens again. It opened on Jesus as Son of Man and Son of God, in the Gospels, the object of divine delight. It was opened to Stephen when the Son of Man was standing on the right hand of God in heaven, which is the Christian state; and it is now opened for Jesus to come out as King of kings, and Lord of lords, to execute judgment and justice on the earth. Triumphant power as the operation of God first appears, and characterizes the vision -a white horse. But there was one that sat on it, called "Faithful;" such He had ever been, at all cost, to God, in the testimony of righteousness, in glorifying Him even to death, that His name might be made good. Obedient till it was given to Him to rise up and take the power, and "true," so that the witness of God which He did render, was a perfect witness of all God was, and all His thoughts. His name was "Faithful and True." "Holy and True" was his name for Philadelphia -for us. That was what was subjectively needed for us -but now rewarded, and coming forth as the faithful and true One. He now does not serve; but judge in righteousness, and makes war on the power of evil in the same righteousness. His eyes had the piercing discerning power of judgment, many crowns were on His head. But there was an essential glory in His person-a relationship to God which none knew but Himself. A name in God is a revelation of what He is and in general of what He is in relation to others, as Almighty, Father. A name in one who takes a place under God, is what He is towards God, or for Him. We have a name on the white stone which no one knows but He who has it. It is our special place and relationship in the favor of Jesus. -So has Christ here. He has public names, made good in all His ways, or displayed in glory; but He has also what is the expression, in that glory, of His secret relationship with the Father, which none knew but He Himself. It is not without interest to have the analogy of our associations with Christ and His own in glory. But, other signs of what He was, and other names remained yet to be noticed. He had a vesture dipped in blood. He came as the avenger. He tramples now the wine press of God's wrath. It is not in the lowliness of humiliation, and to be trodden down by man - he comes. He comes to tread down in power. With this is associated another name-" The Word of God." "Faithful and True" would make good promises. The Word of God reveals God; but now in judgment according to what He had revealed Himself to be. "The word that I have spoken unto you, the same shall judge you in the last day." He was the Word of God, the perfect expression of that nature, which must have everything subject to itself. He was it when the expression of it awakened all the hostility of the flesh which hated the light. Still He made it good in this humiliation at all cost. He was it, declared God's righteousness and truth in the great congregation, did not refrain his lips. "I am (αρχην) altogether what I have said to you-the Word of God:" but now, in judgment, making good this in power and vengeance against rebellious men, the children of disobedience to wisdom's voice. The armies which were in heaven followed Him. These had not the signs of treading the wine press on them, but of declared accepted practical righteousness, while partakers of the triumph. They were on

white horses also, but clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Next, the sword of the word goes out of His mouth, to smite the nations. This is general: He judges by His word. Further, the second psalm is now fulfilled; He rules them with a rod of iron. The wine-press is the unmingled fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, which he executes. Lastly, He has on that which shows his public character in the world, His clothing, the title which He now takes in the world- "King of kings and Lord of lords." I do not know what the meaning of "on His thigh" is, unless the clothing be His bearing it in peaceful government, and His thigh, His bearing when He makes Himself bare for war. The summons of verses 17 and 18 seem to be general. The angel stands in the place of universal and supreme authority, and summons the fowls of the air to the supper of the great God. I do not see that it specifically refers to the beast here. The nineteenth verse does. We come back in it to the history of the beast. The kings of the earth are first, the ten kings. I cannot say that it is absolutely confined to them, but, I suppose those under the influence of Rome. They come to make war against Christ and His heavenly armies. Satan had raised up the earth, into which he had been cast, against heaven. The issue was not doubtful. Deceive he may - never conquer. Both the beasts of chapter 13 (the second, now seen as false prophet) are taken, and cast into the lake of fire -its first victims. The rest are slain with the sword of Him that sat on the horse, the direct execution of judgment was Christ's alone; this was outward present judgment. The invited guests were satiated with prey. These armies of the beast formed, at any rate, a prominent part at this great supper of God. But this was not all. This was the public judgment of men by Him who was King of kings, and Lord of lords. But God was dealing in power, after another manner, by divine, and; to us, unseen instrumentality. An angel comes down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand-figures, of course. The dragon or serpent, the Devil or Satan, the power of evil is laid hold of, bound for a thousand years, and cast into the prison that belongs to his nature, whence he cannot act on the earth: not the place of divine torment and punishment. Out of that he cannot come. But he was shut up, and a seal put upon him, so that he cannot deceive the nations till the thousand years of his confinement are over. After that he will be loosed a little season. We are thus arrived at the beginning of the thousand years. Babylon, the mother of harlots, the corrupt worldly church on the earth, judged; making way for the heavenly one fully associated with Christ in the heavens. Professing worldliness done away, Satan's seat under the garb of Christianity. The beast, the power of antagonist evil, on the earth with the false prophet who had stirred it up in Jewish and Anti-Christian shape, cast into the lake of fire. Satan bound and shut up. Thus the source, and all the forms of evil, of corruption and violence, idolatry and apostasy, were swept away. This is a great act of powerful and mighty judgment. The storm of God has passed over the earth, and laid all that opposed itself to it, low.

The thrones can now be occupied for judgment: Previously it was judgment in the way of war. Now the session of right. It is not simply the throne. In Dan. 7 the thrones were set, but the Ancient of days alone is seen sitting, and thereupon the beast is judged, the Ancient of days Himself coming to execute it as we have seen here; (compare Rev. 19:16 and 1 Tim. 6:14-16). But now there are sitters on the thrones.

Amongst these, two classes are mentioned who might have seemed otherwise not to have had their place there -the witnesses slain for the testimony, and those who would neither worship the beast nor own him. All reigned with Christ a thousand years. All this is very simple. This composed the first resurrection, for there was another. A general resurrection is a thing wholly unknown to

Scripture.

This first resurrection fixed the state of those who had, part in it. The second death had no claim on them. They are priests of God and of Christ. Note here, the language is all literal, we are out of the symbolical language of the book. This once seen, the following verses require, in this short sketch of the book, few remarks to be made. The saints reign a thousand years with Christ over the earth. Satan is again let loose, deceiving the nations on earth (he never returns to heaven), and gathering them together against the camp of the saints and the beloved city (Jerusalem). Judgment from God then closes the scene on earth. The working of Satan had separated between saints and the unconverted, who had remained mixed up together when no temptation was there. The devil is now cast from earth into the lake of fire, is finally judged, as before cast out of heaven and then subsequently shut up. After this the great white throne of judgment is set. It was not now government. Though in that there might be final righteous retribution-the judgment of the quick, as, indeed, it was as to the living who had rejected the testimony in Matt. 25, and of the beast and false prophet: but the present judgment was that of the secret of men's hearts, and their answering for their works. Thus, the saints had no part in it. Death and Hades wholly lost their power, and forever. This is the second death. Death and Hades, being the power of evil in its effects, ceased to have a provisional and separate existence. That power which they exercised is now merged in the complete judgment. Death was death: it is fixed in the second. Hades, the closing up the soul in unseen darkness and separation from the light of life. As far as its effect on the natural man went, this was done, and, finally, in the lake of fire. All that was in any way associated with death as an instrument referred to living man, i.e., man in the responsibility of the first Adam, -all this was cast into final condemnation and separation from God, -the most terrible of punishments. The second death had absorbed the first. Those who had escaped it were in the power of life in Christ. Satan, who had had the power of death, was himself under the power of this in the lake of fire. Whoever had not life in Christ was there, too. This closes the scene of this busy world: closes it finally, and forever. In the first eight verses of the next chapter we have the wholly new creation, where God is all in all. A new earth and a new heaven, and no more sea.

Some remarks are called for here. And, first of all, how little is revealed. The course and judgment of the state we are in, and the glory of the heavenly city, largely; but of the post-millennial state scarcely anything, but some great general principles, which mainly bear upon our present condition. "Sea" bears a general notion of what remains vague and unreclaimed, unsubject to man, not reduced into any order, or regularized relationship to God or amongst men. This exists no more. I suppose fully this will be physically true, and many appropriate physical changes would be associated with it; but into this I do not venture myself. Atmosphere would cease human life, by breathing and blood. I refrain, the rather, as it is simply negative, and, I think, meant to be so. The imperfect waste of tumultuous separation would have no existence there. All would be connected and in order. Further we get the heavenly city(the Lamb's bride, the assembly) coming down to be the tabernacle of God amongst men -not a special people, but the glorified church, the seat of His power and presence amongst men.. It is not said how these are changed to be ever there, or what their peculiar state. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor corruption inherit incorruption. More we cannot say, only God dwells with (not tabernacles over, as in chapter 7) men. They are His people, and He Himself shall be with them and their God. The whole family of man, redeemed men, have this relationship, such, after all, as angels, cannot boast of, though

more glorious in other respects, they are never called His people. Previous orderings of this, such as Israel and the Temple, were only premonitory and preparatory to this great and blessed position. But His temple we are. The church never loses its own proper and peculiar place, but the two forms of blessing- the temple or tabernacle, the dwelling-place of God, and the people of God, positions brought out in the church and Israel-are maintained forever. Only Israel was more figurative and passing than the Assembly, because it was in flesh, the church not. All sorrow would here have ceased forever. This reproduction and connection of the two systems of Israel and the Church is full of interest, and gives a great moral importance to each. In their nature they last forever. But it is in perfect peace and joy - the former things are passed away. All, save the fact of eternal life, is provisional now. They are ways, dealings of God with what is creation and failing, an admirable occasion of the display of His grace and all He is, but not in and for itself as such, the fruit of His absolute and only work, what He has produced. Now it is- "Behold I make all things new." Sorrow he owns, and wipes away its tears. It was a right thing in the disorder of sin. Christ was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Death was there, too; and Christ, in grace, underwent death. He must come divinely under all that evil had brought in, that God might be owned as forgiving it, glorified as to it, and good have the victory over all evil. This made His work so profound and glorious, so complete in itself, and for the glory of God, whence man in Him has entered into the divine glory so He states it in John 13:31, connecting it with previous glory in 17:4, 5. I return to my remarks on the passage. There is a new heaven and a new earth, and no more sea. I do not look for more than the atmospheric heaven here-the connected system of heaven (not heavens) and earth, Ephesians and Colossians οὐρανοῖς, here οὐρανὸν - the first were passed away. The second verse, I take as characteristic - the city was the true holy city, New Jerusalem; it was not human or earthly. It came down from God-out of heaven, and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, fit for Christ as to what she was appareled in, still characteristic, not historic. The bride was married long ago, before the heaven and earth passed away; 3-5 verses, already noticed. The earthly character and state of things. God's tabernacle with men, they His people, and He their God, and with them. He wipes away all tears -they belonged to the former state. Death is no more. That, too, belonged to the former state. Sorrow, crying, pain, are all gone. They were former things. Verse 8 closes the statement, and applies it to conscience now. It is the same God who sat on the throne, but now His working and ways are done. He is the beginning and end of all. Two principles are thus stated as belonging to His ways. First, whoever is athirst gets of the water of life freely; secondly, he that overcomes shall inherit all things. God will be his God, and he will be His son. The free power of life to the corner, then blessing to the overcomer. But, if there was giving way through fear, unbelief; and sin, the lake of fire, the second death, was their portion not death because of sin in Paradise, not terrible judgments on the earth, but the second, because of casting away and rejecting the truth, when grace had come in. This closes the history of the book. What follows is a description of the heavenly city when the Lamb is there; and His glory made manifest. It is the city, but the city in its millennial relationships with the earth. It is presented, too, in the character of millennial association, not of the verses, 1-8, last considered. It is the bride, the Lamb's wife. It is description, not history. That, as often remarked, closes in verse 8. The description is given here as that of Babylon, chapter 17, The prophet gets, figuratively, a vantage point of view, like Moses, and like the Lord Himself from Satan. He first describes it all from without, as it appears. Then its nature. What he did not see in it, but the absence of which is of immense importance. Lastly, we have what is more prophetic declaration than vision. It has the

glory of God. Immense truth. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God:" its display and its dwelling-place shall be in us. The light of the city was such; for He that sat on the throne was like a jasper stone; now it shines forth clear as crystal in unsullied brightness, even when displayed. in the redeemed assembly. It is in perfect security,' figured here according to the image of a city, a wall great and high. There is the perfection of administrative order and power in the creation, twelve gates. As we saw of the idea of people (verse 3), it had been foreshadowed in Israel, and the names of the twelve tribes are found: here. The foundations, however, were not the patriarchs, but the twelve apostles of the Lamb. They were the foundation of all Christian governmental and administrative power. We may remark here, that though, of course, the bride is the same, it is not in its Pauline character, the one body, but in its governmental, as founded in connection with, and an offspring of, the Jewish and earthly system, just as the child was born of the woman. It is a city, not a body. We now get its proper perfection. It is measured with its gates and its walls. It is finitely perfect. It is four square-the length as large as the breadth.-its platform was perfect. It was twelve thousand furlongs, the number twelve again marking the administrative perfection in man, only largely multiplied in fact; but it was as complete as its platform was perfect. It was a cube, not merely a square-a circle or sphere has neither beginning nor end-a square and cube: are equal in every dimension, but each line ends. They are finite perfection-the square in principle -the cube in completeness also. The wall has its perfection, 12 x 12. It is not divine in its nature-it is the measure of a man, though God measures it by the angel. The wall, its security, is divine glory. The jasper, here, not spoken of as clear. It were out of place. The city is divine righteousness and fixed unalterable purity; as is said:- "After the image of Him that created us in righteousness and true holiness.", Next, the foundations of the wall are garnished with precious stones. Besides the general idea of every character of beauty, there is the special character, elsewhere remarked, of the stones -the variegated display of colors into which light transforms itself, when seen through a medium, when God is revealed in and by the creature, or in connection with his state -in creation, intercessional representation, and here, in glory. The names of the apostles were in the foundation Which God had laid for the security of the city, as they had displayed the truth on which that rests, but the varied display of the light of God was found therein. The beauty and comeliness which Christ delights in in the church, meet the eye at once when arriving at the city. The gates were each one pearl. Within, and where one walked, was righteousness and true holiness, as the very character and nature of the city itself. There was no temple seen. God displayed His glory -the place of His worship, unclouded, unhidden. God's glory lit it up, and it was in the. Lamb that glory centered and shone. This closes the direct description of the beauty and glory of the city itself. What follows is what belonged to it, in relation to others, and what was enjoyed in it.

Within the city, the Glory of God gives light, and the Lamb, is its light giver. The nations walk in the light of the city itself. That heavenly glory now enlightened the earth. They have it, not directly; but the sight of the church in glory is a yet more fitting, more instructive, sight to them. They learn what faithful ones have got, what the humiliation of Christ implies. They will know how the Father sent the Son, how those whom the world rejected were loved as Christ was loved. They will have Christ in His glory and joy in his reign, but they cannot learn the other truths in the millennial state, nor can they, therefore, learn them directly. It would not be suited. They learn them in the church, in glory. The kings bring their glory there to it (not "into it"). Its exalting is owned by them, and they honor it as the place of honor. Nothing defiled enters, no idolatry, no falsehood. It cannot be corrupted as the assembly on earth. It rests not on man's responsibility, but on God's power, and

redemption, of which it is the heavenly fruit. We now come to descending blessings which are its blessings, but which flow down on earth. Note here, the Throne of God and the Lamb are now in it. That throne, which was acting in judgment to bring about blessing, was now fixed in the heavenly city; but it is not the seat of judgment now. The river of water of life flows out of it-divine life-giving blessing. The Lamb still holds its place in the scene; and it is the throne of the Lamb as well as of God. The reader will remark that now for the first time it is called the throne of the Lamb. We had the throne of God, and the Lamb in the midst of it, but the throne distinct from the Lamb. It was He that sits on the throne. In 21, God is all in all. But here we have the throne, the Lamb's throne as well as God's, and the time and the character of the time distinctly marked. Next we have the tree of life, the constant supply in the street, and on either side the river, ready for all to enjoy, ever fresh, the full ripe fruit of life as Christ has displayed it. The outward manifestation of this, its leaves, were to heal the nations. Evil was not absolutely gone below though its power was, but remedy was there. Curse there was none at all. That was wholly gone. The throne of God and the Lamb was there; there could not be a curse. But His servants should serve Him. Observe how God and the Lamb are thrown into unity here. His servants (God and the Lamb's) shall serve Him and shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads, i.e., they shall be evidently and avowedly His. These are the three characteristics of the waiting people in glory: they serve him directly and perfectly; they see His face directly and fully; -their connection with, and confession of; His name is complete and evident. Doubtless this is God, but we cannot at all separate the Lamb, for when it is said "His name," it is God, so known as revealed in Him. This is deeply and blessedly characteristic, and, indeed, so it is of the whole book, save the mysterious angelic part; and then the Lamb opens and introduces it, so that the same truth shines out more fully. Thus what the Lamb is, the suffering and enthroned one, shines out. Night or obscurity there is none there, nor need of artificial or even' created light. Jehovah-Elohim gives them light, and they reign forever and ever. This is not I apprehend, their reign with Christ, but the statement of their glory and joy which will never cease. "Ye have reigned as kings without us," says the apostle. That was false. This will be true and eternal.

This closes the book. There are, however, concluding observations, besides what is said to the church, from verse 16, which require some notice. The angel declares the truth of all this, and adds, the Lord God has sent His angel to declare to His servants things that must shortly come to pass. This last expression must be noticed. It is one of the difficulties of the book. The same expression is used in the first verse. But I do not think that the whole key to the expression is in the fact that it begins with Ephesus and is a whole. In God's mind the church had failed as a witness. The time was come for judgment to begin at the house of God. Hence whatever the patience of God, there was no more time recognized till judgment was executed, save 1260 days which belong, in fact, to a period marked out in Jewish chronology. Perhaps I should say, that the church which belongs to heaven having lost this character and left its first love, and Christ having hence taken a judicial character in view of its earthly testimony, the time of taking up computed time and judgment, was a question of divine patience -might be at any moment there. If it were not, it was grace, working as long as love could produce blessing, while all was in spite of mercy, ripening for judgment. But the Lord warns that He was coming quickly -" Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Here again, we may apply all the book, provided we see the church in its responsibility, and not in its connection with Christ as its head. Christ is viewed as coming in reference to responsibility. To such, prophecy applies-the hope of his coming to receive

us up is another thing. It is hope, not responsibility and warning. His coming, in connection with responsibility, is always His appearing; and the church, though doubtless saved and coming with him, stands on the same, ground as the world, that is, of the consequences of its conduct.. Hence the difference is not made here, though from the fourth chapter, the book be more directly prophetic. This verse applies to those who have the book. The testifying angel again rejects the proffered worship. Surely this has reference to the time the book treats of when the very position of the church as connected with the Head being out of view, holding the Head by Christians would tend to give place to excessive reverence for the higher instruments of God's government, in whom he used to reveal Himself, and above which the minds of Christians did not go. In both cases here, the worship was proffered when the witness has closed, saying-" These are the true sayings of God." But the angel does more than refuse the worship, he is a fellow servant, the prophet is to worship God. Now God has ceased thus to reveal Himself angelically. Not only, has God alone the title to be worshipped, but it is in man he has revealed Himself. We know this by faith. The close of this book contemplates its public manifestation. The angels have their own known place for the Christian in service, as creatures of course, not objects of worship, not the beings or form in which God reveals Himself, never mediatorial intercessors and not for the Christian those in whom God is seen; and, once Christ is glorified as man, not seven administrative authorities though ever willing servants. God I worship, Christ I, worship, because He is God and Lord. In Him God is perfectly revealed. He with the saints, i.e., redeemer, ruler, will govern and inherit all things. All here, even the prophet, are servants. The sayings of this book were not to be sealed as Daniel's were That was in place. The fulfillment was to come out in the last days. Between, all the wonderful church-heavenly system was to come in, and what was revealed was to be sealed till this, and the decay of this on earth, which let in these earthly' ways of. God again, had made it timely by the speedy taking up again of these ways. Now that is exactly what we have here. The professing church got into the place of judgment and the divine preparation made, thee Lamb being seen in the throne and opening the book, for the fulfilling the things which had to be sealed in Daniel's time. Hence the book was not to be sealed, for the time is at hand. The time in view in it was not that of restoring grace, of the gospel, but of judgment, of man's responsibility, in which there is no change in man. Even in the churches, which is not the strictly prophetic part of the book, those who hear and are righteous in the churches, are directed and guided in the way, but supposed to be already righteous. Still, here, I doubt not the closing scenes are looked to, and the saints to whom the prophecy is addressed, as already such. The Lord was coming to judge, and quickly. Verse 7 addresses itself in warning to those engaged in the circumstance of the Book itself, and the things are shortly to be done. Here, in verses 10-14, all is closed. The Lord is coming to judge every one according to their works, and their state is viewed as a fixed one. Hence, in verse 13, He closes all with his own nature, as First and Last. Verses 14, 15, need not be confined, I apprehend, to those who form the city itself, but include all those who, having washed their robes (I think Codex Sinaiticus has confirmed this reading), have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates of pearl into the city, Redemption, leading to life, and fitting for a state lovely in grace in Christ's eyes, what meets the entering person at once, and for association with divine holiness and righteousness. This, even the blood of Christ and the sanctification of the Spirit, is the foundation of the blessing of all who are blessed. Without are the evil and the violent, the corrupt and the idolatrous. In chapter 21:8, it is final judgment; here it is exclusion. This wholly closes the book; and Jesus presents himself as such to the prophet, as

revealing all this for the churches. He comes personally forward, still in connection, of course, with the subject of the book, as the Source and Heir of the promises of Israel, and as the One known to the faith of the Church and none else - a heavenly One, not the day for this world, but the Bright and Morning Star for those who watch in the night. Whatever the state of the professing Church might be, this remained true and bright for hope, and the brighter, the darker all seemed to be. It is no announcement of coming or warning now, but Christ's announcing Himself, "I, Jesus" -announcing what He is for the Jews and what He is for the Church: When what He is for the Church, her special portion in Him, is named, all the affection of the Church in her own relationship is awakened: indeed, what love produced in her in every respect, as animated by the Spirit which dwells in her. Indeed, He is first named. The position of the Church is this: she has the Spirit, and longs for Christ. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." It is not merely affection or a wish, but the mind of the Spirit as down here on the earth. The Church looks for Christ, for Himself and herself, in the consciousness of her own relationship. No doubt, it will be blessing for the world. That, she enters into and delights in; but Christ Himself is before her mind. Thus her heart, or the Spirit speaking in the prophet as associated personally with her in position and testimony, turns round in love, first to him who hears; let him who has received the testimony of Jesus say "Come." That is the thing to desire. After Christ Himself, the Spirit first turns to them that are His; then to any one who has an awakened desire and need of soul, "Let him that is athirst." Then in the power of that love with which the Church is filled, and with which the Spirit works, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." The Church longs for Christ, but she has the full stream of the water of life already. She says to every soul, "Whosoever will, let him come;" not to me, as Jesus alone could, still she possesses the water, and invites to come as freely as she has enjoyed. In a word, we get the full place of the Church and her testimony while waiting for Christ, and for nothing, else, and thus for Him directly. This desire the Lord meets then. "He that saith these things, saith, Surely I come quickly;" and that satisfies the heart of the saint. "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus." A solemn sanction is added to the authority of the book, and to maintain its integrity. The book of life is not life, but the prima facie and apparent possession of it as inscribed among professing Christians.

I have thus attempted a sketch of the book., in its structure and meaning. To 'complete this, something might be said of its historical application, at least -as warning as to the present time, and perhaps something of a vocabulary of symbolical language.

The Revivals (So-Called)

When the Lord had, on the day of Pentecost, formed a new people for Himself, He not only added to the Church daily such as should be saved, but, as it was His people, He also displayed His own wisdom, and exercised His own grace, in the ways in which He governed, cared for, and enlarged, that people upon earth. His acts proclaimed His heavenly ways.

Our wisdom, as Christians, is to bring all our thoughts into the light of the Lord's presence, and there soberly to lay aside that which is not according to His word, and to take up that which is.

If my reader will open the Acts of the Apostles, and read it with attention, he will see, that not only did divine grace and heavenly power form a people for the Lord on the day of Pentecost, but that this people had peculiar marks upon them. These marks were especially theirs: 1st. The being gathered, through faith in the word about a crucified and earth-rejected Lord; 2nd. The presence among them and over them of the Holy Ghost.

They were a people clean outside of the world, debtors in nothing to the flesh, in direct conflict with Satan; and being such, they had heavenly stores and divine blessing as their portion. Present experiences, as proper to them, they had, so to speak, none. Full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; surely fed and cared for by God and Christ from on high; their whole to-morrow merged in the bright hope of their returning Lord; they were pilgrims and strangers here, because sons and heirs of God and joint-heirs together with Christ. If we follow a Peter, or a Paul, or a John, through his course, faith gave, through grace and the Spirit's power, freshness of joy and bright confidence in God. The keeping up of this, amid all the wear and tear of the camp in the wilderness, and amid all the sorrows of the journey, etc., etc., was the mark of God's presence with His servants. As individuals, they waited on the Lord, and they were not made ashamed; they labored in the harvest and gathered in; they knew that they were of the church militant, and they endured hardness as the good soldiers of Jesus Christ; not discouraged, when faith was put to the test, by persecution or coldness all around; they were steadily, bright, as to the hope of their Lord's return. As an individual, too, each one of them would have vindicated the Lord as to all the sorrows and trials of the way. As gold ore for the crucible, so faith for the furnace. They knew, too, the need of the trials for their own individual profiting. God uses the sorrows of the way, as occasions for fresh displays of His own grace toward, and for the development of grace in, His servants.

His ways are all His own, and all are wonderful. In giving blessing, He gives it, not in such wise as to create independence of Him in the blest, but His blessing both supplies the vacuum which there was in nature, and creates new needs in grace. Thus, He formed a people; they are blessed in being so formed; blessed by separation from evil; blessed by the presence of Himself in blessing. But who can care for the Lord's people? Who can pretend to direct and govern the people of the living God? The formation of the people creates needs in grace. He has His own way in working, too. He creates a little germ first; then uses them that are in it to gather in more. Next, He meets the needs which Himself has created. He shows His mode of governing them. He shows His mode of caring and providing for them. His tender consideration gives them time for settling in, when He

has wrought and gathered in, that His people may be established in the faith. Then, perhaps, He lets trouble come, to put to proof the tone and temper of their faith, and to purify it; and then He brings a time of rich ingathering, recruiting afresh for His Name's sake.

He is the living God; and, as such, He orders all things, and the order of them; ingathering; establishment; trial of faith by persecution and heresies, etc.; fresh ingathering. All this is seen in the Acts, and He and His ways have never changed since. He knows not the shadow of a turn; is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

Now, forasmuch as we walk with God, the living God, and know Him and His ways, there may be, on our parts, a calm going along with Him in all these exercises; there need be no astonishment when He acts in one way or when He acts in the other. Each act is an act of God's, and all our times are in His hands. If we dwell in His secret, the sense of His presence will keep us from surprises, and also from attributing to ourselves, or one's own portion, in any of the Lord's work, that which would be throwing it and ourselves into a DISLOCATED POSITION, apart from Himself and His wonted actings.

This secret presence of the living God-retreat where all the beauties and glories of the Lamb, past, present, or to, come, are seen-is the place where we should dwell; that there the teaching of the Holy Spirit, through the word, may be realized by us, and we be enabled to discern whence and whose are the sundry actings, which rise and surge around us.

I cannot doubt that differences of judgment among Christians tell much more about the difference of state and position in which they are, individually, at the time of forming their judgments, than of any variety or uncertainty in the truth before them. For, in fact, truth judges us; and our judgments contain, at least, the coloring medium of our own state and condition, and they tell it out. For, instance, how differently does a pious member of the Greek Church; a pious Roman-Catholic; a pious Protestant (whatever be his creed; and a simple, or a well-taught Christian, look upon the (so-called) Reformation. The thing they look at is one, and is past. The state, and condition, and position of each, leads to a different judgment upon it. A Protestant establishment, especially if connected with government, practically dispenses with the presence of God, as a living acting Person; even as much as it has, also, neutralized the keen edge of the written word, and the responsibility of man to be subject to it. The retrieval of the doctrine of justification by faith, will be its estimate of the benefits of the Reformation.

For a well-taught Christian's mind, would not the Reformation rather stand as the time when God showed Himself afresh as the living God, without whose presence and action His own written Standard of Truth (the Scriptures) was powerless among men, to be in blessing 'to them. The living God, the Justifier, is more than justification by faith. Take another instance:-The coming of the Lord, as thought of respectively in the apostles' days, by an ungodly Jew (as Saul of Tarsus); by a Gentile; by an apostle as Peter; or a Paul (blessed man!); by a babe, a young man, or a father in Christ; and, in the 'present day, by those to whom, amid surrounding darkness the Lord has shown it afresh.

After thirteen hundred years (at least) of declension, on man's part, from the pristine blessing given at Pentecost, the Lord did begin (and that, also, according to one of His own ways, which were common to all the periods of his dealings with man on earth) to bestir Himself in vindication

(not only of His own grace but) of his own being and existence, and also among the people who boasted of being His, but, like Israel of old, gloried in the things of the Lord, so far forth, and so far only, as they were distinctive honors to themselves. "The Sabbath, it distinguishes us from all the gentiles," was a thought which could go very well along with, yea, lead on to,—"Who is this fellow who talks of his Father working hitherto, and His working, and whose works are causing the fruits of Israel's sins to appear, that He may heal them? Away with such a maligner of us from the earth." This was done repeatedly as to the Sabbath; and was not forgotten to be renewed as to the temple; the feast of tabernacles; the manna; the rock, etc., etc. That was a generation that sought to take credit to itself from what the Lord had wrought, had given. This cannot be done in the presence of a living God. For who will say to Him, when recognized as present:

"Not unto Thee, O Lord, not unto Thee, but unto us be the glory." Unbelief may so act outside of His presence; but in His presence there is light.

Has the Lord revealed Himself to us as the living God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, sending down the Holy Ghost as the Guardian of His heavenly people in the wilderness? And have we not found that as He vindicated Himself in the days of Nehemiah, Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah, so now also hath He, from the days of the (so-called) Reformation been vindicating Himself. Salvation, not work-wise as of man, but faith-wise, as of Christ; a finished salvation in Christ; forgiveness through His blood; righteousness inseparable from His own acceptance on high; Himself coming to fetch His heavenly people home to His Father's house; the table spread in the wilderness as their rallying point; the personal presence of the Holy Ghost; God, the Care-taker and Governor of the people in the wilderness; their Purger and Trier; the one that recruits and enlarges their bounds, etc., etc. All these things-and they are blessed truth-He, He has brought out afresh since the days of the so-called Reformation.

They are best learned in the secret of his presence, and the better part of them is not (I conceive) the bits of truth so taught, nor the acts by which He has brought them out afresh and home to us; but the vindication of the activity of His being and of His being for us, and the discovery thus made to us of His ways; and that the whole safety, conduct, and blessing of the flock turns upon the activity of the Shepherd, and upon His being duly owned and waited for.

I have then a place in which I get the Lord's judgment upon everything. The ways of the Lord give me light; but those ways, all pure as they are in themselves, are shown to me as one hidden in His Sanctuary; shown by His acting in a world of evil.

When I speak of evil here, I do not refer to the chaff which may have to be sifted out of the Lord's in-gathering, or of any man's infirmities and mistakes which may be connected with the Lord's workman, or of any false work of Satan added on the true; because so it was in the apostles' days, so it is now, and so it will be even unto the end.

But I refer rather to other things; as 1st.-When a work is wrought in the days of an Ezra, a Nehemiah, amid failure, I should always expect God so to act, as to leave the record of its having been His work (not as in the opening days of an economy, when all was simple and fresh, but) as in the closing times, when man had dishonored God, and He had to raise a testimony against man, even whilst giving blessing. And 2ndly.-In closing days, God always has so acted as to test and try man's discernment, by faith, of His presence, and has used the very presence of God to

detect the evil and man's unbelief (see our Lord's days).

What I want is to abide with God in His workings, and actings, and restings, and to be intelligent and fresh in affection while there.

If He gave me a promise in spirit, that one-half of the countries of Europe should be visited by the Gospel, and then (after fourteen years of prayer and expectation on my part, in His presence) He sent out others to labor; or if He kept me waiting for five years for a backsliding soul and then restored it by another's preaching; if I have been in the sanctuary, and am there now; I have neither a less portion nor less faith in exercise, than they who have entered into my labors.

A word to three classes: 1st. To the disbeliever in all these revivals. Drop, if you please, the name of revival; and if you are a believer, tell me whether the Lord's ways have changed? Whether the Lord has ceased to send out into the highways and hedges, and at special times to show special power in gathering in souls? He did so through the history of the New Testament. He has done so at the times of the so-called Reformation; in the days of Whitfield, Wesley, Berridge, etc. And a Christian must be very young, or his ignorance very great, if he cannot add a list of well-authenticated scenes of blessing. If you deny that people are now turned and turning from dumb idols to the true and living God, -look again. The facts are against you.

2nd. As to the young that may be in the work. May they find grace to live in the sanctuary, and to test and compare all their own ways and doings, with the standard authority of the walk of a Paul. If they know the work they are engaged in, they will know that it is of no private interpretation; but takes its place under the Lord; and that whatever will not bear the light of an apostle's ways in their work is questionable, to say the least. Paul reported to the saints what the Lord had wrought; to them He could preach it; but to sinners, he knew nothing to preach save Jesus Christ. To sinners, as such, he did not preach "the work."

3rd. To Believers. The heart is in a bad state, that does not know and own to the want of freshness of soul, in the present day, among Christians. My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that those that know the Lord, and Him working hitherto, and still working, may learn more and more to walk with Him as a living God. For myself, I can only say, that the blessed way in which many have realized, in their own souls, God, as a living Being, and Christ in heaven above, and the Holy Ghost in living presence and action down here, through this (so-called) revival, is blessed. They have found God occupied with souls, a converting them; and it has given a place to the word of the Lord in many of them which it had not before. I would like to see the whole of their lives, here below, brought up to practical consistency with that living in the presence of God that is near, and that neither slumbers nor sleeps.

When God is showing Himself and working, there is a light diffused which makes manifest everything which is in its presence. Disbelief and incredulity-if in the heart-show themselves as disbelief and incredulity as to that which God is doing. Unbelief and little faith get stripped of the coverings which position, of one kind or another, may have given them; and when stripped, they are nothing but unbelief and little faith. Satan, or the devil, either as persecutor or angel of light, will be there, where God is working, and will show himself in one way or another. The low, carnal, the worldly state of the individuals who may be used in blessing to others, perhaps, will show itself in ways, energy, plans, thoughts, and speeches, which tell of their little faith and low state in the

Spirit; the state of the churches, so-called, will not be hidden either;. but all will stand out in its true real character in the light for that which maketh manifest is light. A man and human churches look very different when in the light of God's presence, and when out of it. No flesh can glory in His presence: but, according as it is written, "he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Note on the Seven Churches

A closer examination of the Churches will lead us to see, that in the four first, where there is blame (in the Epistle to Smyrna there is none) and threatened judgment, the threat is to be executed not on the Angel but on the Candlestick in Ephesus-or on the guilty parties, as in Pergamos and in Thyatira. But in the three last it is not so. In Philadelphia there is no blame; and here, as in Smyrna, the Angel and the Church are not distinguished in the address itself; but in Sardis and in Laodicea the threatenings are continued as a part of the address to the Angel himself. This, I suppose, connects itself with the distinction already made between these two classes of churches; the four first have a definite church-place, and the Angel, that part which in God's sight really represented the Church, is abidingly owned at all events, and the judgment is on the inconsistent part, or what falsified the public testimony. But, when we come to Sardis; we go back (for Thyatira goes on to the end); when speaking of the mass, the better and witnessing part comes out as witness, witness against Jezebel; if they are not a witness they are nothing at all. The corporate constitution is null here. Hence if there be failure, the whole thing fails and is judged with the world, and any faithful ones become a distinctive blessed remnant; because faithful witness is the whole thing. Hence, when Christ hast to become that, the Church so ruined is to be spued out of His mouth.

The Testimony of God, the Probation of Man, the Grace and Government of God

Nothing, except personal salvation and the soul's communion with our God, can be of greater importance or of deeper interest to the Christian, than the testimony which God has rendered to himself in this world of darkness. Moreover, both salvation and communion depend on this testimony. What would man's condition be without it? What is his condition where this testimony has not penetrated? What an immense privilege to possess the thoughts of God Himself, especially with regard to that which concerns us morally; to be in relationship with God by means of the communication of His thoughts, to be called His friends, and to enjoy this privilege in reality by the possession of the most true, - the most intimate testimonies of His thoughts and affections. And observe, that man being here the great object of his affections, these are developed in the ways of God with regard to man; ways which even the angels desire to look into.

In effect, man, according to the wisdom of God, is the being with regard to whom the character of God, and all His moral dealings, are displayed the most completely and in the most perfect and admirable manner. It is in no wise the intellectual capacity of man, or the moral power of man, which rendered him so fit for this; because-even without taking the fall of man into account-it is not the judgment that he can form of what God is, which is the means of revealing God. From the fact, that man is a feeble and imperfect being, his judgment would always be below the truth, with respect to God, in proportion as he is himself below God. Moreover, innocent man would have neither the need nor the desire to form a judgment respecting God. He would simply enjoy the bounties of God with thanksgiving. On the other hand; sinful man is quite incapable of forming a sound judgment, even of his own state or of his position before God: he has not even the desire to do it. No! God reveals Himself, in His own ways, with regard to man. An angel does not furnish Him with the occasion for it as man does. An angel does not need mercy, grace, pardon, divine righteousness, a Priest-power, which, while sustaining him in weakness, raises him from among the dead. An angel is not, in consequence of all this, made like unto Christ, a glorified man, identified with His interests by incarnation. An angel is a testimony to the creative and preserving power of God; he excels in strength; we see in him a creature kept by God; so that he has not lost his first estate. Now, grace and redemption, patience, mercy, divine righteousness, do not apply to a state like this, but suit well with that of fallen man. The angels, therefore, desire to sound the depths of the wondrous ways of God towards man. It is of the heart of man, fallen to the lowest grade in the scale of intelligent beings, resembling, alas! the beast in his lusts, and Satan in his pride; a weak slave to his passions; strong, or rather arrogant, in his mind and pretensions; knowing good and evil, but possessing that knowledge in a conscience that condemns him; longing, by dint of suffering, after something better, but incapable of attaining it; feeling the want of another world than this material world, yet afraid of arriving at it; conscious that he ought to be in relationship with God, the only object worthy of an immortal soul, yet being at an infinite distance from God, through his lusts, and animated with such desire of independence that he will not admit God into the only place that befits Him, if He is God, and consequently endeavors to prove that

there is no God;-it is of the heart of man, capable of the highest aspirations (by which he feeds his pride) and of the most degrading lusts, revolting even to his own conscience;-it is of the heart of man that God forms the harp which can sound forth, and shall sound forth forever, all the harmony of His praises.

By the introduction of grace, and of the Divine power, that displays itself in the communication of a new life to man, and by the manifestation of the Son of God in human nature fallen man is led to judge all evil according to the Divine affections that are formed in him by faith, and to enjoy good according to the perfect revelation of good in God Himself, manifested in Christ; while man joyfully gives God His place, because He is a God of love. Man resumes also the place of dependence -the only one that befits a created being- but of a dependence that is exercised in the intelligence of all the perfections of God, on whom he depends, and depends with gladness, as a son upon his father; like Christ Himself, who has taken this place in order that we might enter into it.

But in order that the character of God, that which He is, should unfold itself in man's condition, and that our hearts and consciences should take knowledge of it, man Must pass through the various phases which furnish the occasion for God thus to display Himself in grace. Man must be, on the part of God, an innocent and happy creature; through his own will, a fallen and guilty one, and in a condition in which all the grace of God manifests itself, and in which He unfolds all the riches of His grace, in righteousness; While His sovereign good pleasure raises man to a height which depends entirely on that good pleasure, and which glorifies God Himself in the result produced, but glorifies a God of love. The result is, that His sovereign goodness has displayed itself towards the most entire misery, and has brought into communion with Himself the most perfect excellence.

We will briefly examine these ways of God towards man.

God, created man innocent; that is to say, having neither malice nor corruption, nor evil desires, and without the discernment of good and evil-a discernment which he did not even need; for he only had to enjoy with gratitude the good that surrounded him. At the same time he was bound to obey; and his obedience was tested by his being forbidden to eat of one tree only, which stood in the midst of the garden.

Some have supposed that he had the knowledge of good, and that he gained the knowledge of evil. This is a mistake as to the force of the expression. He gained the knowledge of the inherent distinction between good and evil. He began to judge of that which is good and of that which is evil. To eat of the forbidden fruit was only evil, because he had been forbidden to eat of it; the act was not evil in itself. God took care that, in a state of sin, conscience should accompany man.

When in the state of innocence; man might have opportunity to enjoy visits from God, and to converse with God; but God did not dwell with him, nor he with God.

Man did not fall till he was tempted. The enemy suggested to his heart a distrust of God, and this distrust, by separating his heart from God, made way for his self-will and his lusts, as well as for the pride which desired to be equal with God. Now, self-will, lust, and pride are the characteristics of the present state of the natural man. Thus man separated himself from God by becoming, as to his will, independent of Him; that is to say, so far as sin can make us independent; so far as moral degradation makes us independent, of the sovereign good.

In this state, man could not bear to be in the presence of God. Far from it; that presence which threw divine light on man's condition, and made him sensible of what he had become; that presence which reminded him of his transgression, and of that which he had lost, was necessarily to him the most intolerable of all things. Man might cover himself, to his own eyes, from the shame of sin, but before God he knew that he was as naked as if not a fig-leaf had been found in the garden of Eden.

The question of God: "Adam! where art thou?" was equally touching and overwhelming. Why, when he heard the voice of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, with the divine familiarity of a goodness which could enter into communication with an innocent nature, why did not man run to meet him? Where was he? In sin and nakedness.

Now the Word of God lays man bare-a terrible truth when the conscience is bad! A truth, before which all pretension to independence vanishes, as falsehood does before the truth; leaving only the disgraceful guilt of the pretension itself, as well as that of the folly and ingratitude which sought this independence -the madness and ingratitude in which they desired to be independent of the supreme good.

Remark here, that the promise is made to the last Adam (not to the first), to the seed of woman; and that it precedes the banishment of the fallen Adam from the earthly Paradise. Thus, we see that man had fled from the presence of God, before God drove him out from the abode of peace in which He had placed him. But the authority of God must be maintained. Sin could not remain unpunished. Judgment must be exercised. The holiness of God abhors sin and repels it. The righteousness of God maintains his authority, according to that holiness, in executing just judgment on the wrong-doer Man was exiled from Paradise, and the world began. Sin against one's neighbor, has been consummated in the world; as sin against God, in Paradise; and the death of the righteous (Abel) presents a striking figure of the death of the Lord Himself.

Driven out from the presence of God, man, in despair, sought to arrange and embellish the world; it was all that remained to him: and civilization, the arts, and the attractions of a luxurious life, have occupied and developed the intelligence of a being who, no longer having any relationship with divine holiness and perfection, loses himself in that which is beneath him; while boasting in the fruits of his perverted intelligence.

But, without the repression of the human will by a superior force, civilization - although it may for a moment deceive the judgment of man as to the state of his heart, by occupying his mind, -cannot check the power of his lusts, nor the violence of the will that seeks to satisfy them and to open a way for his passions in defiance of all obstacles. The world was corrupt before God, and the world was full of violence.

But the grace of God did not leave itself without a witness. The sentence of God upon the serpent, announced the seed of the woman. Abel, who being dead yet speaketh, was a testimony to the power of evil and of Satan in the world, but he testified, also, of the acceptance, on God's part, of the righteous, who come to God by means of a sacrifice which recognizes sin and: expiates it, and establishes the basis of a hope outside the world in which He, who was accepted of God, had been rejected, and sacrificed to the hatred of the wicked. The departure of Enoch, who walked with God, confirmed this hope, and tended to assure faith (which believes that God is, and that He

is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him) that there is happiness for the righteous, in the presence of God who loves them -a happiness which the world can neither give nor take away. This - although obscure -nourished and maintained the faith of those who strove to walk with God, while evil still went on increasing.

When this evil had almost reached its height, another witness was raised up, in the person of one who was to pass through the judgment that put an end to the frightful development of wickedness which took place in spite of the testimony already rendered.

It was a testimony, not for the affections of the saints to carry them beyond the world, but a testimony of judgment upon the world itself: necessary judgment, according to the principles of divine government; but in the midst of which a little righteous remnant should be preserved in an ark of salvation, which God revealed.

Such was the condition of man, such his history, when, in consequence of the violation of a law, he had been driven out of the earthly Paradise in which God had placed him, and was left to his own will without law, although not without testimony. The deluge had to put an end to a state of things in which corruption and violence had covered the face of the earth and had left only eight persons willing to hear the testimony which God granted them with regard to the impending judgment.

During the period that elapsed between the expulsion of Adam from the earthly Paradise and the flood, men formed but one family, one race. There was no idolatry. Man was left to his own ways, not without testimony, but without outward restraint. Evil became insupportable. The flood put an end to it. After this event, this judgment from God, a new world began, and the principle of government was introduced. He who slew a man was to be himself put to death; restraint was put on violence, a bridle on outward sin: corruption of heart, in a world estranged from God, remained as it was. Although there were as yet no nations, the fate of different races, even as it has continued to this day, began to dawn, at least prophetically. Noah failed in the place given him after the flood, as Adam had failed in Paradise, as man has always failed, and every creature which has not been directly sustained of God.

The reader may, in passing, notice Adam as a figure of Him who was to come the second Adam; and Noah as a figure also of Christ, inasmuch as the government of the world and the repression of evil were now committed to man. Two great principles, which subsist to the present day, characterize the world which develops itself after Noah; they are connected with the tower of Babel.

Hitherto, whether before or after the flood, the human race was but one family. Now, in consequence of the judgment on man who seeks to exalt himself on the earth, and to make himself a name, a center, which shall give him power, -God scatters the builders of the tower, and they become nations, tongues, and peoples. The present form of the world was constituted, with respect to its divisions into divers tribes and nations. Besides this, individual energy forms an empire, which has Babel for its center and starting point.

Now that the world is constituted, we come to the testimony and the dealings of God. Within this system of nations, there were divers tongues, peoples, and nations. The judgment of God had thus. arranged the world; but an immense fact now- appears in the history of the world.,

The sin of man is no longer only sin against God, manifested in corruptness and in the activity of an independent will, but demons take the place of God Himself, to the eye and imagination of men. Idolatry reigns among the nations, and even in the race that is nearest to God; the race of Shem. Although, at bottom, this idolatry was everywhere the same, each nation had its own gods. In the system established by God Himself at the time of His judgment upon the race at the tower of Babel, men acknowledge demons as their gods. This gives rise to the call of Abram. The God of glory manifests Himself to him, and calls on him to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house. He must break entirely with the system which God had established; and that, in his closest relationships. He must be for God, and for God only. He is chosen by sovereign grace; and, called of God, he walks by faith; and promises are made to him. But this call introduces another principle of great importance. There had been already many faithful ones who had walked with God: Abels, Enochs, Noahs; but none of these was, like Adam, the head of the evil, the 'head of a race. Now Abram, being called, became the head of a race that inherited promises outside the world. This may be developed spiritually, in Christians, or carnally, in the people of Israel; but the heirs of promise (and this applies to Christ himself;) possess it as the seed of Abraham. If the nations, peoples, families, and tongues, took demons for their gods, God took a man by His grace, to be the head of a family, the root from which a nation belonging to Himself, should arise. The fatness of God's olive tree is found in those who grow upon the root of Abraham, whether it be in a people who are his seed according to the flesh, or in a seed that receives the promised blessings because it belongs to Christ, the true seed of the promise. This call and this vocation remain firmly established, whatever may be the phases through which the objects to whom they apply, may have to pass. Christ Himself came to fulfill the promises made to the fathers, a witness to the unchangeable truth of God.

The state of the first heirs, changes nevertheless; and in a little while, we find a people almost regardless of the promises, and who, far removed from the faith of Abraham, are groaning under the yoke of an unrelenting tyranny.

This state of God's people leads to an event in which a principle of immense importance is set forth, namely, that of Redemption or the deliverance of God's people from the consequences of their sins, and from the bondage in which they were held. We shall see also, in the fruits of this redemption, facts of the deepest interest to ourselves.

The cry of the people had reached the ear of the Lord of Hosts, and He conies down to deliver them. But the Savior is also the just judge, and He must reconcile these two characters to be able to deliver, His justice must be satisfied. A God who is not just, cannot, morally speaking, be a Savior. It is in this character that God appears, definitively, when He delivers the people. He had manifested His power. in inducing Pharaoh to let the people go, in asserting His own rights over Israel; but their deliverance had to be accomplished without the good will of man, and by the judgments of God, by the full manifestation of what He is with regard to evil, and in love also, that he might be really known.

Now, the people themselves were, in certain respects, more guilty than the Egyptians, and God comes as a Judge. But the blood of the Paschal Lamb is on their door, and the Israelites escape the judgment due to them; according to the value of that blood in the eyes of God. God judges, and, because of the blood which faith has acknowledged, passes over His guilty people.

But Israel was still in Egypt, their deliverance was not yet effected, although the price of their redemption was paid in figure. Israel sets out. Arriving at the Red Sea, the question of their deliverance or their ruin must be decided. Pharaoh had pursued them, sure of his victory. The wilderness, in which Israel was apparently lost, presented no outlet; and the Red Sea -type of death and judgment- was close before them. On the morrow, Israel saw only the dead bodies of their enemies who had perished in the same sea which had proved the path of salvation to the people of God. The death and judgment of Christ brings us through, dry-shod, afar from the place of our captivity.

'Redemption is much more than the fact, that we are preserved from the judgment of God. It is a deliverance wrought by God. He Himself acts on our behalf, and brings us into an entirely new position by the exercise of His own power.

We have, in this important history, the figures of the great events on which our eternal happiness is founded. It prefigures propitiation, redemption, and justification in a two-fold aspect; on the one side, propitiation by blood, which delivers us from all imputation of sin before the righteousness of God; and on the other, our introduction, by virtue of the value of that blood, into an entirely new position by resurrection. Christ has been delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification.

Some very important principles present themselves to us in connection with deliverance by redemption God dwells with the redeemed, He is in their midst. He did not dwell with Adam when innocent, nor with Abraham when called by grace and the heir of the-promises; but as soon as Israel is ransomed and delivered by redemption, God dwells in the midst of the people. Compare Exodus 15:2; 29:45, 46.

The holiness of God and of His relationship with His people, appears then for the first time. Never in Genesis is the holiness of anything whatsoever presented to us (save only the sanctification of the Sabbath in Paradise), nor even the holiness of the character of God. But Ex. 15 and 19; Lev. 19:26; and other passages, show us that, redemption once accomplished, God takes this character and establishes it as necessary for all in relationship with Him. Compare Ex. 6:5.

In immediate, connection with this truth, we find another which, moreover, flows necessarily from redemption, namely, that the redeemed are no longer their own. God has taken them for Himself, they are consecrated to God, set apart for him. They are brought to God Himself, Ex. 19:4.

Israel enters the wilderness, (the character of this world to the people of God who are conscious of their redemption), and in it the faithfulness of God takes care of His people. Afterward they enter Canaan; where there are victories to be won in order to enjoy in this world the heavenly privileges that belong to us. As regards title, we possess these privileges before gaining a single victory; but to realize them, we must overcome. The wilderness and Canaan prefigure the two parts of Christian life: patience in this world, under the hand of God who conducts us; and victory in our conflicts with Satan, in order that we may enjoy, and lead others to enjoy, spiritual privileges.

But another very important principle comes to light during the sojourn of Israel in the wilderness. If the reader examines Ex. 15-18, he will find that all is grace. But in chap. 19, the people put themselves under the law, and accept the enjoyment of the promises on condition of their obedience to all that the Lord should say. Obedience was a duty; but to put themselves under this

condition, was to forget their own weakness, and to secure their own ruin, a consequence which did not fail to take place. Before Moses had come down from the mount, Israel had made the golden calf. The patience of God continued His relationship with the people, by means of the intercession of Moses, until, as Jeremiah says, there was no more remedy. But our present object is to point out the ways of God, and not to enter into detail.

The promises of God had been made to Abraham unconditionally, and, in consequence, the question of righteousness had not been raised. Now, it was raised; and at first, as was reasonable righteousness in man was demanded on the part of God.

Righteousness was the creature's duty. The question must needs be raised, but the result was - and with sinners it could not be otherwise-that man, having broken the law, had aggravated his sin instead of attaining to righteousness. With a rule that would have made his happiness if he had kept it, he is but a transgressor, and so much the more guilty before God. It was, however, in order to convince him of his sinfulness, that the law, which led to positive transgression, was given him. God had never the thought of saving man by a law; and man needs to be saved. The law of God must necessarily propose a rule which expresses the perfection of a man, indeed, that of all intelligent creatures. But that can do nothing else than bring sin to light, when man is already sinful. When the law is spoken of, this last truth is often forgotten. Nevertheless, the law of God must necessarily be the perfect expression of that which man ought to be; that is to say, it must condemn sinful man. If a piece of cloth that has been sold me is too short, an exact measure will add nothing to its length; but it makes the fraud manifest. By the law is the knowledge of sin. The question of human righteousness has been settled by the law. Ordained with a promise of life on obedience, it has been, in fact, a ministry of death and condemnation to those who were under its yoke.

This is an immense fact or principle. Human righteousness does not exist. The guiltiness of man is manifested.

We have seen that God has displayed the utmost patience with regard to man under the law; while preparing him for a better hope. He sent His prophets to admonish them, to seek fruit on His vine. They were all rejected. Finally, He sent His Son. All was in vain. His Son was cast out of the vineyard and put to death. But this displays another character of sin. Men have rejected the mercy of God, even as they had failed in the just requirements of the law. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. But man had no desire for this reconciliation; he would not have God on any terms. For His Love, Christ found hatred. When He appeared, they saw no beauty in Him, that they should desire Him.

Thus, the sin of man was completely demonstrated. Innocent, he forsook God. Afterward, when left to himself (except the testimony of God), he made the World such a scene, of corruption and violence, that God had to bring the flood over it. Set under the law, he broke it, and worshipped unclean gods of his own invention. God Himself comes in mercy into this world of sin, with the manifestation of the most perfect love, and of a power capable, of re-establishing man in happiness on the earth; but the affection of the flesh is enmity against God, and men manifested that enmity by rejecting Jesus and putting Him to death. The cross of Christ served as a proof that man hated God, and they expressed their hatred by the rejection of the Savior. Morally speaking, this is the end of man's history. Thoroughly tested, he shows himself to be corrupt and violent, a

transgressor and guilty; but, more than that, he hates the God of goodness.

That which we have now gone over, is the history of man under probation. There remains the history of the grace of God towards man, and the government of the world on God's part.

There cannot be a more important question for the soul than this: Where shall I obtain righteousness before God? We have said that the law raised this question. It is of consequence to see the position which this question takes when the law has been given.... Ever since the existence of man on the earth, the question between responsibility and grace has existed. In the earthly Paradise, there was the tree of life, which only imparted life; and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, with which man's responsibility was connected. As to the tree of life, man did not eat of it; and, once become a sinner, mercy, quite as much as justice and the moral order of God's government, denied him access to it. An immortal sinner on the earth would have been, mi anomaly not to, be tolerated in the government of God. Moreover, man deserved to be shut out of the garden. He had failed in his responsibility. Before his fall he did not know sin; but he was in the relationship of a creature with God. There was no sin in eating the 'fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, excepting in that he was forbidden to do so.

"When man has fallen, the seed of the woman, the last Adam, is immediately announced: the hopes of the human race are thenceforth placed on new ground. The promised deliverance does not consist in something which would only have been a means of recovery, founded on the energies of man already fallen; but another person is announced, who, although of the human race, should be a source of life that is independent of Adam; a person who should destroy the power of the enemy; a person who would not represent Adam, but who should take Adam's place before God; One who should be the seed of the woman, which Adam was as not; and who should be at the same time an object of faith to Adam and his children,-an object which, being received into the heart, would be life and salvation to all who received it. The first Adam was made a living soul: he lost himself. The last Adam, the second man, is a quickening Spirit. Until the coming of Christ, the promise alone was the source of hope alone, by grace, it engendered and sustained faith. We have to believe in the accomplishment of the promise. When God called Abraham, He gave him (Gen. 12) the promise that in him the nations should be blessed. Afterward (22) this promise was confirmed to his seed. He who was to be the seed of the woman, was also to be the seed of Abraham. Thus the ways of God towards man are established on an indefeasible promise. A promise without conditions, simply a promise, which, consequently, did not raise the question of righteousness, or of man's responsibility.

Four hundred and thirty years after, the law was given, and it (as we have said) raises the question of righteousness, and that, on the ground of man's responsibility, by giving a perfect rule of that which man, the child of Adam, ought to be. But man, note it well, was already a sinner. This law had a double aspect, a kernel of absolute truth which the Lord Jesus brought out of its obscurity: -supreme love to God, and love for one's neighbor. This is the perfect rule of a creature's happiness, as a creature. Angels realize it in heaven. Man is as far as possible from fulfilling it on the earth. But this law is developed in the detail of relative duties which flow from the relation in which man, in fact, stands towards God, and the mutual relationships between man and man here below. Now, in the circumstances in which man was found, these details are necessarily connected with his existing moral condition, they suppose sin and lusts, and forbid them. As a law

of God, applying to the actual condition of man, it necessarily states the fact of sin, on the one hand, and on the other, necessarily condemns it. What can a law do in such a case, except condemn, and be, as the apostle says. (2 Cor. 3), a ministry of death and condemnation? It required righteousness according to a rule which man's conscience could not but approve, and which at the same time verified his guilt. In fact, the utility of the law consists in this: it gives the knowledge of sin. God never gave the law to produce righteousness. For this, an inward moral power is absolutely necessary; and the law on tables of stone is not that power. The law demands righteousness from man, and proclaims the righteous judgment of God, renders sin extremely sinful, and brings in the righteous wrath of God. No law produces a nature. Now, the nature of man was sinful. The commandment brings out the fact, that man seeks the gratification of that nature, in defiance of God's prohibitions. The law is thus (and because it is righteous and good) the strength of sin; it entered, that the offense might abound. They who are of the works of the law (these are not bad works: the apostle speaks of all who walk on this principle of law), are under the curse which it pronounces on those who disobey it. The flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. The promise of the Lord abideth sure; but man is put to the proof, that it may be manifested whether he is able to produce human righteousness, or not.

The law has been presented to man under two aspects: law unmingled, and law mingled with grace, i.e., given to man after the intervention of grace, but leaving him to his own responsibility after a pardon granted by grace.

The history of the law in the first point of view is very short. Before Moses came down from Mount Sinai, Israel had made the golden calf. The tables of the law never came into the camp. They were never able to form the basis of man's relationship with God. How reconcile the commandments with the worship of the golden calf? After this sin, Moses intercedes for the people, and receives the law anew. God acting in mercy according to His sovereignty, and proclaiming Himself to be merciful and full of grace. The relationship of the people with God, is founded on the pardon which God bestows; and is established no longer as an immediate relationship, but on the ground of the mediation of Moses: the people, nevertheless, are put under the law, and each one was to be blotted out of the book of God by his own sin, if he should become guilty. At the same time, the law is hidden in an ark; and God Himself is concealed behind a veil, within which, blood was to be sprinkled on the mercy-seat, which, with the cherubims, formed the throne of God.

But this blending of grace and law could not serve any more than the unmingled law, to establish between God and man relationships that were able to stand. It could serve to demonstrate that whatever might be the patience of God, man, responsible for his conduct, could not obtain life by means of a righteousness to be accomplished by himself. Also, the impossibility in which man finds himself, of subsisting before the exigencies of the glory of God (however faintly revealed), is shown us in a remarkable figure, which the apostle uses in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: the people entreat Moses to cover his face, which still shone with the reflection of the glory of the Lord, with which he had been in communication on the top of Mount Sinai. Man cannot bear the revelation of God, when God requires from man that which he ought to be before Him. The veil of the temple revealed indeed the same truth. God had to hide Himself; the way into the holiest was not yet manifested. A law was given on God's part to: direct the life of man; a priesthood was established, to maintain the relationship of the people with God, in spite of their transgressions; but the people could not draw near to God. Sorrowful state, in which, the revelation of God's

presence-the only thing that could really bless -necessarily kept those at a distance who needed, the blessing! We shall see that in Christianity, it is precisely the contrary thing that takes place: the veil is rent.

But, let us pursue the ways of God under the law.

"We have already seen, that in the system which we are considering, life was proposed to man as the result of his faithfulness. Whatever may be the patience and grace of God, all depends on this faithfulness; and not only is the responsibility of man in full play, but everything depends on the way in which he meets that responsibility. God has always exercised long-suffering and manifested His grace. He bore with Israel in the wilderness and brought them into the land of Canaan, in spite of all kinds of unfaithfulness on the part of the people. He put them in possession of the land, by giving them victories over their enemies. He raised up judges to deliver them, when unfaithfulness had brought them into subjection to their powerful neighbors. He sent them prophets to recall them to the observance of the law. Finally, with a goodness that would not judge them till every means had been used to win their hearts, He sent His Son to receive the fruit of His vine, on which He had bestowed all His care, and on which He had lavished so many testimonies of love. But His vine had only yielded sour grapes, and they who cultivated it, they to whom He committed it, rejected His servants, the prophets, and cast His Son out of the vineyard and slew Him. Such was the termination of the trial to which man was subjected under the law - all the grace and patience of God having been employed to induce him to obey, and to maintain him in obedience-all was in vain.

This is the history of man under the law. If we examine the bearing of the law upon the conscience, we shall find that it carries condemnation and death into it, as soon as it is spiritually understood; but we must not dwell on that point, as the object of this article is the consideration of the ways of God. Nevertheless, I cannot leave this subject without entreating my readers to weigh thoroughly the bearing of the law, if it is applied to his conscience and his life before God, if he is responsible, (and truly he is so), if he can but acknowledge the justice and excellence of that which the law requires; if he sees that man ought to avoid that which the law condemns, and that the two commandments which form the positive part of the law, are the two pillars of creature-happiness; if he finds that he has constantly done and loved that which this law, and, with it, his own conscience, condemns, and that he has entirely failed in that which his conscience is obliged to own as the perfection of the creature; if all this is true, where is the life that is promised to obedience? How escape the condemnation pronounced on the violation of the law, if he puts himself on the ground of his own responsibility, and has to be judged according to a rule which he himself acknowledges to be perfect? Another law could not be found. If he is without any law, good and evil are indifferent -this is to say, that man is more than wicked even the natural conscience is ruined - good does not exist - and man is unrestrained in evil, save by the violence of his neighbor, or the righteous judgment of God, manifested in such an event as the deluge. No; the law is good and righteous, and man knows that it is; his conscience tells him so. But, if the law is just and good, man, on the ground of his own responsibility, is lost. The life which it promises to obedience, man has not obtained; the judgment which will make good the authority and justice of the law, awaits him who has disobeyed it; and will be pronounced at the same time on all the shameless license of an unbridled will. All the guilty will be reached. With regard to the law, as the apostle, (happily, for the awakened conscience), expresses himself, that which was, ordained unto life,

man finds to be unto death.

Nevertheless, the presence of the Son of God in this world, had not for its only object to seek for fruit in His vine, on the part of, Jehovah. This task had, indeed, but the smallest share in the object for which He came; it was necessary, no doubt, in order to manifest the, condition of man, the child of Adam, responsible to God; but it was by no means the object of the counsels of God in the coming of Christ, nor even the principal thing that was revealed by his manifestation in the flesh. Moreover, the fact, that man has not brought forth the fruit which God had a right to expect, is not that which has filled up the measure of man's sin. God was manifested in the flesh: He appeared He is love -love then has been manifested. It has been manifested in connection with the wants, the weakness, the miseries, the sins of man. He was divine in His perfection, but He showed this perfection in adapting Himself perfectly to the state in which man was found. It was a love that was above all our miseries, but which adapted itself to all our miseries, and was not wearied out by any of them. The Lord Jesus manifested in His life here below, a power which entirely destroyed the dominion of Satan over men. He healed all the sick, cast out devils, raised the dead, fed the hungry. As man, He bound the strong man and despoiled him of his goods. And not only this, but - which is still more important, - the most abandoned sinner found in Him a path by which he might return to God. God Himself was come to seek the sinner, God, who showed that no sin was too great for His love, no defilement too revolting for His heart. Satan had ruined man by destroying his confidence in God, God neglected nothing that could serve to re-establish it; and that, with perfect condescension: perfect, because His love could not do otherwise; perfect, because it was the true expression of His heart, which found in the miseries, the transgressions, the weakness, of men, the -occasion of assuring them that He is Love on which they might always reckon.

We see, in fact, in the case of the woman who was a sinner, and the one whom the Lord met at Jacob's well, how much the love of the Savior attracted the heart when once the awakening of the conscience had made the heart feel its need of His kindness. A confidence in His loving kindness was then produced which revived the heart and turned it from evil; a confidence which no human being could inspire, and which delivers the soul from the evil influences which surround and possess it, as well, as from the fear of man; in order to turn it towards God with a sincerity that proves it to be in the light with God; but which also proves that the goodness of God has found access to the heart, so that the latter has no desire to come out of a position in which all its evil is manifested, but manifested where all is love, and where one can rest, because all is known. It is a love which inspires confidence -for when all is known, God still is love. It is the divine character of Christ to be the Light which makes manifest all-the Love that loves when all is manifested, that knows all beforehand, that produces complete uprightness in the heart, because it is a relief that such a heart as His should know the whole.

Such was Christ upon the earth. One was with God. The sinner who would have been ashamed to show himself to man could hide his face in the bosom of Jesus, sure of finding no reproach there. Not one sin allowed (had there been, confidence could not have been established, for the holy God would not have been revealed), but His was a heart which, in spite of the sin, received, the sinner in its arms; and it was the heart of God. Christ was all this in the world, and He was much more than my poor pen can tell: and man rejected Him! He was all this, in spite of opposition, hatred, outrages, and death; but all was in vain as to man. It was this which definitively proved the state of man. Not only is he a sinner, not only has he broken the law, and resisted the appeals of

the prophets; but when God Himself appeared on earth as goodness, man would not have Him: his heart was entirely hostile to God when He was fully manifested; not in His glory, which will crush everything that rises up against Him, but with all the attractiveness of perfect goodness.

All the grievousness of man's condition does not lie in the fact that God has driven him out of Paradise, but much more in the fact that man, as far as depended on him, has driven God out of the earth, when He came in grace into such a world as the sin of man had made it. "Wherefore when I came, was there no man? When I called, was there none to answer?" "The carnal mind is enmity against God!" - At the beginning of His ministry, as we have noticed; Christ bound the strong man, and then despoiled him of his goods. But the result of the exercise of His ministry was the demonstration that man would not even have a Savior-God, would not have God on any terms. Man, the child of Adam, has been totally condemned by the death of Jesus. There was no more to be done. God Himself had no other resource., no other means to employ, in the hope of awakening a desire for good in the heart of man. Not only was he a sinner, but nothing could bring him back to God. Everything had been tried, save the exceptional means founded on the intercession of Jesus upon the Cross: an intercession to which the Holy Ghost responds by the mouth of Peter, saying, that if even then, Israel repented, Jesus would return. But Israel resisted this call likewise. God had exhausted all the resources of sovereign grace; He has exhausted them, and the heart of man has resisted them all.

A new nature was needed, and redemption; a justification available for the sinner before the throne of the righteous God, and a righteousness which could render man acceptable, without, on the other hand, there remaining a single sin with which God had to deal in judgment; and which did yet more: which rendered man perfectly well-pleasing in the eyes of God, fit for the glory that God had prepared for him.

An entirely new condition was needed, which should leave no trace in man, before God, of his former sinful condition. A condition was needed which should satisfy the glory of God, and render man capable of enjoying it.

According to the doctrine of Christianity, the question of man's responsibility is settled. That doctrine fully recognized his responsibility, but proclaims that man is lost: It is a message of pure love; but of a love that finds the basis of its exercise in the fact that man has already been put to the proof; and that he is lost. Christianity announces, that "The Son of man is come to seek and to save the lost." The day of judgment, which will execute the righteous judgment of God, has been anticipated to faith, by the distinct and plain declaration of the Gospel. The wrath of God has been revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness; but the righteousness of God is also revealed to faith, on the principle of faith.

It is the death and resurrection of Jesus which reveal these things to us. His death closes the history of responsible man, His resurrection recommences the history of man according to God. His death is' the point in which good and evil meet in all their strength for the triumph of the former. His resurrection is the exercise and the manifestation of the power which places man, in the person of Christ who has triumphed, and by virtue of His triumph, in a new position, worthy of the work by which Christ gained the victory, and worthy of the presence of God. In this new condition, man is free from sin, and is outside its dominion and the reach of Satan.

In the position in which the resurrection of Christ has placed him, we see man living of the life of God, there where redemption, purification, and justification, have placed him; and made fit for the state in which the counsels of God will place him, namely, for the glory which is linked with that resurrection. Man is also well-pleasing to God, as the new creation of His hands, the fruit of the work in which God has perfectly glorified Himself. Let us examine this a little more closely.

I have said that good and evil met in all their strength, in the Cross. It is well to apprehend this fact, in order to understand the moral importance of the Cross in the eternal ways of God. I will, therefore, repeat myself a little in speaking of the Cross. The Cross is the expression of the causeless hatred of man against God, even when manifested in goodness. Christ - the perfect expression of the love of God, amid all the misery which sin had brought into the world - had remedied this misery wherever He met it. In Him, the love of God was in constant exercise in spite of the evil. He was never wearied, never repelled by the excess of the evil, or by the ingratitude of those who had profited by His goodness. Sin -loathsome as it might be- never stopped the flow of Christ's love; it was but the occasion for the exercise of that divine love. God was manifested in flesh, winning the confidence of man by seeking him, sinner as he was; by showing him that there was something superior to the evil, the misery, and the defilement. And this was God himself: Christ, perfectly holy, of a holiness that even remained infallibly untainted and perfect, could carry His love into the midst of the evil, in order to inspire the wretched with confidence. If a man touched a leper, he became defiled himself: Christ puts forth His hand and touches him, saying, "I will, be thou clean."

The man, who might fear, on account of his own sin, to draw nigh to God, found in that grace which sought the sinner with a perfect goodness that made sin an occasion for the testimony of God's love towards man, that which was suited to inspire his heart with confidence. He might find relief by casting the burden of a bad conscience into the loving heart of God who knew everything.

But all was in vain: the Cross was the, recompence of this love. Man would not have God.

But there are other aspects of this power of evil, which display themselves in the Cross. The effect of evil, i.e. death, reigns in it. I say that it reigns there. It is true that it displays itself more at Gethsemane than 'on the Cross; but Gethsemane was only another part of the same solemn scene, and was the anticipation of the Cross itself in the soul of Jesus. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death."

Death, as the power of evil, weighed with all its force on the whole being of Christ. Death is the present judgment of man in the flesh, handled by the power of him who has in this way the power of death; but it implies the sin of man, and the wrath of God against sin. It was this that Jesus encountered. It is true, that, by committing Himself entirely to His Father's will, He accepted the cup from His hand in a perfect obedience that left Satan no place. But that was His perfection. He was fully put to the proof. Death was the power of Satan over man on account of sin, but at the same time it was the judgment of God. It was also the weakness of man, even to nothingness, with regard to his existence in this world. If we go into details, we, see evil developing itself under the power of Satan, at this moment of his power:--Is there a judge? He condemns the innocent, washing his hands of the act. Is there a priest, whose duty it is to plead for those who err? He pleads against the just and righteous man. Are there friends? The one betrays, another denies, the rest forsake Him who had ceaselessly displayed His abounding affection. In men at large there

was neither fear of God nor compassion for man. The Savior took so low a place, that even a wretched thief, suffering the penalty of his crimes, could insult Him in death.

In a word, good had been fully manifested in Jesus; and evil reached its moral fullness in the rejection of Jesus. The Savior dies: but He dies to sin. He had never admitted it into His nature; but he quits the life in which He had maintained the conflict: He gives up all relationship with the order of things in which sin is found, breaking it off by death, which destroys that relationship. There is no longer for Christ any link with man in the flesh. It is this which Paul means (2 Cor. 5), no longer even an outward link, nor the likeness of sinful flesh. Man has cut off every link between himself and God; and Christ has done with these relationships, in which he never allowed sin to enter His holy nature, but in which He had to do with sin and with man. Sin and man were now done with. Man, as in the flesh, is left in sin; and there is a risen man, a man completely outside the condition of the children of Adam; dead, non-existent, as relates to the condition men were in; but alive to God, belonging to God, outside of sin.

Immense fact! Christ, who had a perfect life, who was the Life, and who, tempted in all things like us, went through this present life in obedience and faithfulness; who exhibited nothing but the power of the Spirit in His walk, looking only to God; and who encountered all the power which the enemy had by death over man both in soul and body, - Christ closed the history of man in the flesh, by ceasing to exist in relationship with him: man (led by Satan), having consummated his iniquity by putting Him to death.. Nevertheless, it is Christ who offered Himself up. Also, to Him it is the path of life, and He rises again, beyond the scene of Satan's power, whether as the tempter, or as having the power of death.

Let us now look at the good manifesting itself in all its perfection, and as superior to the evil. First of all, the life of Christ displayed the obedience of man, by the Holy Ghost, in the midst of a sinful world, and in spite of all the temptations by which the enemy can test the heart. His life was according to the Spirit of holiness,- His death, perfect obedience. All that we have spoken of as the power of evil, did but enhance the character and value of the obedience. But there is yet more:- Man is now, by death, absolutely set free from evil. He dies to sin. Death breaks his relation with evil; because the nature which can be in relation with evil, no longer exists: that is to say; provided the new life is there. We have seen that Christ, although in the likeness of sinful flesh, never for a moment admitted sin into His being;- but death ended, and ends for us all relation with the scene in which sin exists- with all this sphere of existence- and ends it in Christ in a life which is holy. Christ dies, and we die in Him, by the power of a life which is divine.

Moreover, perfect love has been manifested; and when man rejected it, its strength was not lessened, but it accomplished the work necessary for the reconciliation of those who were enemies.. Good-love-God-is shown to be superior to evil, in such a way that, in the very act in which man's hatred to God fully manifested itself, in which the iniquity of man's heart reached its height, in that act, the love of God and of Christ triumphed: triumphed in the act which sin, come to its height, accomplished. This was the death of Christ. The greatest sin of the world is, on the part of God, and of Christ who offers Himself as a sacrifice for sin, the propitiation made for sin.

Thus, for one who is in Christ, for the believer, the sin of the old nature is entirely blotted out, and he lives, as risen again in Christ, with a new life in relationship with God. What Wisdom of God! One is, dead to sin by means of the very act which manifested that sin in the highest degree, and

the love of God declares itself in that which is the expression of man's hatred. And observe, is it by allowing evil? No; the righteous judgment of God is also manifested in it. If His Son takes sin upon Himself, if He is made sin for us, He must suffer. The justice of God is executed upon sin, in His person; and grace reigns by means of the justice which is glorified in Christ. If the evil has ripened; and has borne all its fruits, the good has triumphed with divine perfection. All our blessing and glory is kit the effect of this work which is the moral center of all the relations of God with men, in judgment and in grace.

We have now to trace its fruits in the ways of God.

The death of Christ had fully glorified God and displayed His love,- had glorified Him in the obedience of man,- had glorified Him with respect to his righteousness and (in the judgment pronounced upon sin) with respect to His holy wrath against sin. And at the same time, tne perfect love of God was shown in it by the gift of His Son, His only Son, for poor sinners; given to bear the sins of all who should believe in Him unto the end.

What, then, are the results of this work and of this love, free now to manifest itself; because that which glorifies love exalts righteousness also?

First of all, Christ raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, all that is in the glory of the Father, that which is the revelation of His nature, love, righteousness, the relationship of the Father with Christ as the Son, His good pleasure in the Savior's life on earth, His satisfaction in that Christ had glorified Him, and. had rendered morally possible the fulfillment of all His counsels, and in particular the glory of those who are His own among the children of men;- all that which answered, in the Father's heart, to the excellence of Him who lay in the tomb, was engaged in the resurrection of the Son of Man. The first fruit of the power of God, in answer to that work in which the good triumphed at the cost of Christ, is the resurrection, of Christ. In this, as we have already seen an entirely new position is taken, for man. Yes, entirely new:- death is left behind: sin, as separating us from God, exists no more; the divine life is the life of man; righteousness is manifested in the acceptance of man, not in his condemnation; and man subsists, not in the weakness of his own responsibility, and mortal, but as the fruit of the power of God who has already been glorified with regard to His justice.

We are speaking abstractly of the position. In applying some of these expressions to Christ, they must -naturally be-modified. Christ has gained, this position `for us, we enjoy it as a new position. But He was in it Himself. Divine life was always in Him. In responsibility, He was never weak. He was, even in the flesh, born of God. Nevertheless His own position was then very different from that which it now is. Before His death, He was in the likeness of sinful flesh; not so, after His resurrection. Before His death, He lived in flesh and blood; not so after His resurrection. He really died, although it was impossible that death should hold Him; now He dies no more. He was the first who entered into the position which He acquired for those that are His own. Now that the Holy Ghost has been given us, this position, and even the glory, is the present portion of them that believe in Him. It is theirs by faith, and by the possession of the divine life and of the Holy Ghost. Actually, we are still in our mortal bodies.

But although resurrection placed the Lord (and, in Him, ourselves), in a position which is the fruit of the power of God, not of the responsibility of man, and which, at the same time, by virtue of the

work of Christ, results from the exercise of the righteousness of God; and although Christ was thus declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness; His resurrection did not constitute the whole result, even with regard to His own Person. He had to be glorified with God, and glorified with the glory of God. Marvelous fact! triumphant divine righteousness! a man in the glory of God, is sitting at the right hand of God upon His throne.

In taking His seat there, Christ personally takes the place which is due to Him, according to the value of His work on earth. "Now is the Son of Man glorified (morally, by accomplishing the work on the Cross), and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will glorify Him in Himself, and will straightway glorify Him." "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify Thou me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." That which Christ asked for, He has received. The words, "Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool," place the Lord at the right hand of God to execute the justice which shall put an end to evil. Viewed, as having entered into the glory of the Father, Christ assures to them that know Him there, all the fullness of blessing which belongs to that position.

But we have here an immense fact: a man, the Son of Man, is sitting at the right hand of God in the divine glory.

We may, before carrying on the consideration of its results, state the import and bearing of this fact. On one side, we see the first Adam, responsible, fallen and in sin; then, law and judgment. On the other side, we see the Son of God, the supreme God, come down from heaven, and, in grace, become man; and, after having manifested the perfect grace of God towards man (grace super-abounding where sin abounded) and after having accomplished the work of propitiation for sin, and glorified God with regard to the position in which man was found, we see Him ascend-according to the justice of God, in virtue of this accomplished work-to the right hand of God; so that man is placed in the glory of God. On the one side, the responsibility of man, and judgment; on the other, the grace of God, the work of God, salvation and glory; the righteousness of God for us, quite as much as His love is for us, and this righteousness of God become ours also, by virtue of the work of Christ.

Moreover, the door is open to every sinner; and God -by virtue of the blood of Christ, which has glorified His love, His righteousness, His truth, His majesty, all that He is,- can receive the sinner to Himself.

Man has entered into his place in glory, according to the counsels of God, to be the head of all created existence (Psa. 8:5-7; 1 Cor. 15 Eph. 1:20-23; Heb. 2:5-9. Compare Col. 1:15, and the following verses.) This is the truth in full. The Man-Christ is made Head of all things in heaven and in earth. In this view, the first Adam was only a figure of the last Adam. At the same time, as for the first Adam, there was a help-meet, who was like him; so it is with Christ. Eve was no part of the inferior creation over which Adam was lord. Neither was she lord; she was the wife and companion of Adam, in the same nature and in the same glory. So will it be with the Church, when Christ shall take into His own hands the rule over all things. (Compare Eph. 5:25-27, and the passages already quoted). Meanwhile, He is sitting at the right hand of God, and His enemies are not yet made subject to Him. But we have still to notice the different parts of the dominion which He is to exercise. The angels (1 Peter 3:22) are made subject to Him. (Compare Eph. 1:10.) But His

dominion is also to extend over the earth. Now, His rule on earth is sub-divided with reference to the human race. The Jews are to be subject to Him, and the Gentiles also. "King of the Jews," is His indefectible title. He is also to reign over the heathen, and the nations will trust in Him. All created things likewise are subjected to Him (see the passages already quoted), they are all groaning for His kingdom (Rom. 8:21). At the same time, all judgment is committed to the Son, because He is the Son of Man (John 5:27). He has power over all flesh (John 17:2); and judgment is committed unto Him, that all men may honor Him as they honor the Father (John 5:23). In, this judgment, there 'is the judgment of the living and the judgment of the dead.- The: former is connected with the government of God on the earth, although it is final as regards individuals. The latter is the ending of all the revealed ways of God, when all the wicked will have the secrets of their hearts and their hidden motives brought to light.

Then the Man-Christ, when He shall have brought all things into subjection and set all in order, will give up the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15), and God shall be all in all. The giving up of the kingdom- note it well -makes no change as to His divinity. Man, till then, had possessed the kingdom, according to the counsels of God. This mediatorial kingdom ceases. Christ is neither the more nor the less God. He was God on the earth in His humiliation; He will be so, in the glory of the kingdom which He will hold as man; He will be so, when, as man, He will be subject to God, the First-born, eternally, among many brethren, in the joy of the family of men eternally blessed before God.

It remains to make a few observations on the ways of God that are destined to bring in this blessed result, and establish the mediatorial glory of Christ.

While the Lord Jesus is sitting at the, right hand of God, God is gathering out the Church by the action of the Holy Ghost on the earth. The glad tidings of grace are proclaimed in the world, to convince the world of sin, and, in particular, of sin in having rejected the Son of God (John 16:7-9). It is not the tidings that sin is pardoned, and that it must be believed; but, that the world lieth in evil, the great proof of which is, that it has rejected the Son of God; and, at the same time, that the blood is on the mercy-seat, and that all men are invited to come to God, who will receive them according to the value which that blood has in His sight. (1 Peter 1:12; 2 Cor. 5:20; Col. 1:23; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; 1 Cor. 15:3; and a multitude of other passages.).

But other precious truths proceed this descent of the Holy Ghost from heaven. Observe, that He comes in virtue of the fact that Jesus Christ is ascended into heaven (John 7). Divine righteousness is exercised and manifested in the fact that man (Christ) is at the right hand of God, because He has glorified God,- and because a perfect propitiation has been made for sin (John 13:31, 32; 17:4, 5. Phil. 2:8, 9.)

Now, Christ has glorified God in the work that He accomplished for them that believe in Him. The Holy Ghost, therefore, comes down (John 7:39; Luke 24:49; Acts 1 and 2) on those who already believe in Him; and, by their means, announces this glorious salvation, announces to all men that the blood is on the mercy-seat, and invites them to draw near. But besides this, He gives the believer, by dwelling in Him, the assurance that all his sins have been borne by Christ (1 Peter 2:24), and are blotted out forever (Rev. 1:5; Heb. 1:3, and other passages); that he, the believer, is made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). For the righteousness of God must accept and glorify the believer; else, the work of Christ has been accomplished in vain, and the

righteousness of God is not in exercise with respect to Him, nor would God be recognizing the value of that work, nor rendering to Christ that which He has in every way deserved: all of which is absolutely impossible. Moreover, the Holy Ghost, who is in the believer, seals him for the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30), that is to say, for his actual entrance into the glory of Christ; He gives him, in whom He dwells, the knowledge that he is with Christ, and in Christ, and Christ in him (John 14:16-20); that he is the child and the heir of God, joint-heir with Christ (Rom. 8:16, 17; Gal. 4:5, 9); in fine, He takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to him, while conducting him through the wilderness, by the path that leads to glory (Rom. 8:14).

All this is for the individual. But there is only one Spirit in all believers; and He unites them all to Christ, and, consequently, all to one another as one body (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:13, and following verses), the body of Christ, who is Head, as we have seen, over all things. This is the church united to Christ, His body;- and Christians the members of Christ and of one another- the Lamb's wife (Eph. 5:25, etc.) The Holy Ghost teaches how thus to expect the Bridegroom, the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 22:17, and 19). Now this can only take place in Heaven. Believers are, by the Spirit, there already (Eph. 2:6; Phil. 3:21, 22), united, by Him to Christ who is there; they have a heavenly calling, and are separated from the world to look above. Therefore, they go up to meet Christ in the air (1 Thess. 4:15-17). Christ, who comes for them according to His promise, raising up, or changing, their bodies, to receive them to Himself, to be with Him in His Father's house, where He Himself is (John 14:2). Thus are they ever with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:17). Believers who have suffered with Him, are the sons of the Father in the glory, and form together the Bride and the body of Christ.

This does not establish the kingdom, but gathers together the joint-heirs who are to reign with Christ, and gives them their own place with Him, infinitely above all dominion, be it what it may, on the earth: although the latter is the necessary, blessed, and glorious consequence of the former. Satan is cast out of heaven, which he will never re-enter (Rev. 12); he incites the apostates, and even the whole world, to rebel against the Lord and His Christ (Rev. 12:12; 16:13, 14; 17:13, 14; 19:18, etc.). The saints then return with Christ (Rev. 19; Col. 3:4; Jude 14; Zech. 14.5), and the power of the enemy is destroyed on the earth, which is now delivered from evil. Satan, cast into the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3)- not yet into the lake of fire -is no longer the prince of this world. The Angels, even, no longer govern it as administrators on the part of God. Christ - and His own Man - is established, according to the counsels of God, over all things, over all the works of the hand of God (Psa. 8 quoted in 1 Cor. 15; Eph. 1; Heb. 2; compare Col. 1:16-20.) Christ appears in glory, the saints also with Him; (compare John 17:22, 23). It is the kingdom of God established in power (compare Matt. 16:28, and 17; Mark 9; Luke 9). Righteousness reigns; and men, and the world, are at peace (Eph. 1:10). It is in this state of things, the fruit of the reign of Christ, all that the prophets have spoken of with regard to peace and blessing on the earth will be fulfilled.

Blessed time! When war and oppression shall entirely cease, and when all men shall enjoy the fruits of God's bounty; while the passions of men -inflamed by the enemy of all good -shall no longer lead them to snatch from one another the objects of their lusts. Christ will maintain the happiness, of all; if evil appears, it will be immediately judged, and banished from the earth.

Some accessory facts should find their place here. The kingdom of the Son of David has to be re-established. All the promises of God with regard to Israel will be fulfilled in favor of that nation;

the law being written on their hearts, the grace and power of God will accomplish the blessing of the people; a blessing which they could not obtain when it depended on their own faithfulness, and when, it rested on the principle of human responsibility. Dominion over the Gentiles will, at the same time, be exercised by the Lord, while these will be subordinate to Israel, the supreme nation on the earth. Thus all things will be gathered together under one Head, Christ -angels, principalities, the Church in Heaven, Israel, the Gentiles; and Satan will be bound.

But, previous to the introduction of this universal blessing, the wicked one will be in open and public rebellion against God. The Jews will have joined Him, the great majority, at least, of the people and the Gentiles will rise up against God. This revolt will bring on a time of extraordinary tribulation in the land of Judah, and there will be a general temptation which will try all the Gentiles. But the testimony of God will be preached all over the world; and then the judgment shall take place; and shall be executed on the apostates front among Christians, on the rebellious Jews, and on all the nations that will have rejected the testimony of God. This is the judgment of the living; they that are Christ's having already been caught up. The fullness of times commences at this period.

A few words will complete our sketch. Satan will be loosed from the abyss after the inhabitants: of the earth shall have long enjoyed the rest and happiness of the reign of Christ, and shall have seen His glory. When temptation comes, they who are not vitally united to Christ, fall; and Satan leads them up against the seat of God's glory on the earth (Jerusalem); and against those that are faithful to the Lord. But all who follow Satan are destroyed.

Then comes the judgment of the dead, and the final state.

There is a new heaven and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. The kingdom having been given up to God the Father, Christ, who will already have brought all things into subjection, is Himself subject, as man: a truth so precious to us! for He remains eternally the First-born among many brethren. I do not think that the Church loses its place either, as the Bride of Christ and the habitation of God (see Eph. 3 and Rev. 21). It is only the kingdom, the existence of which supposed evil that had to be subdued, which comes to an end.

All things shall be made new, and God shall be all in all. We shall enjoy Him in perfect beatitude, and we shall know Him according to the perfection of all His ways, already developed in the history of humanity. His Son will be the eternal expression of His thoughts, and the First among those who have eternal happiness through Him a happiness founded on the value of His blood, the appreciation of which can never fade in the ever-fresh memory of the blessed.

The House of God

This divine discourse on the House of God, the House of this Dispensation, is brought forth by reason of an inquiry made of the Apostle by the saints at Corinth, touching their further fellowship with idol sacrifices.

How commonly has the wisdom of God been brought to us, through our ignorance! In various ways we erect our altars to "the unknown God,"-but He, upon that, in grace declares, Himself to us. Just as new and fresh blessings have come to us, by reason of our own failures -or, as redemption itself has been displayed because of our sin, our great apostasy, our condition of self-wrought ruin.

" Now as touching things offered unto idols," writes the Apostle, at the opening of this fine and weighty scripture; and these words intimate, that he is addressing himself to some communication he had received from the Corinthians on the subject.

He then takes up this matter, "eating things offered in sacrifice to idols," beginning, however, to consider or discuss it, on the lowest ground, as I may say.

1 Corinthians 8

In the progress of chapter 8, he shows the Corinthians, that, by their eating of idol-sacrifices, they were breaking the law of love; inasmuch as by their using their own liberty in this case, they were paining and tempting those who had not the like liberty.

1 Corinthians 9

Then, in chapter 9, he enforces this duty of considering their weak brethren, by showing them what his own ways had been, how he had never used his liberty in the Gospel, lest he should offend others, or hinder their acceptance of blessing.

Now, this argument, I may say, was taking the lowest ground upon which this grave subject of eating sacrifices in idol temples could be met and discussed. But, I ask, was not this the method of the Lord Himself in His teaching? Did He not begin with the simplest and least peremptory argument, when answering questions and matters brought to Him, and then, from thence rise to the more solemn ones? Take as an instance of this, the progress of His words in Matt. 15:1-9, when replying to the Pharisees on the subject of traditions-and so also, as another instance, His method with them again, in Matt. 12:24-37, when they had said that He cast out devils through Beelzebub. On each of those occasions, did He not begin to convict the gainsayers by the simplest argument, and rise gradually to the most awful and peremptory? Does He not use the less startling or alarming rebuke at the beginning, and then solemn condemnation and very awful warning?

And so, the Spirit of God in the Apostle here. He begins by showing, that this eating in an idol's temple would be a breach of the law of love. But, resuming this same subject in chap. 10, he does not merely repeat the argument drawn from the breach of brotherly love, but he lets them know, that if any of them persisted in being at the idol's temples, they were provoking the Lord Himself to jealousy, and that the door of His house must shut itself against them.

This was His method in this argument. And thus we begin, in this divine discourse, contained in this portion of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, to get the House of God first presented to us. The door of that house is here commanded by the Spirit in the Apostle to be watched and guarded. The avenue to the house, as I may express it, must be kept clean. No foot is to tread it that has been inside an idol temple; the contact would defile.

Having been thus introduced to the subject in this way, we shall find that the Apostle keeps it before him to the end of chap. 14. It is "the House of God" he is still considering.

Here, however, I will pause for a moment, to call this to mind-that under Moses, the House of God, as it was in his day, was, strictly watched; the character, and order, and services of it, were all jealously guarded.

That house, under Moses, had been raised in the wilderness first, and then in Canaan as a land set apart and purified for the presence of Jehovah. Neither Egypt, nor uncircumcised- Canaan, as I may express it, was -a fit place. The land must be separated or sanctified, or the house of Jehovah could not be reared. But being reared, all was ordered with great carefulness. The outer and inner courts were distinguished, the places of the Levites and of the Priests, and then the sanctuary of the Glory or the divine Presence.

Now, in these chapters which are at present before us, I mean 1 Cor. 8-14, we get a very complete exhibition of the House of God as it is in this present dispensation; and it is edifying to look at it, and inspect it. We shall observe a strict rule enjoined as to it, as we have just observed, was the case under Moses.

We have already seen the avenue to it, or the door of it (the same thing) watched by the Spirit in the Apostle. He would not allow one to enter there, who had come from an idol temple (10:21).

We are now to look inside the door, at the interior of the house itself, and the Apostle shows us the seats of the guests, the table spread in the midst of them, and the servants and their services.

As, then, respecting the seats of the guests, we now observe that they are guarded and watched with the same jealousy that had sanctified the door. Males and females are to be seated together, but only under certain conditions, such as the character of the house demanded. No trespass on this order can be allowed, the Apostle peremptorily declares, even on a plea of ignorance. The house must maintain its order. There are mysteries, divine truths and principles, in all the parts of that order; and they cannot be sacrificed to the ignorance of foolish men (11:1-16.)

This is much to be observed. The jealousy that watched the door, inspects the seats of the guests; or the guests themselves as seated at the table.

The table itself; as in the midst of the guests, is next shown us. And here again we get the same holy care to watchfulness.

The Apostle rules it expressly, that if any of the guests would defile the table by turning it to another use than that appointed by the Lord of the house, such an One must be judged. There is to be no exception as to this. The table was the Lord's-the table of His house; and they were not to dare to treat it as they might their own table in their own house. The Lord would avenge the wrongs of His table now; for of old He had avenged the controversy of His temple (11:17-34).

Surely, all this is still of the same character. The door of the house, the sitting of the guests, and their partaking of the table, all were to be kept clean and well-ordered, according to the mind of the Lord of the house.

We then get the servants of the house introduced to our notice. Their worshipping service, or the house in its priestly character is, perhaps, just for a passing moment, looked at in chap. 12:1-3; but after this, their Ministering service is very fully, and indeed elaborately, detailed and presented-as from this to the end of these chapters (12:4; 14).

Each servant is challenged by the Apostle to know his own proper service or business under the distribution or gift of the Lord of the house-and therewith to occupy himself both for the honor of the common Lord of all, and for the edification and comfort of his fellow-servants, Or the guests, or household.

And then we learn, that in the exercise of these gifts or endowments, various moral qualities are to be cultivated, or characteristics cherished. Each, for instance, is to honor the others. And each and all are to be, as it were, busy with themselves, while doing the business of the house-that is, exercising themselves in all Christian virtues, judging their own ways and behavior as saints, and nourishing the due graces of the Christian.

All this is earnestly pressed by the Apostle in this part, of his discourse, looking, as he is here doing, at the servants.

And here let me take occasion to say, there is surely danger of getting into merely gifted service, or into merely gifted knowledge. King Saul was the type of the first of these; the prophet Balaam, of the second.

Saul served, delivering Israel from their enemies. But he served merely under a gift. There was no renewal of mind, or exercise of spirit, in the midst of his service. His conscience was not in action, nor was he in God's presence. Balaam prophesied, telling out wonders and secrets, divine counsels concerning Israel. He was an oracle, and his utterances are beautiful beyond the common measure. But he spoke merely under a gift. There was no subjection to the Lord, or exercise of heart in him.

Such things are solemn.

The world, in spite of his gift, was Saul's object; and the same world, in spite of his gift, Balaam's object. Saul coveted its honor; Balaam, its wealth. Gift did not renew the mind, or implant the new life, There was not even struggle with the world in these men, much less victory, over it. "Saul, with full deliberation, would give up his interest in God for a little present honor in the presence of his people; Balaam loved the world and sought only its good things, though he was, under the Spirit, pronouncing its judgment.

Can such service, such knowledge, as this be in estimation with the Lord? Impossible. They may be used by Him. The gift has its value-but the vessel that carries it will be put among the vessels unto dishonor, as soon as the Lord of the house takes account of His servants. "We believe and therefore speak," in a short -sentence, is the due and proper thing, and the contradiction of merely gifted service. "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," says Paul of himself; and to his beloved Timothy he says, "Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine; for in doing this thou shalt save thyself and them that hear thee." He that acted and spoke in this way was neither a Saul nor a Balaam.

Now, the saints at Corinth were nearer this state of merely gifted knowledge and service, than any whom. Paul addresses in those Apostolic days. Nationally, they were, as we speak, schoolmen-and such a generation have their own snares and temptations. He was some what in alarm respecting them on this behalf. He was uneasy touching the Thessalonians, because of their sufferings, lest-they should be overwhelmed-he was in great fear touching the Galatians, because of their judaizing, lest they should be bewitched from the Cross of Christ - here he is angry and apprehensive touching the Corinthians, because of their worldly, carnal, intellectual condition; lest they should, after all, be reprobate.

He may indeed, at the beginning, express his full confidence in the Lord about them (1:7, 8) but being gifted and yet walking in moral relaxation, as the whole of the Epistle shows us, he had his fears, he could not but sound the alarm of a watchman in Zion. He tells them, that he could not speak unto them as spiritual, though he has to acknowledge that they came behind none in gifts. Surely this was an evil and a dangerous state. It is a warning to us. And the Apostle's words in the whole of this Epistle, the first Epistle to the Corinthians, tell us that in a holy, personal, living dispensation, like the present, such a state of things will surely not do.

1 Corinthians 13

Chapter 13, part of the portion we are here considering, coming in where it does, confirms all this. There must be saintly, individual walk, as well as ecclesiastical or corporate service. Surely there must. The conscience of every Saint will tell him so, as this Epistle does. The Corinthians are taught to know, from chap. 13, that they have a business with themselves, as chap. 12 and 14 would teach them, that they have a business for others. Such is the cleanness or required order of the servants of the house of God, as we before learned the required character of the door, the seats, and the table.

I may, therefore, surely say again, if the house of God under Moses was guarded with jealousy, so is it under the Apostles. The framework, the material, the furniture, the services and order of the houses themselves are different, but the jealousy that watches over each of them is the same.

And here let me say, that the first duty of the living house of God (as the house of this present time is), is obedience to the word of God.

It is said at times, how evil a thing it is, to refuse any one who is a saint of God, a place in the assembly of God. But, I ask, Are the saints of God to be received in defiance of the command of God? If the Lord of Israel say, that a leprous Israelite is to be put outside the camp, is the congregation of Israel to say, we will bring him inside, because he is an Israelite and one of us? If the Lord of the present house say, that if any man will go to an idol temple and eat of the sacrifices there, such an one is not to pass the door of the house, is the assembly of the Lord to say, We will take him in, just because we judge him to be a saint, and one of us? Is the watchman at the door to be taught his duty by his Lord; and are the household to give him a dispensation to act in violation of it?

Indeed if the Lord has not spoken, let us be silent. If we are unable to verify and warrant an act, by scripture, we are unable to justify ourselves, or to enforce it on others. Surely indeed. But if God has spoken, and the commandment have enjoined an act, we have only to obey, though it be in the face of all. "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

1 Corinthians 15:23

What a scene of indescribable glory that will be, when the Lord Himself shall descend to gather His redeemed to the home He has prepared for them! What a moment of unsullied delight, when at the shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, His sleeping saints, raised, and living saints, changed, "shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord!"

All the hosts of the redeemed shall be marshaled there, in bodies of glory, instinct with divine life;-the saints of old, who on the faith of a promise were worshippers, pilgrims, soldiers;-those to whose faith dens and caves bore witness; "of whom the world was not worthy;" the elders, and just men, who "died in faith, not having received the promise," shall be there; "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob;" "Noah, Daniel and Job;" "Moses and Elias," shall be there; Abel, and the long line of martyrs; Aaron, and the Lord's priests; Samuel, and the Lord's prophets; David, and the men of faith who sat on his throne; all God's renowned ones, the perfected just shall stand in that scene for which they in faith waited. "The Church of the first-born," too, as the bride prepared for her Lord, shall take her place there; all down to the last reborn soul, who shall form the completion of the mystery. She, too, will recount her worthies in that morning; the many who have stood forth in other days, and who stand forth in our own day, as the witnesses of God's truth, and the heralds of God's salvation, all shall ascend together and swell the countless multitude of Christ's own-shall take their place, too, in their respective glories-" every man in his own order,"-star differing from star in glory, and each reflecting the image of Jesus. There will be seats, too, in the kingdom.; thrones for rulership over the tribes of Israel; mansions in the Father's house; thrones around the throne of God; all shall be occupied by the redeemed, each invested with the insignia sovereign love has assigned him. All will "know even as they are known,"-each known to each-all known to all. What a season of unutterable joy of holy intercourse! of uninterrupted communion! But the rapturous thought of each one of this innumerable company will be, they are Christ's, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me." To be Christ's own will be a source of deep, unmixed pleasure then (should it not be now). The absorbing object of their heaven-inspired vision will be CHRIST; to be forever with Him; to behold Him; to cast their crowns at His feet, paying the heart's deep homage to Him in one united utterance of "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

The power of Christ's resurrection will be applied to the bodies of his saints; they will be raised, because He has been raised, by virtue of having His life, and being indwelt by His Spirit, they will be presented in the perfection of that life, in its full triumph over death, and him who had the power of death; they are raised-not for judgment, that to them is passed, Christ bore it for them, but because they are Christ's-Christ's resurrection was the first fruits, and the pledge of that abundant ingathering. He was the first sheaf presented to the Lord, the sample and earnest of the harvest that shall then be gathered into the garner of God; they will be raised up, and presented in the glory with him. He is the expression of the glory, and they stand in Him. The reunited dust shall be reanimated and vivified with divine life; the weakness shall be transformed into power, corruption

into incorruption, dishonor into glory, the natural body into a spiritual body; it will bear the impress of the heavenly, even as it has borne the image of the earthy. Where is the sting of death? Gone! Where the grave's victory? Gone! Victory, full, complete, eternal, is theirs, Satan bruised under their feet forever.

The saints will stand before the tribunal of Christ, to receive the rewards of the kingdom; but they will appear there as glorified saints, no stain of sin shall be there, the last trace of the curse shall have been removed, the reproach of Egypt clean and forever rolled away; the death of the slain Lamb will be learned in the light of glory, and in the presence of God.

Earth may move on still in its course and projects, as it did when its light was set in the darkness of the cross; its religion may go on, too, quite compatible with its godless pursuits, until judgment break the spell of its delusion, and dissolve the dream, - awaking men to the dread reality of falling "into the hands of the living God." The light, God's light, shall have been removed to its own proper sphere, there to reflect each its peculiar brightness, "shining as the brightness of the firmament;" - "as the sun in the kingdom of their Father;"-being with Him who is the sun and center of that heavenly system, undimmed, unobscured by the clouds of unbelief or doubt. They are with Him as He moves on in the course of the counsels of God, whether relating to the heavens above, or the heavens beneath. In the presence of His glory, they shall be presented faultless, "with exceeding joy." Will He "take his great power, and reign," swaying the scepter of righteous supremacy over a judged and renovated earth? They will be with Him there! After the course of the kingdom shall be complete, and He shall have delivered up the kingdom to the Father, will He be tabernacled in the home, the dwelling-place of righteousness, in the new heavens and new earth? They that are His, will still be with Him. They are Christ's present and eternal portion, and their place is to be "forever with the Lord." Whether in the kingdom, or in the new heavens, and new earth, they will enjoy the rest of God in its perfection, and bear witness to His glory in the exalted sphere in which grace has set them, and for which grace has adapted them.

The hope for which we wait, is,-not judgment,-not the kingdom set up,-not Israel's restoration, or the deliverance of creation from its present bondage,-all true in its place:-but God's Son from heaven He is coming, not to fulfill prophecy, but to fulfill promise:-" I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Judgment waits for this! - the restoration of Israel, creation's deliverance, - all waits suspended until the rapture of the saints,-" they that are Christ's at his coming."

After the Lord Jesus has gathered his own to Himself in the heavens, He will make good the prophetic word in its bearing towards the earth, and deliver creation, bringing it into the liberty of redemption.

Well may the affections of the heart be moved at the prospect! Well may the sound of that well-known scripture reverberate in the inner man, "Behold, I come quickly!" Yes, He is coming, to appropriate to Himself that which He has purchased at his own personal cost; to whom He can say, "I have redeemed thee; thou art mine!" to surround Himself with the trophies of redeeming love. The Father's Will will be fully accomplished in the resurrection and glorification of those who were the objects of it; for this, they were saved. Our necessities were not the first cause; God is glorified in the redemption He has wrought, and the objects of His love are prepared for the glory that awaits them. They shall stand in the clear, unclouded light of divine righteousness, and be at

home there. The robe in which they are arrayed, is divinely righteous, and meet for the occasion.

God, resting in the complacency of omnipotent love, will welcome them to Himself,-His own immediate presence will be their rest,-His unclouded glory, the sphere of their worship; - God and the Lamb, their light and their temple: He will dwell in their midst- they, His people;- He, their God.

What a prospect! Even the anticipation of such a hope lifts our spirits above the clouds and mists of earth; but we need purified hearts, to be prepared to allow the rays of that glory to reach within, and shed its light abroad there; there should be nothing allowed discordant with that holy scene; it will darken the vision, and confuse the affections; the Holy Spirit will be leading us within, to look after the house, and rid it of its corruptions and intruders, instead of opening the windows of the heart to allow the light of a new heaven to fill and irradiate it with its illuminating glory.

O that our constant position may be, -- as those who are "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God;"- "to wait for His Son from heaven," with the heart purified, and the eye single; with staff and girdle; ready to welcome the shout in the air, whenever it may be uttered; ready! with nothing to leave behind that would retard our upward flight, nothing that may clash with that oft-expressed desire.

"Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

Words in Season

Everything is beautiful in its season, and truth is healthful to the soul, when ministered in season and in measure.

New wine must be put into new bottles. The Lord had many things to say to His disciples, while He was with them; but they could not bear them then, and, therefore, He did not say them. When the Spirit of Truth came, they received those things in His teaching, together with a power to bear them.

All this may show us, how the fitting time and proportion are to be observed, when the ministry of the word of God to the soul is waited on. And this suggests to me the remembrance of Apollos at Corinth; for it has long been my impression, that his ministry there did mischief.

His qualities as a teacher suited the Grecian or Corinthian taste, and the Corinthian saints were attracted. Paul was among them a little before Apollos, and Apollos' eloquence seems to have fascinated the natural, human mind of those Grecians; so that Paul, "rude in speech," came to be somewhat undervalued. Not that there was any wrong purpose in Apollos. But he may have gone to Corinth a little hastily, or without due advisement as before God; for we read simply, "that he was disposed to pass into Achaia." It was a disposition of his mind that led him to Corinth; and then we may gather, from Paul's 1st epistle to the Corinthians, that he had captivated the minds of many there, and that there ensued division and mischief (Acts 18, 19).

Thus, with right desires, we may be very unwise in conducting our ministry. With the Lord, however, as a minister (as I need not say), all was perfect; and it is refreshing to mark such perfection, as it is all His glories.

The link between Him and His disciples, in the days of His sojourn among them, was that which personal attraction formed. They had no such knowledge of Him through the light and understanding of scripture, as would have bound them to Him. He had, the rather, to rebuke them again and again, for making many a mistake through ignorance of it. Their gathering round His empty sepulcher, among other circumstances, witnesses this to us. Had they been acquainted with the word, they would not have been there; for they would have known that He was not there. But they were there, just because they clung to Himself by strong personal attraction, and just because they knew not the scripture, that He must rise from the dead.

The remembrance of Him was more to them than converse with all beside. The dead body of her Lord was much more to the heart of Mary Magdalene than a crowd of living associates; yea, than the angelic glories of Heaven, as John 20 will tell us. How ought such a loving heart breathe out that beautiful epitaph: "O quam minus cum aliis versari, quam tui meminisse." And when we ponder this for a moment-when we think of God forming a personal link between Himself and us, what grace shines before us! what a secret is disclosed! The Lord would have our hearts to know Him as an object; and surely, by that, He lets us know that He has us as His objects, and what crowning grace is that!

But though, during the days of His abiding with them, the disciples were thus kept by Him through force of personal attraction, yet, when He had risen from the dead, and rejoined them, "He opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scripture;" and then He gave them (as we speak) a lecture upon scripture, saying to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." This was the forming of a new link between Him and them. Personal attractions, as we said, have already formed one; Scripture, and the knowledge of it, was now to form another.

What beautiful and well-ordered husbandry, under the ministry of Christ, this is! All was in season; the early and the latter rain doing their service to the soul.

We may also notice the way of the Spirit's wisdom as a Teacher in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In the day of their illumination, the Hebrew saints were willing to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods. They were happy under a fresh apprehension of Christ; and joy, as it always does, proved to be their strength. But with all this, they were not established in truth, and thus were shaken, as the whole of the Epistle lets us learn; and the apostle has to bring truth to them, that they might have whereby to stand, and wherewith to meet the seduction that was threatening them. They had been already happy and confident -the truth he brings was that which gave them title to be so; for the Spirit, through him, would lay firmer foundations than the joy which waited on the day of illumination;. that was beginning to betray its insufficiency.

And so with the Galatians. They were so happy; their "blessedness" had been such, that they would have given their eyes to the apostle. But in time, like the Hebrews, they also were shaken. Nay, more; they were "bewitched," seduced from the truth of the Gospel, though their first estate had been so full of blessedness; and the apostle has to feed them with truth, tell them afresh of the grace and liberty of the Gospel, as though the whole work had to begin again.

Surely all this has a voice in our ears. It tells us that the Spirit of God does not commit the saints to mere "illumination" or "blessedness." Such conditions of soul have to be confirmed by truth -and instruction. The infant blossom of the soul was beautiful; but it had to be sustained by further husbandry, ripened into strength and fruitfulness.

Now all this, I surely judge, has a voice in the ear of this day, through which we are passing. Many, many souls are now freshly awakened under a ministry that attracts, rather than instructs. The joy of "illumination" and of "blessedness" is abroad. But all this which we have been looking at, whether in the Lord's own ministry, or in that of the apostle under the Holy Ghost, tells us that such a condition may soon need the confirming virtue which knowledge of the word imparts. Exercises of soul under the discovery of. corruptions, under the accusings of Satan, or of the conscience, from the tendencies of nature, and from the wear and tear of Christian warfare, may set in; and such things will call for "the sword of the Spirit." The danger, I grant, may be feared, lest when the link between Christ and the soul, which Scripture forms; be strengthened, that which personal attraction has already formed should become less earnest. It is delightful to see affection, and joy, and fresh open-heartedness. It is admirable, specially in the eyes of some of us, who know too much of coldness, and narrowness, and formality. Still, knowledge of Scripture is divine provision for the rising exigencies of our onward journey, as for the quickening.-of the soul at the beginning;

the Word being the seed of life, and the Milk and meat of it, too. And, surely, our communion with Scripture is to feed, not to supersede, our communion with Himself. I grant that there is danger, as I said - danger lest the fervency and simplicity, which marked the "illumination," the first moment Of the quickened soul, the day of "blessedness," the time when personal attraction should be owned by the heart, should be injured by the accession of knowledge. But, though this danger may well be feared (and if it prevail, the loss will be serious indeed), yet we find that neither the Lord Himself, nor His servants under the Spirit, were governed by it. The Lord added an opened understanding, and an interpreted Scripture to them who were already His. by personal attraction; and the apostle taught, and taught carefully, those who had been in the joy of unction, and in the power of their early blessedness.

But I must look for a little at Acts 11:19-30. They that were scattered abroad at the persecution which arose about Stephen, went everywhere telling of the Lord Jesus. They were not as ordained or gifted ones; but, in the, freshness of their recent quickening, they talked of the salvation they were enjoying. The elder brethren, official and gifted, remained at home (chap. 8:1).

The fruit of this service was very happy, but evidently very simple. We see this, as at Antioch, in this chapter, Acts 11; and tidings of all this reaching Jerusalem, Barnabas is sent to see it-the very man for such service; for he was a man rather of grace than of gift- "a good man" - "a son of consolation," as he is called; and, coming to Antioch, and there seeing "the grace of God," as we read, "he was glad."

Very simple, very lovely, and very easy to be understood, all this condition of things is. The work carried on by simple, fresh souls, was very attractive to a simple, gracious, saint. Barnabas joined himself with it at once; but he did this in a modest, temperate, way, which surely was the wisdom of the Spirit in him. He exhorted them: he did not teach them, as though he would add something to them, but he exhorted them, as desirous that they should rather hold fast what they already had..I can suppose that he instinctively felt and judged it would be hazardous to do more just at that moment, considering the condition of soul he had then found them in.

This is simple, and it is significant also; for it easily associates itself with much that is abroad at this moment; for Antioch. is again, in this our day, before Jerusalem; and Jesus is again passing by; and though the path of His feet may still be in places of no repute with very many, as Galilee or Nazareth, or the road that lay between Jericho and Jerusalem, it is well for sinners to be in the highway, or on the road-side.

But the scene at Antioch does not yet close. After awhile, Barnabas goes to seek Saul at Tarsus. Saul was a gifted vessel in the house of God. Barnabas, in the grace that distinguishes him, seems- to know this and to own it; and, therefore, in due season, desires his presence and help among the new converts. When these converts reach a certain stage, or come to age, as we may say, he appears at once to think of Saul, his gifted brother, in connection with them; and accordingly seeks him out, and then brings him to Antioch, and there, assembling themselves together for that very purpose, for a whole year, they teach the young converts; and the good fruit of all this is quickly gathered, as we read:- "And in those days came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch; and there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit, that there should be great dearth throughout all the world, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples -every man according to his ability- determined to send relief unto the

brethren which dwelt in Jerusalem, which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

This is all, again I say, not only simple and happy, but significant, having a voice for the ear of this present hour. The ministry of some unnamed, undistinguished, brethren had awakened many souls at Antioch: these souls then welcomed first the exhortations of Barnabas, and afterward the teaching of Saul; and, at the last, and as the end or fruit of this husbandry-this plowing, planting, and watering-they are ready with sympathy-living practical sympathy-to answer the need and sorrow of their brethren.

Antioch is thus before us, in this earliest notice that we get of her. The activity there is lively, full of freshness, and affection, and simplicity, yielding real genuine fruit; and there the disciples are first called "Christians."

This, as we have seen, is in chap. 11. In chap. 13, we find it the seat of an energetic body of disciples, animated by a missionary spirit; and forth from it Paul and Barnabas, the companions of an earlier day, are sent by the Holy Ghost on the work of evangelizing. In chap. 14, we find these brethren returned there, after their mission had been fulfilled; and in chap. 15, Paul a second time, now in company with Silas, going forth from it on fresh labors in the gospel.

Jerusalem, during all this, is rather laid aside, or in the shade, as we speak. She is seen, in chap. xv., as the place where certain disputed ecclesiastical questions had to be settled; but that is far, indeed, from giving her the glowing atmosphere of Antioch; and thus, the last are first, and the first last. The younger Antioch takes the lead of old Jerusalem; but while we say this, we will not forget Jerusalem as the earliest seat of the Church, honored and endowed. The Spirit descended there: there the first disciples sold all they possessed, and lived together, the fairest sample of congregational beauty that ever flourished. There, too, we see a suffering Church: prisons and martyrdoms witness this; and there the Holy Ghost shook the place, as well as filled the place, of the assembled saints.

But in time, Antioch rather than Jerusalem occupies the foreground of observation. We see the last first-a common thing from the beginning hitherto. Sarah got the start of Abraham, in Gen. 21, though she was so much behind him in Gen. 18; and so young converts, like young Antioch, run earnestly along in paths of service, where old disciples are but walking leisurely. In patriarchal, apostolic, and present days, we may thus see the last as first. Be it so; may we older ones of Jerusalem say, "O! that jealousies were watched and mortified! O! that we were not so tempted to judge of things and of persons in relation to ourselves, to the part or measure we take with them, or the interest we have in them!" How should we rejoice in the service and fruitfulness of others! Surely we are not to surrender anything we have of Him or from Him; but as surely we are to value other vessels of His house, and the treasure that is in them, and the use which the Master is pleased to put them to. Eliab will upbraid his younger brother, because he eyed him enviously; but we are to cherish the heart of David, who, if he but served, cared not whether it were among the sheep-folds or on the throne.

I would, however, add another word. One is very conscious at times of a dread of interfering with the work of the Spirit with a soul, when that work appears to have a fresh character about it, and to have been somewhat immediately as from God Himself. It moves us in measure, like as the first

work of the Lord Jesus moved the disciples at the well of Sychar: they felt that they could not intrude: there was a weight and influence in the place which His power and grace had just been so blessedly occupying. It was the same again after He was risen on the shore of the sea of Galilee. There we read-" And none of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art thou, knowing that it was the Lord."

One is, in like spirit with this, indisposed at times to meddle with the working Of God with a soul, to direct it, or to attempt to give it anything of a new shape or character; and this reserve is healthful, I judge. But here, again, I would say, it is to have its measure: it is to be debated with, or it may restrain us too far: I see this in Acts 18.

There, Aquila and his wife Priscilla had a fresh work of God under their eye in the person of Apollos - a work, I can assure myself, which had character in it, savoring of the direct, immediate, hand of God. It had fine qualities in it. That man of Alexandria, as a vessel of the divine Potter, was no common one. Apollos was eloquent, fervent in spirit, mighty in the scriptures, and earnest and diligent in testimony to the Lord. All this may well have attracted, and more than attracted, the older disciples. I can suppose that for a moment Aquila and Priscilla were silent in the presence of this new-formed vessel, as Moses for a time listened to Eldad and Medad prophesying in the camp, and old Eli bowed before the word of the Lord in the mouth of the youthful servant of the Temple.

Still, however, Aquila and Priscilla did not, in fitting time, refuse to take Apollos and teach him the way of God more perfectly, as Barnabas and Saul did not, as we have seen, refuse to teach, as well as exhort, the young converts at Antioch.

I cannot but say, that these samples of the various wisdom' of the Spirit in the saints and servants of the Lord I feel to be admirable. And I see a vividness now giving character to certain freshly-awakened souls, which I have no disposition to deprive of a certain kind of authority with me. I do not yield a jot of what, I have learned from the word; but I fear lest teaching, if not wise in season as well as in substance, should do mischief. And yet surely I know and own that teaching is the divine way of growth and fruitfulness, and may be deeply needful to meet the rising exigencies of these dear young converts.

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