

PRESENT TESTIMONY VOLUME 3, 1851

by G.V. Wigram

A collection of articles and writings by G.V. Wigram from Present Testimony Volume 3, 1851, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

37 Chapters

Table of Contents

0. Present Testimony Volume 3, 1851
1. 1 Corinthians 13
2. 1 Samuel
3. 2 Samuel
4. Abba, Father
5. Acrostic Psalms
6. Belshazzar
7. Biblical Researches: or Occasional Criticisms Upon Various Subjects, Texts, Word...
8. The Candlestick
9. Colossians 1:12-19
10. David Serving His Generation
11. Deuteronomy 32; Habakkuk; Acts 20:29; 2 Timothy; Jude
12. On the Divine Inspiration of Scripture
13. Divine Warning and Encouragement for the Last Days
14. Fragment: Christ Overcoming
15. Fragment: Greek Translation in Revelation
16. Fragment: Malachi 3:16-18
17. Fragment: Revelation 10 and 11
18. The Glories of the Son
19. Hebrews 11:29-32
20. The Condition of Israel During the Prophecies of Malachi
21. Remarks As to Israel
22. Joshua
23. Judges
24. Love
25. The Love of Christ
26. The Melchizedek Priesthood of Christ
27. The Midnight Cry
28. A Prayer
29. Psalm 32:8-9
30. The Seven Churches
31. The Son of God
32. No. 1
33. No. 2
34. Thoughts on the Book of Jonah: Jonah
35. Exhibition of Three Hebrew Words in the Psalter
36. On Worship

Present Testimony Volume 3, 1851

1 Corinthians 13

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part; and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

1 Samuel

We have seen that the book of Ruth occupies an intermediate -place between the end of the period in which Israel was governed by God himself, who interposed from time to time by means of judges, and the setting up of the king whom He selected for them. This period, alas! came to an end through the people's failure, and their inability to make a right use by faith, of their privileges.

The books of Samuel contain the cessation of Israel's original relationship with God, the setting up of the king whom God Himself had prepared, and the circumstances which preceded this event. It is not merely that Israel failed under the government of God: they rejected it.

Placed under the priesthood, they drew nigh to God, in the enjoyment of privileges which were granted them as a people acknowledged by the Lord. We shall see the ark--which, as it was the first, so was it the most precious link in the chain between the Lord God and the people--fall into the hands of the enemy. What could a priest do, when that which gave his priesthood all its importance, was in the enemy's hands, and when the place where he drew near to the Most High, the throne of God in the midst of Israel, was no more there? It was no longer mere unfaithfulness in the circumstances in which God had placed them. The circumstances themselves were entirely changed through God's judgment upon Israel. The outward link of God's connection with the people was broken; the ark of the covenant, center and basis of their relationship with Him, had been given up by the wrath of God into the hands of their enemies. Priesthood was the natural and normal means of maintaining the relationship between God and the people. How could it now be used for this purpose?

Nevertheless, God, acting in sovereignty, could put Himself in communication with His people, by virtue of His grace and immutable faithfulness, according to which His connection with His people existed still on His side, even when all acknowledged relationship between Him and them was broken off by their unfaithfulness. And this He did by raising up a prophet. By his means God still communicated in a direct way with His people, even when they- had not maintained their relationship with Him in their normal condition. The office of the priest was connected with the integrity of these relations; the people needed him in their infirmities. Still, under the priesthood, the people themselves drew nigh to God through the medium of the priest, according to the relationship which God had established, and which He recognized. But the prophet acted on the part of God outside this relationship, or rather above it, when the people were no longer faithful.

The setting up of a king went much further. It was a new order of relationship which involved most important principles. The relationship of God with the people was no longer immediate. An authority was set over Israel. God expected faithfulness from the king. The people's destiny depended upon the conduct of the one who was responsible before the Lord, for the maintenance of this faithfulness.

It was God's purpose to establish this principle for the glory of Christ. I speak of His kingdom over the Jews and over the nations, over the whole world. This kingdom has been prefigured in David

and in Solomon. To ask for a king, rejecting God's own immediate government, was folly and rebellion in the people. How often are our follies and our faults the opportunity for the display of the grace and wisdom of God, and for the fulfillment of His counsels, hidden from the world until then! Our sins and faults alone have conduced to the glorious accomplishment of these counsels in Christ.

These are the important subjects treated of in the books of Samuel, so far at least as the establishment of the kingdom. Its glorious condition and its fall are related in the two books of Kings.

It is the fall of Israel which puts an end to their first relationship with God. The ark is taken; the priest dies. Prophecy introduces the king—a king despised and rejected, man having set up another, yet a king whom God establishes according to the might of His power. Such are the great principles unfolded in the books of Samuel.

History shows us here, as everywhere, that there is but One who has remained faithful—an humbling result for us, of the trial to which God has subjected us, but one well adapted to keep us humble.

If we have spoken of the fall of the priesthood, we must not infer from it that priesthood ceased to exist. It was always necessary to a people full of weakness (as it is to ourselves on earth); it interposed in the things of God, to maintain individual relationship to Him in them; but it ceased to form the basis of that between the whole people and God. The people were no longer capable of enjoying this relationship through this means alone; and the priesthood itself could suffice no longer, having so deeply failed in its standing. We shall do well to dwell a little on this, which is the turning-point of the truths we are now considering.

In Israel's primitive state, and in their constitution generally, as established in the land given to them, priesthood was the basis of their relationship with God; it was that which characterized and maintained them (see Heb. 7:11). The high priest was their head and representative before God, as a nation of worshippers, and in this character (I speak here neither of redemption from Egypt nor of conquests, but of a people before God, and in relation with Him), on the great day of atonement he confessed their sins over the scapegoat. It was not merely intercession; he stood there as head and representative of the people, who were summed up in him before the Lord. The people were acknowledged, although faulty. They presented themselves in the person of the high priest, that they might be in connection with a God, who after all veiled Himself from their eyes. The people presented everything to the priest; the high priest stood before God; this relationship did not imply innocence. An innocent man should have stood himself before God. "Adam, where art thou?" This question brings out his fall. Still the people were not driven away, the veil was between them and God; and the high priest who sympathized with the infirmities of the people, being one with them, maintained the relationship with God. They were a very imperfect people, it is true, yet by this means they stood themselves in connection with the Holy One. The people were not able to maintain this position; not only was there sin, (the high priest could remedy that), but they sinned against the Lord, they turned away from Him, and that even in their leaders. The priesthood itself, which should have maintained the relationship, wrought for its destruction by dishonoring God and repelling the people from His worship, instead of attracting them to it.

I pass over the preparatory circumstances. God then sets up a king, whose duty it was to preserve order and to secure God's connection with the people, by governing them and by his own faithfulness to God. This is what Christ will accomplish in the ages to come; He is the anointed. When the king is established, the priest walks before Him. It is a new institution, the only one capable of maintaining the relationship of the people with God. Priesthood is no longer here an immediate relationship. It provides indeed, in its own functions, for the wants of the people. The king watches over it, and secures order and blessing.

Now, the church's position is altogether different. Together with the priesthood, which is exercised for her, she is united to the anointed; the veil exists no longer. We sit in the heavenly places in Christ, made accepted in the beloved. The favor of God • rests upon us members of the body of Christ, as upon Christ himself. That which has unveiled the holiness of God, has disclosed all the sin of man, and has taken it away.

Thus in Christ, members of His body, we are perfect before God, and perfectly accepted. The priest neither seeks to give us this position, nor to maintain before God the relationship of those who are not in this position. The work of Christ has placed us in it. How intercede for perfection? Can intercession make the person and the work of Christ more perfect in the sight of God? Certainly not. But we are in Him, of His flesh and of His bones. In what manner then is this priesthood exercised for us? In maintaining weak and too often defiled creatures, in the realization of such a relationship with God, in His sanctuary, where nothing defiled can enter, according to the standing purchased for them of being in the light as God is in the light. We are seated in the heavenly places, made accepted in the beloved; loved as He is loved, the righteousness of God in Him. He is our life; He has given us the glory that was given Him. Now, the Holy Ghost who came down from heaven after that Jesus was glorified, has introduced us, in union with Him, into the unveiled presence of God. Nevertheless we are compassed with infirmity here below. The priesthood of Him who is in the presence of God for us, washes our feet by the Spirit and the word, and renders us, capable of maintaining a communion (of which the darkness knows nothing) with that light. Hereafter, in the presence of Jesus the King, priesthood will no doubt sustain the connection of the people with Himself, whilst He will bear the weight of government and of blessing for the people in every sense.

We find, then, in the beginning of this book, priesthood existing before God in the form we have mentioned. Eli, pious himself and fearing God, maintained no order in the priestly family. Priesthood, instead of binding the people to God, morally separated them. Hophni and Phinehas were at Shiloh. In the family of Elkanah, Hannah, chosen of the Lord for blessing, was in trial; the desires of her natural heart were not satisfied, and the adversary tormented her by means of the prosperous Peninnah. But He, whose strength is perfected in weakness, having made manifest (as ever in such a case) the powerlessness of nature, gives blessing according to His own will, against all hope, in order that that which was of Him should be evidently wrought by His own power. Hannah has a son, according to her petition, a son devoted to the Lord. His family was of the tribe of Levi (1 Chron. 6).

In the beautiful song of chapter 2, Hannah recognizes this great principle of sovereign grace, and of the power of God; that He brings down the proud and those who trust in the flesh, and exalts the weak and impotent. " For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's; and he hath set the world upon

them." This was what Israel, poor and fallen, and a feeble remnant waiting for the Lord, needed to learn; that is, that everything hung upon God and God alone, who did not seek for power in man, but manifests it in His own dealings by destroying all His enemies, and who will at length " give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed." It is the history of God's interposition in favor of poor fallen Israel; and that, by the manifestation of His power in giving strength to His king, His Christ. It is a prophecy of the ways of God, of the great principles of His government with respect to the position of Israel, from the moment of its utterance, until the establishment of the millennial kingdom in the person of the Lord Jesus.

Immediately after this testimony from God, upon which faith might rest, the inward state of the people is revealed, and the iniquity of the priesthood, which should have been the instrument for cleansing this iniquity of the people, but which, on the contrary, brought down judgment upon them. " Ye make the Lord's people to transgress," said Eli; " If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?" Such was the state of things according to Eli himself. " Notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them. And the child, Samuel, grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord and also with men," happy in sharing (however feeble the copy), the testimony borne to Jesus himself.

As to the sons of Eli, they are an example of that which but too often happens. How frequently, alas! do we see that when the judgment of God is on the point of breaking forth, people are unconscious of it; their moral perception being darkened by the evil. The eyes of God are elsewhere, as well as the spiritual discernment which He gives to His own, as was the case here with Samuel, Nevertheless, God warns Eli by means of a man of God. His judgment on the priestly family, and on the priesthood, is pronounced before the Lord reveals himself to Samuel.

This judgment announces the change in the order of Divine government, which was to take place through the setting up of a king, an anointed one (a Christ), and through the consequent position of the priesthood, as we have already remarked (ver. 35). " And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind, and I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before mine anointed forever."

In chap. 3 God reveals Himself to Samuel; and he is known to be a prophet of the Lord from Dan even to Beersheba.

Eli, judged for having loved his sons more than the Lord, comforts our hearts, nevertheless, by his submission. If he failed in the energy of faithfulness, he was yet true in heart to the Lord; and his personal piety is the more conspicuous in the devotedness to God's glory, which he manifests in these circumstances, finding his death in the Ichabod of his people.

Sad and affecting history of the effect of God's righteous judgment upon one whose heart was set upon His glory in His people, but who had not had firmness enough to prevent the people, and even his own sons, from dishonoring the Lord Himself in the priestly service.

Here begin the means which God employs in His sovereignty to maintain His relationship with His people, when the ordinary relations He had established are interrupted.

In chap. 4 the enemies of God and of His people display their strength; the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel.

We shall do well to pause a moment here; for the Philistines are of considerable importance on account of the part they take in this history, as the power of the enemy. They appear to me to represent the power of the enemy acting within the circle of God's people. They were in the territory of the Israelites-within the land, and even on this side of the Jordan. They were not, like the Egyptians or Assyrians, enemies from without. Habitually hostile to Israel, to those who by God's appointment should have possessed the land of promise; so much the more dangerous from being always at hand, and claiming possession of the country; the Philistines set before us in type the power of the enemy acting from within. I do not mean the flesh, but the enemy within the pale of the professing church; the oppressor of God's true people to whom the promises belong.

Israel, corrupt in all their ways, and daring in their ways with God, because they had forgotten His Majesty and His holiness, seek to identify the Lord with them in their unfaithful condition, as He had been in their original state, instead of coming before Him to learn why He had forsaken His people. God will neither acknowledge nor succor them. On the contrary, the ark of the covenant, the sign and the seat of His relationship with the people, is taken. His throne is no longer in the midst of the people; His tabernacle is empty; all ordered relationship is interrupted. Where can they offer sacrifice? Where draw nigh to the Lord their God? Eli, the priest, dies; and his pious daughter-in-law, overwhelmed by these disastrous tidings, pronounces the funeral oration of the unhappy people, in the name she bestows on that which could no longer be her joy. The fruit of her womb bears but this impress of her people's calamity, it is only Ichabod in her sight.

What a blessing to have had through grace the song of Hannah already given by the Spirit, to sustain the faith and hope of the people! All outward connection is broken: but God upholds His own Majesty; and if unfaithful Israel had not been able to withstand the worshippers of idols, the God whom Israel had forsaken vindicates his glory, and proves, even in the heart of their temple, that those idols are but vanity.

The Philistines are obliged to acknowledge the power of the God of Israel, whom Israel could not glorify. His judgments suggested a means to their natural conscience which, while proving that the influence of the almighty power of God is felt even by creatures devoid of intelligence, causing them to act against their strongest instincts, manifests also that it was indeed the Lord God Omnipotent who had inflicted the chastisement under which they were suffering.

God maintains His Majesty in the midst even of Israel. He is no longer among them securing their promised blessings. His Ark, exposed through their unfaithfulness to the unworthy treatment of the Philistines and of the inquisitive, becomes (as the token of God's presence) the occasion of judgments inflicted on the temerity of those who dared to look within it, forgetful of His Divine Majesty who made it His throne, and kept His testimony therein.

But how often the absence of God causes His value to be felt, whose presence had not been appreciated.

Israel, still deprived of the Lord's presence and glory, lament after Him. Let us remark here that God could not remain among the Philistines. Unfaithfulness might subject His people to their enemies, although God was there. But left, so to say, to Himself, His presence judged the false

gods. Association was impossible; the Philistines desire Him not. You cannot glory in a victory over One who when captured is your destroyer. The Philistines get rid of Him. Never can the children of Satan endure the presence of the true God. It becomes self-evident. Moreover, the heart of God is not alienated from His people. He finds His way back to the people of His choice in a sovereign manner, which proves Him to be the God of all creation. But, as we have seen, He asserts His Majesty. More than fifty thousand men pay the penalty of their impious temerity. God returns; but still it needs that He open a way for Himself after His own purposes and dealings, according to which He re-establishes His relationship with the people. Thus Samuel appears again on the scene when, the Ark having abode in Kirjath-jearim twenty years (chap. 7), Israel laments after the Lord. The Ark is not put back in its place, nor is the original order restored.

Samuel begins to act by his testimony, upon the conscience of the people, and to put away that which weakened them by dishonoring God. He tells them that if they will turn to the Lord with all their heart, they must put away the strange gods and serve the Lord alone. A mingled worship was intolerable. Then would the Lord deliver them. The Prophet Samuel is now the meeting point between the people and God. God now acknowledges him alone.

The Ark is not found again in its place until the king chosen of God is established on the throne; it is only placed entirely in God's order when the son of David rules in peace and in strength at Jerusalem. It is consulted once (1 Sam. 14:18,19), but its presence is without effect and without power. It exists but in connection with those in whom faith and integrity were no longer found, so that nothing resulted from it. It rather proved that God was elsewhere, or at least that He wrought elsewhere.

But we will pursue the history. At Samuel's call the strange gods are put away. The people gather around him, that he may pray for them. They offer no sacrifice; they draw water and pour it out upon the ground in token of repentance (see 2 Sam. 14:14); they fast and confess their sin. Samuel judges them then. But if Israel assembles, even for humiliation, the enemy at once bestirs himself in opposition; he will tolerate no act which places the people of God in a position which recognizes Him as God.

The Israelites are alarmed and have recourse to Samuel's intercession. Samuel offers sacrifices, tokens of entire surrender of self to the Lord and of the people's communion with Him; but it is not before the Ark. He entreats the Lord, his prayer is heard and the Philistines are smitten before Israel. And it was not an exceptional case, although they lost nothing of their formidable character or of their hatred for Israel. Samuel brings down God's blessing upon the people, and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

The cities of Israel were restored. There was peace between Israel and the Amorites. Samuel judged Israel at Ramah and built an altar there. All this is an exceptional and extraordinary position for Israel, in which they depended entirely on Samuel, who, while living, himself as a patriarch, as though there were no Tabernacle, becomes through his own relationship with God, by faith, the support and upholder of the people, who in fact had no other.

But faith is not transmitted by succession. Samuel could not make prophets of his sons. They were no better as judges than Eli's sons had been as priests, and the people had no faith themselves to lean immediately upon God. They ask to be made like unto the nations, for promise was not in

question.

"Make us now a king," said they to Samuel. Where was the Lord? For Israel no where. But it was evil in the eyes of Samuel, and he prayed unto the Lord. While acknowledging that the people had as usual rejected Him, God commands Samuel to hearken unto their voice. Samuel warns them according to God's testimony, and sets before them all the inexpediences and consequences of such a step; but the people will not hearken unto him. God brings to the Prophet, through providential circumstances, the man whom He had chosen to satisfy the carnal wishes of the people. In all this He judges the people and their king. (" He gave them a king in His anger, and took him away in his wrath.") But He remembers His people. He does not forsake them. He acts by Saul on their behalf, while showing them their unfaithfulness, and afterward in cutting off the disobedient king. Beauty and height of stature distinguished the son of Kish. But in the signs that Samuel gave him when he had anointed him, there was a meaning which should have carried his thoughts beyond himself. How often there is a meaning, a language perfectly intelligible to one who has ears to hear, but which escapes us, because our gross and hardened heart has no spiritual intelligence or discernment! And yet all our future hangs upon it. God has shown our incapacity for the blessing it involved. Nevertheless the means were not wanting.

Although the significance of this circumstance was less evident than that of the other signs, yet Rachel's sepulcher should have reminded Saul, the son and heir according to the flesh of the one who was born there, that the son of the mother's sorrow was the son of the father's right hand (Gen. 35:18).

Now, God had not abandoned Israel, faith was still there, men were going up to God. There were some in Israel who remembered the God of Bethel, who had revealed Himself to Jacob when he fled, and who in His faithfulness had brought him back in peace; and God gave Saul favor in their eyes. The servants of the God of Bethel salute him and strengthen him on his way. But the hill of God was possessed by the garrison of the Philistines; another circumstance which, by its significance, should have gone to the heart of a faithful Israelite who desired the glory of God and the good of His people; but the sign which accompanied it made it much more forcible, for the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul in this place, and he was turned into another man, called, therefore, to " do as occasion served him, for God was with him" (10:7).

It often happens, that faith set forth clearly what should be done, while the heart, waxen fat and unfaithful, does not see it at all.

And what do these signs mean? There are those in Israel who remember the God of Bethel, and who seek Him; upright and prepared hearts who know Him as the resource of faith. But the hill of God, the public seat of His strength, is in the enemy's hands. Still, if this be so, the Spirit of God is upon the man who takes cognizance of it, and it is at this very hill that the Spirit comes upon him. The name of God is also significative here. It is God abstractly-God the Creator-God Himself is in question. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon Saul, because He resumes there the course of His relations with Israel.

But Samuel is still the only one whom God recognizes as the link between Himself and the people. It is when Saul has had to do with Samuel that he is another man. He must wait for Samuel, that he may know what to do, and that blessing may rest upon him. He must thus acknowledge that

blessing is connected with the prophet, and not act without him; he must wait for him with perfect patience (seven days), a patience which, submitting to God's testimony, will not seek for blessing apart from His ways. Here also we see in the Philistines, the enemies who put faith to the proof. We have often enemies over whom we gain an easy victory, and on whose account we are considered spiritual, yet they are not such as, on God's part, and it may also be said on their own part, put faith to the proof. With these patience must have her perfect work. And the Philistines held this place with respect to Saul. It was all well that the people should be delivered from their other enemies; but they were not the ones which were a snare to them, and which manifested the power of the enemy in the very midst of Israel and of the promises.

Do spiritual powers rule over us in the Church, in the place where the promises of God should be fulfilled? (see chap. 9:16). It was from the Philistines that Saul should have delivered the people of God. The hill of God was in the Philistines' hands (see also chap. 14:52). If Saul had waited for Samuel he would have declared unto him all that he should do. Now, we shall see that, two years later, Saul is put to the proof as to this in the presence of the Philistines, and whatever may have been the delay, the thing had not been altered; all the intermediate success should have increased his faith and strengthened him in obedience.

Samuel calls the people together at Mizpeh. There he sets before them their foolishness in rejecting the God of their salvation. But he proceeds to the choice of a king, according to the command of God. God meets the wishes of the people. If the flesh could have glorified God, nothing was wanting to induce them to trust in Him. God adapts Himself to them in outward things; and further, as we know, had the people followed the Lord, the Lord would not have forsaken them (chap. 12:20-25). And now that God has set up a king, those who will not own him are "men of Belial." The people, however, scarcely see God in it at all; they only recognize Him in those things which the flesh can perceive, such as the beauty of the king and the success of his arms, that is to say, the things in which God suits Himself to nature, and in which He grants blessing, in order that He may be known and trusted in this they rejoice, but they go no farther. Faith is not of nature.

As yet all goes well with Saul; he does not take vengeance on those who oppose him. Before his faith is tried, his natural character would gain him favor with men. And now, in those things which had given rise to the carnal movement that led the people to desire a king, all apparently prospers to their wish. The Ammonites are so thoroughly defeated, that two of them are not left together. Here, also, Saul acts with prudence and generosity. He does not allow the people's desire for vengeance to be carried out. He owns the Lord in the blessing granted to the people. In truth, God was with them, granting to the flesh all the means and helps necessary for walking with Him, had the thing been possible. Samuel is there, on God's part, and supports by his authority the king whom God has set up. At Samuel's invitation, the people assemble at Gilgal (a place memorable for the blessing of the people on entering the land), to renew the kingdom there, and again to recognize a throne whose authority had just been confirmed by successful efforts for the deliverance of God's people. Peace-offerings and great rejoicing make the ceremony more imposing.

Samuel (chap. 12) receives the people's testimony to his fidelity. He sets before them the ways of God towards them, their ingratitude and foolishness in having asked for a king and rejected God. Nevertheless, while giving a sign from God, which added the weight of God's own testimony to his

words, he declares to the people, that if henceforth they would obey the Lord, both the king and the people should continue to follow the Lord; but if not, the Lord would be against them. For, in spite of their sin, the Lord would not forsake them, and he himself (Samuel) would assuredly not cease to pray for them, and would teach them the good and the right way: that is to say, he places the people, as to their public conduct, in the position they had chosen, and sets them under their own responsibility before the Lord; but, at the same time, full of love to them as the people of God, their rejection of himself does not for a moment suggest the thought to him of giving up his intercession or his testimony for their welfare. Beautiful picture of a heart near the Lord, which, in forgetfulness of self, can love His people as its own. To fail in this would have been to sin against the Lord (compare 2 Cor. 12:15).

Here, then, is Saul established in his place, and his authority confirmed by the blessing of God. Samuel retires, confining himself to his prophetic office, and Saul is now called to prove himself faithful and obedient in his present position, surrounded by all the advantages which the blessing of God and the solemn act of His prophet could confer upon him.

Let us now recapitulate the history we have been examining.

Israel, unfaithful, maintain no longer their relationship with God under priesthood. The Ark is taken, the priest dies, and Ichabod is written on the condition of the people. God raises up a prophet who becomes the means of communication between Himself and the people; but, threatened by the Amalekites, the people at length demand a king. God grants their request, testifying at the same time His displeasure, since He Himself was their King. The Spirit of prophecy continues, nevertheless, to be the channel of Divine communication to the people. Signs, which indicate the state of the people, are given to Saul, the elected and anointed king: first of all, some faithful ones who own the God of Bethel, that is to say, the faithful God of Jacob, who had promised not to leave him till He had performed all that He had promised him; and, next, the hill of God-the seat of authority among the people-in possession of the Philistines, the power of the enemy in the land of promise.

The Spirit of prophecy comes upon Saul, showing him where God was amid these circumstances; and Samuel tells him to wait for him at Gilgal. Meantime, as we have seen, he is strengthened by the blessing of God upon his undertakings.

Saul reigns two years; he then selects three thousand men; two thousand are with him, and one with Jonathan. Jonathan, a man of faith, acts with energy against the enemies of God's people, and smites the Philistines; but the energy of faith, acting (as it always does) in the very stronghold of the enemy, naturally provokes their hostility. The Philistines hear of it; Saul is roused to action, and calls together, not Israel, but the Hebrews. Let us remark here, that there is faith in Jonathan. The flesh placed in the position of leader to God's people, follows indeed the impulse given by faith, but does not possess it; and the word Hebrews, the name by which a Philistine would have called the people, indicates that Saul relied on the gathering of the nation as a constituted body, and understood no better than a Philistine would have done, the relation between a chosen people and God. And this is the position set before us in the history of Saul. It is not premeditated opposition to God, but the flesh set in a place of testimony, and used in accomplishing God's work. We see in it a person linked with the interests of God's true people, doing the work of God according to the people's idea of their need-a true idea as to their actual need; but he is one who

seeks his resources in the energy of man, an energy to which God does not refuse His aid when there is obedience to His will, for He loves His people; but which in principle, in moral and inward motive, can never of itself go beyond the flesh from which it springs. In the midst of all this, faith can act, and act sincerely, and this is Jonathan's case. God will bless this faith, and He always does so, because it owns Him; and in this instance (and it is His gift,) because it sincerely seeks the good of God's people.

All this is, in principle, a kind of picture of the professing Church, which in this point of view anticipates the true reign of Christ, and in this position fails even in her faithfulness to God. True faith, in the midst of such a system, never rises so high as the glory of the Coming One, but it loves Him and cleaves to Him. If the church is merely professing, she persecutes Christ; but that in her which acts by faith, loves and owns Him, even when He is hunted like a partridge in the mountains.

Jonathan having thus in faith attacked the Philistines, Saul, who ostensibly leads the people before God, is put to the proof: Will he show himself competent? Will he remember the true principle on which the blessing of the people rests? Will he act as a royal priest, or will he acknowledge the prophet to be the true link of faith between the people and God—a link the importance and necessity of which he ought to have recognized, since he owed to it his present place and power, and it had proved to him its own mission and prophetic authority by establishing his? When the critical moment arrives, Saul fails.

It is worth while to retrace here the tokens of the unbelief of the flesh.

The Philistines are smitten. The nation, active and energetic, hear of it; nothing could be more natural. Saul has but the same resource; no call upon God, no cry to the Lord, the God of Israel; Samuel does not occur to his faith, although he remembers what Samuel had told him. If the Philistines have heard, the Hebrews must hear also. Israel fears; God gives no answer to unbelief when the trial of faith is His object. Saul calls the people after him to Gilgal, but they were soon scattered from him at the report of the Philistines having gathered together. Saul is at Gilgal, and Samuel comes again into his mind. It was no longer as when the kingdom had been renewed. The circumstances naturally suggested Samuel as a resource. Saul tarries seven days for him, according to his word. He waits for him long enough to satisfy the exigence of conscience; then, as the people had brought the ark into the camp, he offers the burnt-offering. But, if he had had confidence in God, he would have understood that, whatever might be the result, he should wait for Him, that it was useless to do anything without Him, and that he ran no risk in waiting for Him. A faithful God could not fail him. He had thought of Samuel, so that he was without excuse; he remembered that the guidance and blessing of God were found with the prophet. But he looks at circumstances; the people are scattered, and Saul seeks to bring God in by an act of devotion without faith. It was the decisive moment; God would have confirmed his kingdom over Israel, would have established his dynasty. But now He had made choice of another. Observe here that it is not through being defeated by the Philistines that Saul loses the throne. The fault was between himself and God. The Philistines do not attack him. It is enough for Satan if he succeeds in frightening us away from the pure and simple path of faith. Samuel departs, after having made known to Saul the mind of God. The Philistines pillage the land, which is defenseless. The people moreover had neither sword nor spear.

What a picture of the state of God's people! How often we find that those who profess to be the children of God, to be of the truth, and heirs of the promises, are unarmed before the enemies who despoil them!

But faith in God is always blest; and if God has shown the effects of unbelief, He also shows its folly, since wherever faith is found, there all His strength is displayed; and then it is the enemy who is defenseless. Jonathan makes up his mind to attack the Philistines in the energy which he derives from faith in God; and if unbelief is manifest in Saul, the beauty of faith is exhibited in his son.

The difficulties are not lessened: the Philistines are in garrison, and their camp situated in a place of unusually difficult access, a narrow pathway up perpendicular rocks, being the only means of approach. The Philistines were there in great number, and well armed. But it is hard for faith to endure the oppression of God's people by the enemy, and the dishonor thus done to God Himself: Jonathan endures it not. Where does he seek for strength? His thoughts are simple. The Philistines are uncircumcised; they have not the help of the God of Israel. "There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few;" and this is the thought of Jonathan's faith, that fair flower which God caused to blossom in the wilderness of Israel at this sorrowful moment. He does not think about himself. The Lord, says he, has delivered them up to Israel. He trusts in God, and in His unfailing faithfulness towards His people; his heart rests in this, and he does not imagine for an instant that God is not with His people, whatever their condition may be; this characterizes faith. It not only acknowledges that God is great, but it recognizes the indissoluble bond (indissoluble because it is of God) between God and His people. The consequence is, that faith forgets circumstances, or rather nullifies them. God is with His people. He is not with their enemies. All the rest is but an opportunity of proving the real dependance of faith. Thus, there is no boasting in Jonathan; his expectation is from God. He goes out and meets the Philistines. He is there a witness for God. If they are bold enough to come down, he will wait for them, and not create difficulties for himself, but he will not turn away from those which meet him in his path. The indolent, and at the same time foolish and imprudent confidence of the enemy, is but a sign to Jonathan that the Lord has delivered them up. Had they come down, they would have lost their advantage; in bidding him come up, they set aside the insurmountable difficulty of access to the camp. Happy in having a faithful companion in his work of faith, Jonathan seeks no other assistance. He does not talk of the Hebrews; but he says, "the Lord has delivered them up into the hand of Israel." He climbs the rock with his armor-bearer. And in truth the Lord was with him; the Philistines fall before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer slays after him. But while honoring the arm which faith had strengthened, God manifests Himself. The dread of God took hold of the Philistines, and everything trembles before the man whom faith (God's precious gift) had led into action.

Faith acts of itself. Saul is obliged to number the people to find out who is absent. Alas! we are entering into the sad history of unbelief. Saul endeavors to obtain some directions from the Ark, whilst, elsewhere, God was triumphing over the enemy without Israel. The tumult of their defeat continues to increase; and unbelief, which never knows what to do, tells the priest to withdraw his hand. The king and the priest were not the link between God and the people. It was neither the people's faith in God without a king, nor the king whom God Himself had given.

Here again, instead of Israel (whom Jonathan alone recognized, we find those whom even the Spirit of God calls Hebrews, who, although they were "of the fountain of Jacob," are among the Philistines, content to be at ease among the enemies of God.

Now that the victory is gained, all are glad to share the triumph and pursue the Philistines.

And poor Saul, what does he do? Never can unbelief-however good its intentions in joining the work of faith-do anything except spoil it. Saul speaks of avenging himself on his enemies. The Lord is not in his thoughts; he thinks of himself, and hinders the pursuit by his carnal and selfish zeal. May God preserve us from the guidance and help of unbelief in the work of faith. God Himself can succor us through every means; but when man mixes himself up with the work, he does but spoil it, even when seeking to bring in strength.

Saul, at the moment of such blessing, is zealous to maintain the idea of honoring the Lord's ordinances as he sought to do previously, in asking His counsel at the Ark, making much of His name, as though the victory had been due to him, and it was only some hidden sin which prevented his obtaining an answer from God. He had nearly put Jonathan to death, through whom God had wrought. He would discover the sin by bringing in God, who acts indeed, but only to make manifest the folly of the poor king.

Observe that faith in full energy can thankfully avail itself of the refreshment which God sets before it in its toilsome course, whilst the carnal zeal of that which is but an imitation of faith, and which never acts with God, makes a duty of refusing it. All that Saul can do, when he takes the lead, is to prevent their reaping the entire fruit of the victory. His intervention could only spoil the work of others-he has no faith to perform one himself.

Nevertheless, God has pity on Israel, and keeps their enemies in check by means of Saul; for, although unbelieving, he had not yet turned his hatred against God's elect. He was not yet forsaken of the Lord.

But this painful and solemn moment is at hand. Meanwhile, he strengthens himself. There was constant war with the Philistines; but Saul, warlike as he was, could not overcome them, as David or even Samuel did. He sought carnal means, amongst his fellows, to attain his object.

Observe here with what frightful rapidity, and how even at once, the enemy gains the upper hand when we are not walking in the ways of God (comp. 7:12, 14, and 13:16, 23).

Observe also, that all the forms of piety and of Jewish religion are with Saul, " the Lord's priest in Shiloh (14:3) wearing an ephod," and the Ark (ver. 18). He consults with the priest. He prevents their eating flesh with the blood. He builds an altar. The priest consults God, and God giving no answer, Saul is ready to slay Jonathan as guilty, because he had eaten in spite of the oath. But observe, that it is the first altar Saul had built; his priest is of the family which God had condemned. He builds his altar when rejected, and after the outward blessing which God had given, and which he attributes to himself, although he had only spoiled it. On the other hand, Jonathan's faith acts without taking counsel of flesh and blood, as the people said (14:45), he wrought with God. The people did not know that he was absent..Happy Jonathan! faith had led him so far in advance that he did not even hear the senseless curse which his father invoked on whoever tasted food. The folly of another's unbelief did not reach him. He was at liberty, as he went along, to avail himself of

the kindness of his God, with joy and thanksgiving, and he pursued his course refreshed and encouraged-happy walk of simplicity which acts with God!

The consideration of these two chapters is very instructive, as setting before us the contrast between the walk of faith and that of the flesh, in the position which the latter takes, by virtue of its profession, in the work of God. It was the first time that Saul had faced the enemy on whose account God had raised him up.

Nevertheless, Saul is put to a final proof. The Lord, by the mouth of Samuel, sends him to smite Amalek and utterly destroy them and all that belonged to them. They were the cruel and determined enemies of God's people. (Deut. 30:17,19). They had been chief among the nations, their name and their pride were everywhere known (Num. 24:7,20), but it was a nation doomed of God.

God now entrusts Saul with the fulfillment of Deut. 25.19. In this case all Israel accompanied him without fear. These were not the enemies from within who were daily wearing away their strength and courage. The victory is complete. The only question now is that of faithfulness to God, and of preferring His glory to self interest. But Saul fears the people. The Spirit of God says "Saul and the people;" Saul says, "the people, and that it was for God they spared." But our excuses, even when true, only condemn us. Saul not having faith, not looking to God, fears the people more than God. What a slave is the unbeliever! If not the slave of the enemy, he is that of the people whom he appears to govern. Saul, unfaithful to God in the midst of the people and surrounded by blessings from the Lord, is at length deprived of the kingdom.

No humiliation, no brokenness of heart: he confesses his sin, hoping to avoid its punishment; but, unable to escape it, he entreats Samuel to honor him in spite of it. Samuel does so and then forsakes him. Everything changes now, and David appears on the scene.

It is well to remark, that the connected history of Saul's reign closes with the end of chap. 14.

Chapter 15 is given as a separate history, on account of the importance of its contents-the definite rejection of Saul, a rejection which introduces David.

Chapter 16 Samuel is sent of the Lord to anoint this His chosen one. All glorying in the flesh and its birthright are here set aside; and the youngest, despised and forgotten of all, who kept the sheep, is chosen of God, "for the Lord seeth not as man seeth." Samuel, taught of God, hesitates not in his decision, and can accept none of the seven who are at home. "Are here all thy children?" At length he anoints David, brought in from the field. But God does not set David at once in the height of power, as He did in the case of Saul. He must make his way, by grace and faith, through all kinds of difficulties; and, although filled with the Holy Spirit, he must act in the presence of a power devoid of the Spirit, and which God has not yet set aside. He must be subject and be humbled, he must feel his entire dependence on God, that God is sufficient in all circumstances, and his faith must be developed by trial in which God is felt to be all. Beautiful type of One who, without sin, journeyed through far more painful circumstances, and not only a type, but at the same time a vessel prepared by God for the Holy Spirit, who could fill him with sentiments which, while describing so touchingly the sufferings of Christ Himself and His sympathy with His people, exhibit their resource in God to those who were, in weakness, to tread the same path as Himself. For one cannot doubt that the trials of David gave rise to the greater part of these

beautiful psalms, which-depicting the circumstances, the trials, and the complaints of the remnant of Israel in the last days, as well as of Christ Himself (who, in Spirit, has identified Himself with them, and has undertaken their cause)-have thus furnished so many other burdened souls with the expression and the relief of their sorrows; and although their interpretation of these psalms may have been incorrect, yet their hearts were not mistaken.

We will return to our history.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon David and forsook Saul, who at the same time is troubled by an evil spirit. The providence of God brings in David by means of one of Saul's servants who knew him, and presents him to Saul. Saul loves him, and keeps him in his presence; he becomes his armor-bearer, and he plays on a harp when the evil spirit troubles Saul. David, in God's sight, is the anointed king, but he must suffer before he reigns, however great his energy may be.

The Philistines, that type of the enemy's power, present themselves again with their champion at their head, against whom no one dares to fight. David had returned home, and was living in the simplicity of his usual life.

Although that which precedes gives the general idea of the position in which he had been placed, it appears that David had not remained long with the king (17:15). His father sends him to see his brothers, who Care in Saul's army. There he sees the Philistine who defied the armies of Israel. Jonathan does not appear here; there is but one who can destroy this champion, who centers in his own person all the energy of evil. David's faith sees no difficulty in it, because he sees God, and in the enemy an enemy of God, without strength. He was but one of the "uncircumcised"; little matters the rest. In the performance of his ordinary duties, David had already met with, difficulties too great for a full-grown man; yet, although a mere youth, he had overcome them by a very simple reason, the Lord delivered." He had not boasted of this; it was the fulfillment of his duty: but he had learned in it the strength and faithfulness of the Lord. And this experience is now repeated. Man's armor is rejected; faith knows it not. God will perform the work by the most simple means. David declares wherein his strength consists. " I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts." He thus identifies himself with the people of God. "All the earth shall know that there is a God in Israel." The stone which sinks into the forehead of Goliath, deprives him of strength and of life. David cuts off the head of Goliath with his own sword, like Him who by death destroyed him that had the power of death.

The whole army of Israel profits by David's triumph. Saul, who had forgotten him, will not suffer him to go away. Alas! the flesh, and even the flesh in rebellion, can love the Lord's elect, on account of his kindness and the relief he ministers; but it knows him not. When he is doing the Lord's work, he is as much a stranger to Saul as if they had never met. But when Christ appears, the remnant (which Jonathan represented) loves Him as his own soul, and this beloved one becomes the object of his whole affection. This does not go beyond the personal reign of Christ. Jonathan represents the remnant which has loved him in humiliation. As to this world, it is so always; there is a remnant who love Christ, and desire His kingdom, although it will put an end to the economy in which they stand. Of the church, properly so called, there is nothing here. It is a remnant who desire the coming of Christ. Saul, who sought his own glory, and endeavored to uphold his house by carnal means, seeks His death, who is to come and establish the kingdom.

The faith of David had rather a different character from that of Jonathan, although both conquered the Philistines. Jonathan is not deterred by difficulties; he sees the God of Israel, and does the work of God which Saul neglects. It is the true and energetic faith of God's people. But David, the king-secretly so indeed, but chosen and anointed-meets face to face the great enemy of his people in all his might, the mere sight of whom dismayed the people, who fled before him. That which distinguishes the faith of Jonathan most touchingly, is his attachment to one who (to judge after the manner of men, as Saul did) eclipses his glory. But Jonathan is absorbed by his affection for the one whom God has chosen. He sees in him the true head of Israel, worthy to be so, who, however despised at the present moment, must prosper and reign as of God. It was also David's qualities which gained his affection. It was a personal attachment. He could appreciate David, and he forgot his own interests in thinking of him. The voice and the words of David sink deep into his heart, and bind him to the king whom God has chosen, while unknown, and in spite of everything. Saul, the professed head of the people, jealous of any one who might displace either himself or his descendants, is at enmity with David and forsaken of God; he is the instrument of the enemy against the Lord's anointed. At length he falls by the more direct and open power of the enemy of God's people. Sorrowful end of that which had been a vessel of blessing and an instrument in the work of God, although but in a carnal way.

God causes David's true glory to outshine the official importance of Saul. The victories of the former are sung in such a manner as to excite the king's jealousy.

We will now briefly trace the features of David's faith in these new circumstances. Never does he lift his hand against Saul; he serves him obediently, he does his duty, and patiently bears the jealousy and malice which pursue him.

Poor Saul! troubled by the evil spirit, David plays on the harp to soothe him, and Saul seeks to slay him. David escapes. Saul fears him; for the God by whom he is himself forsaken, is with David. He employs him at a distance from himself; but where he is more than ever in the view of the people. God always carries out His purposes in spite of all the carnal precautions of man. David is prudent. He has the wisdom of God who is with him in all his ways. Energetic and unpretending; always successful; he is beloved by all Israel and Judah, before whom he goes in and out with all the strength and superiority of faith.

Saul seeks to turn all this to his own account; apparently he honors David, but he only does so in order to expose him to the enemy and get rid of him. David abides in his lowliness, and Merab is given to another. Michal affords Saul a more specious opportunity. As he was only required to destroy the power of the enemies of God's people, David accepts Saul's proposal and succeeds. Saul perceives more and more that the Lord is with David, and becomes still more afraid of him; sad development of a sad state of soul. Yet Saul was not deficient in fine points of natural character, which manifested themselves at times in better feelings. But God was not in them (19). Jonathan's intercession has power over his father, and for a time all is well. But Saul, being forsaken of God, cannot bear that He should be with David. War breaks out; and David, God's own instrument in what He does for His people, defeats the Philistines, and drives them away.

It will be observed here, that it is the Philistines who are in question. It is with them that the battle of God and of faith is fought, that David always succeeded, and that Saul failed.

Saul is again troubled, and David, who seeks to refresh him, narrowly avoids being slain. He makes his escape and goes away to Samuel.

Remark here how the grief, which egotism and self-love produce, makes room for the action of the evil spirit on the soul. The power re-appears here, which, hidden as it was, still governed the fate of Israel. David recognizes it, and when he can no longer remain with Saul, he does not seek in anywise to magnify himself by rising up against the outward form which God had inwardly judged, but not destroyed. Instead of opposing it, he contents himself with acknowledging that manifestation of the power of God which had placed Saul in his royal position, and from which he had himself received the testimony and the communication of the strength and of the will of God; he takes refuge with Samuel. He is pursued thither by Saul, and by his messengers, who, with their master, are subjected to a power which does not influence their hearts or guide their conduct; a power, of which Saul had forfeited the blessing. What a picture of a useless ruined vessel, sometimes prophesying in the energy of Satan, sometimes in that of God, from whom his heart is far away, by whom he is forsaken; his outward conduct is not disorderly; he does no harm except when the Lord's anointed excites his jealousy and his hatred. David is now driven away from the presence of Saul, and becomes a wanderer in the earth. It is no longer entire submission to Saul, whilst himself the vessel of the energy of God. Driven away by Saul, David had returned to the source of God's testimony; and Saul had again dared to seek his life; even when he was with Samuel. He has completely thrown off the last restraint, and forgotten all that should have reminded him of God and stayed his hand. Seeking his own glory, and taking advantage of his acquired position, the presence of Samuel has no longer any hold upon his conscience. It is even no longer "honor me before the elders of my people;" he does not value the prophet at all; he comes under, in spite of himself, an influence which he despises. David is thus shielded from his malice. He could not now return to Saul. It would have been to unite himself with the despoliation of God's testimony. For, what can be done when a man prophesies, and yet runs counter to the power which he cannot deny? David takes flight. But Saul's state is again tested by this state of things. Jonathan can scarcely credit his father's. But, before putting it to the proof, his devotion to David is very plainly manifested. His faith and his heart acknowledge that which the blinded Saul cannot receive (20:13-17).

Even when David is driven away, Jonathan's faith is not shaken; his heart is not separated from the one whom his soul loved, when, in the glory of his youth and of his victory over Goliath, David replied to Saul with a modesty that heightened its luster. He loves him when dishonored and a fugitive. He acknowledges him as God's elect, and links the hopes of his house with the glory of his beloved.

Jonathan does not follow David, and he falls with Saul. Whatever opinion we may entertain with respect to the typical meaning of this part of his history, we see in him that whatever is allied to the carnal system which is outwardly connected with the interests of the people and name of God, falls as regards this world with the system that perishes entirely.

David, informed by Jonathan of Saul's state of mind, departs; and Jonathan returns into the city.

The elect king is now rejected. He repairs to the priest, who gives him the hallowed bread, according to the sovereign grace of God, who rises above the ordinances that are connected with blessing, when that blessing is rejected-when He Himself is rejected in His chosen one, and in the

power of His testimony. When this is the case, He sets faith above ordinances, in His sovereign grace. Since God Himself and His testimony are rejected, the show-bread was considered common. God, in fact, was ordering all anew. It was precisely the case of the Lord Jesus. He submitted indeed to all the ordinances and authorities; but the rejection of God's testimony in Him, caused it to be perceived by degrees that He was One greater than the ordinances-One who set them aside, and replaced them by the manifestation of the effectual and eternal grace of God. It was much more important to give David food, than to keep that which had grown old. God cared more for him than for the bread of the tabernacle. David, then, takes the sword of Goliath. It was by the power of death that the Lord destroyed all his strength who had the power of death. Death is the best weapon in the arsenal of God, when it is wielded by the power of life.

David, his mind full of Saul's enmity, seeks refuge among the Philistines. What business had he there? This time God drives him thence without chastisement, but abundantly proving to him, at the same time, that he was out of place there. We escape from the wisdom which leads us into the midst of God's enemies, by the shame of that folly which causes us to be driven out again. David now takes his place fully with the excellent of the earth (Heb. 11:38). There the prophet joins him; he is guided in a direct manner by the plain testimony of God, and soon after he is joined by the priest also; so that, rejected as he is, all that belonged to the testimony and the dealings of God, gathers around him. He was the king, the prophet was there, the priest was there also; the outward forms were elsewhere. Saul, on the contrary, as he had shown his contempt for Samuel, by pursuing David even into his presence, without pity as without fear of God, and without remorse, rids himself of the priests by the hand of a stranger, an Edomite, a merciless enemy of the people, when the consciences of the latter would have withheld his hand. It was on this occasion that the priest is brought by God to David, in like manner as we find the prophet there after Saul had manifested his contempt of him. What a sad history of the gradual but progressive fall of one who, having the form of good, has not faith in God, and whom God has forsaken! How sure are the ways of God, whatever appearances may be!

David, despised as he may be, is the king and savior of the people; he-puts the Philistines to flight with great slaughter. He finds nothing but treachery in Israel; Saul makes use of this in the hope of seizing David. But as the wisdom of the prophet is with David, so has he also God's answer by the ephod of the priest which is with him. Let us observe, in passing, that Saul has greatly aggrandized himself to outward view. He is no longer with his six hundred men who followed him trembling; he can speak of his captains of thousands and captains of hundreds; he can bestow fields and vineyards; he has his Doeg, the head over his herdsmen. Before God, inwardly, he makes frightful progress in evil; he is not only forsaken of God, but he breaks through all the restraints of conscience, and of the testimony and ordinances of God. For the prophet Samuel and the priests ought to have been a restraint to one who professed to be identified with the interests of God's people.

Outward progress in prosperity, joined to actual progress in evil inwardly, is a very solemn thing. It is at once a snare to the flesh and a trial to faith. David, on the contrary, is apparently-and in fact as to circumstances-driven out from the people. He has neither home nor refuge. But the testimony of God in the person of the prophet Gad, and communion with God by the priest's ephod, are his portion in exile. Cast out by man, he is where the resources of God are realized according to the need of His people. Remark, also, that it is David himself who acts as priest to

obtain the expression of God's mind. It is he who takes the ephod to seek counsel of God; it is he who eats the show-bread - remarkable type of Christ, teaching us that when all is ruined, blessing is made over to those who by faith walk in obedience, understanding the duty of the believer that discerns the moral place of faith, what it owes to God, and how it may rely on Him. Remark, also, that that which here distinguishes David, is not shining deeds, the fruit of the power of faith, but the instinct and intelligence of that which is suitable to his position, a moral discernment of that which is pleasing to God, and of the line of conduct which His servant should pursue as the vessel of His spiritual energy, while the power which belongs to him is in the hands of another. It is the walk of one who has apprehended that which is suitable to this difficult position, in all the circumstances it brings him into; who respects that which God respects, and does the work of God without fear when God calls him; a remarkable type of Jesus in all this.

Besides this spiritual perception, these moral suitabilities, the greater part of this history sets before us the way in which God makes everything tend towards the accomplishment of His purposes (in spite of all the motives and intentions of men), in order to place David, through patience and the energy of faith, in the position He had prepared for him. Nevertheless, David needs the intervention and the safeguard of God. Having quitted Keilah (23), in consequence of God's warning, he goes into the wilderness. There he is surrounded by Saul's men. But at the moment when Saul would have taken him, the Philistines invade the land, and Saul is obliged to return.

"And David went up and dwelt in the strongholds of En-gedi." Saul pursues him thither, after following the Philistines, more occupied with his jealousy of the king whom God had chosen, than with the enemies of his people. But this expedition is not to his honor. An opportunity to kill his persecutor presents itself to David; but the fear of God rules him, and even Saul's heart is touched for the moment by a preservation which proved that David respected him in a way he had not imagined. He sees clearly what the result will be, and engages David to protect his posterity; but David does not return to Saul. The relation was broken.

At length Samuel dies. This forms an epoch, because he who was the true link between the people and God, was gone. Israel acknowledged him when dead, although they had despised him while living. And now David's position changes, and Abigail is brought in. Jonathan never separated from the system in which he stood, never united himself to David, although loving him, and never shared his sufferings. But Abigail identifies herself with him; existing relationships do not prevent her acknowledging David, and she is united to him after her husband's death. Jonathan prefigures the remnant in the character of the remnant of Israel who acknowledge the future king and adhere to him, but go no farther-it is the kingdom. Jonathan does not suffer with David, and does not reign with him. He remains with Saul, and, as to that position, his career ends with Saul. Abigail, and even the malcontents who joined David, share his sufferings. Abigail separates herself completely from the spirit of her husband; and it is on account of her faith and wisdom that David spares Nabal's life. God judges the latter, and then Abigail becomes the wife of David. Historically, David had nearly failed in his high standing. In fact, it is on account of the faithful remnant, the Abigail of the foolish nation, that Israel itself has been spared; and the Lord's connection with the Church is in the character of pure grace, not in that of the avenger (as hereafter with Israel). At this time it is, David, who, during his rejection, surrounds himself with those who will be the companions and the retinue of his glory in the kingdom; but he also takes a

wife.

Abigail speaks of Saul as a man. The Lord, she says, will make a sure house to David; this is the intelligence of faith. It is the truth of God's counsels, (2 Sam. 7:11), and in its fullness, as to this. She was forming for herself, without knowing it, the position of the Church, in the future she was preparing for herself.

In Jonathan we see the remnant under the Jewish aspect. But Abigail enters into the spirit of God's purposes respecting David, although he was now in distress; and David, who-while thoroughly submissive, can act according to the faith that owns him -hears her voice and accepts her person.

Let us mark the features of Abigail's faith. All rests upon her appreciation of David (it is this which forms a Christian's judgment-in every respect he appreciates Christ); his title as owned of God; his personal perfection, and that which belonged to him according to the counsels of God. She thinks of him according to all the good which God has spoken of him; she sees him fighting God's battles, where others only see a rebel against Saul; and all this from her heart. She judges Nabal, and looks upon him as already judged of God on account of this; for with her everything is judged according to its connection with David (verse 26); a judgment which God accomplishes ten days later, although Nabal was at peace in his own house, and David an exile and outcast. Nevertheless the relation of Abigail to Nabal is recognized until God executes judgment. She judges Saul. He is but a man, because, to her faith, David is king. All her desire is that David may remember her. Jonathan says, when he goes out to David, " I shall be next unto thee;" and David abides in the wood, while Jonathan returns to his house. In the order of things which God had judged, (a judgment that faith recognized), he remains with his family and shares its ruin. This is important to a Christian: for instance, he respects the official Christianity, which, in the world, is the religion of God while God bears with it and does not stand up against it. As to faith and personal walk, this Christianity is nothing at all; just as Saul was only a man to Abigail's faith.)

Alas! Saul is unchanged; instigated by the Ziphites, he seeks David anew; but it is only to fall again, and more publicly, into David's hands. Observe that David now appeals more directly to the Lord to judge between him and Saul. The separation is more complete. Saul was incorrigible. This appeal to God was becoming. It is not becoming, it is not according to the way of the Spirit to accustom ourselves to evil. "Righteous Father," said the Lord at length, "the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee; and these have known that Thou hast sent me." That which characterized David in everything is, that he put himself entirely into the Lord's hands; it is the Spirit of Christ in the Psalms. But David, after all, is only a man; and immediately after this testimony that God was with him-a testimony that even Saul acknowledged-his faith fails, and he -passes over into the midst of the enemies of God's people. God, no doubt, makes use of this means to remove David from peril. But, at the same time, he is tried and chastened, and is exposed to the dreadful necessity of appearing ready to fight against Israel. There is but One whose perfection and wisdom were his safeguard in every trial. We may remark that it was immediately after an evident interposition of God (26:12) that David's faith fails. It is the same with Elijah (1 Kings 19). One would say that, in our hearts, faith exhausts itself by an unusual effort. Faith may carry us through the crisis; but the heart, which was the vessel of faith, is terrified by it, whilst in Jesus we find an equability of perfection altogether divine.

David removes to a distance from the royal city. In the land of the Philistines he gains their king's favor, not by faith, but by a prudence inconsistent with truth. It is an unhappy position; nevertheless God does not forsake him. He chastises him, and in a painful manner, but He spares and preserves him. We have seen similar ways of the Lord in the case of the fugitive Jacob.

Achish, who knows David, wishes to employ him in his service, and David cannot refuse; for when he who possesses the energy which the Spirit of God imparts by faith, has placed himself in a false position through unfaithfulness, he has no power against the one under whose authority he has placed himself; and if he does not use the energy with which he is endowed in favor of his protector, he very naturally excites his jealousy. He would have avoided all this by going to Ziklag, but he could not. God in His mercy preserved David, but he was now in a sad and false position.

Saul, as well as Israel at present, was in a still worse position, having succor neither from God nor from the enemy. Saul is forsaken of God. Samuel is dead; so that Israel is no longer in connection with God through him.

David, who at least made head against the Philistines, was, through Saul's own doings, in their midst. The outward zeal of the king had put down all those who had the spirit of witchcraft. He seeks direction from God, but obtains no answer. He has now neither conscience nor faith: the case is urgent, and he throws himself, not into outward service to God, as formerly (he has the sad and solemn conviction that that belongs to him no more); but into those things which he had condemned and cut off as evil when he maintained a religious character, things which he still knew were evil; but the Philistines were there, and his heart greatly trembles. He seeks out a woman who had a familiar spirit. God meets him here. Samuel ascends, but in such a manner as to terrify the woman. She recognizes the presence of a power superior to her enchantments. Samuel declares to Saul without reserve and without any sympathy (for that was no longer possible), the solemn judgment of God.

Chapter 29. God, in His loving-kindness, brings David out of his difficulty, by means of the jealousy of the lords of the Philistines. Nevertheless, to maintain his credit with Achish, David falls still lower, it seems to me, and protests that he is quite ready to fight against the enemies of the Philistine 'king, that is to say, against the people of God. This appears to me the most wretched part of David's life. God makes him sensible of it? for while he is there, the Amalekites strip him of everything and burn Ziklag, and his followers are ready to stone him.

All this is grievous; but the grace of God raises him up again, and the effect of this chastisement is to bring him back to God, for he was ever true to Him in heart.

David encouraged himself in the Lord his God, and inquires of Him what he shall do. What patience, what kindness in God! What care He takes of His people, even while they are turning away from Him! David is truly brought back to God, and rescued from his false position, and he walks and acts with God. God was, unknown to him, preparing a very different position for him; and was purifying and preparing him for it. How dreadful had David been with the Philistines, and taken part in the defeat of God's people, and in the death of him whose life he had often spared so touchingly! How far the child of God. may go astray when he puts himself under the protection of unbelievers, instead of relying on the help of God in all the difficulties which beset the path of faith! It is through these very difficulties that every grace is developed. And observe the danger the

believer is in-if his faith be not simple, but fails ever so little-of being thrown into the arms of God's enemies, through the persecution of professors. Nature grows weary, and seeks comfort afar from the narrow path which leads through the briars. This happens whenever the people of God, following their own will, confide their interests to those who seek nothing but their own advantage in a less difficult position, which is neither that of God nor that of faith. And the more glorious, a work there is for faith, the more nature grows weary, if faith becomes weak. Ziklag is taken during David's absence, but he pursues the spoilers and recovers all the booty.

David, upright and generous, found, in the difficulty which arose from the selfishness of his people, an opportunity to institute that which was conformable to the will of God, and instead of seeking to enrich himself through his share of the spoil, he uses it to maintain kindly relations with the elders of his people, and to prove to them that the Lord is still with him.

Chapter 31 recounts the solemn death of Saul, and of Jonathan also, closing with the total discomfiture of Israel, this touching history. The whole account of Saul and his family, as raised up to withstand the Philistines, is ended. Saul and his sons fall into the hands of the Philistines; they are beheaded, their armor sent in triumph to the house of their idols, and their bodies hung upon the walls of Beth-shan. Sad end, as that of the flesh will ever be in the battle of the Lord!

Let us briefly retrace the history of David. Simplicity of faith keeps him in the place of duty, and contented there, without desire to leave it, because the approbation of God suffices him. Consequently, he can there reckon upon the help of God, as thoroughly secured to him; he acts in the strength of God. The lion and the bear fall under his youthful hand. Why not, if God was with him? He follows Saul with equal simplicity, and then returns to the care of his sheep with the same satisfaction. There, in secret, he had understood by faith that the Lord was with Israel; he had understood the nature and force of this relationship. He sees in the condition of Israel something which does not answer to this; but, as for himself, his faith rests upon the faithfulness of God. An uncircumcised Philistine falls like the lion. He serves Saul as a musician with the same simplicity as before; and whether with him, or when Saul sends him out as captain of a thousand, he gives proof of his valor. He obeys the king's commands. At length the king drives him away; but he is still in the place of faith. There is little now of military achievement, but there is the discernment of that which became him, when the spiritual power was in him, but the outward divine authority was in other hands. It was the same position as that of Jesus in Israel. David does not fail in this position, its difficulties only the better bringing out all the beauty of God's grace and the fruits of the Spirit's work, while very peculiarly developing spiritual affections and intimate relations with God, his only refuge. It is especially this which gave rise to the psalms. Faith suffices to bring him through all the difficulties of his position, in which it displays all its beauty and all its grace. The nobleness of character which faith imparts to man, and which is the reflection of God's character, produces in the most hardened hearts-even in those who having forsaken God are forsaken of Him (a state in which sin, selfishness, and despair combine to harden)- feelings of natural affection, the remorse of a nature which awakens under the influence of something superior to its malice, something which sheds its light (painful, because momentary and powerless) upon the darkness which encompasses the unhappy sinner who rejects God. It is because faith dwells so near God as to be above evil, that it withdraws nature itself from the power of evil, although nature has no power of self-mastery. But God is with faith; and faith respects that which God respects, and invests one who bears something from God, with the honor due to that which belongs to God, and which

recalls God to the heart with all the affection that faith entertains for Him and all that pertains to Him. This is always seen in Jesus, and wherever His Spirit is; and it is this that gives such beauty, such elevation to faith, which ennoble itself with the nobility of God by recognizing that which is noble in His sight and on account of its relation to Him; in spite of the iniquity or abasement of those who are invested with it. Faith acts on God's behalf, and reveals Him in the midst of circumstances, instead of being governed by them. Its superiority over that which surrounds it is evident., What repose to witness this, amid the mire of this poor world! But, although faith-in the place it gives us in this world-suffices for all that we meet with in it, yet alas! communion with God is not perfect in us. Instead of doing our duty, whatever it be, without weariness, because God is with us, and when we have slain the lion, being ready to slay the bear, and, through this, more ready still to slay Goliath; instead of faith being strengthened by victory, nature grows weary of the conflict; we lose the normal position of faith, we debase and dishonor ourselves. What a difference between David, who, by the fruit of grace, draws tears from the heart of Saul, re-opening (at least for the moment) the channel of his affections, and David unable to raise his hand against the Philistines whom he had so often defeated, and boasting himself ready to fight against Israel and the king whose life he had spared!

My brethren, let us abide in the place of faith, apparently a more difficult one, yet the place where God is found, and where grace-the only precious thing in this world-flourishes, and binds the heart to God by a thousand links of affection and gratitude, as to One who has known us, and who has stooped to meet our need and the desires of our hearts. Faith gives energy, faith gives patience; and it is often thus that the most precious affections are developed; affections which, if the energy of faith makes us servants on earth, render Heaven itself happy, because He who is the object of faith is there, and fills it in the presence of the Father.

Nature makes us impatient with circumstances, because we do not sufficiently realize God, and draws us into situations where it is impossible to glorify Him. On the other hand, it is well to observe, that it is when man had thoroughly failed, when even David's faith had been found wanting, and - departing from Israel he had thrown himself among the Philistines, it was then that God gave him the kingdom. Grace is above all failure. God must glorify Himself in His people.

2 Samuel

The second book of Samuel sets before us the definitive establishment of David in the kingdom, and afterward the miseries of his house, when prosperity had opened' the door to self-will.

The path of faith and its difficulties, is that in which we walk with God, and in which we celebrate the triumph which His presence secures to us. A state of prosperity makes it evident how little man is able to enjoy it without its becoming a snare to him. Prosperity not being the path of faith, that is to say, of strength, the evil of the heart comes out in the walk. Compare 2 Sam. 22, the psalm by which David closes the path of difficulty, with chap. 23, which contains his last words, after the experience of the enjoyment of the prosperity and glory in which faith had placed him.

Nevertheless, piety and pious, and hence generous sentiments, were genuine in David. He did not pretend to feel for Saul's misfortunes, and then seize upon the kingdom without regret as soon as Saul had ceased to exist. David's heart was really melted when he heard of Saul's death. Woe to the hard-hearted man who, impelled by the hope of reward, thought to be the bearer of good tidings in announcing it to him. Whatever Saul's misfortunes, he was the king of Israel to David. Whatever his faults, he was an unfortunate king. David had been beloved by him, and had dwelt in his house, where the king's affliction manifested itself, and commanded the respect of all around him. And if Saul had unjustly persecuted David, at this moment it was readily forgotten. Now that he has fallen, David will only remember that which can do him honor; and above all, that it is the Lord's anointed, and the Lord's people, who have fallen before their enemies.

David causes the man to be put to death who, deluded by selfishness, accused himself of lacking all fear of the Lord, all good and generous feeling. For David fears God; and the Lord's anointed is precious in his sight. He then pours out his heart before God in the touching accents of a grief which, in solemn and affecting language, recalls whatever would exalt Saul, and expresses the tender and affectionate recollections which his heart suggests. Beautiful exhibition of the fruits of the Spirit of God! David is in nowise discouraged, for his faith is in action. If this misfortune grieves him, it gives him also the opportunity of guarding against a similar calamity. He bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow, by which weapon Saul was slain. David still humble, goes on well. He asks the Lord if he should go up to Judah, and to which place-and the Lord directs him. David testifies also to the men of Jabeshgilead his satisfaction at their conduct with respect to Saul.

Nevertheless, war has not yet ceased; if not against enemies from without, it is carried on against those from within. That which was linked with Saul's fleshly importance cannot support David. All is, however, now changed, Ishbosheth was not the Lord's anointed, and to make him king was in fact to rebel against God. David makes war upon him by his captains.

Alas! the history of this period plunges us into the ways of man. It is no longer merely David walking in the path of faith. It is Joab, a clever, ambitious, bloody-minded, and heartless man. It is Abner, a man morally superior to Joab, but who fights on fleshly principles as a party man against

the king whom God has chosen. Abner is related to Ish-bosheth as Joab is to David. When his pride has been wounded, he throws himself into David's interests, and Joab kills him as much from jealousy as to avenge his brother's death. And wherein is the prowess and valor of the chiefs of Benjamin and Judah now manifested in this "field of strong men?" In slaying each other. The Philistines were forgotten. But the family of Saul were entirely in the wrong. It was nature which with its pretended rights would not submit to God and to His will. As David now begins to do, so will Christ, the king of Judah, bring all around into subjection to Himself after He has taken the throne. It is well, however, to observe that David does not appear in all this. Joab is the actor; and it appears to me, from the details given, that evil had already begun. I do not see that David had sought counsel of the Lord; and Joab had certainly not done so, for he was nothing more than an ungodly man who understood that it was more prudent to honor God, and not to depart too far from Him merely to gratify one's passions; but this did not preserve him from being at length ensnared in his own calculations. And, after all, it is not the energy of Joab which puts the kingdom into David's hands; but the wounded pride of Abner, the chief of Ish-bosheth's party, who ends by reaping from men that which he had sown. But all this is very sad.

By providential means, God accomplishes His purposes, and David is successful. Generally also, in his combats at this period and in his exaltation, he typifies the Lord Jesus. And I doubt not that the establishment of Christ's kingdom will be accomplished in detail, after His appearing; the prophecies of Zechariah and Mic. 5 prove this; but, as a history, we are, as I have said, in the midst of men. In the matter of Ish-bosheth's death, David maintains his integrity, and with respect to Abner's assassination, he manifests the sentiments which become a man of God. Nevertheless, the thirty-ninth verse of the third chapter, exhibits the weakness of man as the instrument of God's government. David appeals to the God of judgment.

The election of one in whom God's counsels are accomplished must necessarily take place before his establishment in the place which the Lord had appointed. It is still more evident that this election precedes the rest of the chosen one, and this is true as to Christ Himself, only, He came down into it in grace.

David, the king of Judah in Hebron for seven years and a half, becomes the king of all Israel upon Ish-bosheth's death. And now David is no longer the man of faith who, himself the head of the armies of Israel, walking in dependance upon God, guided the enterprises which the circumstances of Israel required of faith; but he is a king who can exalt whom he will. The man very soon appears, the energetic man, but not the man of God. " Whosoever getteth up to the gutter," said the king, " shall be rewarded, he shall be chief and captain." (ver. 8). Joab goes up, and he has natural claims upon David. Nevertheless, in the main, David is guided by God, and he takes the city which God had chosen for His throne upon the earth. It was on this account he could say of those who had it in possession " they are hated of David's soul," for, in fact, they who possess the true seat of God's power, the place which He loves, and who, trusting to their natural strength, resist and scoff at the king whom God has chosen, are more hateful than any people, and are hated by those who have the Spirit of the Lord who establishes His throne upon the earth.

It is well to remark here, that David is a type of Christ in rejection, and of Christ making war in power for the establishment of the millennium; and Solomon, of Christ reigning in millennial peace. David's wars with the Philistines are subsequent to the taking of Jerusalem, and to the entire

subjugation of Israel to David. It is not David, neither is it Christ reigning over the earth, who takes Jerusalem. Christ will descend from Heaven for the destruction of Antichrist; but He destroys the enemies of Israel by means of His own people, after having established His throne in Zion (compare Zech. 9 and 10). I do not enlarge upon this. I merely point out the grand features which the Word supplies on this subject.

David establishes himself in Zion; he is acknowledged by some friendly Gentiles; he is conscious too that it was God who made him king. But the natural heart soon shows itself. Strengthened in his kingdom by the Lord, he does what he likes, he follows his own will (comp. Deut. 17:17). Nevertheless the consolidation of his power does not overthrow the hopes of his former enemies; it excites their jealousy. They neither know the arm of his strength, nor the purpose of the Lord who exalted him. They rush on to destruction. And now, with the danger that awakens him, we find again the man of God, the type of the Lord Jesus, inquiring of the Lord and obedient to His word. He gains signal victories under the express guidance of God whose strength goes before him and puts his enemies to flight. Accordingly, he gives God the glory.

Although God has established a king in power who is at the same time the victorious leader of his people, yet the bonds of the covenant are not yet restored. The Ark is still in the place where individual piety had sheltered it, when God was obliged to be the guardian of His own glory. David would bring it to the place where his throne is now established. He desires that the Lord of Hosts who dwelleth between the cherubims, should be honored, and that He should be at the same time the glory of the king of Israel's throne. They are bound together in his mind. Now the kingdom of Melchisedec was not yet in exercise, not even in type. For Melchisedec is king of Salem-i.e., king of Peace. God was still maintaining His own glory. He could bless David, the elect and anointed king; but that order of things which united all together under the king's authority, was not yet in force. It was to be set up later, under Solomon.

Israel should have acknowledged God's order. But even while seeking to honor God, David thinks of himself, and there is, definitively, but a faulty imitation of that which the Philistine priests had done, when acted upon by the terror of the Lord. The result was unhappy. What man had done, man seeks to sustain; but, in doing this, he touches the glory of the Lord and falls before His Majesty. The Lord vindicates his glory. He dwells not yet in the midst of His people. At once pained and alarmed, pained because his heart truly sought the Lord's glory, although he did not understand its height, and had forgotten the majesty of Him who should have been nearer to him, David leaves the Ark in the house of Obed-edom; and there the Lord shows that it is His nature to bless, whenever His majesty is not so forgotten that men deal with Him as they think proper. If we detract from His glory, He maintains it; as also He manifests what He is, by the blessing He bestows. The heart and affections of David are restored; he causes the Ark to be carried from Obed-edom's house and places it in the Tabernacle he had pitched for it. Here we only see David, and we see him clothed with the ephod. He is the head of his people, when he re-establishes the relationship between them and his God, and it is with joy, with offerings and songs of triumph. It is He also who blesses the people, being in all this a remarkable type of Jesus, and of that which He will perform in Israel in the last days. All this, however, was not building the temple, which was a work reserved for the prince of Peace. It was the king, by faith head of the people, acting up to a certain point, for faith, as priest, on the principle of Melchisedec, although the order and the blessing belonging to that title were not yet established. The king offers sacrifices, he blesses the

people. As their sole head, he had united all Israel. He had beaten his enemies. But, after all, it was a transitional period. The Ark of the covenant abode still in a tent, David had triumphed; but the peace he enjoyed was but transitory. The establishment of the Ark on the hill of Zion formed, however, an epoch; for Mount Zion was the seat of royal grace, where the king who had suffered-and as having suffered-bad established his throne in power and grace with respect to Israel. This is the key to the fourteenth chapter of the Revelation, a book in which the Lamb is always (as it appears to me) the Messiah who has suffered, but who is seated on the throne of God while waiting for the manifestation of His glory; seated there in this character, although as such, He had accomplished things far otherwise important; for salvation and the Church are far more excellent than the kingdom; but it is evidently the kingdom that we have to do with here. I doubt not that the hundred and forty-four thousand who are with the Lamb on Mount Zion, are those who have suffered for Messiah's sake in the spirit of His own sufferings, in the midst of Israel. They share His kingly position in Zion, and follow Him whithersoever He goeth. They are morally near enough to Heaven to learn its song, which none other on earth can learn. They are the first-fruits of the earth. They are not in Heaven.

This explains Heb. 12:22 also; in which we find Zion in contrast with Sinai, where the people had been placed under their own responsibility, the law having the sanction which the terror of the Lord's presence gave it. But, in the passage referred to, Zion is clearly distinguished from the heavenly Jerusalem. I doubt not that at the end a similar relation will exist between Christ and the remnant of His people who have waited for him. It is a period during which Jesus is fully triumphant, and acts in power and as a king, but does not yet rule in peace; and during which he forms, developer and establishes the relationship of His people with Himself on the earth, in His triumphs and in His kingdom, according to the rights of which He will subject His enemies to Himself. The Psalms also open this part of Christ's reign to us, prophetically and in type (see Psa. 110). After having seated David's Lord at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, the Spirit says, " The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning [the morning of His glory, the dawn of day]; thou shalt have the dew of thy youth [of the young men who follow Him]." The whole of this Psalm unfolds the same idea, the warlike kingdom of Christ, having Zion chosen of God for its seat, and the place whence His power shall go forth during the triumphant wars of the Messiah.

Let us pursue this latter point.

After having described the ruin of Israel, Psa. 78 shows us the Lord awaking; but it sets aside all rights of inheritance, and testimony to His former dealings with Israel; for (1 Chron. 5) the birthright was Joseph's. "He CHOSE the tribe of Judah the mount Zion which He loved. He CHOSE David his servant and took him from the sheep-folds," etc. This Psalm mentions indeed His sanctuary, but the mountain on which it was built is never represented as the object of God's election. This Psalm reaches further than our present history; but it applies election to David and to Zion.

The 132 Psalm sets before us precisely the sentiments with which the Spirit inspired David when he placed the ark upon Mount Zion. It is but a tabernacle, but it is that of the mighty God of Jacob on the earth. And the Lord has chosen Zion. There the horn of David shall bud. Observe here, that the Lord's answer goes each time beyond the request and the desire of David; a beautiful

testimony to the rich goodness of God. The Lord's rest is in the midst of His people. He will enjoy this rest here, in the midst of His own, although His glory is in the temple; and it is there that every one speaks of it. But this glory and this rest had not yet had a place in the wilderness. Israel was on a journey, and the Lord who dwelt among the people, went before them to search out a resting place for them (Num. 10:33). Neither was it the case at Shiloh, when His rest among them depended on their faithfulness. "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, and delivered His strength into the enemy's hand" Psa. 78:61,62. Election and grace alone-by means of "one chosen out of the people" (Psa. 89:19)-establish the rest of God among His people.

There is yet a remark to make on the subject of the, (132 Psalm). We have seen that God maintains His majesty in his government, and does not allow any one to touch His ark. He gives David time to learn, that God is a God of blessing and of grace; but, however good the intentions of His people may be, it is necessary that truth, that what He is, should be clearly demonstrated in His public dealings. If it were otherwise, if His government were not stable, all would go to ruin; the levity of man would constantly lead him into the paths of self-will. It is true that God is full of patience, and that after having formed the relationship between His people and Himself, He continues to act according to this relationship as long as possible, although forced to chasten at the same time; but judgment comes at length. In the case we are considering, God had broken this relationship; He had delivered His strength into the enemy's hand; David, as victor, restores to Him His place. Nevertheless, in examining Psa. 132, we discover much deeper sentiments, a heart which desires to have God glorified among His people in a much more developed and much more intimate manner than was indicated by that which the outward pomp and train represented, in which Israel could take part; sentiments to which God responded in a very different way than by the death of Uzzah. This Psalm, it is true, was written after the touching communications which are revealed in chap. 7 of the Second Book of Samuel, as the 11th and 12th verses prove. It teaches us, however, in what spirit David went to fetch the ark, the ardent desire of his heart to find an habitation for the Lord, which, as we have seen, Christ will accomplish (comp. Ex. 15). Now it appears to me, that it was the consciousness of this desire, that led to David's failure. Alas for man! In the consciousness of it, he seeks to put it into execution, and he a little forgets the supreme glory of God, the sin which had caused God's departure from His people, and the majesty proper to Him. When God acts according to the requirements of His glory, and smites the man who lent David his assistance in accomplishing the desire of his heart, David is displeased. The death of Uzzah was the result of David's conduct, and he is angry with the Lord when this result takes place. This was truly the flesh. God made David sensible of that which was becoming to the service of the God of Israel (see 1 Chron. 15:12,13), and He restored His soul by showing him that He was the true source of blessing, and that the sending away of the ark was also the sending away of blessing. Moreover, the position of David, zealously maintaining a sense of the Lord's glory in the midst of his exaltation, is of the highest moral beauty, and has a very peculiar aspect in reference to the divine economies. The place which Solomon occupies at the dedication of the temple, presents, no doubt, a more striking picture. The Melchisedec priesthood is there in its simplicity and its fullness, but this was the fruit of the accomplishment of blessing; and the moral condition of those who took part in it, was much less the result of deep exercise of heart, and of the close communion with God which is its consequence; it was, therefore, much less connected with the intelligent expectation of Christ. Solomon enjoyed the realization of the glory upon which, in its true accomplishment in Christ, David relied by faith; Solomon does not go to a

higher source than David's faith, and the responsibility of the people which flowed from it. The temple is the scene of this. David rises higher. He lays hold of God's purpose, as to the seat of the Lord's kingdom, and at a time when this required faith, he becomes as far as possible, the royal priest, and consequently ascends to God Himself who is the source of this royal priesthood. Taught of God, he has understood the election of Zion, the seat of Christ's kingly glory; and, in this sense, his moral position, when dancing before the ark as an obscure man, and to his shame, before the world, appears to me a much higher one than that of Solomon upon his brazen scaffold.

The ark is also the sign of the re-establishment of God's power in the midst of His people by this moral link; but this re-establishment takes place in type by the victory and the energy of Christ who prevails over His enemies, as will be the case, and not merely in the enjoyment of glory. In all this part of His history, David is more personally a type of Christ. It is while difficulty exists, that he restores the people's connection with God, and before the result of power has removed every obstacle, he blesses and feeds the people as Melchisedec. Blessing flows from his person in the presence of all that still opposes it, and in spite of every difficulty. The position which David still takes is that of servant, the immediate servant of God, by grace. He is not a priest upon his throne; but the king makes himself a priest, and that while still performing service. Samuel, as given to the Lord, was clothed with a linen ephod. It was the priestly garment, and he was not a priest after the order of Aaron. He served in the tabernacle by grace and by the Spirit, as one chosen and set apart for God. He was in his right place, but on God's part it was in grace, when the gloomy night of Ichabod already threatened the people with its darkness. Here, it is the king who, taking this place, puts on the priestly ephod, not the garments which God had given the priests for glory and for beauty; but those which distinguished the priest considered as the type of Christ as priest, and which belonged to the essence of his functions; and, in fact, he took the place rather of a Levite, that is, of one set apart to serve before the ark, before the Lord. The leading idea connected with the ephod is that he who wears it presents himself to God. But even though making request, Melchisedec rather presents himself to the people; although he is before God for the people, as king and priest upon his throne.

Having offered his sacrifices, the king blesses the people. There were yet the Philistines, the Syrians, and other nations to be subdued; but the connection of the people with God was established and maintained in security by the king in Zion, although the ark on which this connection rested was still within curtains. Blessing was also secured on the king's part, who had brought the sign of the covenant and the elect king together in the place which God had chosen, and who was still the servant for this. The ephod did not pertain to Melchisedec; but, in honoring the Lord who had preserved the people, he who wore it- maintained, as priest, the blessing of the people before God. Michal, who, in the spirit of Saul her father, only dreamed of earthly glory, cannot participate in this. Abasement before the Lord was incomprehensible to her. She neither understood nor tasted His glory, or the joy of knowing Him as the heart's sole master. That which belongs to Saul can have no share in David's kingdom, nor can it suffer with a despised and rejected one. In short, it is a king devoted to the Lord and to the people, who secures and communicates blessing to the latter; and not as yet a king in the enjoyment above all of established blessing; which is Solomon's condition. Now, the first of these two conditions appears to me to represent Christ, such as He has always been in principle and in right, and especially such as He will be after the destruction of Antichrist, and before the destruction of those enemies

who will still oppose themselves to the establishment of His kingdom in peace. His people, all Israel, will be united under Him. The rod of His strength will go out of Zion, and He will rule in the midst of His enemies (Psa. 110); but it will not yet be the fulfillment of Psa. 72, nor of Zech. 6:12,13. Compare also Psa. 2, in which Christ is looked upon as the Son of God, born upon earth, and in which His universal rights to the possession of the earth, which flow from this, are set forth, acknowledged by God, and proclaimed to the kings of the earth. In Psa. 110, Christ is seated at the right hand of God, waiting until His enemies are made His footstool. In Psa. 8 He is the Son of Man, and all things are put under Him. Under Solomon, all Israel rejoices in all the good things which the Lord had bestowed upon Solomon, as well as upon David. Here, David in his own person provides that which is necessary to feed the people, and deals to every one " a good piece." He returns to bless his house, for David has his own house, to which he returns after having blessed Israel: it is something nearer to him than Israel. Michal, we have seen, could not really belong to it. David finds it a joyful thing to humble himself before the Lord, and he reproves her. How overwhelming was the reply he made her!

Ardently desiring the Lord's glory, David is troubled at dwelling in a house of cedar, while the Lord dwelt within curtains. He wishes to build Him a house. A good desire, yet one which God could not grant. The work of building the temple belonged to the Prince of Peace. As suffering and conquering, David represented Christ, and consequently, not as enjoying the earthly kingdom by undisputed right, and opening to all nations the gates of the temple in which the Lord of Righteousness was to be worshipped. He returns then, so to say, into his own personal position, in which God blessed him in a very peculiar manner. David was more than a type; he was truly the stock of that family from which Christ Himself should spring. This is taught in the beautiful seventh chapter. An elect vessel to maintain the cause of the Lord's people in suffering, and to re-establish among them the glory of the Lord's name (8, 9), the Lord had been with him; and David-most especially honored in this-was also, in his faithfulness, a vessel of promise of the future peace and prosperity destined for Israel in the counsels of God. But these were yet future things. The perpetuity of the kingdom over Israel is established in his family, which. God will chasten if needful, but not cut off. His son shall build the house. At the time of the Exodus, the man in whom was the Spirit, desired to prepare an habitation for the Lord.

The following, are the chief subjects of the revelation made to David, and of his reply:-The sovereign call of God; that which God had done for David; the certainty of future rest for Israel; the establishment, on God's part, of David's house; his son shall be the Son of God, shall build the house; the throne of his son shall be established forever.

David's first thought-and it is always so when the Spirit of God works-was not to rejoice, but to bless God. These are the striking features of the prayer of thankfulness: he is in peace and freedom before God; he goes in and sits before Him; he acknowledges at the same time his own nothingness, and how unworthy he was of all that God had already done. Yet this was but a small thing in the sight of God, who had declared to him the future glories of his house. It was God, and not the manner of man. What could he say more? God knew him; there lay his confidence and his joy. He acknowledged that God did it in truth and "of His own heart." It was grace to make His servant know it. The effect of all this was to make David recognize the Lord's excellency. There was none beside Him, and none upon earth to be compared to His elect people, whom He went to redeem for a people to Himself, and whom he had now confirmed to Himself, that Israel might be

His people forever, and that He Himself might be their God. The highest kind of prayer is that which does not spring from a sense of need, but from the desires and the intelligence which the revelation of God's purposes produces—purposes which He will fulfill in love to His people and for the glory of Christ. Finally, he asks that his house may be the place of God's own blessing. In a word, he desires that the purposes of God, which had awakened all his affections, may be accomplished by the Lord Himself, who had revealed them unto His servant.,

Being entirely delivered from the insurrections of the people, David exercises his power in bringing his enemies into subjection. The Philistines who dwelt within the land of Israel are subjugated. Metheg-Amma signifies, "bridle of the capital." David held the key of power. Moab is subdued and made tributary. At length the outward enemies, the Syrians, also, are either conquered or submit themselves. The Edomites become David's servants, and the Lord preserves David whithersoever he goes. In all this, we have again the man of faith and the type of the Lord Jesus, King in Zion, who is victorious over the enemies of Israel, and puts Israel in possession of the promised land (Gen. 15:18), as far as the Euphrates. He dedicates the spoil to the Lord. He reigns over all Israel, and executes judgment and justice unto all his people. The companions of his pilgrimage participate in the glory of his kingdom, a type in all this of the kingdom of Christ.

He acts in grace also towards the humbled remnant of Saul's house; and, if Mephibosheth is not associated with the glory of his kingdom, he enjoys the privilege of the king's table, who shows him kindness, although Mephibosheth belongs to the family of his enemy and persecutor, but at the same time to that little remnant which favored the king whom God had chosen; being, on that account, hated itself by those in power. He enjoys also the whole of his inheritance. This touching and beautiful testimony to David's kindness and faithfulness through grace, appears to me to give us a picture of Christ's relations to the remnant of Israel, or at least that of the spirit of these relations. It was "the kindness of God" which sought out the family of Saul, the enemy of David's crown,—and which rests upon the representative of Jonathan, whose history we have read, and who typifies those that will attach themselves to Christ in prospect of the kingdom, to which their thoughts are limited. The remnant enjoys the effect of the establishment of the kingdom, but does not rank among those that surround the throne after having shared the sufferings of the despised and rejected king.

Chapter 10, the details of which we pass over, sets before us the general principle of the king's rule in Zion. When grace is despised by those to whom it is manifested, the king's judgment follows. Opposition and rebellion only serve to establish his authority in the very place where resistance is attempted. It is useless to strive against the power of God's chosen king.

The history of David and the wife of Uriah follows. David is no longer acting by faith, in God's service. When the time comes at which kings go forth to war, he stays at home, at his ease, and sends others in his place to fight the Lord's battles. At ease and in indolence, he falls readily into sin, as was the case when he sought for rest among the Philistines. He was no longer standing by faith.

The nearer David was to God, the more ineffectual were his attempts to conceal his sin. Given up to himself for the time, in chastisement, he adds a second transgression to the first; he completes it, and enjoys its fruit, now that the removal of every obstacle gives a semblance of lawfulness to his course. What a sad history! What unworthiness! He forgets his position as king, and a king

from God. Was it reigning in righteousness to take advantage of his royal power to oppress Uriah. He makes himself a slave to this wretched Joab by rendering him accessory to his crime. How degrading! How much happier was he, when, though hunted like a partridge in the mountains; he had a living faith and a good conscience! But, who can shun the eye of God? Accordingly, God who knows and loves him, fails not to visit his sin. This was a very great sin. David committed it in secret; God punishes it in the sight of all Israel. If David knew not how to glorify God, nor while reigning in his name to maintain a true testimony as to the nature of God's kingdom; if he had, on the contrary, falsified its character, God Himself will know how, in the sight of all men, to retrace its features, through the chastisement He will send upon the man who has thus dishonored Him, and who had taken away the only witness to His government which God had set up before men.

This history shows us how far sin can blind the heart, even while the moral judgment continues sound; it shows also the power of the faithful word of God. God manifests at the same time the sovereignty of His grace; for although He chastened David by the child's death, it is Bath-sheba's second son who was the elect of God, who became king, and the head of the royal family, the man of peace and blessing, the beloved of the Lord. David submits himself under the hand of God, his heart bows under it in the depth of its affections. He understands it better than his servants do, although more guilty than they. He acts becomingly, according to spiritual intelligence. There was confidence in God and intimacy with Him; and therefore David can lay open the tenderest part of his heart to God, the part in which God had wounded him; but when the will of God is manifest, he submits entirely. We see here the evident work of the Spirit. It is the same Spirit who wrought in Jesus at Gethsemane, although both the occasion and the extent of the suffering were far otherwise important. The sin of David had been extremely great; but we can plainly see in him the precious work of the Spirit. Confounded by the simple faithfulness of Uriah, he cannot escape the hand of God! David is pardoned, for he confesses his sin • but, as to his government, God showed Himself to be inflexible, and while sparing the king-for he deserved death-He announces to him that the sword shall never depart out of his house. We have seen a similar case in Jacob's unfaithfulness. David's punishment also answers to his sins (compare ver. 10 and 12 with the history of Absalom). As to David's affections, the chastisement was in the death of his child, a chastisement which he deeply felt; and the public government of God was manifested in that which was done, according to His word, before all Israel and before the sun.

It is possible that the children of Ammon deserved severe judgment, and that this period was the time of their judgment; they were the insolent enemies of the king whom God had set up, and who had given proof of his kind feeling towards them. But as to his personal condition, I know not whether David would have treated his enemies in this manner when he was walking in the narrow path of faith. As a type, this judgment brings to mind the righteous judgment of the Messiah, and the dreadful consequences of having despised and insulted Him even in His glory. We learn from it also, that when a people are ripe for judgment, God will bring it upon them, even although others may seek to act in grace.

When David had shown that he had forgotten God, and had failed in His entire dependence upon Him, the evils in his house soon broke out. He had added to the number of his wives. The root of bitterness buds and brings forth bitter fruits. Although, in the main, David's heart was upright before God, and deeply acknowledged Him, yet, when once out of that path of humble dependence which is produced by faith and the sense of God's presence, he embittered the

remainder of his days, through following his own will in the midst of his blessings. There is sin in his house, wrath on account of the sin-vacillation, through partiality for Absalom. Joab appears on the scene, as is the case every time that these matters of intrigue and wickedness recur in the history. This is all that need be said of the sorrowful story of Amnon and Absalom.

David's partiality for Absalom had yet other and more painful results, and heavy chastisements. It is painful to see the conqueror of Goliath driven from his home and his throne by his beloved son, and that under God's hand. For if God had not allowed, it, who could have driven God's elect from the royal seat in which the Lord had placed him? The sword was in his house—the Word of God, sharper than a two-edged sword. How just is the Lord! But whom He loves He chastens. Accordingly, whilst all this is a manifestation of the righteous rule of God, it is to David an occasion of deep heart-exercise, and of a more real and more intimate knowledge of God; for his heart was truly and eternally bound to God, so that all his sorrows bore fruit, although they were occasioned by his faults. In this respect also, although the cause of his grief was so widely different from that of the Lord's grief, he becomes the type of Christ in suffering, and the vessel of the expression of His sympathy for His people. This is even so much more the case, because, with a faithful heart, and in a certain sense, with perfect integrity towards God, the king's faults and transgressions gave rise to those confessions and to that humiliation which the Spirit of Christ will produce in the remnant of Israel; so that on the one hand, he speaks of his integrity, while on the other he confesses his faults. Now this is what Christ causes His people to say, and what He says for them. Nevertheless, we must remember it is not David himself, as a godly man, who speaks in the Psalms; it is by the inspiration of the Spirit he utters them; and it is a very precious thing for us that, in circumstances where faith might fail and the heart be discouraged, the Word supplies us with language suitable to faith, and to faith in one who has perhaps been unfaithful; a precious testimony that, even in this condition, God does not cast us off, and that Christ sympathizes with us, since He furnishes us with expressions and sentiments adapted to such a condition. The Psalms supply this, and in especial suitability to the remnant of Israel in the last days. They are characterized by integrity of heart and confession of sin. The Spirit of Christ gives the sentiments and assures of His sympathy. Psa. 16 gives us very strikingly this position of Christ. His goodness extends not to God. He calls the Lord, His Lord; but of the saints on earth He says, "in whom is all my delight." By His baptism, which was the expression of this, He connected Himself, not with Israel, but with the first movement of the Spirit, responding in the remnant to the condemnation of the people as such. This is the principle of the Psalms—the upright and faithful man in the midst of the perverse nation. The book opens with this distinction, drawn by God; it next presents us with the King in Zion, according to the decree of God, rejected by the nation and hated by the heathen, who oppress the people. All this develops itself through a variety of circumstances, and all the relationships of the remnant are there depicted, as well as all affections of the heart. All connected with it is gone over the hand and the pen of God, and according to the Spirit and the sympathies of Christ.

Chapter 20 ends this part of David's history, and his history in general. He is re-established on his throne, and has overcome the efforts of his enemies, and the rebellion of his own people. The order of his court and officers is restored in peace. Sundry details are added by the Spirit of God.

And, first of all, the government of God who forgets nothing, and with whom everything has its result, is recalled to David and to his people by means of the Gibeonites. It is no longer necessary

for the establishment of God's economy that David should pursue the house of Saul. There is a righteous judgment, a moral principle of God, which is above all economies. Saul, in his formal and fleshly zeal, although it was for God, had not acted in the fear of God. It is this which especially distinguishes a godly zeal from a zeal for the outward interests of His kingdom. Saul forgets the oath which Israel made to the Gibeonites. God remembers it, and does not despise the poor Gibeonites. David also recognizes its obligation; after having inquired of the Lord on account of the thrice repeated chastening upon Israel, he submits to the demand of the Gibeonites. The whole house of Saul perishes, except the little remnant attached to David. With respect to the latter, the circumstances of Rizpah's touching and faithful affection, awaken in David's heart the remembrance of brighter moments in poor Saul's career, and he pays the last honors to his memory. After this, God was entreated for the land.

If with a sling and a stone faith can overthrow its enemies the flesh is at fault before their attacks. David, when king, as we have clearly seen, gave himself up more to his lusts and to his own will, than David suffering. Nevertheless, it is beautiful to see, that where faith has acted amid the people's ruin, it has stirred up many other instruments, who animated and encouraged by its success-act fearlessly with the same power as that which wrought the first deliverance. It is well, however, to observe, that to conquer valiant foes when all Israel was flushed with success, and strengthened the hands of the mighty men, is a very different thing from the faith which reckons upon God, when strength and success are on the enemy's side, and the people are fleeing before him. The latter was David's case with Goliath. The former that of the men who slew the other giants.

The songs that follow contain instruction of deep interest. David comes forth from his sufferings and his affliction, with a song of triumph and of praise. He had learned what God was, in his sufferings. He celebrates all that God had been for him, all that he had found Him to be in his necessities and dangers, the effect of God's power on his behalf, and the glorious and blessed result of this power. All this is given in a song, the expressions of which will only be fully accomplished in Christ Himself. In chap. xxiii. he celebrates his prosperity. But, what a difference He declares, it is true, what Christ will be when He reigns; and he does so in language of most attractive beauty, a beauty which ravishes the mind and transports it into the reign of Christ, that blessed world to come of which we speak. But then this sorrowful thought presents itself-" my house is not so with God."

In the first of these two songs there is something more, of profound interest. David speaks as a prophet; and, as he had done in so many other instances, he personifies the Lord Jesus, the Lord Jesus in connection with Israel. This song then sets before us the sufferings of Christ, as the representative of Israel, and often speaking of the nation as though it were Himself, (sufferings which obtained also other deliverance of far surpassing excellence) as the cause of the deliverance out of Egypt and of all Israel's blessings, until the establishment of Messiah's glory in the age to come. He surrounds the agony of Christ with the whole history of Israel in salvation and in blessing, from Pithom and Raamses unto the destruction of the violent man at the end of days, and the submission of the nations to Messiah's scepter; and He gives a voice to their distress in Egypt. In chapter 23 the covenant was " all his salvation and all his desire," although at that time " He made it not to grow." Judgment must be executed, ere the full blessing he expected could be brought in; and these thorns of iniquity must be "utterly burned in the same place." This will take

place at the coming of Christ.

If God honors and glorifies David, He does not forget those whom the energy of David's faith had brought around him. The Holy Ghost enumerates the mighty men of David, and recounts their deeds of valor and devotedness-deeds which obtain a name and a place for them when God writeth up the people (Psa. 87). Joab is not among them.

Chapter 24 leads us into a subject which requires particular notice. The wrath of God is kindled again against Israel. It is not in the mind of the Spirit to inform us on what occasion this took place; but to lay open God's dealings both in government and grace. In the preceding chapter, God "writeth up" the mighty men who prefigure the companions of the true David in glory. Here it is His grace in staying his anger and bringing in His blessing.

God punishes the pride and rebellion of Israel, by leaving them to the consequences of the impulse of David's natural heart. Joab's habitual cleverness and good sense made him perceive its folly. When it is the flesh in another, it is easily discerned. Joab felt that it was not worth while to despise God when nothing was to be gained by it; for, in this way, the flesh fears God. But the thing was of the Lord, and Satan gains his point. What, in truth, can man's good sense avail, in opposition to the will of God in chastening, and Satan's malice? It is an awful thing to be given up to his power. Nine months of sin on David's part and of patience on God's part, shows us the fatal influence of the enemy; but the sin accomplished only awakens David's conscience. The enjoyment of the fruit of our sin undeceives us. It is the pursuit of it which allures our hearts. When he has succeeded in inducing the children of God to commit the evil to which he tempted them, Satan cares no longer to conceal from them its emptiness and folly. Happily, where there is life, conscience resumes its power in such a case. Nevertheless, chastening must follow sin which has been carried out in spite of so much long-suffering. But God, who reaches His servant's conscience, brings into play the sincere affections of His heart, in order to bring about His own sovereign purpose. David exhibits that never-failing token of a heart that knows the Lord, i. e. confidence in God above all, and at whatever cost. "Let me fall into the hand of the Lord." Sweet and precious thought of what the Lord is unto His people, and well He knows how to fill the heart with the certainty that He deserves its confidence I Even while chastening, God is more loving, more faithful, more worthy of confidence than any other. The plague breaks out; but, in the midst of judgment the Lord remembers mercy, and commands the destroying angel, when he had reached Jerusalem, to stay his hand. It is Jerusalem, the city of His affections, that attracts His attention. God chooses it for the place where His altar shall be built, and His grace shown forth; His appointed mercy-seat. It is there that His wrath, justly kindled against Israel, ceases; and sin gives occasion to the establishment of the place, and of the work, in which He and His people shall meet, according to that grace which has put away the sin. This will characterize the cross of Christ-this will stay the plague in Israel, and introduce the reign of the true Prince of Peace. David stands in the breach to deliver his people, and at his own cost (verse 17), and according to the counsels of God, he offers the sacrifice of appeasement.

The Thoughts on the First Book of Chronicles will contain a fuller examination into this latter part of David's history.

Abba, Father

■ββ■ (Abba) occurs but three times in the New Testament.

"And he said, Abba, Father," Mark 14:36.

"whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Rom. 8:15.

"into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Gal. 4:6.

In all three of which occurrences, it is, evidently, an invocation, and has the Greek word which is equivalent to it placed immediately after it.

The passage in Mark is in the narration of the agony in the garden: "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt."

The citation from Rom. 8 is from the epitome of Christian privileges presented in that blessed portion: "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption (υιοθεσιας), whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

The third occurrence is in the labored argument of the apostle to recover certain Galatians from error. After urging, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (chap. 3:26, [i.e. the present standing of acceptance in the family of God to all that have faith]), he goes on to show the result of this in them; for there was, "I in you" to those to whom "ye in me" (of John 14) was made good; and so he says, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

It is a blessed truth, that our " Lord and God," who has called us "Brethren," as the sons, by adoption, of God, thus puts into our hearts (as in Galatians) the power which leads us in daily habitual communion (as in Romans) towards His Father; according to the title, Abba, even that by which He, the only begotten Son, addressed Him.

The word Abba is not Greek, nor Hebrew, but appears to be Chaldee, and to be in what is called the status emphaticus. In the little Chaldee which exists in the Bible, we do not meet with it; but it exists in the Talmud (Furst says) frequently ■■■■■■. It may be as well to observe, that while each of the occurrences is an invocation, the vocative vcrep is not the form which is used after it, but δ πατ■ρ, that is, the nominative.

W.

Abba, Father

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6).

Father! by that dear name my heart is stirred,

And child-like homage renders at the word;
No other name can give such sweet repose,
So full a solace for our many woes.
With joy unspeakable I hear Thy voice,
Which says, " At all times in My love rejoice."
I need not bring Thee words-"My Son, thy heart,"
Is Thy demand. And often, when apart
In sorrow, brooding o'er some heavy care,
'Tis soothing and relief to feel Thee near;
And though in broken tones my utterance be,
Father! I call, and Thou dost answer me.
Draw me! I will run after Thee, will seek
To hear obediently what Thou wilt speak;
And step by step the blessed path would trace
Of Thy beloved-full of truth and grace.
Thou hast but One who ever pleas'd Thee well,
Of Him we love to hear, and Thou to tell.
Our deep desire, our highest aim to grow
Into His likeness-all His grace to know.
The grace that brought Him from Thy bosom, where
The Fount of Life is, and all pleasures are,
To gain a name, our hearts adoring own
The name of Jesus-and a royal crown.
His and our Father! O the depth and height,
The love surpassing knowledge, 'tis too bright.
Faith nearly staggers at the mysteries-
The mystery of love: yet though o'erpower'd,
Our trembling hearts can trust Thy faithful word,
The Spirit with our spirit witnesses,

Children we are, and He our Father is!

Personne.

Ruth.

The Book of Ruth tells us also of the days of the Judges, when there was no king in Israel; but it shows us the fair side of those days, in the operations of the grace of God, who, blessed be His name! never failed to work in the midst of the evil, as, also, in the steady progress of events towards the fulfillment of his promises in the Messiah, whatever may have been the simultaneous progress of the general evil.

Ruth, a stranger, seeking shelter by faith under the wings of the God of Israel, is received in grace, and the genealogy of David, king over Israel according to grace, is linked with her. It is the genealogy of the Lord Jesus himself, after the flesh.

This book appears to me to set before us, in type, the reception in grace of the remnant of Israel in the last days; their Redeemer (the kinsman, who has the right of redemption), having taken their cause in hand.

Eli-Melech (which signifies God the King) being dead, Naomi (my delight, my pleasure), becomes a widow, and eventually loses her children also. She typifies the Jewish nation, who, having lost her God, is like a widow, and has no heir. Yet there shall be a remnant, destitute of all right to the promises (and, therefore, prefigured historically by a stranger), who will be received in grace—similarly to the Gentiles and the Church—who will faithfully and heartily identify itself with desolate Israel. God will own this remnant, which, poor and afflicted itself, will in heart obey the commands given to the people.

Naomi, who, in her destitution, is a type of the nation, acknowledges her condition; she calls herself Mara (bitterness).

He who was nearest of kin, who would willingly have redeemed the inheritance, refuses to do so, if Ruth must be taken with it. The law was never able (nor the Church either) to re-establish Israel in their inheritance, nor to raise up, in grace, the name of the dead.

Boaz (in him is strength), upon whom the remnant had no direct claim, (and who typifies Christ risen, in whom are the sure mercies of David), undertakes to raise up the name of the dead, and to re-establish the heritage of Israel. Acting in grace and in kindness, and encouraging the patient, humble faith of the remnant, the meek of the earth, he shows himself faithful to fulfill the purposes and the will of God, with respect to this poor desolate family. Nothing can be more touching and exquisite than the details given here. The character of Ruth, this poor woman of the Gentiles, has great beauty. "Naomi took the child that was born to her, and laid it in her bosom;" and they said, "There is a son born to Naomi." In fact, the heir of the promises will be born unto Israel, as a nation, although the fulfillment of the promise affects the remnant only, which, fully identifying itself with the interests of God's people, has sought neither the rich nor the poor; but, in faith and obedience has kept the testimony of God amongst the people, in the path appointed by him.

Thus, if on one side, the Book of Judges shows us the falling away of the people of Israel, and their failure under responsibility, even when God was their helper; on the other side, this touching

and precious book sets before us, as the dawn of better things, grace acting in the midst of difficulties, securing the fulfillment of promise, and embellishing this scene of misery and sin by lovely and beautiful instances of faith, precious fruits of grace, whether in weakness and devotedness, or in strength and kindness, and always in accordance with the perfect will of God.

In the succeeding books, we shall see prophecy, and the history of God's dealings, developing the body of events which tended to the fulfillment of His designs, the first principles, the elements of which are laid down in that which will be shown us in him. For Ruth furnishes a kind of intermediate link 'between the fall of Israel under God's immediate government, and the future fulfillment of His purposes.

Prophecy, which unfolds these purposes, and gives moral proof of this fall, begins with Samuel: we learn this from the lips of Jesus, who is himself the object of prophecy.

Eli the last judge and priest, departs, his family is to be cut off, the Ark of the Covenant is taken by the Philistines, and Samuel, consecrated to God in a new and extraordinary manner, comes in with the special testimony of the Lord.

Acrostic Psalms

1.-Psa. 130

Each of the verses 1-8 begins with ■ Aleph.

1. ALL blessings for the perfect in the way, who walk in the law of the Jehovah.
2. All blessings for those that keep His testimonies, they shall seek Him with the whole heart.
3. Also they do no iniquity; they walk in his ways.
4. A command thou hast given, diligently to keep thy precepts.
5. Ah! that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes!
6. Ashamed I shall not be, when I have respect to all Thy commandments.
7. As learning Thy righteous judgments, I will praise Thee with uprightness of heart.
8. Ah! forsake me not utterly, I will keep Thy statutes.

Acrostic Psalms

2.-Ps. 119.

Each of the verses from 9-19, begins with ■ Beth.

Ver. 9 - By what shall a youth cleanse his way,

To guard (it) according to Thy Word?

Ver. 10 - By (or, with) my whole heart I sought Thee;

Let me not wander from Thy commands.

Ver. 11 - Bestowed I Thy word, in my heart,

That I might not sin against Thee,

Ver. 12 - Blessed art Thou, O Jehovah;

Teach me Thy statutes.

Ver. 13 - By my lips have I declared

All the judgments of Thy mouth,

Ver. 14 - By the way, I have rejoiced in Thy

Testimonies as over all riches.

Ver. 15 - By means of Thy precepts I will muse

And have respect to Thy paths.

Ver. 16 - By thy statutes do I delight myself:

I will not forget Thy words.

Acrostic Psalms

Each of the verses from 17-24, begins with a ■ Gimel.

Ver. 17 - Grant favor unto thy servant,

That I may live and keep Thy Word;

Ver. 18 - Give the opening of the eyes that I may behold-

Wonderful things out of Thy law;

Ver. 19 - Greatly am I estranged from the world;

Hide not Thy commandments from me;

Ver. 20 - Grievously my soul breaks -

For the longing it hath for Thy judgments at all times;

Ver. 21 - Going astray from Thy commandments-

The proud are cursed and rebuked by Thee;

Ver. 22 - Grant that reproach and contempt may be removed-

For I have kept Thy testimonies;

Ver. 23 - Great men (lit. princes) did set and speak against me;

But Thy servant did meditate in Thy statutes;

Ver. 24 - Greatly delightful and instructive

Are Thy testimonies.

Belshazzar

It is no uncommon weakness in the child of God, that the non-reception of the truth by others leads him to question it. Aroused to the apprehension of the coming of the Lord, he is chilled by the torpor and indifference of those about him. This sensibility to external impression may arise, because walking too little in the power of individual communion. The Spirit's witness through the word is the fullest persuasion; and we depart from His guidance when the heart asks for collateral testimony. But the word of God has obvious teaching in this respect. "All scripture is given by inspiration." The antediluvian world was heedless of the preaching of Noah. "They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." So in Sodom, when Lot went out and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, "Up I get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked 'unto his sons-in-law" (Gen. 19:14). Indifference to the testimony of God, and the warnings of His word, betokens the proximity of judgment. We who believe in the speedy advent of our Lord, will do well to take heed that nothing from without, or even from within, distract the attention from the solemn cry, " Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" The warning brought many into active service, and drew them outside the camp, bearing the reproach. The word reached their consciences. They sought to be prepared. But fellowship has its snares as well as its blessings. Much of joy, and no little of danger. Individual energy may give rise to corporate fellowship; but the latter may decline into individual apathy. Association may deaden, as well as revive.

The position which God gave to many of His people in our day, was taken when escaping from a chaos of confusion. They had light, and a measure of faith, and this insured a blessing. Sympathy of soul with others about the Lord (unless the eye is kept single), may degenerate into sympathy with one another, and unity occupy the soul instead of the object of union; and thus individuality be crushed for a season-conscience seared, and the torpor of others, affect ourselves. "But the word of God is quick and powerful." Blessed that it is so!

It is a solemn narrative which is brought before us in the judgment of Belshazzar. A tragic drama in human history! Portraying in vivid colors the careless world on the brink of ruin. Ages have rolled on in unbroken succession, striking events have occurred in the annals of mankind; but so concise a narrative of haughty pride, on the verge of destruction, is hardly paralleled.

Belshazzar had positive warning, and this was disregarded. "A more convenient season" (Acts 24:25), is the plea of some; a pressure of engagements, the apology of others. Sudden destruction is the doom of procrastination. "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed" (Prov. 13:13). The habit of good may be gradual in attainment, the habit of evil gradual in its development; unlooked-for results occur in both. "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" At one time, we may blush at the thought; at another be hardened for the act. "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins."

The prophet Daniel brings home to the conscience of Belshazzar, that he had slighted reproof and scorned instruction. In verses 18 and 21, God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar are noticed, and the summary in verse 22, " And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, Hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this." How effectually does this short notice unravel the history! How it recalled to remembrance the marvelous dealings of the God of Israel with his predecessor on the throne, in the person of Nebuchadnezzar! Surely the chart of his life was retraversed in that moment of agony. How quickened his memory! How vivid the past! The mysterious ways of Jehovah! His singular power! His arm of protection thrown over his captives in Babylon! In bondage, yet occupying a palace! Hated and despised, yet respected and powerful! Mixed up with the nation, yet dwelling alone! The seed of the patriarchs, expelled their inheritance, because they had broken God's covenant, yet preserved and exalted because of God's promise!

Gorgeous splendor surrounded the youth of Belshazzar. The Chaldean empire, with Babylon for its capital, had just reached the zenith of its glory. A succession of conquests, under renowned leaders, and the permission of God in His providence, had brought the then known world, to the feet of the dynasty of Babylon. The head of gold was significant of this. Doubtless the education of Belshazzar had regard to his position and destiny. Near the of this greatness, events were sufficiently green in man's memory to rouse emulation. A stirring time gives birth to active energies. The symbols of empire and trophies of victory had not faded with age. Power was consolidated; and the struggle to obtain it, unforgotten as yet, and remembered to give joy, amid the security which success had accomplished. The empire was won, and won for Belshazzar.

Imagination has no place in the records of Scripture. The facts are so full they occupy space in the heart of a man, and coloring them is only to crowd in what is needless. Yet the youth of Belshazzar, and his mind in his youth, would not lack culture. Chaldean historians would bring before him the records of his race, and their contests with Israel. Stern battles had been fought, victories won, and defeats sustained. Sudden panic in the moment of triumph! A summons to halt, in the same breath with the charge to advance! Mysterious power destroying whole hosts in a night! This and far more, the prince would hear in his boyhood, and Eastern coloring would give a charm to the narrative. Then, there was the cleansing of Naaman the leper, the siege of the prophet in Dothan, the defeat of Sennacherib, and the midnight alarm of the Syrian camp in the days of Ahab. Men can afford to amplify danger, when they have succeeded in overcoming it, and gather fresh reasons for triumph in the resolute resistance and determined valor, they had finally subdued. But more to the purpose in the life of Belshazzar is recorded in the chapter before us.

The children of Israel, of the blood royal of her kings, were inmates of the palace of Nebuchadnezzar. Strange wisdom was theirs. To tell of the past is human; to foretell the future, divine. The Chaldean sages were baffled; the youth of Israel triumphed. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar had departed from, him (chapter 2)--the impression remained. Yet who could bring it fresh to his memory? The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said--"O There is not a man upon earth that can skew the king's matter" (verse 10); but God revealed it to the seed of His chosen (verse 19). Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night-vision (verse 46). And " the king Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and worshipped "; and " the king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a Revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret" (verses 48 and 49). Surely Daniel found that " in God's favor was life, and His loving-kindness better than life." The captives were lords in the king's

household.

The 3rd chapter of Daniel records the triumph of Israel over the image of gold which Nebuchadnezzar the king set up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. The furnace was prepared for the destruction of the witnesses of Jehovah. Yet the guards, who essayed to cast them bound into the fire, were consumed by the heat of the flames without; Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, were uninjured within. These marvels would have their influence, on the mind of Belshazzar: the conscience of youth is tender, and easily impressed. But the prophet's voice in the hour of his judgments revealed his awful impenitence-" And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this!"

But more striking still was the humiliation of Nebuchadnezzar the king. Surrounded by greatness, untaught by his dreams, uninstructed at the furnace, unhumbled by all, he boasted in his glory, as if he alone had achieved it, and magnified his possessions, as though he were sole architect of his fame. Chapter 5:29-" At the end of twelve months Nebuchadnezzar walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" " While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee" (verses 32 and 33). Verse 34-" And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation." Thus God wrought on the mind of the first representative of Gentile power. The head of gold was taught to tread softly in the position of empire. In himself both the moral and the precept. It might be when his hair had grown gray he instructed Belshazzar. How marvelous the lesson-not less so the instructor. The might of Jehovah had given him dominion, and when seated in dignity he had neglected to own Him. The power of God had visited him in chastisement; yet, marvelous loving-kindness, it was not to crush him. He had lifted himself against God, and assumed His prerogative. God condescended to chasten, and then to restore; He bruised, that He might heal; He suffered him to become as a beast, that (humbled and lowly) he might henceforth remember he was but of dust. And his understanding returned, and he gave God thanks, and blessed the King of kings and Lord of lords. And Belshazzar, his successor, was instructed in this; but, alas! in the words of Daniel, " he did not humble his heart, though he knew all this."

There, are gradations in evil. But Scripture is silent on the career of Belshazzar, until the curtain is withdrawn in the chapter before us. He had given reins to his lusts. Impatient of restraint, like an impetuous steed, he took the bit in his mouth, and disdainingly admonition, rushed on in the frenzy of pride. He would be served with the vessels which were consecrated to the worship of Jehovah. In the folly of his heart he would be as God. But the moment of triumph was the hour of judgment. "Did any ever harden themselves against God and prosper."

"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at

Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the sooth-sayers. And the king spake, and said to the wise men of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and skew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king's wise men: hut they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonished" (Dan. 5:1-9).

Solemn moment I anxious expectancy absorbed the mind of the king-the mysterious hand and mystic writing disturbed his revels. The music was still-the guests breathless-fear upon all. Their impious effrontery was awed by the finger of God. The inebriate became sober, the dread of judgment was stronger than the fumes of the wine. The careless were attentive, the jocund still, and the quiet of the grave reigned in the chamber of revelry. The hand-writing upon the wall accomplished this. The rumor spreads (verses 10, 11, 12): " Now the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet-house: and the queen spake and said, O king, live forever." That voice sounds strangely on the ears of the monarch. She had hurried to the scene of festivity, forgetful of all but the terror of him, whose steps she had guarded in infancy, and now saw trembling, though crowned with a diadem. Who should shed light on the characters, who should explain their purport? "Then was Daniel brought in before the king." The man of God who had given the warnings, which had passed unheeded, was now called in to read the sentence of judgment on the eve of execution. Large gifts were promised as if in remembrance that he had been neglected. The dignity of office was proffered, royal power proposed. Strange inconsistency of man. To give like a king in the hour of terror, helpless to all that he needed! (ver. 13-24).

" And this is the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it. TEKEL; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."

" How was he brought into desolation as in a moment" (Psa. 73:19). How different the end of the believer! " Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory" (v. 23). There is intimate connection between the book of Daniel and the Revelation of St. John. Evil is developed in both, and judgment follows; much of the one is matter of history now, much in both remains for fulfillment. As has been remarked by another, the first six chapters of Daniel give us power in the hands of the Gentiles, and their conduct in possession of it. In the book of Revelation we have the fact, that the Gospel amongst the Gentiles would end in utter corruption, and the testimony of our Lord to the judgment of the nations, and the call of his people to be separate would be disregarded, and men seek to improve it, and find a home in it. Luke 19:12, 13, 14.-" A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." The faithfulness.

of his servants in his absence depended upon the assurance of his return; the character also of their service upon their estimate of his character. In Mark 2:18 the question was asked of our Lord, " Why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall-they fast in those days." The return of the Lord was to be the hope of the church. The measure of faithfulness in testimony depended upon the brightness of this hope: His love brought him into the world, where he was set at naught and crucified. His people are given him out of the world, left here to witness of the grace which was ready to pardon the vilest sinner, but also of certain judgment on the impenitent. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:7 and 8).

The coming of the Lord will surprise the world, as the flood did its inhabitants in the days of Noah, or the destruction of Sodom in the days of Lot. It will be as unlooked for as the change from the banquet in the palace of Babylon to the midnight slaughter of Belshazzar, and the transfer of the kingdom to Darius the Mede. And this judgment will take place when the iniquity is at its height. Repeated testimonies superciliously disregarded. The cry " Behold He cometh!" the subject of merriment! " There shall come scoffers in the last days, walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Peter 3:3). And Jude declares, " There shall be mockers in the last time" (ver. 18). Let not then the non-reception of the truth by others lead us to doubt it, but the rather, seeing Scripture speaks of the coming of Christ surprising a careless professing people and a guilty world, " Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5:6).

W.

Biblical Researches: or Occasional Criticisms Upon Various Subjects, Texts, Words, Etc., in Scripture

Introduction.

"Familiar acquaintance" and "thorough knowledge," though akin, are different; they may sometimes even be contrasted the one to the other. Thus, few persons have a thorough knowledge of their native tongue or language, although they have, of course, familiar acquaintance with it.

As to the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek languages, I pretend not to either "familiar acquaintance" or to "thorough knowledge"-properly so called. Yet, having long felt that it was a needless dishonor to myself, when God had put into my hand a revelation, from and of Himself, written therein, not to know these tongues at all, I have sought with some diligence, and at least much labor, to use the Scriptures in my private reading as they were written.

The Lord, who confounded the language of men, that they should not understand one another's speech,-when the iniquity of the post-diluvian age was ripe enough to combine in independency of Him, has condescended to make his revelation in three languages, vouchsafing also a very good translation of the whole in our mother tongue, and more or less correct translations into the languages current in the various countries of Christendom. I could not be satisfied, where intercourse was frequent, to speak to my brethren in the Lord, or even to men, merely through the medium of an interpreter; much less could I be satisfied to allow a translation of the Bible into my own tongue to stand between me and the Bible as it was written. I thought (and do think still) that a child of God might plead with Him for help to read His WORD as He wrote it; and so, at least, be ready to estimate aright any suggested emendation, and acquire competency to see through the many false glosses, of which ignorance and self-sufficiency are the parents; at all events, enough to detect the want of kindredship between "improvements" and "alterations"; for while every needless alteration, as such, is to be deprecated, doubtless faith and humility may find defects, and, therefore, room for improvement in every translation made by uninspired men.

In pursuing this course, one could not divest one's own mind of its previous knowledge of the English authorized version; but then one gained the power to examine its value, and to mark and guard against any bias it might contain. The result has been an increased sense;-1st, Of individual ignorance; 2ndly, of the difficulty of making a good translation of any, but especially of such, a book as the Bible; and, 3rdly, of the value of our English authorized version.

In cultivating wisdom-that wisdom which, while it dwells in us and is practical in our walk, consists in the appropriation of Heavenly light by the renewed affections-we ought not either to refuse to weigh a criticism; or, when assured of its value, refuse to communicate it to others. With what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again. That good measure pressed down and running over, may be measured into my own bosom is my desire. I would, therefore, give freely, yet with reverence, before God, as seeking not to handle the word of God lightly or deceitfully. If I

desire that those to whom I write should, by the word and by the testimony, " prove all things," and hold fast that only which is truth,- I trust, also, that God may vouchsafe so much of light as to produce, on both writer and reader, the feeling of " Who is sufficient for these things? " as contrasted with that feeling of empty conceit which a little light sometimes produces.

My object is not display but edification; he who can only read English will find (if God prospers my effort) that which will help him in the Scriptures; and they that have the balances of the sanctuary-the Truth-with them, and know how to use them, may return, in some other form of blessing, that which they read; for there is unity in Scripture; and thus the elucidation of a very little point will often open a very large portion to us; even as, also, ignorance of or misunderstanding of large portions of Scripture grows out of error in some small detail.

The Candlestick

To any soul quickened into life through Christ Jesus (risen from the death due to us), and thus and then united to Him,-must be deeply interesting, the path and service he may observe to be well-pleasing to the Lord; and not only so, but also, the definite testimony which he, in common with his fellow-partakers in this life, as members in the one body, should pursue here, as expressive of the reality and blessedness of union with the Head.

I need scarcely remark that, until our own individual interests are assured to us in the Lord, we shall have no heart or power to be interested for His glory in the Church, or for the members of it. A true servant must be unselfish. Until peace keeps my heart and mind, " the Apostles' course is little regarded by me" (Phil. 4:9), and the source of the peace is imperfectly known to me. But to one from whom the pathetic appeal of Jesus " Lovest thou Me," can awaken the same plain, earnest response as it did from Peter,-it must be a subject of no small moment, how he may prove his love, according to the word, in feeding and caring for (and both are implied) the sheep,-objects of the love of Christ. Love to the Lord Jesus is the great ability and qualification wanting to most for such service. The service is feeding and caring for: no political movement, no amelioration of the propensities of our nature can ever reach to the deep and important and personal interest expressed by "feeding and caring for." If we love, let us show our love. Dear to Christ Jesus is the feeding and caring for the sheep, and not less can satisfy the heart that loves Him. The Church should be of things on earth, our sole interest and service. St. Paul could say-I fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body's sake which is the Church; and again, I endure all things for the elects' sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. The great point is, Service to the Church; this is too plainly enforced to be denied, though the manner in which this is attempted to be rendered is the fruitful cause of many and grievous mistakes. In truth, to know how rightly to feed and care for the Church we need to be instructed in the nature and doctrines of the Church. If that which we call the church is but an assembly bound to observe a certain ritual and ceremonies,-to serve it will fall very far short of the intention of Christ and lead to a very different course from that which a man will follow who regards every believer as a member of the mystical body of Christ, and as one who ought to be served referentially to that union, which is true in Christ, and would be declared here but for the interposition of the flesh, and is declared so far as the flesh is crucified; for the Spirit is one, and spiritual service must lead to this; not merely to a nominal union but to a union, as true and as real and as holy as that which the members in particular have with the Head. The Spirit cannot countenance less nor can He work in God's servants for less. So that whenever anything discordant or disaffective to the union, as it is in Christ, arises, then, just so far, there must be a breach in union, in godly union here. True service begins with Christ, who is the Head, and when Christ is forgotten then the service is defective; it has lost connection with the spring and fountain of all service, because it is from the Head that all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered increaseth. The body is of Christ and He loves it as He loves Himself, and every one who would serve it will best learn to do so by knowing His heart and purposes towards it. In a word

it is Christ serves, though it may be through us. We are but "joints and bands:" if we are not derivative and communicative from Christ, we are useless. To be useful, my eye and heart must be on Christ, and not on the issue of my service; though if true to Him, the end will vindicate me too, however disheartening the interval. He who judges of his service by present appearances will judge by the blossom and not by the fruit; and after all the service is not for the sake of the Church but for the sake of Christ; and if he be served in the Church, though the Church own it not, yet, Christ being served, He will own it. Now the constant effort of Satan is to disconnect, in our minds, Christ from our service; and this, much more than any of us, perhaps, have fully discovered. Whether in reading, or praying, or speaking, how seldom, if we judge ourselves, do we find that we act simply as towards Christ and Him alone! How often may sentimentality and natural feelings affect us in our service, instead of simple love to Him?

Such was the sin of the church of Ephesus. You could not say that they did not show interest for the members, as far as man could see; they had works and patience-could not bear them that were evil-had tried them which say they are apostles, and are not. Laborious, righteous, strict in discipline, nay, laboring also for the sake of Christ, and yet they were wanting in the all-engrossing undivided affection for Christ, which "first love" designates. The absence of first love entailed the loss of "first works" and the inevitable judgment was the removal of their candlestick, or ability to hold light for the guidance of others. The symbol of a candlestick illustrates the peculiar and blessed office of the church upon earth to be a lightbearer in the midst of surrounding darkness, and thus a guide; but this it forfeited when it failed in simple and abstract reference to Christ as the center of affection and the object of all service. If the first fruits of service are not rendered to Christ, there can be no real service to the members. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another: there could be no fellowship in the flesh; flesh is selfish; fellowship obtains when flesh is silenced, and in the light to which Jesus has introduced the quickened members of His body, through His own life. If we love our brother we abide in the light and light is in the presence of God where Christ has set us; it is known to us by our union with Jesus-when we walk in it we walk in the consciousness of Himself, because He alone is our light.

He is the light of men. When we walk in the light we must serve according to the mind of Christ. If we attempt to serve otherwise, it is no service. If we are not abiding in Christ we are not in the light, and hence our service will be in darkness and we can do nothing. If we abide in Christ, we are supplied with strength and nourishment from Him who supplies the members. He is the light and gives us light, and by Him alone can we bear light; without Him we can do nothing; we have no light to know our own course, we know not at what we stumble; apart from the light we can not guide ourselves, much less others; we are but blind leaders of the blind, we forfeit the blessing of giving light.

If Christ, who would give power and ability to us for service, is lost sight of by us, we have not the first works which grow out of the heart devoted to Christ; and we consequently lose the effect which they would produce. In the church of Ephesus I doubt not but that the first incipient form of declension is denounced, and the judgment for such declension is the removal of the candlestick. The removal of the candlestick was not the penalty of open evil: it was the first punishment for the first and earliest form of declension.

Adam's first emotions which led to his fatal fall were doubts of the perfectness of the love of God. He left his first love. He was the first example of man losing the place of lightbearer to this earth, because his heart swerved in fidelity and love to God. He did not eat of the tree of life; but he that overcomes this, the first and earliest tendency of our poor faithless hearts, shall eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

I think it is important to note that there is no allusion to the intent of removing the candlestick to any church after Ephesus. The reason of this, I think, is that the other churches had sinned more grievously, and hence their judicial treatment is more severe than with Ephesus. Here let me observe, that I fear we shall err much if we forget that the seven churches mentioned in the Revelation, as representing the candlestick are all under judgment now. This is important, because if I take them for precedents for my present action, I am manifestly, by adopting any of their maxims or principles, placing myself under judgment where they are. True it is, I may be described by one or other of the churches, but assert that no zealous and devoted saint or company of saints could seek to follow any of their ways as a whole, yea, rather but would seek to be unlike them, seeing that they are under sentence of judgment for being what they are, and instead of seeking to them for lines of guidance we should rather seek how we may avoid resemblance to them. We need only refer to Paul's opinion of them as expressed in 2 Tim. 1:15; where he says, "All they which are in Asia are turned away from me." Now I should not gather from this that all the Christians in Asia were deceivers, and had given up the profession of Christianity; no such thing. I believe they had departed from the truth relative to the churches present position and hopes; just the same as Demas in the 4th chapter; "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present age. (τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα). He had not necessarily given up Christianity; he gave up the idea that the church was purely heavenly without any earthly hopes, and that it was only to traverse this dark world as heavenly citizens bearing the light of God through it, as the body of Christ. He could not bear to regard himself as so completely cut off from earth and no longer to have a hold, position, or citizenship here; he could not brook the doctrine that our citizenship is in Heaven (see Phil.). And like him were all they that were in Asia. Hence the seven churches are presented to me not as patterns for imitation, but specimens of the declension which would occur, and from following which we ought to be deterred by the judgments inflicted on them. Ask me to shape my course by any number of Christians, whom the Apostle tells me have turned away from him "!" no surely. Rather it relieves me to find that there is especial notice taken and judgment passed on them, who disregarded his high and holy teaching; and though, as I have already allowed, the seven churches so dealt with, may and do stand there as representative of the general condition of the church, yet this in no way affects my statement; they are not for our guidance but for our warning. And he who follows them, follows that which was under sentence of losing its blessing. Nor is it an argument of any weight to say that because certain solemn duties are not mentioned as being observed by them, and which they are not admonished to observe, that, therefore, they were not obligatory in a condition similar to theirs. Can a church or any body exercise discipline or observe solemn duties till it first rights itself corporately as touching foundation-truth. Ephesus Was applauded for her discipline, but when she lost her candlestick, would she discipline? Did any of them retain the candlestick? Unless cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart what was the value of discipline? Does it not argue a very low state of spiritual apprehension to remind a church of one of the essential attributes of its existence as discipline undoubtedly is? Is not Pergamos censured for retaining (ἡ χεῖρ κέ) amongst them " those that

hold the doctrine of Balaam," and also, " those that hold the doctrines of the Nicolaitanes." How (I may ask) could they get rid of these but by discipline? and yet some quote Pergamos as a precedent to us for not using discipline. Why, their fault was that they had not used discipline. Nay more, they had not discovered the power of Christ as the sharp sword to repel and destroy such false doctrines. In like manner it is alleged, that, because in Sardis a few names are said not to have defiled their garments, and that, consequently, they shall walk in white, that this is a precedent for us to satisfy our consciences that, though we are in connection with what is manifestly erroneous, yet we may be individually pure and untainted ourselves, and hence indifferent as to separating from such unhallowed associations. If this is the light which Sardis diffuses, it savors little of Him who is the light. In a corporate character, Sardis is described as having only a name to live, and her works are incomplete before God. She is accordingly warned, that unless she remember how she has received, and heard, and holds fast, and repents, that judgment will come on her as a thief; but even in the event of this judgment being consummated, a few names will be carried through the tribulation. There are some sincere ones who have not defiled their garments, they shall overcome the evil influences affecting Sardis. They shall walk in white and he that overcometh shall thus be clothed (see Greek) in white.. We are told in the end of chap. 7, whom "white" characterizes; and, therefore, we may conclude, that the wearers of white here are not those who remained in the low condition in which Sardis is here described, but rather those who have overcome, and through trial renounced, the deadness and evil there so dominant for they alone have white garments who 'overcome; they did not assent to the evil; they had not defiled their garments, but they were to do more, they were to renounce and overcome it; and they would do so, for " they shall walk in white for they are worthy;" no neutral ground but a decided victory and superiority over the pressure marked their course-their destined course. It is unnecessary for me further to pursue this subject, deeply interesting and important as it is. But to return to consider a little more in detail the characteristics of the candlestick. To the quickly sensitive and affectionate heart it must have been painful to hear of disqualification from bearing of light. Light is of God -Christ is our light unto God. From Adam to Christ every witness had failed to hold out the light of God to the world. In Christ, was life and He was the light of man. He shined in the darkness; but the darkness did not comprehend Him. In Christ the saints have life; and this is the argument of 1 John 1. Therefore we are in the light, we have fellowship with the Father and the Son: as long as we abide here we are in the light; we have fellowship one with another, and we know whither we go. And if the candlestick have failed, nothing can rob us of the privilege individually of being light-bearers, but loss of "first love;" loss of that deep and fervent interest in the person of Christ, which would supply us with power and intelligence to guide the souls of others. Paul could say, "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ." Nothing so attracts the sheep as the shepherd: none can guide as He does. None can restore but the Shepherd. The soul is in an unhealthy state when anything but Christ appears to restore it. Devotedness raises the question, " What is thy beloved more than another Beloved?" It is not doctrine, dry and correct, that feeds and leads the souls of Christ's flock. It is Christ Himself, vividly and truly declared. He is the bread of life. The pasturage attracts the sheep, for Christ stands and feeds in the strength of the Lord. If a number of believers meet together, there is no promise of blessing unless they meet in the name of the Lord Jesus. The Apostle when directing the Corinthians how to vindicate the holiness of God among them; tells them they are to gather together in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. If they assembled otherwise they could not reckon on the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. "

For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." If it be said, and alas! it may justly be said (with sorrow and humiliation) that we know little of the power or presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only answer is, It is so, because we do not simply meet in His name. This I again repeat was the sin of Ephesus; this is the first form of declension, and practically we know what a sad train of weakness and carelessness follows with it. Meeting in His name implies, at least, that we unreservedly commit ourselves to Him, that we depend on naught save Him and His Spirit to feed and satisfy our souls; nay, that naught else is allowed. May our minds weigh the portentous meaning of these words to which are attached, even to the end, such wondrous blessing and blessings, alas! so little known by us. Do we want blessing as for the two or three meeting together? Let us meet in the name of the Lord Jesus. Do we want power? Where will the power we need be found, save in that Blessed One. Do we desire that our light may shine forth? The tender all-absorbing emotions of first love alone can effect that. Let us not think that our devotedness to Christ, however earnest and self-sacrificing, will discourage or deter any Christian. Doubtless it will raise opposition where there is a name more than a reality; but the sheep will follow the shepherd's voice. The more undilutedly His grace flows from us, the more will it commend itself to the simple-hearted saint. When did Abimelech seek unto Isaac? (Gen. 26). After Isaac by slow and sorrowful steps had separated from all the attractive region of Abimelech's influence. He proved his superiority by renouncing what the other lived

in. This manifestation of moral power led the Philistine king to Isaac's retirement, and to seek a covenant with him. Here he was indeed light-displaying. Again, David in Adullam's cave, the cheerless hold, had more numerous and more illustrious followers than in Saul's palace (1 Sam. 22:1). Simple suffering devotedness is always attractive. The maintenance, the strict and holy maintenance of truth in honor to Christ, whilst it repels the Deceiver, assures the heart and invigorates the purposes of the faithful. Witness the effect of the solemn judgment in Acts 5:13,14, "of the rest durst no man join himself to them;" and yet, "believers were the more added to the Lord multitudes both of men and women."

In the consummation of all blessing "the Lamb shall be the light," and around Him, in one holy and bright array will all the saints be marshalled, and as we are like unto Him now, as "Christ is formed in us" (which the Galatians needed) are we the bearers of light before the world. S.

Colossians 1:12-19

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.

David Serving His Generation

"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." Acts 13:36.

It is truly wonderful to mark the controlling power of God over agents the most unconscious and unwilling, so as to render them subservient to the effectuating His own counsel; "howbeit in his heart he thinketh not so." But it is equally important to see, when God has, from time to time, raised up special instruments for the work He has to be done, such instruments have ever manifested that both the wisdom and power they have is derived from God. So long as they have acted in their proper sphere they have succeeded; because they have acted in faith. "The Lord of Hosts is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." Such considerations give great present calmness to the believer: God has given to us "the spirit of a sound mind." We know that God has a counsel, and it shall stand, although he bringeth the counsel of the heathen to naught; we need not feel ourselves as though God could not carry out his own counsel without our plans or assistance. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?" In the rich grace wherein God has abounded toward us in redemption, he has "abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." He has left no contingency to be provided for by the wisdom and prudence of his saints: their power of serving him is faith. Hence, says the Apostle, whom his adversaries would charge with acting from policy, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." But it is one of the results of the fall that man affects creative power, and rejoices in the works of his hands; but that which he makes is like himself, even without continuance. He may strive to perpetuate that which he vainly conceives he has originated; but God knows the thoughts of man that they are but vain. That only can stand which God both originates and perpetuates. On this point, as well as others touching the pretensions of man, God will come to an issue with man. To those who know redemption, the issue has been already joined, and the result is, that no flesh can glory in His presence; but he that glorieth can only glory in the Lord: 46 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." He alone can "bear the glory," who is able to say, "I am the first and the last," "the Alpha and the Omega," "the beginning and the end." The essential glory of His person is the security for effectuating His work. All real subordinate ministry flows directly from Him. He has ascended up on high, and "he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers," and he still gives them, according to his own sovereign will. He has not left the ministry for the building up of his body to depend upon succession, as the Aaronic priesthood; or on the schools of philosophy, as in ancient times; or on universities or academies, as in our day; or on popular choice, as in the case of the seven deacons recorded in the Acts; but directly on Himself. In giving such gifts of ministry he has not given to them the responsibility of devising means to perpetuate his work: He works in them, and "with them;" and they only work healthfully as they hang upon Him, and fill up that place in the body which he has assigned to them for its present service. Hence in their ministerial capacity, as well as their capacity as Christians, they

alone "stand by faith."

The analogy afforded by the history of Israel is very striking. After the death of Joshua, God was pleased to act by the extraordinary ministry of Judges for four hundred years. "Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled, them; and yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them; they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers had walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord, but they did not so. And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them, and vexed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way." When the men of Israel would have perpetuated their blessing after their own thoughts, in the case of Gideon, one of their judges, Gideon, refused their offer. " Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian. And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you." Gideon had fulfilled his mission, and served his generation. God had wrought by Gideon to bring Israel to depend on Himself, and Gideon sought to answer the same end. On the other hand, the prominent failure of Samuel, otherwise so remarkably blameless, was the attempt to perpetuate his own mission in his sons: " And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." This led to the people's desire for a king: " Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." Samuel may have seen more distinctly than Gideon that such a request was the rejection of Jehovah himself as their king; yet he had vainly thought to perpetuate good government through his sons, whom God had not called to that ministry.

Among many instructions afforded us in God answering the desire of the people for a king, in giving them Saul, and then removing him, according to the word of the Prophet: " I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath "-the important truth, that perpetuation of blessing rests alone with God, is sufficiently apparent. So that even when God himself " raised up unto them David to be their king, to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, which shall fulfill all my will," the highest honor which God put upon David was to be a type of his own seed, in whom alone blessing can possibly be perpetuated-" Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever." It is in this order that the Holy Ghost himself leads our thoughts by the apostle (Acts 13), abruptly turning from David to David's seed: "Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus." But David served his own generation, and in doing so did that which he sought to do in another way, even serve posterity. This is an important principle, that in serving our own generation, doing our appointed service in God's way, and in His time, we do really secure the very thing which we attempt to secure by providing for the future by means of our own devising. In trying to act for posterity we retrograde, and oppose a barrier to others carrying on the work which God may have assigned to us to commence. In this manner it would seem that the Reformation was hindered; the reformers were anxious to secure that precious truth which God, through them,

had revived. In doing this they hindered their own progress, and got off the ground of faith. They succeeded in establishing that which they allowed to be imperfect and incomplete; and by this Establishment have hindered to this day the progress of others, because their established imperfection has become the standard to their posterity. Most blessedly did David serve his generation, when the Lord took him as he said, " From the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: and I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth." It was the time of David's " trouble," but it was also the time of his real greatness, and of his most important service, to his generation: David then magnified the Lord, and the Lord magnified David in the sight of all Israel. Walking before the Lord, David could afford to appear vile in the eyes of Michal, and of all who despised him. No two things are morally more opposite, than the Lord making an individual great, and the same person whom the Lord has magnified acting the great man himself. Here truly is found the need of "hind's feet" to tread on our high places. The Lord magnified Moses by his promise, "Certainly I will be with thee." "And the man Moses became very great in the land of Egypt, and in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people." The Lord would not allow any insult to be put on his chosen servant, but promptly resented it. Once only did this chosen servant magnify himself, and it is written for our instruction: "And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice...And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

David had most blessedly served his generation, "when the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies." At this time, "when the king sat in his house," the thought came into his heart that it was not suitable for the ark of the Lord to dwell in curtains, whilst he was dwelling in a house of cedar. David knew well the value of the presence of the Lord, and he sought to secure it in a way which seemed right in his own eyes, and which commended itself also to the judgment of Nathan the prophet. But "who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him." The man after God's own heart, and an inspired prophet, are alike destitute of true counsel when not walking by faith under the immediate guidance of the Spirit of Truth. The thought of David was a pious thought, it was the expression of that desire of the renewed heart for rest, without conflict, in the immediate presence of God: " Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart, notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house." Zeal without knowledge, and piety apart from actual dependence on God, have proved alike dangerous to the truth of God: it has pleased God to spew that He of his own grace delights to "provide some better thing for us," than we should choose for ourselves. Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration, out of a true heart, said, " It is good for us to be here"; but what better thoughts had the Lord for Peter, that, instead of being under the shelter of the glory, as he then stood, he should be actually in the glory with Jesus, where he had seen Moses and Elias. Had David been allowed to act under the impulse of his own heart, and to build the house which his son built, what a loser had David been: every quickened soul is almost unconsciously drawn to David, and as unconsciously little interested in Solomon. David "in his troubles" finds truer sympathy in our hearts than Solomon in " all his glory." Had David, according to his desire, acted for another

generation, instead of serving God in his own, we are all able to see what he would have lost. Nathan now instructed in the mind of the Lord, is sent to David with the message of the Lord. The first great truth announced is, that the will, even of the saint, is not to take the lead in the things of God; if permitted, the result would be "will-worship," one of the most fearful evils in the Church of God. It is our part to "prove what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God." So long as God is pleased to "walk in a tent, and in a tabernacle," it is not for any one to build him a house. Solomon, according to the promise of God to David, his father, did, build a house for the Lord; the house was filled with the glory of the Lord, and called by his name; but in due course it becomes the subject of prophetic denunciation (Jer. 7:11-14): its history, with brief gleams of relief, is the history of Israel's abomination, till at last the Lord himself suddenly comes to His temple and finds it a den of thieves, and utterly repudiates it; it is no longer a house which he could own as his, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate."

The next thing announced by Nathan was the determinate counsel of the Lord, in His own time and way, to give settled rest to his people Israel, according to and far beyond their heart's desire: "Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more." This is the happy theme of many a prophecy, the cheering close to many a heavy burden, "Jehovah-shammah" (Ezek. 48:35; Jer. 3:16-18; Obad. 1:1, 21; Luke 1:32,33).

But the most blessed part of the announcement still remains to be noticed: "Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house." David would have been content to have built a house for the Lord, but the Lord's thoughts were higher, even for the Lord to build a house for David. This was the word of recovery to David's soul. It brought him before the Lord. He reviews all the gracious dealings of the Lord with him, and becomes suitably impressed with a sense of his own insignificance, "Who am I, O Lord God?" Such was not the thought in David's mind when he sat in his own house, he then looked from himself, but now from the Lord to himself. It is this which ever checks the thought of the consequence of our own service, as well as the attempt of doing that which the Lord has not called us to do: "By the grace of God I am what I am; I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." It is equally a sin to run without being sent, and not to come to the help of the Lord against the mighty when he calls. The Lord can do without us, but we cannot do without him: if he be pleased to use us, sufficient is the honor of being the servants of such a master, but we only really serve him as we do the work of our own generation; the moment we cease to serve by faith, we regard the sphere of service as our own, forgetting that the husbandry and building on which we are occupied is not ours, but belongs to Him whom we serve. Needful is it also in contemplating any service, to retrace the way the Lord has led us "hitherto." But all is "small" now in David's estimation compared with the promise of the Lord of making him a house: David's work of making a house for the Lord is now superseded by the happier thought of God making him a house. If we would happily and healthfully serve our generation, it mu be by giving to the Lord his due preeminence in service as well as in everything else: "I am among you as he that serveth"; and he still serves at the right hand of God, making intercession for us.

"And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God, but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come., And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?" The manner of man is to rejoice in the work of his hands: he seeks to achieve something great to make himself a

name. His work will often survive him; but in process of time it falls to decay, to add to the monuments of the vanity of man by the very means he seeks to secure: his greatness. But what God does he does "forever." David served his generation and fell asleep, but the promise of God to David, when he was disappointing his desire to build a house for the Lord, became the sustainment of faith throughout Israel's dreary history, and will be again, when faith shall be revived in Israel. The multitude looked to the temple; faith in the godly remnant regarded the promise to David. God brought judgment on Israel for their confidence in the house, but he showed mercy for David's sake. David's disappointment has, in the result, proved to be his service to his posterity. Is the house of David threatened with extermination by the confederacy of Israel and Syria in the days of king Ahaz: "It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass." God had made David a house, and this confederacy shall only tend to prove its stability: "Hear ye now, O house of David, is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," David's son and David's Lord. Is Hezekiah sorely beset by the armies of the blasphemous king of Assyria; the cry of Hezekiah to the Lord is answered in mercy, "For I will defend this city to save it for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake." It had not been said in vain, "Also the Lord saith, I will make thee an house." Do the people go into captivity and emerge from it only to be "servants" in their own land unto the kings whom the Lord had set over them because of their sins; how cheering must have been the angelic announcement, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David." What a meaning in the words, "I will make thee an house!" "Is not this the Son of David?" and, "O Son of David have mercy on us!" were the expressions of faith during our Lord's own personal ministry. And if either ourselves or Israel look for security of blessing, we are led back to David's disappointment in his service to God (Acts 13:32-34). And David still lives in our memories in Him who, in his closing words of the scripture of truth, announces the fulfillment of all the ancient promises to Israel in announcing himself, "I am the root and the off-spring of David."

But how entirely did David's disappointment in his contemplated service turn to the stability of his own soul in the sure grace and faithfulness of God, "Solomon built him an house," and after accomplishing the "magnificent" work, he leaves, as it were, his last words for our instruction: "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." "What hath a man of all his labor, and of the vexation of his heart wherein he hath labored under the sun?" But how different the last words of David, the lesson he teaches is not only happier but deeper: "Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although it make it not to grow." These are last words indeed, and such will ever be the train of thought of those who serve their generation. There will be no rejoicing in any result of their own service, for the only satisfying result will be, that which the Lord himself will introduce: our expectations may be disappointed, but there is no disappointment to him whose expectation is from the Lord. If a present palpable result be the object we propose to ourselves, we shall certainly be disappointed; but if it be the honor of Christ, and there be no present result answering the desire of our heart, whilst deeply humbled under the sense of our own imperfection, we may take comfort from the language of the only perfect servant, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God."

The apostle Paul served his generation, but he could find no rest in the work of his hands. He had labored more abundantly than all others, yet what profit had he of all his labor under the sun, if he had regarded merely the result. "A great house" had indeed been reared, but it needed purification from within: "All in Asia had turned away from him." But there is no such querulous thought as that which escaped the prophet before him, "I only am left." His soul rises with the emergency: "Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me his prisoner." "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure," however tottering the superstructure, the result of his arduous labors, might appear in his own eyes and the eyes of others: his labor was not in vain in the Lord. His house, if Paul regarded the result of his own service, might not be so with God, but the foundation was sure, and it was all his salvation, and all his desire. He was not discouraged by the result, but gives a solemn charge to Timothy, "to preach the word," "to do the work of an evangelist, to make full proof of his ministry," for he had nearly closed his service to his generation. "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing." Had the "great house" been that which was according to the desire of the heart of the apostle, he might rightfully have rejoiced in the result of his service: but in the wisdom of God it was not so, and the apostle, in serving his own generation, and in finishing his course, has served future generations, even to our own day. Error and evil of every kind were allowed to show themselves in the Church in the days of the Apostles, and the correction of these errors and evils by their inspired writings, supply to us even the place of themselves. Whilst we look to Paul's labors, and praise God for the grace given to him, we look to his writings for the confutation of the errors of our own day, which the apostle met in serving his generation. True it is that men, and even Christians, look at the "great house," and seek either to support it by their own wisdom, or, turning from it in disgust as a failure, strike out a fresh path for themselves to produce something better. It is thus that many are turned away from the truth to infidelity: but faith regardeth that which faileth not, "the foundation of the Lord," and finds the Scriptures more wonderful and more profitable as corruption deepens.

How shall we then serve our generation? This question must be answered by another. Does it please God to walk still in curtains, or to fix his presence in any special place, so that his people may "dwell in a place of their own and move no more"? Does the Holy Ghost still assert his sovereignty with respect to the servants whom he will use "for the work whereunto he calls them"? (Acts 13) Does He still appoint the sphere of their labor, as when he "forbad them to preach in Asia"? Does He still show the special objects of his grace as when He opened the heart of Lydia? If it be so, then establishment is not his order, and we shall not be serving our generation by seeking it. Such a thought would take the care and keeping of the Church out of the hands of its Head, and interfere with the prerogative grace of the Holy Ghost.

Union is strength; men find it to be so, and it is characteristic of our age to seek to effect every purpose by combination. Shall we serve our generation by seeking Christian combination? The Word of God is very pointed here: not only does it say, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord;" but "For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of

hosts himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread, and He shall be for a sanctuary." To seek even Christian combination would not be to sanctify Jesus, "Jehovah-sabaoth" in our hearts, and, therefore, would not be to serve our generation.

Let it be fully granted that the unity of the body is a truth, as blessed as it is practical, and if carried out would be the great moral demonstration of Christ's mission (John 17); yet it is not the truth, and is only valuable as it is subservient to the truth. The unity of the body is not a combination of Christians, such combination neither produces nor promotes it. It is an actual reality resulting from the fact of the redemption of the Church by the finished work of Christ, and by the coming down of the Holy Ghost in consequence of that finished work. To promote this unity practically, can only be a suitable object of service when the unity itself is regarded as a result of a higher object. The Church is not the object proposed to our faith, but Christ himself. We are not exhorted to hold fast the Church, but to hold fast the Head who holds fast the Church. If we see the result of seeking the unity of the Church to the disregard of the honor and glory of Christ, in the wide-spread abomination of popery, have we judged the principle in ourselves in the readiness of our hearts to maintain, a combination of Christians at the expense of Christ's honor and glory. Unity is, indeed, both good and pleasant; but it is the result of the comeliness which Christ has set upon us; and we must not trust to "our own beauty," but "to Him who has beautified us, who is altogether lovely." To endeavor to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" is the common responsibility of all Christians; but it is much easier to keep the rules of any Christian association than the unity of the Spirit. This last cannot be effected without holding fast the Head, and, it is the only unity which does not interfere with individual faith and conscience: on the contrary, it is really promoted by both being kept in exercise. The essence of all confederacies is, that they hinder the exercise of faith and conscience towards God, and shelter self-will; for if the confederacy be honored, all else is disregarded. If we seek as our object to promote unity, we shall not serve our generation; but if we seek Christ's honor first and singly, we shall serve our generation, and secure the blessings which flow immediately from Him.

Human institutions are soon out-grown by the progress of society, and constantly need remodeling: but there is no such pliancy in the truth of God, and that because it is the truth. When the Soul is once awakened to the recognition of the truth of God, it finds in the truth the standard to measure the declension of Christians and the alone power of recovery, " Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." In the too plainly verified prophetic declarations of the evil of the last days, we find the only remedy propounded by the Apostles to be recurrence to first principles. They are first and last, because embodied in Him who is " the first and the last." When the Apostle Peter portrays the fearful corruption arising from damnable heresies privily brought in " by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of "; there is no remedy but in the Lord himself: " The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." If "scoffers" arise it would be dangerous to answer the fool according to his folly; but how safe in such a time to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Thus that which would apparently alarm the soul only tends to its establishment in the sure grace of God: " Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen."

Jude speaks of very evil days, denial of the Lordship of Jesus, connected with the disowning of all constituted authority, and the "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." The power of safety and of recovery is found in earnest contention for the faith once delivered to the Saints, and in building up ourselves on our most holy faith. There can be no enlargement of our creed to meet the progress of the human mind, no human aids to attain a sanctity which results from faith alone, "our most holy faith."

As ministers of Christ we shall best serve our generation by "preaching the word." The Gospel survives, in its blessed simplicity, all the revolutions of empires, and all the errors and controversies of Christians, and still asserts its majesty as the only power which can effectually meet the need of man. It sternly rejects the proffered aid of human advancement. The spirit of the age would "heap teachers to itself according to its own lusts," and seek to give the tone to the Gospel, instead of receiving its impression from it. The Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy looks forward to the full-blown evil of the last perilous days. He describes his Apostleship accordingly: "Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of eternal life which is in Christ Jesus." Eternal life was no where else to be found. In the earlier days of his ministry he had made this profession to the Christians at Rome: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" and now that he is a prisoner at Rome for the Gospel's sake, as if to appearance his labor had been in vain, he writes to Timothy: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." The gospel which was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed in the name of Jesus, brought with it also to those who believed the power to endure. Some, indeed, thought its cause hopeless, others content to know their own personal security, shrunk from the open confession of Christ, because of the cross it involved, and turned their backs on the zealous Apostle of the Gentiles as if his mission had failed: not so Onesiphorus. Of him says the Apostle, " he was not ashamed of my chain, but when he was in Rome he sought me out diligently and found me." If men think the gospel antiquated, and not adapted to the progress of civilization, ministers of Christ will serve their generation by not being ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. Man has need of the gospel as an instrument for his own advancement; and by this means it has lost its real character, and just in proportion as it has by this abuse elevated the world, it has degraded the church. But the gospel, as the instrument of God, is his "power unto salvation": it is "the word of truth;" it has to do with realities. It maintains the unsundered holiness of God, and regards man in his truthful position of sin and helplessness; and then, through the proclamation of the cross, it adjusts the claims of God, and relieves the conscience of the sinner from the guilt of sin, and brings the sinner into peace and nearness with God. This is the truth. The shame may be greater now to " preach the word," because man has made such progress; and it is a strong temptation for ministers of Christ to meet the craving of the age for novelty, talent and learning; but God sets his way in direct contrast with the way of man-" Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

The Apostle John speaks to believers generally as to the last days, and many Antichrists, and we shall serve our generation by giving heed to his word: "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning; if that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father: and this is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life." Christian progress essentially differs from the progress of the world, the

leading of the Spirit of God from that of the spirit of the age. As the world runs its course, luxuries are turned into necessities, new wants are created, and inventions multiplied to satisfy them. The spirit of the age so eminently utilitarian, turns science itself to the account of profit and comfort. It is truly said that you cannot arrest progress; success emboldens enterprise, and nothing seems to be withholden from the daring genius of man. What a contrast to this is Christian progress: " The father in Christ knows Him that is from the beginning." He centralizes everything in one object, even in Christ. The Spirit of God glorifies Christ; and taking of his things and showing them to the soul of the believer satisfies him, " All my springs are in thee." The world leaves the established Christian to himself as one behind the age; but he is in reality before it, having his soul occupied, not with the result of human progress, but with the certain accomplishment of the divine counsel; " All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world, and the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." The Christian will best serve his own generation by maintaining his own proper ground, and asserting the blessedness of the knowledge of Christ at the very moment when man is magnifying himself. It is well, indeed, to be able truthfully to say of Christ, He is " all my salvation "; but how blessed to add, He is " all my desire," and this too in the face of all appearances, " although he maketh not to grow."

Presbutes.

Deuteronomy 32; Habakkuk; Acts 20:29; 2 Timothy; Jude

Moses and the Apostle Paul, each in the respective times or dispensation in which he lived, prophetically bore witness to this, namely, God's people corrupting their ways. They testify of the apostasy and ruin of that entrusted to man's hands-yet (and seen, may we not say, the brighter because of it?) the unchangeable goodness of God-His glorious Majesty and all the unfailing power of His grace, and love, and tender mercy above the sphere of man's conduct, and whatever failure there may be, though He deal with it, and judge it, for He must judge, in that sense, His people.

The prophet Habakkuk establishes and confirms the testimony of Moses. Jude that of Paul. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is established." Others, indeed, as Peter in his second epistle, witness the same. It may be found instructive to examine and compare the Scripture as to this testimony, for where are we? What is God's present testimony to us? Assuredly it is as to His faithfulness and blessedness in spite of failure and corruption. There is witness enough as to the ruin and failure, and, alas! abundant practical proof of our unbelief and folly, but the point which God presses on our consciences is that He is the same. The same God and Father, whose mercy endureth forever. The same God the giver in all His unsearchable riches and inexhaustible fullness. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. The same God the Holy Ghost in all His present living energy and witness, given "that He may abide with you forever." Blessed truth! With this, and having special faith in this, there is a remnant recognized and addressed in the Word, represented in lively way by Habakkuk in his triumph of faith, and specially testified of in Jude, who-in communion with God's thoughts, and walking with and before Him as the living God, and cheered by the promises and truth suited to their circumstances-work on (as those in Ezra) for the building of the House and are sustained in doing so (notwithstanding all the trial and difficulty of the way), by the moral power - the secret divine energy of faith, looking on to the glory itself, not working or building with reference to the scene here only, or so much-as to the time when He will appear, who alone is worthy and able to bear the glory and sit and rule upon His throne. Oh that our hearts could enter into this. That there was given to us the needed confession of sin and failure, the broken and soft heart, and the faith that will work on, not for man or present things, but having respect to the recompense of the reward" and to Him who will dispense crowns of gold and better than that, (Rev. 2.17), hidden manna" and " a white stone and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." But let us glance at the Scriptures quoted. In Deut. 31.29, Moses speaks to the people, the elders and officers " For I know [compare Paul's identical For I know ' to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, Acts 20.29] that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you, and evil will befall you in the latter days:" It is then on the fore-known failure of the people, and fore-declared corruption of their ways that the magnificent song (chap. 32.) and utterance of the Holy Spirit by Moses proceeds. It is based on man's failure, but oh! what a testimony as to our God. " Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear oh earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender

herb, and as the showers upon the grass [and how or why was the doctrine to be such a cleansing, fertilizing, refreshing blessed doctrine?]: because I will publish the Name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment, a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He "; and what does he find at man's hands? " They have corrupted themselves," and with what tender and affecting words does Jehovah speak of His dealings with the people, ver. 9, "For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found Him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth; that he might eat the increase of the fields; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." How the very terms and thoughts (the pure grace) are calculated to penetrate our very souls and affect our consciences indeed (if heart and conscience be not as the nether millstone); but what of the people Israel, ver. 15, " But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked," the very exuberance of the grace and manifestation of God's goodness not held in communion with Him, turns them aside. " He forsook God which made him and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." Thus early, ere the dispensation had, well begun, does Moses speak as to man's failure, but utters such a glorious testimony as to the perfectness of the work of the Rock of Ages, and how does Habakkuk witness towards the close of the dispensation? "Although the fig tree shall not blossom" failure and disappointment may be all around, "Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength." He can fall back upon the faithfulness and perfectness of Jehovah the Rock. But the prophet Habakkuk did not get these blessed thoughts without due exercise of soul-yea, deep searchings of heart; surely the three chapters of his prophecy are replete with instruction, and give a very exact picture of the course pursued, and the exercises of conscience of many a saint of late.

In the 1st chapter Habakkuk manifestly is not in communion with God as to what is going on around, he is astounded at circumstances and the conduct of many-complains to God Himself, even vexed in spirit at the scene before him. Mark the expressions, ver. 2, "O Lord, how long shall I cry and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! 'Why lost thou skew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked and judgment doth never go forth," etc. We see from the entire chapter (see ver. 13 to the end) that the prophet is occupied with the scene below, like a field of battle for Confusion. He does not get above to the pure atmosphere of God's counsels and the needs be for such things, he is taken up with himself and man-expediency and circumstances. What a picture of the condition of many a soul! but the scene changes in chap. 2. The prophet gets into God's presence and mark how, with self-judgment and lowliness and watching, " I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower and will watch to see what He will say to me, and what I shall answer, when I am reprov'd. And the Lord answered me." And what a truth does his God meet him with, ver. 4, "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.' Here is the principle, the secret, which when understood, removes difficulties and accounts for God's dealings with His people oftentimes. They get away from Him. The Lord Jesus loses His due and proper place, as the center of their affections-the object of their faith and service-the eye is not single-worldliness

comes in-independency and, presently, haughtiness of spirit: the soul becomes "lifted up" (just the contrary to the word "learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart"). The Lord judges it and sifts because of His Divine, unceasing, as unchangeable love. This blessed Divine culture and teaching was not lost on Habakkuk, for in chapter 3 we see him fully in the Lord's thoughts. In the power of communion with God he has the vision of the Holy One from Mount Paran, the manifestation and power of the Son of Man, whose glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of His praise. And then, notwithstanding all his exercises, ver. 16, "and disappointment and failure all around," ver. 17, he comes to the blessed Conclusion, that let man or things fail, God is full of grace and truth. "The Lord God is my strength and He will make my feet like hind's feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places." How hard it is for the human heart to give God His place, and to put man in his place! and to walk and abide in the power of such faith!

Thus we see the beginning and end of that time or dispensation marked with this emphatic testimony. And what is witnessed to us in the Word for our own time, or during this dispensation in which the Church is gathered? The same truth. Blessed it is to know that while man fails, God does not fail. He may set aside or close dispensations, but His people "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." The existence of what is entrusted to man's hands will depend upon man's faithfulness. The existence, i.e. salvation, of the people of God depends on His faithfulness, our unfailing security. And it is good to remember this, for in such a scene as presents to many an eye now, souls may, through unbelief, begin to question God's purpose and grace. Now the Apostle Paul meets this very blessedly in his second letter to Timothy. There he draws a most dark fearful picture (chap. 3) of the last days and perilous times in which our lot is cast. In his description of corrupt Christianity, the reader may remark that many of the terms employed by the Apostle describing the character of those of whom he speaks, are the same terms which are used in Rom. 1 in setting forth the horrible account of the gentile world; but the picture in 2nd Timothy is more fearfully bad, because of that word "having a form of godliness. The name of God is tacked on to the abominations of man. Now in this very letter, giving such an awful, frightful description of the time we are in, how truly precious are the words of comfort, the beacons of light for humble souls, brought into contrast with that which would alarm the soul. Mark the sentences of truth to support the soul cast upon God. We find in chap. 1 that which is to be laid hold of by faith and gloried in, ver. 9, "Who hath saved us." Ver. 14, "The Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." In chap. 2 ver. 8, "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel." Ver. 13, "He cannot deny Himself," the only thing our Lord Jesus cannot do! In chap. 3 ver. 16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." How good, how beneficent is God! With the sad, awful dark history of such a time. Our God furnishes that truth for humble weak souls who look to Him, which can raise them up, out of, and above all the turmoil, confusion and failure. "What hath God wrought!" Is the soul alarmed and confounded at what is passing? Sweet the assurance of our God "Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling [just what Satan would have us to question and deny] not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality [incorruptibility] to light through the Gospel." Is there a "great house" containing those from whom a man must purge himself, if he be obedient, "a vessel unto honor sanctified and meet for the master's use"-The faithful man is thrown upon. Him who cannot deny Himself; he has all Scripture and the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, to lead into all truth. How tender is our God! The

witness of Jude is in the same strain. After a hideous picture of apostasy and man's corruption, the Spirit of God by Jude addresses a remnant out-side professing bodies " building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God." Not their love to God, but their hearts being established in grace, to know God's love to them,, and all His dealings according to His love and grace and not according to their apprehension of it. The Spirit then inculcates largeheartedness with faithfulness and abhorrence of the evil. " Of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." O that such a heart were formed and found in us, because faithful and true to Christ, large towards the brethren (compare Job 42:10, " And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends."). The Holy Ghost then casts, as it were, this feeble remnant on the Lord Jesus Himself. As if He had said, you will be sensible of weakness and failure and your hearts may be sinking within you at times, but here is that which will never fail you (the point of testimony which we set out with). Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Savior be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen. A.

On the Divine Inspiration of Scripture

The question which I would here consider, is not that of the amount of inspiration. I do not enter on the discussion of verbal inspiration-interesting as it is to those who believe in a revelation from God.

My object is the truth of inspiration itself, the reality of a written revelation, and indeed of all revelation given through the mouth of man.

It is not open infidelity as to the facts and doctrines of Christianity, which we have to combat. Our subject is the Divine authority of the books which relate these facts and treat of these doctrines. The existence of these truths is admitted, but their immediate communication to us by God, is denied with the exception possibly of the inward revelation of the person of Christ to the soul; if indeed that could be true consistently with these principles. It is the existence of the Word of God, having authority as His word, which is in question. It is owned perhaps: that Christ bore the title of the Word of God. But according to their system, they have no real authority for this-it may have been a mistake of John's, or a rabbinical or rabbino-Platonic tradition; And in fact the expression is found in writings of this description. It is important to keep the question clearly on this ground. The denial of any communication of Divine truth which, coming from God, would have the authority of God as truth. For us, if there is no inspiration, there is no divine truth: because a truth which is not communicated with divine certainty, is not a divine truth to man. Or, to speak more accurately, an existing fact, which cannot be naturally known to man, because not belonging to this creation; cannot be a truth to my soul if it be not communicated with divine certainty. There might be an immediate revelation to each individual in each case; otherwise, in order to believe, there must be an inspired communication either written or by word of mouth. I am not speaking of truth being applied to the conscience by the Holy Ghost, but of the means of possessing a divine certainty of truth, by knowing from whom we have received it. A doctrine cannot have more authority, as a truth, than the means by which it is communicated. A man without being inspired may be the channel through which truth is imparted, and the truth may act through the Spirit's power, on the heart and conscience; but this does not constitute a divine basis for faith in him who hears. The effect has been produced in the soul by God; the man may say " I believe this;" but if I ask him, " Why do you believe it?" he has no answer. He can give no account of his faith.

Let us remember, then, that when authority is spoken of, and it is said there is no authority, the words Divine certainty may be substituted for authority; and that the doctrine inculcated is, that there is no Divine certainty in the things of faith; that is to say, that there is no such thing as faith at all. John the Baptist describes faith in these words, " He that has received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." But this no longer exists in the system which denies inspiration. There is no longer such a thing as faith. The testimony of God is excluded. This may be called an *It priori* argument. But no, I only place the doctrine in its true light; which is often enough to convince a sincere person. If any one disputed the interpretation of a text, and I could show that his mode of looking at it, the effect of his

reasoning upon it, was to make Christ wicked, or to prove that He was not the Son of God; to state the real question, would be, in fact, to decide it, in the mind of one who knew Christ.

Besides, there are two kinds of a priori arguments, which it is important to point out here; they differ totally from each other and are morally quite opposed to each other. Suppose that some one tried to prove God a liar. I answer that cannot be! I condemn your reasoning as false, a priori. My judgment is sound, perfectly logical and philosophical (if you like to take that ground); because it is much more sure, nay, it is infallibly sure, that God cannot lie; whilst it is very possible, that your reasoning is false, even though I were unable to detect the fallacy. How many things there are as to which man wants the capacity for reasoning rightly! And this is the safeguard which God has given to the simpleminded, namely, a divine conviction with respect to those things which are beyond their reach-beyond the reach of man; while the philosopher who undertakes to explain them sinks in the mire. It is also what is called a priori reasoning, to say "God ought not to be so and so," but of an entirely different kind. In the first case, I measure the folly of man by the certainty of what God is; in the second, I measure what God ought to be, taking man for my measure; which is necessarily false. "Thou thoughtest," said God, "that I was altogether such a one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things which thou hast done." In the first case, I say God is true, therefore your argument which denies it must be false! In the second, I say, this is my thought, and God must be according to my thought. To measure man by the certainty of what God is, and to measure God by man are two very different things. This may be termed a priori reasoning. It is true, that it presumes there is the knowledge of God; and all men have not the knowledge of God. "He hides these things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes."

It is evident, that whatever may be the competency of witnesses, from their own faithfulness, and from the ever interesting and important fact of their proximity to the circumstances they relate, and to the living source of Christian doctrine, yet to deny direct inspiration, and to put in its stead the competency of witnesses; is to substitute a merely human belief for a divine testimony. The aim of such a system is to shut out God.

But I pursue my subject. It is asserted (for without this it would be open infidelity) that Revelation is allowed, although not, inspiration. That is to say, that the Apostles, or others, employed to communicate truth, had a Divine basis for their faith; but that other believers have not. For that is plainly the effect of this supposition. Truth has been revealed from heaven, that is, divinely communicated, to the Apostles and others; but since then there has been only a human testimony-however godly it may be, only human-no Divine basis, as to testimony, which, on God's part, could shield the church from error. I say on God's part, because no one disputes the possibility of man's falling into error through his own folly or negligence. The mere statement of this doctrine is almost its refutation; but it is needless to dwell further upon it, since it is formally contradicted in the word itself. "But God," says the Apostle, who carefully states the opposite of the notion which we combat, "God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (I suppose no one would venture to assert that the communications made through Paul. were of a different character, or of another nature than those given through Peter or John or any other prophet). The reason the Apostle gives for this revelation is very striking! "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know

the things that are given to us of God." I was going to dwell upon this argument forgetting that the Apostle had used it; I will now only insist on the force of what he says: " Without a divine communication there can be no faith." That which belongs to man, which is within the limits of his intelligence, may be known to man through sight, through reasoning, or through the testimony of man; but it is not so in the things of faith, in Divine thoughts and truths. God alone knows them, and God alone can make them known; consequently, man must be entirely ignorant of them, unless God reveal them. But He makes them known by His Spirit, that is, by Revelation giving the Holy Ghost Himself, who reveals it in the heart. I speak of the Apostolic work. The question then stands within very narrow limits. It is this: The Apostles, having received the knowledge of these things in a divine manner, did they communicate them to us in a manner, excellent indeed, but not inspired? God had revealed them to the Apostles by His Spirit; how did they communicate them? Was their inspiration what is termed " simply religious inspiration?" was it only that operation of the Spirit which is found in a spiritual preacher, and which leaves him still liable to error. Nothing can be more precise than the testimony of the Apostle on this point. Continuing the passage already quoted, he says, "which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Could the idea of inspiration be embodied in a form of words more absolutely definite than the expression, "words-which the Holy Ghost teacheth?" Here then there is nothing equivocal. When the Apostle set forth the truths which the Holy Ghost had taught him, he used words which the Holy Ghost had also taught him; that is, it was God Himself speaking through the mouth of man. And remark here, that inspiration is asserted in cases where religious inspiration was impossible, as in that of Balaam, when " He took up his parable and spoke, having heard the words of God." Finally, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and so many others who have said to us, "Thus saith the Lord," "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying," etc., are all examples of positive, and properly-so-called inspiration. Nevertheless, the arguments which deny inspiration must be applied universally. Here, however, there is nothing doubtful. The prophets boldly proclaim their inspiration, and we have it in a written form. In examining this subject, one cannot honestly leave out the Old Testament, because the arguments (except, perhaps, that which relates to the Canon) apply to both; to the Old as to the New. Has the Old Testament authority, and has the New none? Is the Old Testament the Word of God, and not the New? It is very convenient to reason upon a subject and leave out that part of which the proofs are incontestable. Inspiration is a reality, and we possess the absolute authority of God's own Word. The Prophets have affirmed it, the Lord has recognized it, i.e. that of this body of writings as it stands; and He has declared that nothing can invalidate its authority. The Apostle also has declared that these Scriptures were given by inspiration of God, and are capable of making us wise unto salvation. The principle of authority is true, the principle of inspiration is true., The question is limited to this; Is the New Testament inspired, also? The Old Testament leaves no room for any argument which would make inspiration questionable. It affirms its own inspiration in all the prophetic part; and the words of the Lord and of the Apostles prove that of all the books it contains. This should be thoroughly understood. Inspiration is certain, the divine authority of the Word of God incontestable. This question alone remains. Is the New Testament a part of that Word? Principles which deny that which the Lord and the Apostles affirm, inspire no confidence in the judgment of any one who can entertain such false and even blasphemous principles. He who denies inspiration, denies that which the Lord and the Apostles maintain-for they maintain the inspiration of the Old Testament. He has, therefore, already destroyed all my confidence in his

judgment; and I cannot listen to him when he tells me that the New Testament has not the authority of inspiration.

I will not multiply quotations to prove that the prophets assert the inspiration of their prophecies; because it recurs at the beginning of almost every separate prophecy; but I will point out the passages in the New Testament, which recognize the Scriptures of the Old as having this authority. Luke 24:44, "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." Jesus here recognizes the body of writings, called the Old Testament in its three parts-still thus entitled in the modern Hebrew Bibles. The Lord gives them equal authority, ver. 27, "And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." John 5:39, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." "And the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). These passages demonstrate that the Scriptures of the Old Testament were a body of writings recognized by the Lord, and that, in the detail of its present divisions, recognized as having, absolute authority. But, to have their writings is something more, as to the form of communication, than having the truth spoken by word of mouth; even though it were by the mouth of the Lord Himself. John 5:47, "If ye believe not his writings., how shall ye believe my words?" The writings, then, were the object of faith, and consequently had the authority of the Word of God. "They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them"- "If they 'hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:29,31). When the Apostle preached the truth at Berea, the Jews-his hearers-"searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so," that is to say, they made use of the Scriptures, as an authority, to judge the teaching even of an Apostle; and they are commended for so doing (Acts 17:11). The inspiration of the Old Testament is then demonstrated, its authority recognized by the Lord, and the whole-as we possess it-declared to be authentic, and to be clothed with an authority which nothing can invalidate.

The Scriptures, as a whole, are owned of God, as a distinct class of writings, having a certain authority; namely, that of HIS WORD. As it is written in Prov. 30:5, 6-"Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not to His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Finally, the Apostle Paul (2 Tim. 3.16) gives a remarkable testimony to the same effect, and which clearly designates this class of writings; "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." We have only therefore to learn whether the New Testament forms a part of "the Scriptures," or whether the Church is entirely without a divine communication entrusted to herself; and possesses only the Old Testament. And here I would notice the folly of a principle set forth by some of those who deny inspiration. It is said, that the claim to inspiration is necessarily limited to the Book which makes the claim; or, at least, to the writings of the same author. There is no sense in this assertion. Why could not an inspired author, or the Lord, declare all the other Books, or some amongst them, to be inspired? And, on the other hand, there is no necessity that the other writings of an author should be inspired, because one of them is so. The Lord sets His seal to the entire Old Testament; and Paul declares that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Does this only prove the inspiration of the Epistle to Timothy in which the assertion is found? Those who seek to overthrow the foundations of truth by such arguments as these, deserve chiding rather than

refutation. In 2 Peter 1:19-21, we find, " the word of prophecy," " the prophecies of Scripture," which holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." There are persons who reject this Epistle; but I am not bound to own their authority. The style of the Epistle is not that of an impostor. Yet if not written by Peter, it is certainly the work of an impostor, for he calls himself the Apostle, and says it is his second Epistle. But I leave this. There is another point which must be noticed in this discussion. They maintain that we cannot avail ourselves of the New Testament, till the Canon is settled. Why not? Let us suppose (although I do not believe it of the Word) that a wilding is found in my garden, can I therefore make no use of the good trees which are in it? Supposing the second Epistle of Peter were spurious, and that the Apocalypse deserved all that is said against it by certain authors, what has that to do with the Epistle of John, or that of Paul to the Romans. I might admit that one Epistle was questionable-which I do not admit-without, the least in the world, questioning the others.

I return to direct proofs. We have seen the inspiration, the authority, the Canon even, of the Old Testament fully proved; and the principles which deny inspiration itself, utterly overthrown. But we have seen more than this. Paul received "by revelation" the truths he taught, and he communicated them in "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," that is to say, by inspiration; consequently, it is certain that the early disciples had the truth communicated to them by inspiration, as the foundation of their faith. And the argument which denies inspiration to the New Testament, if true, would only prove that God had changed His mode of acting, and left the succeeding ages without this foundation, and without Divine basis for their faith: a change incredible enough. But when Paul says, "which things we speak" does he mean those things which he spoke by word of mouth only? And has he taught nothing by writing? We well know that he has taught by writing that which had been revealed to him; that is to say, that his writings for this purpose were inspired. He even says so, which would not have been necessary after the passage we have quoted from Corinthians. But God has favored us with this additional proof: "How," he says, " by revelation He made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words, whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ?" Should any say, "It may be so when fundamental truths are concerned, but not otherwise;" even this refuge is denied them by Scripture. In giving details for the inward regulation of a church (1 Cor. 14:36, 37), the Apostle says, "Came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." The communications then of the Spirit to the church or to the world, were the "Word of God," and that which was written by the Apostle to direct the Saints, was " the commandment of the Lord." " For this cause," said the Apostle to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2:13), "we thank God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." Thus we see that the Apostle puts his writings on the footing of commandments from the Lord, with the sorrowful consolation for those who cannot discern it, " If any man be ignorant, LET HIM BE IGNORANT." NOW will any one tell me, that the Apostle, acting in the self-same character and addressing himself in the same manner in virtue of his Apostolic sanction and authority, to the Romans or to the Galatians, is less inspired than when he addresses the Corinthians? Such an argument deserves no other refutation than "if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant!" To say God has willed that the faith of the Ephesians and Corinthians, should rest upon Divine inspiration, and that

of the Romans and Galatians on a human basis, deserves no serious answer. We have a particular class of writings; and this class of writings is called "The Scriptures." The sixteenth chapter of Romans defines this principle very clearly in ver. 26. "But now is made manifest [i.e. the mystery] and by the prophetic writings [see Greek] according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." This passage again points out that class of writings which we call the Scriptures. Writings which have the authority of a revelation, an oracle of God; they are "prophetic writings." In short, to sum up this part of the testimonies we possess, Peter in his second Epistle, recognizing these writings as the Scriptures, tells us, when speaking of Paul's Epistles, that those who are "unlearned and unstable, wrest them, as they do the other. Scriptures," proving that Paul's Epistles form a part of the Scriptures, a term very well understood and having the same meaning then as now; as the Lord's own words demonstrate. I know, indeed, as I have already said, that some reject this Epistle; but I do not accept their dictum as an authority.

The existence, then, of prophetic scriptures, of the scriptures of the New Testament, which have the authority of the Word of God, of the commandments of God, is most clearly proved. He who finds more authority in the words of the Lord's Apostle than in those of the adversaries of inspiration, he who reveres the Word of God and the revelations of God, will have no doubt on the subject. But, if there are the writings of John or Peter making the same claim, addressing Christians in the same manner; and that in perfect accordance with the divine ministry committed to them; as, for instance, those of Peter to the circumcision, could a Christian say, "The writings of one apostle are inspired, but those of another are not; although entirely of the same nature, and although he speaks expressly in the name of his apostolate and as exercising the authority of his mission? I assume now their authenticity; and that they are really the writings they claim to be. We need not look for the words "I am inspired." We find in them the unequivocal expression of authority. The faith of Christians consequently clothes them with this authority. They announce the truth, as having a right to impose their thoughts, as such, and in fact imposing them. Take the first Epistle of Peter. Does he not speak with full authority as apostle? And when Paul said, "If any obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man and have no company with him;" had not that written word apostolic authority? When John said, "We are of God: he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us" (1 John 4:6), exercising thus divine authority over the conscience, do you think he meant that these words pronounced so solemnly had not altogether the same authority? It would be a contradiction in itself, for if they rejected his words they did not hear him. One cannot attribute authority to his words spoken elsewhere, without attributing it to the words which claim that authority. If I say, "I command you to obey me," the command which I give, and the authority of that which I have already commanded, stand or fall together. I cannot believe the authority of Peter to be less great than that of John or of Paul. He was sent forth with the same authority by the Lord.

Well then what have we proved? That there is a class of writings called "the Scriptures" which are inspired, which possess absolute authority as the Word of God, recognized by the Lord and His apostles, and brought forward constantly by them with the greatest solemnity. We have found that a very large portion of the New Testament is spoken of as forming part of these Scriptures; that there is a body of writings attached to the apostolic work, prophetic scriptures used by the command of God, a body of writings which has the authority of the Word of God. The question

then is narrowed into very small dimensions. The assertion that there is no inspiration no Divine authority for the word, has been proved entirely false. It is in flagrant opposition to the authority of the Lord and the apostles; and seeks to overthrow that which they maintain. The only question is this, does such or such a book form a part of this inspired collection? A very important question; but which, by the very fact of its being asked, presupposes the existence and the authority of the Word of God; and only seeks not to confound human pretensions with the divine authority it reveres; the full value of which it seeks to preserve untouched and without alloy.

It will be felt that this is not the place for detailed proofs of the authenticity of each book of the New Testament: it would be to write an introduction to the New Testament. I will point out farther on, some general principles of the ways of God in this respect. The great question is decided. It did not consist in inquiring whether such or such a book were genuine, admitting the inspiration of the rest; but in ascertaining whether there be such a thing as inspiration at all. Now, inspiration has been proved; not only revelation, but inspiration. The revealed truth communicated in words taught by the Holy Ghost. If this be so (mark it well) the system which denies it, bears the character not only of a false principle, but of a principle hostile to God and to His goodness, subversive of the truth He has condescended to make known to us, and of the very foundations of our faith. It is a very important thing to judge the source and the character of that which presents itself as truth. "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world [to act]." Following this injunction of the apostle's - of the Holy Ghost's-I solemnly judge that the principle in question proceeds from Satan. It were out of place here to examine how far the principles current in the religious world, have given occasion to this inroad of the enemy. Whatever saps the foundations of faith, in opposition to the express declarations of the Spirit of God, comes from the enemy; and I have always found that to deal with that which is of the enemy openly and publicly as from the enemy, is the wisdom of God and is accompanied by His strength and His blessing. I deal thus with the doctrine that denies the inspiration of scripture.

There is one kind of proof of the authority of Scripture, that is to say of a collection of writings having the authority of the Word of God, which is difficult to produce, on account of the very thing which constitutes its value. I mean; the constant appeal to the Written Word when addressing believers as to a recognized authority. It is used as an authority which no one, except a professed unbeliever, would think of disputing. Open the New Testament at almost what page you like, you will find a proof of this. " It is written, it is written," settled every question decided every controversy. It is not the Scriptures which have to be proved, they serve themselves for an absolute and final proof. This is the strongest testimony we can have. If I say-in canvassing some point of human conduct-the law says this, and the law says that, as settling the question; that takes for granted the existence of the law and its sovereign authority over all disputed points-an authority which no one can gainsay. Thus it is in the use of Scripture. If the word of the Apostles were the word of authority, like that of the Church (as has been said) and were not the word of God, which I entirely believe it to be, even this word of authority submits itself most absolutely to the authority of the Word. The Scriptures are searched to ascertain whether the teaching of an Apostle were true. " These things were done that the Scripture might be fulfilled."-" Jesus, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst."-" Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers."-"Promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures."

Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures."- "And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith."- "And the Scripture cannot be broken." "Give place unto wrath; for it is written." - "That by comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope."

It was the highest of all the Jewish privileges, that the "oracles of God" were committed to them. " For what saith the Scripture?"-"The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation." The Jews made "the Word of God of none effect through their traditions."- " Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures: and said unto them, Thus it is written." Is it in accommodating Himself to man, that the Lord opens the understanding that they may understand things which have not divine authority? No, the Scriptures are treated by the Apostles, by the Lord himself, as having an incontestable and divine authority as the Oracles of God, as The Word of God. This is so entirely true, that when-in fulfilling his divine mission-it behooved the Lord to undergo the temptation of the enemy, this was the weapon He used-as being divinely tempered-against which Satan had no power, and his devices no possible success. It sufficed to say, "It is written." The tempter would have betrayed himself if he had questioned the absolute authority of the quotation: his best resource was to quote Scripture his own way; but it does not fail under this trial. The second Adam still replies, " It is also written." One may, without blame, prefer the wisdom and the perfection of one's Savior, to the self-sufficiency and unbelief of human wisdom. And observe here, the importance of this use of the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, the Oracles of God, by the Apostles and by the Lord. People say, " But there are various readings, bad translations, statements which the increase of knowledge has proved impossible, so that Scripture cannot be used as an authority." The Lord, then, was mistaken!

There were various readings, bad translations (especially that of the Septuagint), pointed out by those who deny Inspiration, and supposed inconsistencies, at the very time when the Lord said, " The Scriptures cannot be broken." When, in his controversy with Satan, he employed the Scriptures, Satan, lest he should appear to be Satan undisguised, durst not question their authority. These things existed too when the Apostle called them the Oracles of God. None of these things prevented the Lord's recognizing their absolute authority on every occasion. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men." As to proofs which may be given of the authority of The Word, it carries its own proof with it, as does every testimony from God. This is a fundamental principle. It does not require proof, it furnishes its own proofs of everything to the soul. We do not bring a light to the sun in order to discern it, it enlightens us. The Word of God is not judged, it judges. If God speaks, and we have seen that the Scriptures are called His Word, woe unto him that knows not it is God who speaks. There are those assuredly who will not own that it is He. If this refusal to believe be final, they are lost, sentence has already been passed upon them; the light is come, and the darkness comprehends it not. "The word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is received, whether spoken or written, as the Word of God; he who rejects it is lost. If any remain in ignorance of some of its details, if any are mistaken as to some book, they lose just so much of it through their pride. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple moreover by them is thy servant warned." - "The entrance of thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding unto the simple." Read the whole 119th Psalm. This conviction that the Word is its own evidence, is all-important; this alone maintains the true

character of the Word of God. Like Jesus, it "receives not testimony from man." He who believes not in the Son of God will be condemned. He that believeth not the record that God gave of his Son hath made God a liar, and hath not life. Now, according to the Lord's own words, the Scriptures testify of Him. The fundamental principle is this-The Word of God must be received by Faith; and the reasonings of man cannot be the foundation of faith; if they were, it would not be faith in God, nor faith in His word. "He believed God."- "They shall be all taught of God; every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me."

Having established this principle, I would enter into some details respecting the ways of God in this matter. We have seen the Lord setting his seal to the Scriptures, but observe, in so doing, He has set his seal to the faith of all those who had previously believed in them. It was not because He had done so that those faithful ones believed. Their heart, their faith, had been previously tested. They had faith, because they had received the testimony of the Scriptures before they were thus sanctioned., at the time when they were presented to their faith, on the ground of their own authority. When Jeremiah spoke, it does not follow that all received his testimony; there were some who had not ears to hear, but who listened to false prophets. When God is to be owned it becomes a moral question: but in all ages, believers have received the testimony of God, and unbelievers have not been able to discern God in the testimony; it is so now. God gives, in His word, sufficient moral evidence to commend it to the conscience. When He has set up a new thing, or when He has sustained faith at a distance from the sanctuary, He has added a sufficiency of extraordinary evidences. But with this comes the moral responsibility of him who hears, which God never sets aside; and also the grace which acts in giving and in establishing faith: the reception of the Word, and afterward the understanding this Word, is a thing presented to the responsibility of man. Grace alone can enable him to receive and to understand it. Nothing can set aside this responsibility, or take away the necessity of this grace, or destroy its efficacy. The positive authority of the Apostolic testimony, claiming submission, as it does, in the most peremptory manner, cannot alter this. " If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." An Apostle cannot go beyond that. For the things which are communicated in words taught by the Spirit, are spiritually discerned. It was thus in the days of all the prophets. " Hear ye and give ear," said Jeremiah, " be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." Now, the condition which brings judgment upon the house of God is marked by this-the Word loses its authority, excepting over the remnant preserved by Him. " And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned; saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men." This is the condition of the people and the cause of the judgment which falls upon them.

Then the Lord said "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples... To the law and to the testimony." Thus also in the New Testament " In the last days perilous times shall come." What is then the resource? " But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the

Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The resource in the last days, is reverence for the Holy Scriptures, and the assurance of their sufficiency. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Therefore whether amongst the Jews, whether in the Church, the resource in evil days is confidence in the Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The Lord has pointed it out, and sanctioned it, but this confidence in the authority of the Word existed before He had given it His sanction.

And it is this faith, without any other sanction than the. Word itself, which He has sanctioned. Precious testimony for after-days, since the same sanction applies to them also. The apostle, in warning us of perilous times, directs our thoughts beforehand to the same means of establishing the soul. Those who had faith in the Scriptures before the Savior's testimony, having been enabled, through grace, to discern what was God's word, before Jesus had sealed the whole, have thus been approved by Him. Those who do so afterward, have already this approval. They have the same responsibility as to what they receive; but although this responsibility exists, God does not fail to use means. There is another principle which should be noticed here. It is, that the oracles of God are committed to His people. The Church cannot impose her authority upon us; but she is responsible for preserving that which has been committed to her. Thus Rome has shown her unfaithfulness, by adding apocryphal books. Now, although the Church may, in detail, fail in her responsibility, it is impossible, in anything essential to it, that God should fail His Church, or that Christ should cease to nourish and cherish it. God watches over all this; not to keep the learned from stumbling, but that believers may have food from Him, and an unerring rule of life. It is not the babe and the wayfaring man who find difficulties; God has given them the Bible, and preserved it for them; and their conscience bears them witness in the Holy Ghost, that God works in them by this Word. The Holy Ghost enables them, according to the measure of their spirituality, to use and understand it. A heart, full of joy because taught of God, discerns the Word. It is read perhaps in a bad translation; and doubtless, something is lost thereby; but God has taken care that enough should remain to teach the heart with certainty His truth and His ways. This Word is the sword of the Spirit-it carries conviction with it, when the Spirit uses it in the power of His grace. It leaves man under the responsibility of having rejected it, whenever it has been presented to his conscience.

A man of little information, but taught of God, is much more able to apprehend the whole truth, even through the medium of an indifferent translation, than the learned man who thinks he can judge of the whole canon; and for this reason. The Church puts the New Testament into his hands, for the oracles of God are committed to the Church; this does not indeed impart faith, but it is the means which God uses. The Church presents us with them; not with authority as having power to judge the Word; but as the faithful guardian of that which had been committed to her. This is done through relations, friends, ministers; and there is a general belief in the professing Church that it is the word of God. The simple-minded do not set themselves to judge the whole canon of the New Testament before reading it; they read it, and the Word produces faith.

A man receives, by the teaching of God, first one truth and then another. To such a one, the history of Jesus is all divine; it communicates to his soul what he receives with divine knowledge, for these things are spiritually discerned. The word has judged him, the Word has revealed Jesus to him. The epistles unfold divine truth-he enjoys the word with a divine certainty that God has

spoken to him. He makes use of every book in the New Testament, without knowing what the term "Canon" means. And if some great scholar would deprive him of his treasure; to wit, the authority and inspiration of that word which he knows to be of God; this Word is the sword of the Spirit in his hands, to teach him the folly of human wisdom. He pities the learned man who is without all that, of which he has the divine fruition.

He who has eaten bread knows what bread is, although -he may not understand the art of baking. If, through grace, the believer grows in divine knowledge, he sees the harmony of the whole, the adaptation of the several parts. He has not only the full assurance of faith, but the full assurance of understanding also. He perceives the divine wisdom of the Bible, and not merely the divine truth in it. He finds perhaps a text spoiled by a bad translation-it does not harmonize with what he knows to be the truth of God; he will say, "I don't understand that passage" (I am supposing him deprived of all spiritual help, which is not the case, according to the ways of God in His Church). Humble in heart, he will attribute it to his own ignorance. The wisdom of this world reasons about the canon, and will form its judgment before it reads, and it receives nothing. The mind of man cannot create for itself the things of God. Human reason cannot pronounce upon the authority of the word of God.. It may be said, this is trusting to a feeling; but no, it is trusting to God. "They shall be all taught of God." The authority of the Word can only be known by believing in it.

He who has only man's thoughts will say, " But I must know that it is the word of God before I can believe in it." I reply, "You cannot." It is true, happily true, that we receive the New Testament as the Word of God, on the faith of our parents or of our education; but it is never really received as such, till it is " mixed with faith " in those that read it. For my part, I receive the New Testament with full assurance, in its present form, as adopted by the universal Church. Circumstances having called me to it, I have examined the external evidences, and found them satisfactory; but that does not produce faith. It may be useful, to obviate the objections made by those who do not live upon the Word, and cannot judge of it. The authority of God is not subject to human intelligence. I know that some of the epistles were questioned in the early ages, at least in certain places; but I doubt not, that in receiving those books which form the New Testament, as inspired, the Church was guided by God. The means of communication are not the rule of authority; but these means may be used according to the certainty of the rule. A mother instructs her child in the truth, but she is not the rule of the truth. Thus the poor Christian receives the New Testament in the form in which it is distributed. It may be that he cannot demonstrate its authenticity, but he happily profits by the fact that the Church receives it. When he has read it, he finds it divine. God thus uses means to spread the truth, and the book which contains it. The multitude of believers profit by it. It is God who acts thus.

If an answer must be given to unbelievers who dispute the authority of that which others enjoy, it may be that only a few amongst them are able to convince gainsayers; but that does not hinder God's using these means, and giving faith to those who use them; and then the 'folly of gainsayers and of those who have fed themselves upon unbelief, becomes manifest.

I have said that the man who is exercised in the word according to God, finds not only the proof of its divinity in the application of passage after passage to his conscience, but will gain the deepest conviction of its perfection as a whole, through the knowledge he will thus gain of the fullness of Christ. I will take an instance, which is used to prove that there are things in the New Testament

which are outside the province of spiritual discernment. The Spirit of God cannot, it is said, make us feel the value of a genealogy. Such a remark only betrays ignorance of the Word and of Christ Himself: To set forth the varied glory of Jesus, according to the counsels of God respecting Him, it is needful to present the different characters He bears; this is the substance of God's revelation. Now His connection with Abraham and David, and His connection with Adam, are leading points in this revelation; and the genealogies set this before us. But this is not all. They correspond exactly with the character of the Gospels in which we find them. The Gospel by Matthew treats especially of the Messiah, of the relation of Christ to the Jews, of the fulfillment of prophecy in Him, and at the same time, of His rejection as Messiah, and the transition to a new dispensation. Luke sets before us, after the Savior's birth, the great features of grace brought in by the second Adam, and the great moral principles belonging to it; so that in the body of this Gospel, events are not arranged in chronological order, but according to their moral bearing. This is true, even in the history of the temptation. John, on the contrary, gives us the person of the Savior, who is above all the dispensational dealings of God in the earth. The Jews are set aside throughout as rejected, therefore no genealogy is given. The Word was God. John's gospel begins before Genesis, and at the close, we find neither the agony in Gethsemane, nor the forsaking on the cross; but other things are mentioned which are not found in Matthew or in Luke. Thus the different glories of Christ are manifested, and by degrees the admirable perfection of the Word shines forth in all its splendor. The criticisms of man fade away, like the stars before the sun, which makes them disappear, with the darkness that allowed them to be seen. The Bible presents us with a perfection both in its details and as a whole, which leaves no doubt in the mind of one who has tasted it, that as a complete whole it is divine.

I have already spoken of its divinity in its separate parts, as the sword of the Spirit causing its power to be felt in the soul, judging it, and revealing Christ to it; but I speak of it now as a whole, of what is called the canon of Scripture. If Matthew were wanting, we should not have the Messiah, Son of David, and Son of Abraham. If Mark were wanting, we should not have the Servant, made in the likeness of man; if Luke, we should not have the Son of Man; if John, we should lose the Son of God. In the Acts, we find the foundation of the Church, by the power of the Spirit of God, the commencement and development of the Church in Jerusalem, through the instrumentality of the twelve; then the Gentiles grafted into the good Olive Tree by Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision; and, when Jerusalem had rejected the testimony, the Church, fully revealed, and called by the ministry of Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles. The Epistle to the Romans furnishes the eternal principles of God's relationship with man, established in blessing by means of Christ, dead and risen, and the reconciling of these things with the speciality of the promises made to the Jews by Him whose gifts and calling are without repentance. In the Corinthians are found details respecting the inward regulation of a Church; its walk, its order, its restoration when it had gone astray, the patience and the energy of grace; the whole sketched by the Spirit of God, acting through an apostle, and declaring the divine authority of His commands. In Galatians, the contrast between Law and Promise as well as the source of ministry; in a word the condemnation of Judaism, even in its very roots.

In Ephesians, the fullness of the Church's privileges, as the body of Christ, her connection with Him, and " the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations," in which all the counsels of God, for His glory, are unfolded. In Colossians, the fullness which is in the head for the

body, and the solemn warning not to separate practically from this standing of union with the Head, through allowing a show of humility to glide into the bosom of the Church. In Philippians, the Apostle's experience of what Christ is to the Christian; as sufficient for all things, whatever his position may be. His immediate sufficiency, even when the Christian should be deprived of apostolic support; and the walk of the Church in the unity of grace, in unity maintained by grace, when the spiritual energy of her human leaders should be wanting. It is a precious epistle in this point of view. In Thessalonians the hope of the Church in the freshness of her affections; and the mystery of iniquity ending in the manifestation of the man of sin; a mystery notwithstanding which, the Church is called to maintain this hope and her affections. In Timothy and Titus, what may be termed ecclesiastical care for the maintenance whether of truth or of order. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Church had been seen seated as a body in the heavenly places. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the faithful are viewed as journeying in weakness upon the earth, and Christ is consequently seen apart, for them, in heaven, in contrast with the earthly figures of it given to Israel. This gives rise to a glorious unfolding of the person of our Lord, as God the Creator, as man, and as the Son over His own house, the Creator of all things, and lastly, very fully as High Priest; after the order of Melchisedec, as to his personal rights; after the likeness of Aaron, or rather in contrast with Aaron, as to the present exercise of priesthood. This leads to the unfolding of the life of faith, the faith common to all saints; and to the final separation of the believing Jews from the camp of earthly religion, as having "come to the heavenly Jerusalem." James sets before us that girdle of practical righteousness, which restrains the natural tendency of the heart to abuse grace; and the last dealings of God with the twelve tribes (as in Jonah with the Gentiles) when the light and perfection of a new order of things eclipsed that old order to which those tribes had proved unfaithful. In Peter, we find the Christian a pilgrim on the earth, placed in this position by the power of Christ's resurrection, according to an election which is not that of an earthly people, but unto eternal life.

This was addressed to the Jews of the Dispersion (Peter was the apostle of the Circumcision), and was particularly adapted to them, setting them free from the idea of an earthly establishment, to be pilgrims, through grace, on the earth, in view of an incorruptible inheritance. THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER is written in the prospect of his departure, and of the flowing in of evil. It exhorts them to press forward. On the one hand, it gives the picture and the assurance of the glory of the coming kingdom, in its heavenly aspect but manifested on the earth; on the other hand, the corruption which would degrade and swallow up Christianity; and the consequences of this in judgment. Peter never represents the Church as one body in heaven, as Paul does; he views her, or rather her members, as on the earth; and they are pilgrims there. The exact correspondence of every detail with this point of view, even in the manner of presenting the glory (2 Peter 1), manifests a perfection which proves its divine origin. Jude admirably unfolds all the features of the apostasy; its beginning and its results; recording that which we should otherwise have lost, the solemn prophecy of Enoch; proving how clear was the testimony of God before the flood-God, who is unchangeable in purpose from the beginning to the end. John presents us with all the features of the Divine nature; first of all as manifested in Jesus; and then as characteristic of the whole family; a safeguard against every pretension, which, not having these features, would seek to pervert the faithful; and the means of strengthening and establishing the faithful by the development of these qualities of the nature of God, with whom, if light be in them, they have communion; and in whom, if love be in them, they dwell, and He in them. This is true of every

believer in Jesus.

This love was manifested in Christ's coming down into the earth; and was perfected, by setting us, in full enjoyment with Him, in His own place above. Philemon, and the two lesser Epistles of John, show us that if the mystery of God is revealed to us by one Apostle, and the nature of God set evidently before us by another; if they lift us up to the height of His counsels and of His being, they can-and the Christianity they preach can-be occupied with the interests of a runaway slave and his master, and with the anxieties and practical difficulties of an excellent lady, and a kind and worthy brother, as to receiving persons to whom Christian love might open the door, but who brought not the doctrine of Christ. They show us, that that love which dwells in God, which is the very nature of God, which is manifested in the glorious work of Christ, that wisdom, which ordains all mysteries for His eternal glory, disdains not to provide, with perfect delicacy, for the difficult relationships between a master and his slave; nor to manifest the tenderest solicitude with respect to the details of life. This love, in the perfection of wisdom and grace, links the fullness and the perfection of God with every emotion of the human heart, with every circumstance of our life in this world; and sanctifies a people who are to dwell with God by the revelation of what he is, and fits them for His presence by creating pure affections, and by making a holy love the spring of their whole life.

In the Apocalypse, the Spirit of God, after having given, in an admirable review of the state of seven Asiatic churches, the elements of a perfect judgment with respect to every state in which one connected with the Church could be found; after having at the same time encouraged the faithfulness of those who had ears to hear, by promises of blessing from above, specially suited to the difficulties of these several conditions; after having declared that these blessings are prepared for "him that overcometh" in the conflict, which the declension of the Church brings him into (a declension which had already commenced in the days of the Apostle, in their leaving their first love, and which will end in compelling Christ to spew out of His mouth those who bear His name); after having thus furnished the Christian with all that he needs in the midst of the difficulties presented by the state of the professing Church; and having revealed the judgment of Christ with a perfection, and a circumstantial adaptation which are most admirable, the Holy Ghost then lifts the veil, to show where all this will end in the judgment of the world. He reveals, first of all, chastenings in outward things; then more directly upon man himself; afterward, all the features of man's dreadful apostasy, the diabolical organization of his forces against Christ; and, at length, the judgment which will break forth at the coming of Christ himself, the King of kings and Lord of lords. This judgment making way for an administration of blessing and happiness (Satan being bound), which will only be interrupted by his being loosed from his prison, to try those who have enjoyed this happiness, and thus to bring on the final judgment of the dead, and the eternal state in which God will be all in all. This is the methodical and complete development of that which Jude, 2 Peter, and 2 Thessalonians had made known to the Church in its moral elements.

At the close of the book the connection of the Church in Heaven with Christ, and with the times of blessing enjoyed under the reign of Christ, are more particularly unfolded.

There is another striking feature of the perfection of the Apocalypse, which may be added here; that is, its moral unity. The standing of the Church is indeed defined in the opening and concluding paragraphs, by the expression of her own sentiments; but there is never throughout the book, one thought connected with the living communication of grace from the Head to the members. It is a

prophetic book of judgment, first of all that of the Church, seen in its responsibility upon the earth. In the chapters which speak of the Church, there is promise, threatening, warning, judgment of its condition, revelation of the characters of the Son of Man, everything connected with responsibility. The Head, the source of life and knowledge to the body, is not mentioned in these chapters. After the judgment of the Church comes that of the world; a judgment increasing in severity, up to the destruction of the Wicked One. In this part of the book is found all that the faithful need, in order to understand the ways of God, and to discern the path He has marked out for them in these perilous times; but never Christ the living source of grace: everything is in its right place, for it is the work of God.

The New Testament presents us then, from the manifestation of the Man Christ in humiliation on the earth, up to the eternal state when God will be all in all, with the full development of all the ways of God, and of what He is in Himself, in order that man may joy in Him, know Him and glorify Him: that the believer may be kept through all the difficulties and dangers of the way, by the wisdom and the admonitions of God; and that he may understand His wisdom and His infinite love. Man could not have composed this as a whole, could not have foreseen the necessity for each part. One feels in it the energetic spontaneity of life, that is to say, of the Spirit of God. But take away one single part-when we possess the whole-and the breach is immediately felt by one who has seen and appreciated its completeness. The perfection of the whole is manifested, as in everything which God has made, from the insect which sports in the air, to the admirable details of the body of man, united to a mind which can be taken lip with God, and, through grace, express Him in His countenance even, and in His ways. The Word is not a shapeless mass, it is the complete body of the revealed thoughts of God. More perfect even than man to whom it is addressed, because more immediately divine, it expresses itself in man, because God will introduce man into it; but it is God who expresses in it all His thoughts. Yes, man who would be wise, does not understand this body, because he does not perceive it; he judges one of its members according to the little pitiful history of ecclesiastical weaknesses and contentions, the most pitiful of all contentions. The things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned. Divine perfection shines forth at every page for him who is spiritual; and the unity of the whole, the perfect connection of its several parts, the relation of these parts to each other and to all the ways of God, to the person of Christ, to the Old Testament, to the heart of the renewed man who, through grace, knows himself, to the necessities of sinful man, to the dangers and difficulties which long afterward sprang up in the Church, all combine to crown with divine glory the demonstration of the origin and the true Author of the book which contains these things. Its author is so much the more evidently God, from the human instruments having been many and diverse. But its unity and, above all, the intimate union of its different parts, demonstrate a complete and perfect body. If but one joint of a finger were wanting to a man, he is not a man such as God made him; it is at once perceived, he may have life, but he is imperfect. Take away a book from the New Testament, the remainder is divine undoubtedly, but it is no longer the New Testament in its divine perfection. As in a noble tree the inward energy, the freedom of the sovereign power which works in it, produces a variety of forms, in which the details of human order may appear to be wanting, but in which there is a beauty that no human art can imitate. Cut off one of its branches, the void is obvious; the minute connection of the remainder is destroyed, the gap which is made in the intertwining of its tender leaves proves that the devastating hand of man has been there. This then is how the Christian possesses the Word; each part of it acts divinely in him, and, in proportion to the progress he

makes, it unfolds itself as a whole to the eyes of his faith, with a divine evidence which unites itself with every element of his faith, with the varied glories of the person of Christ, and with the universal perfection of the ways of God; a perfection of which the christian has not judged a priori, but which he has learned in the Word itself.

When I see a man do I need to be told that his form is complete? The more I know of anatomy the more I shall admire its structure. But it is the sight of the man himself which makes me apprehend his perfectness. Thus it is with all the works of God; only His Word requires, as it produces, spiritual discernment. If any one be a prophet or spiritual let him acknowledge it. And do you know how the Word disposes of those who do not acknowledge it? "If any be ignorant let him be ignorant." It is humbling, no doubt, to have all one's learning treated thus; but this is as it should be between God and man. I repeat, I doubt not that outward evidences confirm the spiritual judgment. The learned man who creates doubts for himself, needs evidences to remove them. The simple Christian feeds on that which is divine, and knows nothing of the difficulties which man's poor learning creates. Lastly, I will go over, in order to show their futility, some of the arguments which are used to deny inspiration. It is a melancholy task, after having had one's thoughts directed towards the perfection of the Bible.

The first thing which strikes one is that all is judged from without. We are told that at the time of the reformation one authority was substituted for another. But observe, it is not through anything found in the Bible that unbelief judges its authority. Men would have faith to rest upon historical certainty and moral evidence. But this skews entire ignorance of what faith is. He who could be satisfied with this has never had divine conviction, feels not the need of divine faith, and knows not its nature; for no historical or moral certainty can be faith more or less. Faith comes from God, and receives a testimony, whereupon it sets to its seal that God is true. The rationalist, who has not the Spirit, can only see in Scripture the testimony of the man who wrote it. This is easy to be understood. He gives up the Spirit and the Word together, and falls back upon his own reason. Stress is laid also on the imperfection of the text of the New Testament, on its being written in a dead language, on its being read in translations; and, finally-, we are told that its authors followed the opinions of the day in which they lived. This last objection is itself but a judgment formed upon the opinions of the present day, and is not worth a refutation. It is an accusation, not a proof: and the accusation is but a calumny. In fact if it were well-founded, the same should be said of the Lord's own discourses, or the whole history should be rejected as false (see John 3:33, 34; 8:47). As to the other objections, I have a divine certainty of their futility, because, as I have already shown, the Lord has set his seal to the Old Testament scriptures, in spite of the same difficulties. I would add a few words. Those who reason in this way confound the-rule of faith with the means by which it is made known; in the latter, the imperfection of the instrument is felt. No one would assert that a translation was divine; but this is merely saying that through human diligence we profit by a divine work. The deposit, the rule of faith, remains in its original purity.

If clouds, formed by exhalations from the earth, obscure the light of the sun, they only prove, by thus veiling it, the power of that light which still suffices for all human purposes, although not seen in all its brightness. This objection, then, only tells us that when God gives blessing, we profit by the blessing according to our diligence. But this is not all. It is said that we do not even possess the original in its purity. This is, in the main, the same principle we have just touched on.

All that God gives He puts into the hands of men for their use, and they never know how to keep it as they ought. The revelation of God has been placed in the hands of men-of the Church. Man has not preserved it in its absolute perfection: be it so. God allows man to learn what he is; but faith knows that behind all this, there is the faithfulness of God, who watches over the Church, and that Christ nourishes and cherishes her. Experience teaches, and the Day of Judgment will make manifest, that faith in God is always in the right. Thus the believer quite supposes it possible that, through the carelessness of man, some defects may have crept into that which was committed to him; but he has full confidence in the faithfulness of God. His experience, as we have seen, confirms his faith, for he finds the Word divine. The judgment of God will decide that question for the unbeliever, which. divine faith has already decided for the believer.

The examination of the text by learned men has, indeed, shown the rashness of infidel knowledge; but has left no serious doubt, except as to an extremely small number of texts, or rather of words, nor a shadow of obscurity upon any passage of the slightest importance as to the truth.

One learns that God was there, as much in His caring for, as in His gift of, the Word; although, apparently, He left all to the responsibility of man. To say that the meaning of a passage is doubtful, in order to deny its inspiration, is too absurd an argument to be repeated. It is saying, that the ignorance and incapacity of man are a proof that God has not acted in anything which man does not understand. There is a superficiality in such reasoning as this, which reveals the true value of mere human wisdom. The meaning is doubtful! doubtful to whom? I ask. It is said that the writers of the New Testament implicitly followed the translation of the Seventy. The contrary is the truth. When this translation gives the sense they used it. Half their quotations are faithfully rendered from the Hebrew; and if there are passages which differ from the present Hebrew text, the researches of the learned have proved that they are borne out by the testimony of the oldest translations. In many instances the meaning is given without attaching themselves to the exact words. Conscientious research on this point strongly confirms the divine inspiration of the authors of the New Testament. Inaccuracies, errors, and contradictions are alleged. I deny these contradictions and these inaccuracies. Let us remember that the certainty of the objector's knowledge must be first ascertained, and I have no confidence in it. I have known many cases in which man would prune away the fruit of the spontaneous actings of the Spirit, and carve the beautiful tree into a round or a square. For my part, I have seen divine perfection in the form it has. All is divinely. adapted to the object which the Holy Ghost had in view. We have seen that John does not mention the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane; Matthew and Luke omit what John relates. What does this prove to me? That John was not there? Not so; but that the Holy Ghost is the author of the two accounts, and not John and Matthew. Man would have related what man had seen. The Holy Ghost sets before me in the one Gospel, the man and the Messiah suffering; in the other, the Divine Person who offered up Himself, and whose life no man took from Him. I see divine perfection where human wisdom see blemishes. Luke puts the offer of the kingdoms of the earth before the temptation on the pinnacle of the Temple, and, in consequence, omits "Get thee hence, Satan!" "This is wrong!" cries the worldly scholar. "What perfection!" says the Christian. Matthew gives the historical order, Luke the moral order; for the spiritual temptation, through the written word, was of a deeper character than that of the offer of the whole world. The Man, the Messiah, Son of Man, the Holy One, relying on the promises, duly succeed each other. Now this moral order is characteristic of the whole of Luke's Gospel, excepting where the historical order is

necessary to the truth of the recital. It is the Holy Ghost who writes. I have found difficulties in the Word: this has not surprised me, ignorant as I am; but I have found these difficulties, one after another, to be but the means of entering more fully into the perfection, the wisdom, and the divine beauty of the revelation of my God. If I still find more of these difficulties, and I do so, I wait upon Him to solve them for me; and I do not say "the meaning is doubtful," but "the meaning is doubtful to me." I do not say "there is inaccuracy- and I am accurate enough to judge it without divine light;" but "I am ignorant, and God will enlighten me in due time." Some have even gone so far as to say, that Scripture does not lay claim to inspiration. This shows an ignorance, or a disregard, of its contents, which, especially on such a subject, renders the arguments of those who could assert it unworthy of the attention of a serious man. The apostle asserts the exact contrary in the most clear and absolute manner. We have already seen how the Word, as a principle, speaks of the Scriptures. I will not return to it. I have already exposed the folly of the argument, that inspiration is limited to the passage which asserts it-I say its folly; for why could not a text say, "All these writings are inspired." The fact is, that the passages which assert it, limit it neither to the book which contains them, nor to the writings of the same author. They establish a principle, or allude to the writings of another, to invest them with the authority of Scripture. They establish the existence of a class of writings having divine authority; they ascribe this authority to the entire Old Testament.

The Church, it is also said, may have made mistakes. Be it so; but is there no God? Would He allow us to be deceived on so essential a point? Those who do not know His goodness answer that He might; and boldly pronounce about books which have edified the Church for centuries. But what is this opinion worth? That must be settled before we allow it to invalidate the Book it refers to. I by no means admit the authority of the Church; but I recognize that it is her duty to preserve the deposit committed to her; and I believe in the faithfulness of God. In a certain sense, everything is necessarily referred to individual judgment, that is to say, each one is under its responsibility for himself. A Socinian claims a right to deny the divinity of Christ and the Atonement. Were I the Pope, I could not hinder his thinking so; but being a Christian, I know that he is lost if he remain in this state. I cannot make another believe the inspiration of the New Testament: each one must judge for himself. But he who rejects the Word, the Word will reject him. He is bolder than man should dare to be; but he will not be stronger than God. Salvation does not depend on faith in the inspiration of the New Testament. A man may be saved, without knowing that the book exists, by the truth which it contains reaching his heart through the lips of another. To reject the Word of God, when it is before us, is quite another thing.

I admit that there is a difference between the inspiration of the New Testament and that of the Old; not as to its authority, but as to its character. The prophets of old said, "Thus saith the Lord"; and they announced the thoughts of God, in His own words, on a particular subject, at the moment when his word was addressed to them. But the Holy Ghost-come down as the Comforter to lead into all truth-is different from the Spirit of Prophecy, although the same Spirit (see 1 Pet. 1:11, 12). He searches all things, even the deep things of God." "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Christ being glorified, the Holy Ghost dwells in His disciples, and can open all the treasures of the glory of the Lord, all the tenderness of His love, of His connection, as man, with his own. God was made man, and God the Holy Ghost dwells in the Church, and thus, if I may so speak, humanizes Himself, while not ceasing to be God; He expresses Himself in grace and

blessing in all the details and circumstances of human life: He helps our infirmities. He that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God.

The inspiration of the New Testament partakes of this character. It unfolds itself, in the unity of the Church, in feelings and affections, and ministers to her need by telling of the love and the ways of the God-man in a world of sinners; but if the Holy Ghost has thus acted in the Church, united to the Head whom he glorifies, what He spoke and what he caused to be written, was none the less the Word of God, the thoughts of God communicated in words of His own teaching. As Christ did not cease to be God because he was made man, so he that received the testimony of Christ set to his seal that God is true. We do not give up (alas! too many human teachers have given it up) that presence of the Holy Ghost in the church which produces religious inspiration; that is, the energy which acts in power and blessing in Christians, without making them an authority; neither do we give up the authority of that which has been communicated, whether by word of mouth (had we been present to profit by it), or by writings and words taught by the Holy Ghost; nor do we give up those things which are the Lord's commands..

Observe also, that it is not apostolic authority only which is the question, but the authority of the Word of God. A prophet who spoke by inspiration, and who could say, "The Holy Ghost saith, Separate me Barnabas and Saul;" had as much authority in that instance as Paul or Barnabas. He was but the mouth of God, just as what Paul and Barnabas spoke by the same inspiration was the Word of God. To allege that the Gospels were not written by Apostles is idle. If an Apostle had written without being inspired, his book would only have had the value of that of a godly man. If one of the least in the Church has been used by the Holy Ghost, his book has the authority of the Word of God. The infinite value of Scripture proceeds from its Author, and not, in any instance, from the spiritual personality of its authors.

The two Gospels which are not written by Apostles are none the less the perfect presentation of God manifest in the earth, in that aspect which the Holy Ghost had in view. It is Christ, it is God, who was there. The instrument used in giving us the history of our Savior is of no importance; the only essential thing is, that Christ should be faithfully presented as He was, as God would present Him.

Doubts are raised especially about the Epistle of Jude, the second of Peter, and the Apocalypse. Let us briefly examine these three books. Peter's Epistle contains the assertion that it was written by himself: it has a tone of deep and spiritual holiness, a dignified confidence, most remote from imposture; yet such it must be if it were not written by the Apostle Peter. I find in it minute allusions to things which happened to himself, related elsewhere, which would not have occurred to an impostor: not the smallest deviation from divine truth: a solemnity and an authority nowhere found except in inspired writings: a direct application to the soul, as from God, of the authority of its contents, which is one characteristic of Inspiration. The manner in which the Word is used in it, as well as the events of the life of Christ, has a divine character. We see in it also a knowledge and a use of the grand principles of divine truth, which are unquestionably original, and which possess, at the same time, that divine force which belongs to the whole Bible; an absence of amplification only to be found in the Bible, and which is the result of that consciousness of authority with which an inspired man would speak, or which was rather the natural consequences of his divine

authority. Those who have read the Epistle of Barnabas, which some would compare with that of Peter, will be able to judge of the difference between them, and of the discernment of those who could put it on a level with that of the Apostle. Not to say that it is scarcely doubtful that this so called Epistle of Barnabas is a fabrication, even the one which has been sifted, one has but to read the Epistles of the Fathers (called apostolic) to see that God has guarded the testimony of His Word by the counter-proof of the futility of the writings even of the Apostle's companions; one would scarcely find so much nonsense in these days, even in the religious books written for children. There are two epistles by Clement-kind and amiable enough -written to make peace at Corinth, but they are the only passable ones; and even these are as inferior to the New Testament as, doubtless, the humility of the author would have admitted them to be. Jude is accused of having made use of fables and apocryphal books in his Epistle; but where is the proof of this? The Epistle, on the whole, contains deep and wonderful instruction as to the features of the Apostasy which is foretold in other parts of the Word; supplying elements which, although linking themselves with the whole Scripture, are found no where else. It contains deep principles of eternal and divine truth, and sketches, with surprising distinctness in a few words, the moral progressive steps of man's apostasy; as well as its historical beginnings in the Church, beginnings confirmed doctrinally, and by allusions to other parts of the New Testament. It bears the same marks of inspiration and divine authority which I have pointed out in Peter, and the same contrast with what we know to be of man. But, it is said, there are fables in it; which are they? Is the fall of the angels a fable? The Lord Himself tells us that Satan is a fallen being: we learn from Peter that there are angels reserved for judgment. The temerity of human knowledge calls everything which is beyond its reach a fable. Jude and Peter are borne out, if that were needful, by other passages. All Revelation is a fable to him who believes not: perhaps Michael contending with the devil is meant. But this, as a scriptural principle, is recognized, not only in the Apocalypse and the second of Peter, but also in the book of Daniel (10:20, 21), quoted by the Lord Himself; and that passage shews that Michael especially interests himself in Israel: He is there called their prince. We find the same thing in Dan. 12:1, a chapter, one part of which is especially pointed out as worthy of attention by the Lord Jesus. It proves that Michael is used of the Lord in behalf of Israel. One can easily understand the use which the Israelites would have made of the body of Moses, as we know what they did for centuries with the brazen serpent. We know also that the Lord buried him, carefully concealing the place of his interment. Does He not use the angels in His service, for these things, and Michael especially, for Israel, and against Satan, who opposed his service to that people. So that there is not an element contained in Jude's statement that is not borne out, in principle, by the general testimony of the word of God. That Jude should have been commissioned to add another act to all this is no difficulty to one, whose mind is imbued with the word of God. On the contrary, there is much solemnity in the instruction. It has none of those curious and idle details which we find in the fables of the apocryphal books; but that which throws much light on that invisible world of Providence, the existence of which is proved by a multitude of passages, and which will be unveiled to us when we shall know even as we are known. If I reason thus, it is not that I question the inspiration of Jude: no; for his whole epistle is stamped with the love, the holiness, and the authority of God; and has its own manifest place in the series of the books of the New Testament. I am not proving the truth of what Jude spoke by inspiration, but the superficial character of the objections brought against the epistle. As to the accusation of borrowing from the apocrypha, where is it proved? I conclude it is the prophecy of Enoch which '2 alluded to, as it is

found in an apocryphal book, bearing the name of Enoch, which was published in England some years ago, and which exists in the Ethiopian language. But there is no shadow of a proof that Jude borrowed it from this Ethiopian book. There would be nothing extraordinary in the idea that the author of the so-called book of Enoch may have been acquainted with this prophecy. The prophecy itself is confirmed by a multitude of passages in the Old and New Testament. Its divine truth is proved by innumerable texts of all kinds. Is the preserving that which is certainly true, and nothing else, a proof of not being directed by God, whilst he who composes a book, known to be an imposture, adds to it a mass of crudities? Is it not rather a proof to the contrary, if proof were needed? Jude gives us a true prophecy, and nothing else. Another avails himself of the truth of this prophecy, which had come to his knowledge, to accredit a mass of errors. And this is brought forward as a proof that the former was not under the direction of God, and that he must have quoted the true prophecy from him, who made so bad a use of it And this is called reasoning, and wisdom, and knowledge! To a Christian, the preservation of this prophecy has an affecting interest. In adding the fact of its having been prophesied by Enoch, to a truth taught elsewhere, we have a testimony that, even before the flood, the man of God, who walked with Him, who was taken from the world - as the church will one day be had already, at that early period, announced the judgment of the world he was leaving. "Known unto God are all His works, from the beginning of the world." All His purposes are fixed beforehand, whatever may be His patience and His dealings in long-suffering and in righteousness with man, ere those purposes be accomplished.

In short, to say that this passage has been taken from an apocryphal book is an assertion destitute of proof. It is a question whether this book were in existence when Jude wrote his Epistle. The date of the apocryphal book of Enoch is controverted. And this must be settled before there can be any foundation whatever for alleging that the passage in Jude was taken from it.

We have only now to consider the Apocalypse. This book is only rejected because not understood. Ignorance assumes the office of judge, and decides with the temerity natural to it. It is obscure in its style, to one not familiar with the Word; and in its matter, because it treats of subjects which naturally tend to make it so. But there is no book in the New Testament of which the date and the author are established by more precise, more ancient, and more competent evidences; not one which has acted in a more holy and solemn manner on the conscience of true Christians; not one which - if it be not the simple truth, commending itself - links itself more admirably with the whole structure of the New Testament, completing the whole edifice; and the absence of which, in this respect, would be more sensibly felt. Not one that connects itself so much with, the. Old Testament, by borrowing the imagery of the prophets to unfold its revelations, while so far altering it as to adapt it to the New Testament.

This mode of acting forms the most perfect connection between heavenly and earthly things - a connection fully established in the New Testament-and makes the symbols more easy to be understood, and the object of the book more apparent. There is scarcely a point, from the first chapter of Genesis, with which the Apocalypse does not link itself, without effort, and in a manner which is altogether beyond human art. This book has the impress, the lofty range, the perfection of the mind of God, precisely in those things from which man has endeavored, apart from the Bible, to borrow something from God to give a more exalted character to the idolatry of his own heart. Creation-the Jew-Man, his power in the world, the work of Satan, that of Christ in its results of glory to Himself and to the earth, the church, the condition of the saints in relation to God and to

the earth, the government and the long-suffering of God, the angels-all these subjects are treated of, set in their relations to each other and to God, and yet in no respect whatever is this book deficient, as to any one doctrine revealed in the Word; not copying these doctrines, but expressing them in new forms and in altogether new circumstances, which throw fresh light upon the former ones, and receive it from them in return.

One understands, that a book which, like the Bible, sets forth all the ways of God, from the creation to the return of that creation - long rebellious and miserable, but now redeemed-into the order and blessing in which it is set, by the fullness of God, in safety, shutting out that only which is incompatible with the blessing itself; one can understand, that a book which reveals the eternal Son of God, who was before creation, standing in the midst of this whole scene, to bring out of it glory to His Father, and a more beautiful order than that which had been lost; one can understand, I say, that such a book would not close without taking up again all the threads of this wondrous divine process, in those results which (when the work of the Son is perfected, and all things subdued) will bring in the full and perfect dominion of Him who surrounds Himself with the eternal blessing of that God who has made himself known in Him. This is what the Apocalypse sets before us.

Who is it (to enter into some details of another part, of this book), who is it that in choosing seven churches (a number which, in itself, suggests the idea of a complete whole), could give us, in two short chapters, every moral position in which the Church (and even every individual who has ears to hear) could be found, from the beginning to the end of its career? Who is it that could, with this, give us the most precious revelation of heavenly blessings, adapted as special encouragement to the difficulties of each of these respective conditions, and, at the same time, revelations of the divine and varied glory of the person of the Son of God, a glory which beams with all-pervading brightness over every part of the subject; and that in such details as are calculated to strengthen those who are in the circumstances which, these chapters describe, whilst making known to all the glory of Him who speaketh. This is what we find in chapters ii. and iii. of the Apocalypse. One understands, also, that when the inspired communications made to the Church were about to be closed; when those who were commissioned by God to superintend were being remove- and evil, as the Word. everywhere testifies, was coming in like a flood; one can understand, I say, that the Spirit of God should have thus left to the Church-to the faithful who needed it-a moral summary, which could meet their need in the moral darkness which was gathering around them; a summary which, if God aroused those who were His, would explain the course of events which had taken place during this darkness, and make it manifest that nothing happened without God, even although the Church might slumber; a summary which would, also, give warning of the judgment which will fall upon that which, in the world, is the result of this forsaking of God and of His light by the Church, or by those who profess to be the Church; in a word, upon that which is the result of this corruption of God's -last manifestation of Himself to man-a result which will leave room for nothing but judgment-a judgment which will establish righteousness by divine power.

One understands that such a book as this would close up the revelations of God. Rationalism sees nothing in it but historical speculations-an opinion worthy of such a system. That there should be in it things hard to be understood is not to be wondered at.; it is only in proportion as the Church awakens, takes her place (in humbling herself,) and apprehends her true relationship to God, that she will be able also to acquire a Divine understanding of this rich treasury of all which enlightens

her outward position, and to comprehend the way in which God resumes the government of the world to place it in the hands of the First-begotten, whom He brings into it.

Rationalism prefers man to God, or, at least, would rather listen to him, and that is in truth preferring him. This will be exclaimed against as calumny. I shall be glad of it, for at least it will show that conscience feels it is a horrible thing if true; and that a system which has this for its root and principle, condemns itself. Well then, I repeat it, it prefers man to God, and avows that it does so. The Bible is no longer the Word of God for the rationalist. Human reason pronounces upon it, upon its verity, upon its moral worth; but it is self-evident that this cannot be done with the Word of God. It is equally certain that the rationalist does thus judge the Bible, and chooses rather to rely on his own reason than to acknowledge Divine authority, be it in what book it may. One of the most recent expositors of this doctrine in France, says, " The Bible is no longer the Word of God, and I know not what detriment it will be to the cause of piety to exchange a written code for the living produce of apostolic individuality," that is to say, an inspired collection which has the authority of God, " a uniform impress of divinity," for that which gives man in his individuality, man as he is, godly perhaps, yet man; " authority for history; and, to speak plainly, a cabalistic ventriloquy, for the noble accents of the human voice." If this be not preferring the word of man to the Word of God, what is it? Inspiration, which makes man the mouth and the voice of God, is a cabalistic ventriloquy!!

This author would have the human voice: he thinks it a more noble voice. Poor rationalists! self-admirers, to whom the voice of God, too clearly heard, is a deathly alarm; an unknown sound, which too plainly tells them what they are! Yet hearken to it, ye wise men, who are tempted of Satan to search into good and evil by yourselves; hearken to it: you will find it a voice of grace which can restore you, if it convict you, and cover your moral nakedness with the perfection and the glory of the second Adam-of the Son of God.

One of the shapes which error has taken of late years, is to assert that rejecting the inspiration of the Bible and its authority over believers, allows the Holy Ghost to resume His right place. I fully allow that the Church has grievously forgotten the presence and authority of the Holy Ghost dwelling in her. But I cannot understand how rejecting the authority. of what He has already spoken, can enhance His authority. It appears to me to be rather opening the door to human pretensions and the devices of Satan. I have seen the latter effect produced by the same cause; and in the writings which advocate this system, we are already given over to the former. " Instead of the authority of the Word, we shall

have the word of authority; instead of referring the poor proselyte to the articles of a code, to the ritual of a dogmatist [which I would no more do, than the author whom I quote], or to the pages of I know not what mysterious oracles; we will refer him to all the great prophets of all ages, to the living instruction of the Church, to the Word of God, personified in His servants, to the Spirit and to His manifestations, in a word, to the immediate contact of the heart with truth." How my heart would be in more immediate contact with truth, by listening to the voice of man, than by listening to " the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," is difficult to conceive. I accept "the manifestation of the Spirit," if by that is only meant the exercise of spiritual gifts for the edification of the Church, and the energy of the Spirit manifested in these gifts; but I warn the believer to be carefully on his guard against all false claims to these " manifestations." I have witnessed such, and could plainly

see in them the presence and active energy of Satan. It is not every spirit which is the Spirit of God; and Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light. Such manifestations, when accompanied by the rejection of the Word and of its direct authority over the soul, proceed from the enemy of souls. This is the case with the Irvingites, and there have been others. It seems to me that the enemy is preparing some attempt of this kind, if the Lord hinder him not. The Church in general does not sufficiently own the Holy Ghost to have real strength against such pretensions. But it is not in giving up the Word which the Spirit has given us, that we shall find strength.

Observe, we are asked to give up that which we have now heard called "I know not what mysterious oracles," but which Stephen calls "the lively oracles," and Paul, "the oracles of God" (and remark, the lively oracles were the letter), and to give ourselves up to "all the great prophets of all ages," i.e. to all the vagaries of the human mind, without God, perhaps under the influence of Satan, and that without remedy; for there is no Word of God, only the noble accents of the human voice, and a word of authority: that is to say, whether it be an individual, or a body, which assumes this authority, man, instead of God.

I recognize the existence of the evil which this system attacks. It is one of the commonest devices of the enemy, to attack an evil when it grows old and loses its power over the mind of man, in order to set up some other evil more in accordance with the state of men's minds. Thus the Roman mythology was assailed by the scoffs of infidelity, as soon as it had been shaken by Christianity. Eclectic philosophy began also to display itself. Modern rationalism is doing the same thing. It attacks that lifeless dogmatic theology which makes use of the name of God, to fetter-not man, but the Holy Ghost. But while doing this, instead of bringing us back to the authority of God, it sets up that of man; instead of restoring the liberty and the rights of the Spirit of God, it gives us up to the spirit of man, publishing its unbelief as to the Word, and undermining as far as it can, all that is certainly of God. This once taken away, and when (as they avow) there is no more authority, i.e. authority of God, which alone secures true liberty to man; when there is no other authority than that of him who speaks, or of the Church who will then be free.

It is said that faith in the person of the Savior will remain; doubtless this is the center and the strength of Christianity: but I do not very well know what this faith would be, or in what Savior, if the Word of God were taken from us.

The Holy Ghost is spoken of in this system:-I own most fully the way in which the precious Comforter sent down from Heaven has been grieved and forgotten; but, if the authority of the written Word be set aside, it is something vague and mystical, and nowise answering to what inspiration says of the Comforter. It is a kind of principle, which forms a community, and not the revealer of Christ, and the power of a Divine person in the Church.

The Holy Ghost is the only source of strength, of power, and of understanding in the Church, and in the Christian. But if you separate the idea of the Holy Ghost from the inspiration, and the authority of the written Word, you give yourself up-either to the imaginations of the mind of man, or to an authority which is merely human; whatever may be its pretensions, or the ecclesiastical form it may put on. It is authority, and not truth. The Word of God is the authority of the Truth, and of Him who reveals it

There is an important point which I have not yet brought forward; and on which I would add a few words.-That is, authority of the Word, independently of the effect it produces on the heart. I may be led to recognize the authority of the Word of God, through the effect it has had upon me; but, evidently, it is not this effect which gives it its authority. If the Word produces this effect, it is because it possessed the authority, which I recognized before I yielded to it. I recognize it, because it exists. If Christ pronounced the Words of God, his words had authority, whatever might be the unbelief of his hearers; that is to say, they possessed intrinsic authority. Nor have they lost it, by /being written. The Lord speaks of "Writings" being the highest order of means of communication. If the Apostle has made the will of God known to us in "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," the revelations he received- his words have a divine authority over the conscience, even though they should be rejected by man. The authority of the Word does not depend upon its being received by him who hears. It is not he who is to judge it, except at his own peril. "The words which I speak, the same shall judge you in that day." This may indeed be called possessing authority, independently of him who would judge it.

We are not now discussing the authenticity of the Testimony, but its authority, allowing it to be authentic. Wherein lies this authority? Suppose two persons read a book of the Bible: the heart of one is touched and convinced of the divine authority of what he reads, the other remains in his unbelief. Does the authority of the Word depend on the faith of the one who believes, or is it the same for both; although unrecognized by him who believes not? It is evident that either he who believed was mistaken, or if not, that the authority of the book, although unrecognized by the unbeliever, is as great for him as for the one who bowed to it. The authority lies then in the Word itself, independently of the effect produced by it; or, of the opinion man forms of it. It possesses intrinsic authority. The judgment of the last day will prove it. " The words which I have spoken, the same shall judge you in that day." It could not be otherwise with the Word of God; but it is important clearly to establish this principle.

The Word of God can be of no profit, if it be not received; nevertheless it retains its full authority, because it is the Word of God. Unless the existence of any divine communication be denied, this principle cannot be questioned. He who denies all such communication is an unbeliever. So that the point is not to reason upon what the Church possesses in the Scriptures; but to convince an unbeliever. Moreover, this unbelief does not destroy the authority of the Word; for the rebellion of man cannot destroy the authority of God. The day of probation is granted to man: the day of judgment will make good the authority of God. The Word itself establishes this principle. "And, thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious" (Ex. 2:7): Compare 1 John 3:11-27.-" He that believes has the witness in himself." This is the inward power of the testimony: " He that believeth not God hath made him a liar:" here is the guilt of him who believes not. The authority then, of Testimony from God is independent of the judgment man may pronounce upon it. The testimony will itself judge man.

Other passages, founded upon this principle, apply it to the Scriptures as a body of writings; seeing that from a child " thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. 3:15. Here the holy Scriptures exercise authority over man, from his childhood, as well as make the man of God perfect. It is not then the opinion of the man of God which determines the value of the Scriptures. He who knew their value as making the man of God perfect, recognized their, authority over him at a time when

he was quite incapable of, judging at all on the subject. That is to say, they possessed full and absolute authority over him, independently of his power to receive them: an intrinsic and divine authority. The most advanced man of God is glad to receive them in this spirit, 1 Peter 2:1, 2. The principle of authority is formally laid down by the Apostle in the same passage, " Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned-knowing of whom thou had learned them." The authority of Him from whom he had learned them, was the reason for continuing in them.

The intrinsic authority, then, of the testimony of Scripture is clearly established. Authority independent of the reception of the testimony by the hearer. So entirely independent that the Word will judge him who is not obedient to it. This proves to us that God has endued it with moral evidence, powerful enough to bring him in guilty, who does not receive the testimony; thereby making God a liar. Nevertheless, it is only the grace of God which can overcome the moral resistance of man's heart; unbelieving as it is by nature and by will, when God is in question, though full of credulity as to the things of man.

There is another point which I have only glanced at, and which I desire to put forward a little more plainly. Many circumstances testify that the narratives of the evangelists were not written merely by man, but by the Holy Ghost. John was one of the three apostles who were with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, close to the scene of His agony. He says not a word about it. Nothing can be more affecting and more solemn than the Savior's agony; and most certainly John had not forgotten it, for he remembers many other circumstances which are not to be found in the other gospels; for instance, that those who came to take Jesus went backward and fell to the ground. John accompanied Jesus also to the cross, yet he says not a word of His having been forsaken of God, although he relates a multitude of other circumstances which prove that the Savior was as calm there as when he showed Him to us in the garden. A man who had written the history of the sufferings of the Savior, would not have failed to relate things so deeply interesting, and of which he had himself been an eye-witness. Matthew also would have related the remarkable incident which occurred in the garden of Gethsemane, of which he was an eye-witness, namely, that they all fell to the ground; but he does not mention it, whilst he gives an account of the agony of Jesus and his prayer, although he was not one of the three who accompanied Him at that time.

Now, if you examine these gospels you will find, that this peculiarity-inexplicable as this would be if they were not inspired-becomes quite intelligible when we recognize their inspiration. One and the same author wrote them all. The Holy Ghost, whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and to show them unto us, furnishes us in John with those circumstances of the history of Jesus which would bring out the glory of his person-His glory who offered Himself to God for us. In Matthew he gives us that which is needed to make known the suffering Messiah. The result is not only harmony between the parts of each gospel, but also between all the gospels; producing a perfect whole, exhibiting the design and the workmanship of one and the same author. This principle is applicable to the entire contents of the four, gospels. I have only called the reader's attention to the garden of Gethsemane and to the cross as striking instances. One who is well versed in the gospels, and who has spiritual discernment, would know by the manner in which the subject is presented, in which gospel it is to be found. Compare the connection between the end of Matt. 21 and the parable in the beginning of 22: also the way in which the corresponding parable in Luke 14:16 is introduced, with that of the husbandmen in Luke 20, and you will perceive that the substance, the form, and the diversities of these parables are in perfect harmony with the design

of each gospel. In Matthew, the rejection of Christ in connection with the relation of the Messiah to the Jews; in Luke, the moral order of the events, the acts and ways of the God of grace, founded on the broader, more moral and less official basis of the character of the Son of Man. The same thing may be observed in comparing Matt. 24 and Luke 22

There is another testimony to the truth of inspiration, the peculiar character of which deserves the reader's attention. It applies especially to the Old Testament; but it brings out very clearly the difference between the inspiration of the Old, and that of the New. It is that the prophets did not understand their own prophecies, but studied them as we might do. We read in 1 Peter 1:11-" Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister," etc. They searched into that which the Holy Ghost had spoken through themselves. Their inspiration was so absolute, and so independent of the workings of their own minds, that they sought the meaning of what they uttered, as one of us might do. This is not precisely the character of the inspiration of the New Testament; but it is not, therefore, the less real. It is declared in the succeeding words-" reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven."

The Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven leads into all truth, and thus inspiration acts in the understanding and by the understanding; but it is not the less inspiration. On the contrary, the apostle Paul preferred the inspiration which acts by the understanding, to that which is, apparently, more independent of the man. 1 Cor. 14:14-19-" If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth; but my understanding is unfruitful." Dan. 12:8 gives us an example of that which Peter describes" And I heard, but understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of those things? And He said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."

The reader will remember that the passage I have quoted, is the one to which the Lord Himself referred the disciples, in order that they might understand it. Now if the prophet did not understand the revelation he gave; if the prophets searched into their own prophecies to understand them, it is most evident that those prophecies were given through direct and positive inspiration. I desire to add a thought which tends to confirm the truth I seek to maintain, and which applies to the whole of the Bible. Our attention is called to the fact that the Bible is not one book, but a collection of writings by different authors. It is precisely on this fact I ground my argument, adding to it that they were written at periods very remote from each other. In spite of this great diversity of times and of authors, there is a perfect unity of design and of doctrine: a unity, the separate parts of which are so linked with each other, and so entirely adapted to each other, that the whole work is evidently that of one and the same Spirit, one and the same mind; with one purpose, carried on from the beginning to the end, whatever might be the date of each separate book. And this, not at all by means of mere uniformity of idea, for the Promises are quite distinct from the Law; and the Gospel of Grace is distinct from them both; nevertheless, its parts are so correlative, and form so harmonious a whole, that with the least attention, one cannot fail to perceive that it is the production of ONE MIND. Now there is but One who lived through all the ages during which the various books of the Bible were written, and that One is the HOLY GHOST.

Look at Genesis. You will find doctrines, promises, types which are in perfect harmony with that which is more fully developed in the New Testament events, which in this book are narratives, related with the greatest simplicity; yet in such a manner as to give the most perfect picture of things which should happen in after, ages. Feelings natural to piety (speaking historically) are so related as to possess a meaning, which when we have the key to it, throws light upon the most precious doctrines of the New Testament, and the most remarkable events of prophecy. Look at Exodus; and you will find the same thing. Everything is made according to the pattern Moses saw in the Mount, and furnishes us with the clearest exposition we possess of the ways of God in Christ. At the same time the Law is given. A Law which is not imitated in the Gospel, which does not contain a copy of it, nor any human order. Nevertheless the Law is linked with the Gospel in a manner which makes it impossible to separate them, and which gives to the authority of this revelation, a divine and absolute character. Were it not so, Christ would have died to suffer the consequences of a partly human thing; for He bore the curse of the Law. Observe this carefully, the curse of the Law, revealed to man; and of which He had said, that not one jot or tittle should pass away, till all were fulfilled. And moreover, it was not when reasoning with the Jews, upon their own ground, that He said this; but when teaching His disciples, according to His own perfect wisdom, and solemnly setting before them the principles of His kingdom. Take Leviticus; the details of its sacrifices furnish a light, which throws upon the work of Christ, rays so bright that nothing could replace them; supplying a key to all the workings of the human heart, and an answer to all its need, such as it is found even among the heathen. These details prefigure every aspect of the work of Christ, as doctrinally unfolded in the New Testament, whether by Himself or His apostles. For the inspired writer, they were Jewish ordinances. Take Numbers, the history of the journey of God's people through the Wilderness. "These things," says the apostle, "happened to them for examples [types] and they are written for us, upon whom the ends of the world are come; "Who was it that wrote them for us? Certainly not Moses; although he was the human instrument. It was He who knoweth the end from the beginning, and who orders all things according to His good pleasure.

All the circumstances of Christian life are found treasured up in these oracles in so complete a manner, that the apostle could say, " They are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the New Testament is equally far from merely repeating the substance of the Old, or from making void its authority. It brings in an altogether new light, which-while setting aside a multitude of things, as fulfilled-throws a light upon the contents of the Old Testament, which alone gives it its true bearing. All this applies to the moral, and to the ceremonial Law; to the history of the Patriarchs; to the royalties of David and of Solomon; to the sentiments expressed in the Psalms, as well as to other subjects. Is it not ONE MIND which has done all this? Was it the mind of Moses or of Paul? Assuredly not. Observe also, that all this refers to Christ, and to all the various glories of Christ; glories which God alone knew, so as to reveal them beforehand; and to give, in the history and ordinances of His people, and even in that which is related. of the world, precisely that which would serve for the development of all that was to be manifested in His Son Jesus. Accordingly, what says Peter? (Acts 2) " Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David; that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day; therefore being a prophet, and seeing this before, he spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

I will not go through all the books of the Bible, to give proofs of this unity of design, which is manifested in a work wrought by such various instruments, and at periods so remote from each other. A unity realized in the accomplishment of a work which precludes all idea of its having been intended by the persons who executed it. I only use this thought in confirmation of the doctrine I maintain; but to one who has any knowledge of the Word of God, it is an incontestable proof.

I will add but one word. In judging of Inspiration by the precision of the account, a mistake is committed as to what should be sought for. The Holy Ghost does not aim at that accuracy which would be needful to prove the truthfulness of man. The Holy Ghost has always a moral or spiritual object; the revelation of some eternal principle of truth and grace. Every circumstance which has no bearing upon His object is omitted. He pays no attention to accuracy in that respect. But the moral accuracy is all the greater on this account; and the picture presented to the conscience much more complete. The introduction of something needful to human accuracy, would spoil the perfection of the whole, as God's testimony. God does not seek to amuse the mind of man by stories to no purpose, but to instruct his heart by truth. This might sometimes make it rather difficult to balance the whole, as a mere narrative; but there are two ways of explaining the cause of a difficulty-the ignorance of him who feels the difficulty, or the impossibility of the thing which has perplexed him. And man willingly attributes to the latter cause, that which proceeds from the former. He who understands the design of the Holy Ghost in what He says, seizes the perfection of the Word, where the mind of man is perplexed by a thousand obstacles.

Divine Warning and Encouragement for the Last Days

In the first propagation of Christianity and earliest history of the church, there were markedly displayed two master-forms of evil, against which it had to contend. There was the self-righteousness of the Jew built upon his religion of heaven-appointed ordinances-the " shadows of things to come, [while] the body is of Christ;" -and the atheistic wisdom of the Greek; a wisdom tenaciously clung to by the whole civilized, and as it is called, " Christian world "; which modifies their philosophy, ethics, and divinity, and has stamped its features on the whole range of their literature; and by which they would now correct and mold the precious revelation of God! Though the voice of inspiration declares concerning it, "the world by wisdom knew not God."

Accordingly, the preaching of Christ crucified was " unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness"; but where faith overcame these obstacles, it is added, "unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." And in vain is God's power and God's wisdom, henceforth sought in dissociation from the cross. There alone is its illustration and display, in the person and work of Him who "was crucified through weakness, yet liveth by the power of God."

But before the canon of the New Testament is closed, the spirit of revelation is found in conflict with evil of altogether another type.

The elements of Judaism, and the principles of gentile philosophy, working separately or coalescing in the church of God, may have produced the primary features of this 'evil; but the evil itself has a generic character; marked as " the mystery of iniquity;"-" a falling away," or apostasy; a " departing from the faith," through " giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons." And it is to be remarked, that in order to forewarn and arm the faithful against this corruption of Christianity, the stream of revelation, in the latter epistles of the New Testament, leaves its accustomed channel, and flows entirely in another course. A single glance at the epistle of Jude is sufficient to show that the subject it treats of has no counterpart in the earlier portions of the New Testament. It is not occupied with the unfolding of divine doctrine, nor the enforcement of the details of practice, nor even with arming the believer against the common unbelief and wickedness of the world; but its entire instruction turns upon the characteristic evil, the course and issue of which it describes:- briefly giving this reason for its character, in the fourth verse " For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained unto this condemnation: ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

It may be no pleasant task to ponder this character of the epistle of Jude, and of other scriptures which present concurrent testimony, that in the very bosom of Christianity there should arise a defined and progressive system of evil-commencing in apostolic days-which no revival in the church ever sets aside, and no reformation ever eradicates; but which works on until the ripened iniquity brings the Lord himself in judgment upon the dispensation of Christianity, as surely as the corruption of the old world brought upon it the judgment of the flood; or the apostasy of Israel

brought their overthrow in the wilderness. Yet this corruption, which has for its seed-bed the very bosom of the church, is most necessary to be noted by the saints of God, if they would have God's estimate of the scene through which they must have their course; or if they would possess the only torch of guidance through the darkened labyrinth. It is necessary to follow the Spirit's course when it ceases to treat of "the common salvation," because of the necessity of contending for the "faith once delivered to the saints."

The terms church and world, in the New Testament, - are characteristically opposed; and are in their proper application as distinct as light and darkness: but alas! in practical Christianity this distinctiveness no longer exists. It is not within the limits of a boundary line that truth and error are now confined-though "the foundation of God abideth sure." But it is not now as once it was-the Jew, outside the profession of Christianity, "ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish his own 'righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God;" nor is it the Gentile, apart, scoffing in proud derision at the preaching of "Jesus and the resurrection," or persecuting and imprisoning those who bore his name; but it is within the limits of a professed Christianity, that the mystery of iniquity works; and therefore the need of the precious exhortation on the one hand, and, on the other, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

There was one who could say "I have kept the faith!" But through what contests had he to carry the sacred deposit, and by what incessant wiles was he tempted to betray his trust? The Lord give to his people courage "earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints;" and grace to "keep themselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life!" For then, the onward progress of corruption, instead of staggering the soul, will give but additional confirmation to the truth, as its lamp brightens amidst the increasing gloom. It is in the darkness of the night that the beacon-fire flashes most brightly, and warns 'of hidden dangers; and it is in the night that the light of the prophetic word, whether to direct or to warn, has its most special use. " 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."

The peculiarity of the epistle of Jude is, that it deals with the general and comprehensive principles of all apostasy, or departure from God, instead of dwelling exclusively on any particular feature of evil by which it may be characterized. And solemn indeed is the reflection that all these principles will find their field of action in that sphere where grace at first recorded its triumphs, and which should have been consecrated to holiness and to God! " If the light that is in thee become darkness how great is that darkness! " There is no middle position between being espoused to Christ, as " a chaste virgin "the true character of the church -and being allied to "the great whore" of Christendom's corruptions, " the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

Hence, in giving the moral characteristics of the "men who had crept in unawares," he says, with a "woe unto them," they have " gone in the way of Cain, and run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core"! Thus associating their principles with every form of corruption which God will judge. For in Cain is presented the first apostate amongst men,

in the way of infidelity and hatred of righteousness. Balaam is the selected example of corruption in religion for reward. Core is the head of revolt.

But, though Cain stands as the illustration of the infidel heart and ways of man, under the evil spirit of infidelity, and necessary hatred of righteousness, yet, as may be clearly seen in the example, these may consist with the self-chosen forms of a religion that excludes the recognition of sin in the presence of God, and reliance for acceptance on the blood of atonement.

Balaam stands in scripture in bad pre-eminence, as a man who used his character as a prophet to gain the rewards of the powers of the world, and against the true people of God. He would have used the revelations of God to this end, if they could have been brought into such subserviency; but, in the failure of this, his heart, set upon "the wages of unrighteousness," directly uses, for the ends of corruption, the light he had in the ways of God. Memorable and instructive are the words to the Church in Pergamos-"thou host there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

"The error of Balaam for reward "-having men's persons in admiration because of advantage"-and, "through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandise of you"- are exponents of evil that need no eye of a seer to give them their application.

As to "the gainsaying of Core," it will be seen, in the history, that it is no intrusion into ecclesiastical functions, by one who had no ostensible call to them, as it is often viewed by those who are prone to see all scripture through the medium of an established order; for Corah was a Levite-of the very tribe and order set apart to sacred offices.

Corah alone is mentioned in this gainsaying; but "Dathan and Abiram, with two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, and men of renown," were joined in this rebellion against Moses and Aaron, of which Corah was the instigator.

And thus will it be found, at last, that the corrupt ecclesiastical power, as "the false prophet," will be the evil adviser and instigator of the beast and his armies, in the final rebellion against the kingly and priestly authority of Christ; of which, the rebellion and judgment of Corah is given as a type. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev. 17:14). "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse and his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:19, 20).

This is the result, when the issue is joined at last, between Him who "shall sit as a priest upon his throne," and the last daring usurper of his rights, in the person of him who "has said in his heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North: I will ascend above the height of the clouds: I will be like the Most High."

But spiritual blindness, by whatever cause induced, can alone hinder the perception of this character of evil, as pervading, in a greater or less degree, the entireness of the ecclesiastical

arrangements of Christendom. The intrusion into the prerogatives of Christ, by the assumption of a sacerdotal character and lordship over the conscience in the papal usurpation, asks no comment. Corah, dissatisfied with his Levitical service, seeks to invade the office of Aaron, who was "the priest of the Lord," and to be equal with "Moses, who was king in Jeshurun."

But, in the Church of England, while its accredited doctrines are in entire antagonism with the horrid dogmas of Rome, can it be concealed or denied, that the sin of Corah covertly lurks in its priestly assumption, and in its royal headship? Nay, further, wherever simple and evangelic ministry puts on the form, or asserts the prerogative, of priestly authority, "lording it over God's heritage," there is the incipient working of Corah's sin.

In correspondence with this general character of the epistle, is the association of "these dreamers, who defile the flesh," with Israel's destruction in the wilderness, after the people had been saved out of the land of Egypt (ver. 5); with the apostasy of the angels-the characteristic of which is given in the expressive words "who kept not their first estate" (ver. 6); and, also, with the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the judgment that followed their natural apostasy, in the corruption of the flesh (ver. 7). With such beacons has the Spirit of the Lord planted the downward course of the apostasy of the present dispensation. Reasons for "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," and warnings against the danger of the Church's not keeping "her first estate," are thus drawn from every range that apostasy has ever taken; while heaven, earth, and the realms of darkness, are cited as witnesses of the true judgment of God that must follow in its wake.

The immediate moral features that are dwelt on, and expanded in their action through the epistle, are given in the fourth verse-"turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness"-unholiness of practice with a profession of grace-and denying (not as a point of doctrine, but practically), the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Master or Lord.

From these principles flow, legitimately, insubjection to all constituted authority; for grace, and subjection to the authority of Christ, are the only curb to the wantonness of man's self-will. And if men fancy, and would teach, that, by "despising dominion [or authority], and speaking evil of dignities," they exalt themselves, the Christian is taught how to estimate these things, by the spirit in which an "archangel" owns the authority of his Lord.

"These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead [dead naturally, and dead after a profession of life], plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." "Spots in your feasts of charity," alas! tells us where this evil began. And when it is said, "Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these," we learn, that in the very place where the evil arose there its judgment will fall. Nor is the 19th verse any exception to this-"these be they which separate themselves, sensual, not having the spirit." For it should be observed, that the words do not indicate the action of schismatics; nor even, as it is said in the Epistle of John, "they went out from us." The general condition of the Church was now so low, that they could remain, and "mark themselves off, or distinguish themselves," as the expression is. But, with this assumption of separation, and claim to superior sanctity, they are declared to be "natural men, not having the Spirit;" in contrast to that which characterizes the true saint, who is a "spiritual man;"

and in contrast with the only spring of holiness, as beautifully presented in the 20th verse-" But, ye beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of OUR Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

But I now turn to the blessed encouragements, amidst the evil, presented in the commencement and the close of the epistle. Nothing can exceed their preciousness. The address of the epistle (vet. 1) is, "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, called." Thus presenting God's calling and power in connection with their association with Christ, as the true and abiding and only ground of their security; while, at the same moment, it places them (ver. 2) in connection with the very spring-head, of mercy, peace, and love.

In verses 14 and 15, Enoch's prophecy is given, not more as a token of warning against the evil on which he predicts that judgment will fall, than as a stay to the faithful, in the certain knowledge, that, as the evil is seen rising to its flood-mark, so certainly will the power of Christ's judgment be interposed to put it down.

Verses 17 and 18 recall the minds of the faithful-the "beloved"-to the concurrent testimony of " the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ," concerning these days of evil, for a confirmation of their faith; than which nothing can be more gracious, as showing that nothing is occurring unforeseen.

But, besides this, the characteristics of the evil would by no means be complete, without this concurrent testimony; consequently, the warnings and encouragements for "the last days" would be incomplete, if confined to the features of this epistle.

The second of Thessalonians presents, amongst other delineations, "the mystery of iniquity," and "the man of sin;" from whose delusions, and "the deceivableness of unrighteousness," there is no escape, but in "receiving THE LOVE of the truth."

The second of Timothy gives the moral characteristics of "the last days" and the "perilous times," in the self-love, and boasting, and spirit of fierce democracy, which still have their place amongst those who have "the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof"; and preservation to the " man of God" is pointed out in the exhortation, " but continue thou in the things which thou hast learned "; and in the assertion of the inspiration of all scripture, and its perfectness, " that [thus] the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

The second of Peter goes over the same subject, as to its main features, as the Epistle of Jude, with the same result in judgment upon the evil. But there is this characteristic difference, that it dwells on the comparison between "the false prophets" of a former dispensation - the leaders in Israel's apostasy - and the " false teachers," who are presented as the active instruments of the more fearful evil in this. But, whilst these "false teachers" are leading the van in corruption, and the " scoffers" are saying, " Where is the promise of his coming?" the saint is called to listen to the words, " ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

The first of John predicts "the coming of antichrist," and gives, as his ecclesiastical or religious character, that he will deny the Father and the Son. But, that it might not be imagined that the springs of this evil were altogether future, it is added, " even now there are many antichrists;

whereby we know that it is the last time." Here, again, the place of security is marked in the most simple and perfect way-" If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." Neither "antichrist," nor the "many antichrists," could harm them there.

The epistles to the seven churches, in the Revelation, in their moral bearing, evidently present the same general progress of decay, while the prophetic part opens -into a wider scene; and in them blessing, and safeguard, and overcoming, are connected with an "ear to hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches"-and, if it might be a recovery of " first love."

But there are yet to be noticed one or two points in the beautiful closing verses of Jude. Verses 21 and 22 present the practical every-day business of a saint; and the more so as the evil day comes on. "Ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (that is, its character, in contrast with " turning the grace of our God into licentiousness"), "praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life." Like Enoch, the prophet of the epistle, " walking with God," in the quiet and holy intimacy of one who had the attestation that " he pleased God;" though, for a while, in the midst of all the evil, whose coming judgment he predicted, but waiting for his own translation to a sphere alike above the evil and the judgment, which the coming of the Lord with ten thousands of his saints would execute.

Verses 22 and 23 give the blessed and necessary action of grace, which, not satisfied with self-preservation, seeks, to the end, the rescue of others. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." And they also add, "Let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

But there is also this beautiful character in grace, that, while it compassionates the entangled and lingering, as the angels did Lot, it maintains the most uncompromising separation from the evil - "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." In Christ are the two presented in their perfectness; a compassion that knows no limits to the sinner, combined with infinite separation from the sin.

How divinely perfect is the word of God! And how increasingly precious to the saint, as the night of error and corruption is darkening every ray of light around!

One is not sent to the happiest saint of God, to learn, from the testimony of his experience, what are the privileges and hopes to which he is called by the grace of God. These are alone learned in their perfectness from the scriptures of truth, illustrated in the blessed person of Christ, and revealed in living power to the soul by the Holy Ghost.

Neither is it necessary to go to the men who are wise in the affairs of the world-for the world it is still, despite of its formal adoption of the name of Christ-to learn its character and course. The true reflections of things in heaven and on earth are alone to be found in the divine mirror of the word. The saint, apart from the world, with the Bible in his hand, as one shut up in a camera obscura, sees brought beneath his gaze every movement and figure in the busy complicated scene around him, with a clearness that none of its actors can discern. Thus, and thus only, is it safe to know the world. " For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but

he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

" Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

"Death and Resurrection are the two great principles of Divine. Grace: but, antagonistically, Human Energy and Combination are those in which Human Nature, since its fall, delights.

By the Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, Life, peace, and hope, were found for our souls; by practical fellowship therewith, through the spirit, our life and service are molded and sustained;-while it is the realizing this which maintains our recognition of God, as the End and object of our Being-" whose service is perfect freedom."

Human Energy and Combination have no power-to emancipate from Satan-neither can they even raise to the level of divine thoughts;-of the nature which fell in Eden, they will constantly be found to be roots of bitterness to the people of God-and, through Satan, subjects of pride to fallen man, his great implements in the last scenes of the coming apostasy against God and his Christ.

Fragment: Christ Overcoming

"I was much struck lately with the way in which Christ was answered and overcame in Gethsemane and on the cross. I apprehend, while looking forward to the dreadful cup, the proper and immediate trial of Gethsemane was the power of Satan. This is your hour and the power of darkness.' The great point was to get between his soul and the Father (as before, by desirable things for life). But he could not. Christ hence pleading with His Father, receiving nothing from Satan or man in the cup, receives it from His Father in perfect and blessed obedience-' Thou hast brought me into the dust of death.' Hence His soul is entirely out of the darkness, in respect of the enemy; and He can say, in perfect calm, of others, This is your hour and the power of darkness,' and present himself willingly, that His disciples might go free. How blessed the perfectness which at His own cost always kept them free, for in their position Satan would have caught them in his hour, had not the Lord stood forward in the gap-and so ever, and when needed for Peter-can allow just so much as was good to sift, but stay the proud billows for him which were to go clean over His own soul. He was thus, I judge, entirely out of the whole conflict with darkness, before it came in fact. He passed through it with God-His God. At the Cross. I apprehend, it was another thing. He was forsaken of God. He had immediately to do with God and just wrath against sin. It was not Satan. It was justice, holiness, arrayed against sin, and He, in that place, so that he could have no refuge for His soul. And here, too, He is perfect."

Fragment: Greek Translation in Revelation

" Two passages in Revelation seem to admit of being more easily explained, and to save some controversy, if we adopt the simple interpretation; that ψυχή, in these places, means dead 'body' instead of 'soul,' see Num. 9 One is Rev. 6:9, describing the opening of the fifth seal, where we read of souls' under the altar, the other the celebrated passage in Rev. 20:4, I saw the souls of them that were beheaded. An objection may be raised, How can dead, headless bodies speak? It may be a sufficient answer to say, How can a soul speak without a body at all? To which we may add, It seems contrary to common sense to see a soul. To make a soul visible would not only be (we may suppose) to suspend the course of nature, and achieve what is called a physical impossibility, which is the very nature of a miracle, but, beyond this, to bring to pass what is rather a metaphysical or mathematical impossibility, i.e. that which, in the very nature of the case, can no more be than a sound can be seen, or a color be heard, or two and two can make Ave. At all events, this difficulty is worth considering. Corpses cannot literally speak, no more can blood, yet in figurative, i.e. scriptural, language it has a voice, see Gen. 4 Heb. 11 Again, corpses, as such, do not live and reign, neither do souls (according to the common version) without bodies. In the one case the first resurrection unites body and soul, in the other it not only does so, but repairs the loss the mutilated body had sustained." B.

Fragment: Malachi 3:16-18

"THEN they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not,"-Mal. 3:16-18.

Fragment: Revelation 10 and 11

Suggestive-If we attend carefully to the "words" of the 10th chapter of the Book of Revelation we may be kept clear of much of the perplexity and confusion which prevail in the Church of God with respect to this momentous and deeply-interesting portion of God's Holy Word. Chapter 10, "The mighty angel (verse 1) sware (verse 6) by Him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: but (verse 7) in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished as he /Lath declared to his servants the prophets."

In chap. 11 ver. 15, to the end we have the fulfillment of this oath-confirmed prophecy. "And (verse 15) the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wart, and art to come, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned." "And (verse 18) the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." "And (verse 19) the - temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament: and there were lightnings and voices and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." My object is to call attention to the thought, that the 18th and 19th verses of this 11th chapter contain a complete general account of the finished mystery of God. That, in fact, the Book of Revelation has AN end here.

That which follows consists of circumstantial scenes or detailed pictures, which compose the eventful history so wonderfully generalized and condensed as to be comprised in the last two verses of the 11th chapter. M.

Worcester.

The Glories of the Son

This first chapter, and, indeed, the Epistle to the Hebrews generally, remarkably sets forth to us the glories of the Son. We would desire, under the Lord's guidance, to dwell upon them: may He bless it to the profit of our souls!

He introduces it to us by the thought, that the God, who in times past spake "in many parts, and in many manners," hath, in these last days, spoken to us in one full, unbroken, complete revelation of Himself by His Son. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Meet person to do so! He only meet I now fully, then, does He unfold the glories of the Son. By Him He made the worlds, or ages; and for Him, as Heir, he made them. For Him; I say, as heir; for 1 Cor. 8:6 (where "in him" should be "unto him" [καὶ μὲν εἰς αὐτὸν-ED.]) shows us, I believe, the Father as the ultimate object. "To the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11).

And let us pause, to see with what distinctness the Son is spoken of in Scripture as the Creator (which, to many of us, of course, need not be written, as "though we knew not the truth"). John says (1:3), "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." With equal certainty does the apostle say-"By Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him."

And as He is the Creator of all, so in the same undoubted certainty is He the Judge of all. John y. 26- "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself [it is spoken, I apprehend, officially, as Head of His Church]; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment, also, because He is the Son of Man". And (v. 22)-"For neither doth the Father judge any man; but hath committed all judgment to the Son." Which resurrection-power, I believe, he sets before us, when he says-"The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." I take this to be, "they that are Christ's at His coming;" they, and they only, hear His voice at that time, and come forth, forever to be with their Lord. Lazarus was the practical exhibition of this. And not only they; but the hour is coming, in its own time, "when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice. And shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." And all this for the express purpose, as He tells us, "that all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father" (ver. 23). And how thoroughly do our hearts assent to, and echo, that word-"He, that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that sent Him."

What a chain of glory, therefore, is here indicated to us! Creator of all, Preserver of all (as I believe that word "upholding all things by the word of His power," and (Colossians) "and by Him"--perhaps better "in Him"-all things consist, shows us), and finally Judge of all. "The judgment-seat," we know, is that of "Christ."

This is part of His glory: [but there are some of His glories which we may, and I think it is most important that we should, look upon, as, after all, less than Himself, His own person, and glory;]

because they are official glories. Thus the expression (Col. 1:16), " The firsts born of every creature, or of all creation," That there can be no identification intended with the creature, the context entirely proves; for the " FOR," which, in verse 16, elucidates this first-bornship, is not as though he were only the first-born among the rest of the creatures coming after him; but the first-bornship stands in this connection, " FOR by Him were all things CREATED, whether they be thrones, or dominions," etc.

The first-bornship I would take to be a thing answering to that of the 18th verse, that of the Church. It points, I would suggest with all reverence and deference, to Him, as appointed from everlasting to the headship, first of creation (" I was set up," Prov. 8, strictly, " anointed" [Innm ED.], from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was), and then as the ulterior object (Eph. 3:9 where for " from the be- ginning of the world," read " from the age") to the Headship of the Church. This does not touch the question of what he was in Himself.

And so again with regard to the Kingdom, when it comes, glorious as it is, yet is it less than what He is in Himself. "Then -cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the, kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that did put all things under him, that God may be all in all." He has received the Kingdom from the Father, and when he has gathered out of it all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, put down all authority, and power, and made it meet for the Father, he lays all down at the Father's feet, that God may be all in all; the last grand and glorious token of obedience and love (John 14:31). It has been a mediatorial official glory. " He is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person."

And then what joy it is to our souls to find what comes after; " When he had, by Himself, purged our sins." All the value of his person was thrown into his work: and in the value of that work He now stands before God for us, and we in Him. As the living bird in Lev, 14 dipped in his fellow's blood, stood now in all the value of that blood, though alive; so Jesus, He that was dead and is alive again, stands now before God in the value of all he did on the cross for us, a Lamb as it had been slain.

See again how the value of this truth tells on what follows in chap. 2. That one should have been humbled, as Jesus was, is no so great wonder; but that one, who was what-Jesus was-"Jesus the Son of God"- should have been " made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every one": this is a thing calling upon us, like Moses, to turn aside and see the great sight.

What value of grace again does it put upon his priesthood, who, like Aaron, became "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." What strength, too!" Having a great high priest (chap. 4) that is passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." He is able to help us all through.

See the further testimony to his glory (chap. 3), the contrast between Moses, "the house, and He that built the house, that builded all things, which is God, even Jesus.

Then, again, what a lively type does Melchisedec present of -Him, standing solitary, and alone, " without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,

but made -like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." The tenderness of the Aaronic, the strength of the Melchisedec priesthood, both unite in Him.

" Join all the glorious names,

Of wisdom love, and power," etc.

"Set down (in chap. 8) on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the true sanctuary" shaking both earth and heaven (in chap. 12). Great in his humiliation, great in his priesthood, great in his kingdom, great in Himself.

How sweet to know, that though thus great, yet is it true, what the Psalmist said of him: " Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee forever (Psa. 45). Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." It is the same Jesus, who was meek and lowly in heart-giving rest to the weary and heavy-laden. It is the same Jesus, who " by himself purged our sins"-with whom we are united, " bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh." May we know him increasingly! May we come increasingly " into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God (Eph. 4), that so we may be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." May we know Him more in His grace and love, taking our proper place, like the poor woman, washing His feet with our tears; being increasingly, too, conformed to Him in His meekness and grace, and telling forth His salvation and love to perishing sinners.

Hebrews 11:29-32

By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets.

The Condition of Israel During the Prophecies of Malachi

One of the first lessons that Israel was taught by Jehovah was, " I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me; and before all the people I will be glorified."

In the ninth of Leviticus, Aaron and his sons enter upon their service, according to the commandment of the Lord by Moses. The offerings were accepted; 23rd verse, " And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people: and there came a fire out from before the Lord and consumed upon The altar the burnt-offering, and the fat, which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces."

Immediately upon this, we have an account of the sin of Nadab and Abihu. Chapter 10-" And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not. And there, went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace."

This vindication of the holiness of God should have served for Israel all along, up to the remotest part of their history. It was God's standard. He changed not. We see a corresponding lesson taught to the Church in its early days, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira; God then vindicated his holiness against their sin. The same judgments may not have fallen on like sins during the apostasy of the Church; but God has not changed. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

The spirit of God by Malachi, reproves the people for the way in which they were carrying on the worship of God. Those who had come up from Babylon in answer to the call of God, had in the midst of much weakness reared the temple; and their sin was not that the doors of the temple were closed, but this: " Who is there among you, that would shut the doors for naught? neither do you kindle fire on mine altar for naught. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand." They were not rebuked for not offering sacrifices. " But ye have profaned my name, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even His meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it!... and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord." They had their priests, but the word to them, was, " The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts. Therefore, have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law."

The judgments of God had interrupted the idolatrous course which Israel for so many generations had followed. Those judgments had cleared the land of its idols. The people, on their return, had started afresh; and, alas! this is what they had come to-the form of godliness without the power.

Their conscience had fallen, too. When the prophet charges all these things home upon them, they do not own their sin, nor bow before the word of God. It was a tender way in which the Spirit of God spoke. " A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?" and when the word of mercy was spoken to them-" Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord," they said "Wherein shall we return?" It was the conscience of Israel in the midst of such corruption, that left their case hopeless. " The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Self-justification and self-righteousness widen the breach between God and man. The pride of the human heart dislikes to be told of sin; it dislikes, still more, to own it: acknowledgment of sin must precede blessing. " Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished" (Prov. 16:5). This state of things in the sanctuary had its fruit in the character of the people. " Ye have said,-It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts. And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered."

Bad religion, bad conscience, and bad walk are' linked together. Israel had got away from God; they were not walking with God. The light of God's glory-manifested when Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord--they were not walking in; therefore all this evil. It is " by the fear of the Lord that men depart from evil" (Prov. 16:6). "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name." "The condition of Israel at this time necessarily threw those that regarded the honor of the name of God outside." Those, who with the Psalmist could say-" How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my, heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God.... For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness"-could have no fellowship with that cold heartless service which was around them. "Who is there among you that would shut the doors for naught?" and how true is all this in our own day I How much of the religion around us would fall to the ground, were it not upheld in the same way.

"Doth Job fear God for naught?" is Satan's taunt. This is not the case with them that love God. There is something truly lamentable in the condition of Israel. How must those who loved and honored their God, have mourned to see his table rendered contemptible! What special regard had ever been paid to the sacrifices which God had required-the firstlings of the flock-the lamb without blemish. Even Saul attempted to justify his sin, when he said, " The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord thy God;" but now the torn, the lame, and the sick were offered unto the Lord. Our hearts shrink from the thought that God's name should be thus dishonored; and yet how much this resembles the evil of our own day, too. Where do we find

the full appreciation of the character of our God? The divine holiness of His name, that perfect righteousness, which could rest satisfied in no offering-could accept no ransom-but the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. The heart that is true to God will be sensitive to all that would dishonor His holy and ever-blessed name -alive to aught that would lower the dignity of the person and work of the Lord Jesus: everything that is dear to the Lord is dear to him;-that which glorifies Christ his heart unites in, in the spirit of the apostle" Whom having not seen we love." There are evils so gross, under the name of Christ, that even the world can expose them and war against them. This is a day of strife-system against system; but, amidst it all, how little tenderness is shown as to what is well-pleasing to God. The priests of old were alone entitled to bear the ark of God. Broken hearts healed by divine grace, through the precious name of Jesus, and in-dwelt by the Spirit of the living God, are they alone that can appreciate what is acceptable to God. When gross corruptions, abominable cruelties, and idolatries were prevalent, as in the days of Ahab and Jezebel, the rough hand and stout heart of Jehu were used of God. But the place of testimony required tender hearts, hearts in communion with God, when Malachi prophesied. Right thoughts of God will regulate His worship; communion with God gives an elevation to those who realize it; walking with God will keep us out of the world's religion. Nothing else will. The Lord keep His children-those whose hearts have been brought out to bear peculiar testimony for Him-and strengthen us to hold on.

May we remember those words, " If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." We live in a day when self-complacency in evil, is as strikingly manifest as at this period of Israel's history. There seems little or no conscience towards God left; men struggle with evils, but not as those who sought, in the fear of God, to please Him, but as those who have their own objects to obtain, their own systems to uphold. " Jealousy for God's honor, and for this alone, is true testimony in an evil day;" and where the Spirit of God leads on the testimony, it will take its character according to the state of things against which it is borne. The comfort of those who feared the Lord was, that they were owned, fully owned in their service by God; and that when the day of reckoning came on that which they had left, the word of the Lord to them was, "they shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels." "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall."

M.

Remarks As to Israel

...on the changes incidental to the recognition of a King; and on the term "Lo Ammi."

I desire to make a few remarks upon the Priesthood - as center of unity to Israel, - and upon the change which took place at the time of the establishment of Royalty. That a remarkable change then took place cannot be questioned. Ichabod had been written upon Israel, and every ordinary relationship with God had been broken, for the Ark of the Covenant had been taken. Hannah, in the song in which she celebrates, before this disaster, the goodness of God toward herself, had proclaimed that He would give power to His king, and would exalt the horn of His anointed.

The kingly rule is established, but, at first, not such as was according to the will of God, but, in truth, by the great sin of the people, who, in making a king, rejected God, who was their King. And from that time the Ark was never restored to its place in the Tabernacle, but David removed it to the Mount Zion; and having established all the order of the house of God upon a new footing, he had to leave to his successor (Solomon) the execution of all that which he had received by inspiration, as well as the installment of the Priests in the temple. The order established by David was communicated to him by revelation, just as much as that of the Tabernacle had been to Moses. Everything was arranged afresh, although there were elements common to both. It was, then, the epoch of a great change, when grace, acting by means of David, placed the blessing of the people upon a new footing, at a time when all had been lost. The prophet comes in between the two states referred to, it is true, as a sort of mediator, in the person of Samuel; but we will leave this for the present. His office was the sovereign means, employed by God, to maintain His relationship with the people, when it was unfaithful and fallen into decay. That I have rightly estimated this standing of the kingly authority of David, is proved by the close of the 78 Psalm, where it is said:-

When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance. The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage. Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation. Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach. Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established forever. He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

Here we see the sovereign grace and election of God, who raises up David, as an instrument to lift up the people, when God had forsaken His tabernacle, and delivered up His people to the sword.

This passage is very important, as portraying the true royalty willed by God; but our subject now is the priesthood.

But before giving power to His king, and lifting up the horn of His Anointed,-of whom the True Anointed was to be the descendant, and who bore, indeed, prophetically, his name of "Beloved " (David, see Ezekiel) before the existence of that kingly authority, what was the link between God and the people? What, I say, was the link when there was no king? For some link there must have been. He who is ever so little acquainted with the ways of God in the Old Testament, will at once answer, "It was the high priest." For after Moses (who was king in Jeshurun), who else could be the link? The only person who could have been so, was Joshua; but in the very times of Joshua it was the high priest rather who was so. Let us cite the passages which speak of this. Take Num. 27:15-23.; there we see Joshua, who was to command, placed before Eleazar and the congregation; and when a portion of the honor of Moses has been conferred upon him, in order that the people might obey him, he must needs remain before Eleazar the priest, who inquired of the Lord by Urim and Thummim. At his word (the word of Eleazar) was to be the coming in and at his word was to be the going out of him (Joshua) and of the children of Israel with him, and of all the congregation. Indeed, if God was King in the midst of His people, His high priest, who drew near to him, was, of necessity, the center of unity. It was he (the high priest) who bore the names of the twelve tribes upon his breast, before the Lord,-and their judgment- continually, having the Urim and Thummim, sole true center of unity. On the other hand, when even it was Joshua who directed them, who communicated to them the will of the Lord, it was, nevertheless, always at the word of Eleazar, that they were to come in; and at the word of Eleazar, that they were to go out. That Israel was unfaithful to this, in the times of the Judges, is true; but what was the consequence thereof?

God adds a sad history at the end of this book (but it is a history of facts which happened about the commencement of this period, for Phinehas was high priest) in order to give us an idea of the state of things within the country (for almost all the book is occupied with what passed between the people and their enemies), and therein we see that in their affliction, it was the priesthood which was their resource and common center, Judg. 18:26-28. It is the same in the division of the land, as also in all else, Num. 14:17; Josh. 14:1., Eleazar is always placed at the head. This had never been the case in the time of Moses. And I ask any attentive reader of the Bible whether such was the place of the high priest in the times of the kings. I am aware it may be replied: " He always bore the breastplate with the names of the tribes." Be it so. But it is forgotten that God had already abandoned the people, upon that footing; that the Ark had been delivered up to the Philistines, and that the king chosen of God, inspired by God, savior of His people through grace, had taken possession of it, and re-settled all upon a new footing, as type and representative of the Anointed of the Lord, of Christ the King of Israel, of the King who should establish the kingdom of God, and govern all as such. From that time all hangs upon the conduct of the king. When the kingly office failed, the priesthood could preserve naught. Now the character of Christ in Israel, at that time, will be that of King, and, consequently, it is under that same character that His type and precursor has appeared. Although He be a Priest, yet is it as Melchisedec (a Priest upon his throne) and not as Aaron, entering into the Holy place, that he will act in that day. Aaron is the type of that which he is now; and, therefore, in the epistle to the Hebrews, in the very act of showing that Christ is personally after the order of Melchisedec, the Apostle, so soon as he speaks of His present

services, uses the type of Aaron. On the other hand, when the temple is dedicated, the Priests cannot abide there by reason of the glory, and it is Solomon,-a remarkable type of a kingly priest who acts. He blesses Israel, and blesses the Lord, as Melchisedec had done when Abraham was returning from the conquest of the kings. David the Deliverer, and Solomon established in glory, types of the Lord Jesus, the Anointed King in Israel, necessarily take the prominent place, and all hangs on them. For instance, when Solomon sins, ten tribes are rent from his family and from the temple. The fate of the people hangs upon the conduct of the king as leader of the people (2 Chron. 7:17-20). The history of the kings, from Rehoboam to Zedekiah, shows us that it was thus; and -as to the fact, it was the sin of Manasseh, brought, at length, entire ruin on the people and the house of God (2 Kings 21:11-14).

The examination of the character of Christ, as Melchizedek, puts the change which took place as to the

Priesthood, in so clear a light, that it is impossible that a Christian instructed in the word should mistake, or say that the sacrificial pre-eminence of the family of Aaron held the same place in the ways of God, subsequent to the establishment of royalty, as it did before. Moreover, we have seen, in detail, proofs to the contrary. In like manner, Solomon sends back Abiathar to his own house, and when David, without troubling himself about the priesthood, places the ark in Sion,-an all-important change-he places the Priests in Gibeon before the altar; and there were none before the ark (see 1 Chron. 16:37, to the end of the chapter). We find also (2 Sam. 6:17,18), this character of Melchizedek showing itself in measure in David. If we closely examine the change, we shall see how vast was its import. The expression (1 Sam. 2:35), " He shall stand, or shall walk before His Anointed," has already revealed this. The ark taken captive-where is the glory? Ichabod being the state of Israel, in such sort that the Priesthood was a nullity, as to its original exercise; for without the ark there was no day of atonement for Israel - God interposes in an extraordinary manner by means of prophecy, which was a sovereign means on His part, and announces to the afflicted and downcast people, in the person, and by the mouth, of Hannah, that there was a new means of blessing; that He

The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his King, and exalt the horn of his Anointed.

Here, in the presence of the priesthood, and on the eve of the capture of the ark, a new character, that of the Anointed, is introduced. The anointing had before been distinctively attached to the priesthood. The high priest had been the Anointed. Now it is another

who is distinctively the anointed, it is the king; and this connects itself with the character in which the Christ was to appear. The king being thus distinctively the anointed, the high priest, who had been so previously, walks before Him. He (the priest) is still in office, but He is no longer the center of the system. The king, type of Christ, has taken his place.

Let us examine this in another point of view. It is certain that God, in His determinate counsel, designed to glorify His Son, even in the kingdom of Israel, and in that of the world. But on the other hand, the people ought to have remained before God, by the means of the high priest, without a king being needed for the maintenance of its order. The Lord was their King. Consequently God permitted the sin of the people to ripen, ere he established His anointed. Now the priesthood, as we have seen, and as all the Levitical system testifies, was the center of all the relationships of the people with God-the link of the chain which was near the throne of the Lord. The Lord was Himself King in Israel; but Israel needed to see a king, to be like the nations. The notion that the sin was simply in desiring a king like the nations, and that the thing was not evil, because it was foreknown of God, cannot be admitted for a moment: " And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Sam. 8:7).

At the same time, God presents before the people what will be the consequences; but the people say, " Nay, but a king shall reign over us:" "Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:5, comp. with 12:12).

Now, already, before this request, the high priest had, if one may so say, disappeared. Samuel offered sacrifices here and there; but at length God established His king, His anointed, as we have seen, and in such a position (for he was the type of Christ) that it is said by the Holy Spirit, " Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king" (1 Chron. 29:23).

We see here, the anointed of the Lord seated upon the throne of the Lord. The high priest walks before him. This it is which will take place when the Kingdom shall be established. Without the least doubt Christ will be the Head and Center of it. The question here, is not of the high priest, type of the Heavenly Priesthood (a thought which properly applies only to the tabernacle, as we see in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Apostle speaks only of the tabernacle), but of the position of the high priest in the presence of the king. Christ must have that place of king. David and Solomon are the types of this-in suffering, in victory, and in glory -sitting upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel (1 Chron. 28:5). Now, previously, the Lord had been Himself their King, and the high priest abode before Him. The people rejected God, that He should not reign over them. Their iniquity gave occasion for the accomplishment of His designs in grace, even as it befalls us. But before this act of the people, the high priesthood itself had failed, and all the order to which it pertains was dissolved. The ark was taken, and consequently, the relations of God with the people broken, so far as that depended upon their faithfulness. That order, such as it had been, was not restored. The tabernacle never received the ark. The king became the anointed; and he it is who arranges as to the ark, and the high priest must walk before him. Now, to say, in the face of changes of such a kind as this, that external splendor placed the high priest in more glorious position, deserves no reply. It was worth while developing these things by reason of their intrinsic value.

These remarks will already have enabled us to understand what was the royal authority truly willed of God, and what was the royal authority, which was chosen by man; but we will cite some passages to make it perfectly obvious.

First, I do not see exactly that royalty was in failure during the reign of Saul. The King fell by the hands of the Philistines, but Saul was no more an unbeliever at the close than at the

commencement; sin came to its maturity in him; his heart hardened itself: alas! this is the history of man. But Saul never stood by faith; and the royal authority was not in worse plight at the close than at the commencement. He was disobedient, and God withdrew His favor from him as an individual, but I see not in what the royal authority, as such, failed. It is true, indeed, that the judgment which we have to form upon this, in measure, depends upon the principal question, viz. that of the Character of the royal authority of Saul, and to what point we can call it the royal authority willed of God. This we will now examine.

Samuel sees so distinctively the will of the people in this matter, that he says (in substance in the terms of which I have made use), "Now, therefore, behold the king whom ye have chosen" (1 Sam. 12:13). This royal authority--was it that which was willed of God? The Spirit of God by Moses had anticipated the occasion in which the people of God would ask for a king, and had given rules to be observed when the occasion occurred--but the will of God is not found there (Deut. 17:14-29, etc.).

It is clear that nothing can happen without the will of God. But it is certain that the establishment of Saul was not, morally, according to the Divine will. Several passages in the Book of Samuel furnish unanswerable proofs of this. "The thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. Now therefore hearken unto their voice; howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them" (1 Sam. 8:6, 7, 9).

Then Samuel recounts the oppressions which they must needs endure at the hand of the king, and adds: "And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day" (1 Sam. 8:18). But "ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the Lord your God was your king" (1 Sam. 12:12).

We see here passages which show, with the most entire evidence, that unless the Lord willed that the people should reject Himself; unless, which is impossible, that He willed a great sin (see 1 Sam. 12:17,19), that it is not possible that God willed the royalty of Saul. There is a collateral proof that this was not the royalty willed of God, viz., in that the entire responsibility of maintaining its relationship with God is left to the people (see end of chap. 12). But the people having shown that they could not do without that intermediate power could not walk with God in direct relationship; and God having also manifested the evil--the door opens for the accomplishment of his counsels in Christ: for there was a royalty which had its place in the counsels of God,--even that of Christ,--whose forerunner and type the Lord Himself raises up, without the will or thought of the people finding any entrance whatsoever. We have already seen the manner in which God (in Psa. 68) passes from his judgment upon Shiloh, by the which he had abandoned the tabernacle forever, to his own choice, viz. to David and to the place of his throne in the midst of his people--the place chosen for his abode; comp. Psa. 132:17, where it is written "There will I make the house of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed."

Such was the royalty willed of God. "The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord commanded Him to be captain over His people" (1 Sam. 13:14), and again (16:1), "Fill thine horn with oil, and go; I will send thee to Jesse, the Bethlehemite, for I have provided me a king among his sons." Having anointed him, it is David who is the true chief and leader of Israel, even

during the reign of Saul. The Lord also said to him, speaking of Solomon, " I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee" (1 Chron. 17:13). And in Psa. 89, where the bounties of God concentrate upon David, type of the true well-beloved.

Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: with whom my hand shall be established; mine arm also shall strengthen him.

And in 2 Sam. 7 (of which we have cited one verse) we find all the blessing of the people connected with the house of David. Moreover, his relation with Christ considered, this could not be otherwise. I would quote Hos. 13:11, but its application to Saul may be questioned. I have quoted passages in direct proof that the existence of the royal authority of Saul was by an act of sin; and that it was not what God willed to maintain as that which He had established according to His will; and that the royal authority of David was established by the very act and by the will of God, during the very existence of the other. But, in fact, the manner in which the Word expresses itself, as to the relationship between the royalty of David and that of Christ, the allusions of the Prophets to Christ under this very name, the manner in which the Psalms speak, the history of David, its analogy with that of Christ, the bearing of all that is said, and the very history, all these things are (for him who takes notice of the ways of God) what manifest the divine thought as to His counsels in Christ; and they are evidence far more powerful than isolated texts, in proof that the royalty of David was that willed by God, and that the royal authority of Saul (fruit of the will of the people, who in desiring him rejected God) was not so; although, in a certain sense, all things are according to His sovereign will. It is, consequently, in the royalty of David that the failure of this means of relationship with God is in question, and not in that which took place by the sin of the people, who, in establishing it, rejected God. When we speak of failure, we take for granted there was a state in which God had established man, or, indeed, angels, in blessing; but in blessing lost through the failure, so far as the responsibility of him who was placed in it goes, the sovereign grace of God alone remaining, and capable of reestablishing it according to His counsels of peace. And this proves, in an unquestionable manner, that God never re-establishes, in its primitive state, a thing entrusted to man and placed under responsibility; because, as to that which regards man, all these things are but figures of some part of the glory of Christ, who alone can uphold them. Thus Adam himself was the pattern of Him that was to come; and the blessings of an earthly paradise must needs be replaced in Christ by far better mercies, but could not be so out of Him. So the priesthood, the royal authority, and every other form of blessing whatsoever, can only be realized in Christ. Nevertheless, God places man in positions which correspond to all these blessings, and man has always failed therein. The patience of God has been great, as is expressed as to the royal authority, " till there was no remedy" (2 Chron. 36:16). Then man is judged in the failed thing, and it is in Christ alone that the thing is established-in Him who alone maintains, and is able to maintain, all the glory of God and the blessing of man in these things. " And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons" (Isa. 22:24).

As to the question of "Lo Ammi" a few words:-

The rejection of Judah, at the time of the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and, consequently, the cessation of the application of the title "Ammi" to the whole people, has been the

universal conviction of those Christians who have studied these subjects; and this for very simple reasons. One may be astonished that any one should call it in question, but I will briefly here present some of the proofs. To give them in full and in order, it would be needful to transcribe the greater part of the books of Jeremiah and of Ezekiel. Before producing some of these, it is well to recall the fact, that Israel is always the people of God; and if the affections of the heart and of the faith of a Daniel and a Nehemiah have called them so, nothing is proved thereby. Israel cannot cease to be the people of God. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance," and it is of Israel that this is said. God never ceases to consider Israel as His people; but He has ceased to govern them as His people, and to have His throne in the midst of them upon the earth. St. Paul insists, in the 11th of Romans, upon this point after their rejection of Christ- "I say, then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid" (ver. 1).

So that Israel may now be called the people of God; and ought to be so, as beloved for the fathers' sakes, respect being had to the election. So that that is not the question. If Zechariah (Luke 1) says He has visited and redeemed His people, this is still less difficult to understand, because he speaks of the coming of Jesus, who was, in truth, to establish the people in the enjoyment of all its privileges as the people of God. This, then, proves nothing; because, if this proves that "Lo Ammi" was not applicable, because Israel remains the people of God, it is evident that it never will be "Lo Ammi," because it is always the people of God.

It might be said, perhaps, "But this is because Judah always remained the people of God," one could hardly venture to say so after the death of Jesus. But the fact is, that the apostle takes no notice of the distinction between Judah and the ten tribes. He speaks of all Israel, and shows that it is beloved for the fathers' sakes-that God has not cast off the people whom He had foreknown. Now this, evidently, does not apply only to Judah, but to all Israel, as the apostle expresses himself; and the distinction which he draws is between all Israel and the election according to grace. This will suffice for the moment; we shall see positive proofs of it farther on. Here I seek only to show that the recognition of the people, as people, applies to all Israel, and that it is entirely to misapprehend the force of the passages, and to mistake as to the whole question, to suppose that the faithfulness of God to His predeterminate counsel, and the precious faith of them that are His in that unchangeable faithfulness,-according to which the title of His people is given to Israel, touches the question of the judgment of "Lo Ammi". It is to confound the counsels of God with His government. In all times, Israel is His people, according to His counsels, and the thoughts of His love. This do not prevent their being called "Lo Ammi" (not my people) as to the government of God. Consequently, the fact that Israel has been called "His people," at any given epoch, leaves the question entirely unanswered of "When was the sentence of Lo Ammi' pronounced?" Only we have made a step in our research after truth, to wit, in that we have found that this concerns the government of God. For "Lo Ammi" certainly applies, as to the government of God, to all Israel, and to the ten tribes, at one epoch or another. And as to the sovereign love, and the counsels of God, Israel as a whole is always His people. The question then is of His government, and we can now ask: "When is it that God, in his government of the people Israel, executes upon that people the sentence of "Lo Ammi'?" I am about to show my reader that it was at the time of the captivity of Babylon.

It is certain that the ten tribes bore the name of Israel after their separation from the other two, and that they are presented in general, as having the right to the title, the other two being rather an

appendage to the family of David, whom God would not utterly forsake. Yet the fate of the whole people hung upon that family, on account of the Messiah, who was to be of it, and of the temple, which was at Jerusalem. The perusal of the Book of Kings will show that the ten tribes held the place I refer to; the Book of Chronicles shows the importance of the family of David. The last chapter of the 2nd of Chronicles shows us that the God of Israel was thoughtful of His house and of His people, until there was no remedy. Lastly, the 23rd chapter of the 2nd of Kings shows us that the sin of Manasseh was the cause of the Lord's saying-" I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem, which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there."

As Jeremiah had said-

Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth. And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord; Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity. And I will appoint over them four kinds saith the Lord: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy. And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem. For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest? Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting.

(Compare 2 Kings 21:13, Jer. 14:7). Thus we learn that in the captivity of Babylon, for that event is the subject of these passages, the Lord rejected Judah as He had rejected Israel. He drove that people from before His face and destroyed Jerusalem, being weary of repenting.

Now, Hosea handles the case of Israel and of Judah, and his prophecy bears date of the reign of the various kings of both countries, who reigned in his time. The ten tribes are principally the objects, inasmuch as they formed the main body of the people, and as their dispersion was nearer at hand; but the judgment of Judah is also proclaimed, and the prophet, at times, speaks of the whole together under the titles of " the Children of Israel," and "My people." Especially (chap. 4) as being the priesthood of God; while, at the same time, he speaks of the priests separately. The general application, here, of the expression " Children of Israel" is explained clearly by its use in ver. 5, of chap. 3. The judgment on Judah is announced in chap. 5:5, and 10-15; 6:4-11; that of the house of the Lord, chap. 8:1; that of Judah, again, ver. 14; of Ephraim, Judah, and all Jacob, 10:11; of Judah and Jacob, 12:2. The sum of these passages shows plainly enough the object of the prophecy of Hosea; it applies to the whole of the land and of the people, to Judah as well as to Israel; but the ten, tribes are chiefly in view. The expression, the mother, includes both, and the restoration of the whole people is announced, chap. 2, when God will again become their husband. The point which is not treated by Hosea is the family of David, if not in chap. 3:4, 5, in which the subject is, the people as a whole, under the title of " children of Israel," and their history in a few striking words up to the time of their millennial restoration.

The expression, "Lo Ammi" necessarily applies to all the people, and, consequently, could not be announced ere the captivity of Babylon, although great progress may have been made towards its fulfillment, by the captivity of the ten tribes. The conduct' of the king had, from the days of David and Solomon, been the question with God, in his dealings with His people, who were finally rejected on account of the sin of Manasseh. The impiety of Solomon had already been the cause of the separation of the ten tribes from the throne of his family, and then the peculiar iniquity of these ten tribes had finally caused them to be delivered over into the hands of the Gentiles. Still, the house of God, the family of David, the priesthood of Aaron, the ark of the covenant, continued surrounded by two tribes and some other Israelites, in such sort that one could not say absolutely, -there is no longer a people. Yet the arm of the Lord was already lifted up to smite Judah. One has only to consult Isaiah (who prophesied at the same time as Hosea), the declarations of the first four chapters, and the magnificent and touching appeal of the fifth chapter of his prophecy, to see what was the judgment which God had formed upon the state of Judah.

In the midst of these circumstances, Hosea announces, first of all, the judgment of the house of Jehu. Then, under the (symbolical) name of " Lo Ruhamah," he announces that the Lord will entirely remove the house of Israel, that is to say, the ten tribes. But he will yet have mercy upon Judah, and will deliver it, even as he did in the case of Sennacherib, successor of him who led captive Israel. Then he declares by another (symbolical) name, given to another child, that at length he will pronounce the sentence of "Lo Ammi"; for, said he, you are not my people. Having announced this judgment in an absolute manner, by a prophetic act, after the judgment executed upon Israel, by means of which it was already entirely cut off, and having declared, at the time of this cutting off, that Judah should be spared, the evidence is of the clearest kind, that it would be by the judgment executed upon Judah that this sentence would take effect. This is by so much the more evident in that " Lo Ammi," by the import of the term, applies to the whole people, which was the object of the prophecy of Hosea. Immediately afterward, the prophet, publishing the mercies of God, declares, first, that the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea-shore, and that, then, the children of Judah and the children of Israel,-here expressly distinguished the one from the other in order to establish their re-union in one,-shall be gathered together, and shall appoint to themselves a leader, etc.; we thus see clearly, that the answer and the deliverance embrace Judah as well as Israel, both of whom were included in " Lo Ammi," although the judgment pronounced

for the latter could not take effect until Judah also should

be rejected, and thus there should no longer be a people before God. That God (in the mean while) preserved a little remnant, which he brought back in order to present Christ to it is evident. The question which we have to solve is this-Did -God, as to his government, put in force this sentence of " Lo Ammi" at the time of the captivity of Babylon? For that sentence must needs at some time be put in force. Now let us bear in mind, that the question, as to this expression, is one of the relationship of God with His people,-already broken as to the ten tribes (whatsoever may have been the patience of God, and the messages which he sent to them) by the separation of Jeroboam. For the golden calves did not maintain the relationship of Israel with God. Now, Jerusalem was the place which He had chosen,-the temple the place where he had placed His name. The Ark of the Covenant of the God of the whole earth was there. The family of David, family chosen for the maintenance of His relationship with His people,-the Urim and the Thummim,

means of receiving (by the intervention of the priesthood), light and direction from God were there. Now, not only had Judah sinned, but the family of David, upon the conduct of which all depended, had failed in fidelity. There was no remedy, (2 Chron.), and God must reject Judah as he had rejected Israel.

But in this case the act is more solemn, because the house of God, the throne of God (dwelling between the cherubim, the royal authority, which was of God, which "sat on the throne of the Lord", 1 Chron. 29:23, His Urim and His Thummim were in question. But how preserve them there in order to sanction the iniquity which existed? That would have been still worse, and God executes the judgment which He had pronounced upon His people. The house of God is destroyed, the family of David is led into captivity, and the times of the Gentiles commence. The scepter of the world is placed in the hands of the Gentiles, by the authority of the God of the heavens, an event of immense import, which exists even at this time, and which necessarily prevents the establishment of the earthly people of God, considered in the light of the government of God, because the reign of the Messiah cannot consist with such empire in the hands of the Gentiles. Now it is as clear as possible that the epoch of the restoration and blessing of Israel, when they will no longer be "Lo Ammi", will be that of the reign of the Messiah. For the time being the people of God is a heavenly people, subject to the powers which be, a people which has nothing to seek in the world but the glory of Him who has saved it in order to introduce it into the heavens.

We see then, at the taking of Jerusalem, the judgment of God executed upon His people; the ark of the covenant taken; the house of God burnt; its royal authority taken from the family of David (and this until the coming of the true son of David); the Urim and Thummim of the priesthood lost; the throne of God removed from off the earth; and sovereign authority placed in the hands of the Gentiles. In a word, all that which, as institutions, formed the link between God and the people is set aside (observe it, reader) and by a means which renders the re-establishment of the people impossible, because the scepter and authority have been transferred by God to the hands of the Gentiles.

Under the old covenant, all was lost; under the new, under the Messiah, all is yet future for Israel; Christ manifested in flesh has not re-established the old covenant, and Israel has not been placed under the new. Christ was personally perfect under the old, and when He shed His blood-basis of the new covenant-the time was passed for Israel as a nation. If the grace of God proposed to this people, the return of Jesus (Acts 3) if they repented, the people in their blindness, stopped the mouths of those who made the declaration. This truth, that it is under the new covenant, and under the Messiah, that Israel will be recognized as a people, is of all importance in order to judge in these matters. We shall see that the prophets who announce the judgment by Nebuchadnezzar, pass directly from it to the coming of Christ. We shall see that, although God acted to bring matters to this point, by divers acts of Providence-Christ, when the blessing is established, is always in relationship with the people as a whole, and that the existence of two tribes without the ten, cannot accord with the accomplishment of the promises in Christ. He may come from heaven to destroy the wicked one; but once united to Israel, it is to all Israel, so that there should have been the re-establishment in the promised blessing at the time of the return from Babylon, is impossible, if in that view that event is considered as a continuation of Judah alone as the people of God.

We will now examine the passages which prove that which has just been stated. That the royal authority over all the earth was conferred on Nebuchadnezzar is most clearly stated by Dan. 2:37,38; and even that this should continue until the setting up of the kingdom of God (ver. 38-44); which renders it impossible that Judah, during that interval; should be the people of God, recognized by Him-His government being that which we have to consider. Israel is always "Lo Ammi" during this period.

I need not say that the royal authority was not renewed in the family of David. We nowhere find that the ark of the Covenant was made de novo; certainly it was not so by the command of God-and, sure it is, they could not make the tables of the law having the writing of God, which rendered the ark, the Ark of the Testimony. We have, further, the assurance that no manifestation of the glory of God, sign of his presence, took place at the time of the dedication of the second temple, as happened when the tabernacle was set up, and when the ark was introduced into the Temple of Solomon, and they sounded with the trumpets. So that the testimony and the glory of the presence of God were wanting to the ark, if so be they made one. The absence of these two things made the existence of an ark the plain proof that all that which could have given to it importance was wanting. That there was neither Urim nor Thummim is a fact also admitted by the Jews, and proved by Neh. 7:65.

The absence of this mysterious token was a fact of the most serious kind, for it was thus that the High Priest bore the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before-the Lord continually; that is to say, all that which symbolized the presence of God, and all the links established of old and which maintained the relation of the people with God were wanting, while the people themselves were subjected to the Gentiles by reason of their sin. God might come in in grace, He might send messengers to the little off-shoot of His people which found itself at Jerusalem, He might bear with the mutilated state of institutions, the exterior appearance of which was reestablished,-He might, further, send His Son,-all this He did; but He never canceled the decree of "Lo Ammi." He could not do so, save by Jesus and the New Covenant, when the links of the First Covenant were broken, and Israel subjected to the Gentiles. He presented Jesus-the people would not have Him. He presented Him in the faithfulness of His promise, and it is evident that it was not according to the Old Covenant, under which Israel had been in relationship with God as a people; all was lost according to that Covenant. The New could not be established with a people who rejected its Mediator in Jesus.

There remain three things for us to consider. That which the prophets said after the captivity and that which they said before, as to the means which God would employ in order that Israel might be His people, and, then, the manner in which the New Testament presents this point: I put in the fore-front the prophets after the captivity, because we find there all that the Spirit of God could say of the strongest kind to encourage the people on their return. If in examining these passages we find that the remnant which returned from the captivity is not in them called the people of God, we shall, also understand that the other prophets and the New Testament confirm this testimony.

Let us examine Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Never once is the people returned from the captivity called, by any one of these prophets, the people of God: contrariwise, in the occasions in which one would have supposed this inevitable, this expression is not found, but they say, that they will be His people in the last days. But, in these occasions, it is Israel and Judah. Proof

manifest that they were not recognized by God then as His people. Never do these prophets say on behalf of God, "My people." Their prophecies are full of remarkable revelations on the subject of times yet to come, as also with regard to the first coming of Jesus; and they connect the blessings which are to come with the encouragements which they give for the time, present; but never at the time, nor in reference to the first coming of Jesus, is the people called the people of God. While Zechariah is very plain in declaring that it will be so in the latter days, never is it said that God should dwell in the temple then, but He promises to abide there in the days yet to come. But it is after the glory that the prophet is sent to the nations who have robbed Israel: then it is said, "I will dwell in the midst of thee" (compare Zech. 2:8-10).

It is said, "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it" (Zech. 1:16); but the promise of abiding there is reserved for another time, when the four carpenters shall have "frayed away," and "cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up (their) horn over the land of Judah to scatter it" (ver. 21).

Again, in chap. 8, it is said, "I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem" (ver. 3); but, forthwith, we find the times yet to come in which God will cause His people to come from the east and from the west, and when He will be their God. For the time present, he says, "so again have I thought in these days to do well unto Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah: fear ye not" (ver. 15).

Precious encouragement! Yet leaving the abiding of

God and the title "of his people," as a hope for days to come, when (chap. 6:12) "Behold the man whose name is the Branch; shall grow up out of his place;" and (9:13) Ephraim and Judah shall be united as the bow and the arrow of the Lord.

The promises in Haggai are temporal, and the presence of the messenger of the covenant is promised for the house, but for a time yet to come, for it is when GOD shall have shaken all nations, the heavens and the earth; a declaration which (Heb. 12:26) makes us understand is not yet accomplished. The attentive reader of the Bible will not have need to observe, that God constantly addresses himself to Judah or to the whole nation as to His people, by the prophets who spake to them before the captivity.. Stronger proof one can scarcely have' that God no longer recognized Judah as His people after the captivity of Babylon, while, at the same time, he was vouchsafing to them the promise that, together with Israel, they should be His people, when He should re-establish them by means of Christ under the New Covenant. I will now examine what is the light which the prophets, who announced the judgment executed upon Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, furnish, and what is the epoch at which they declare that Israel will anew be called the people of God. They are the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel. We have already seen that the Lord, weary of repenting, would reject Judah as he had rejected Israel, and that He would execute, without longer deferring (Ezek. 19:21-28) the judgment announced. We shall, then, now see at what epoch, the prophets place the re-establishment of Judah in the enjoyment of the privilege of being the people of God.

Before clearing up this point, and examining at what moment the name of "my people" is given to Israel (I say to Israel, because the two families are always united in this blessing), I will draw the attention of my reader to the solemn judgment which took place at the time of the taking of Jerusalem, which stamps its true character upon this, and gives the true force of the term "Lo

Ammi," placed on the forehead of Judah, as well as of the whole nation, when it was led captive to Babylon, and on the import of the transfer of the throne to the midst of the Gentiles. The throne of God shows itself, and the cherubim of glory, with the wheels, the rings of which were so high, that they were dreadful to the spirit of the prophet. These wheels which were as a wheel within a wheel. The cherubim running to and fro, according to the appearance of lightning, and the wheels in the rings were full of eyes round about.

There was the likeness of a man sitting upon a throne. This was the vision of the glory of the Lord. Then he declares to the prophet the end, " An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations. And mine eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity: but I will recompense thy ways upon thee, and thine abominations shall be in the midst of thee: and ye shall know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. 7:2-4).

Then having set a mark upon those that sighed and cried by reason of all these abominations, he visits and smites the wicked according to the glory of His throne, beginning at His house. But a judgment yet more solemn, announced by the most significant action, awaited the rebellious city. The throne of glory, the Cherubim which the prophet had seen at Chebar appeared anew at the side of the house of the Lord, whither the prophet had been carried. " Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory" (Ezek. 10:4).

Wherefore this solemn visit of the Lord to His house full of imagery and corruption? Wherefore this un- wanted glory? Alas! the reason was but too soon evident. Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the house and mounted up above the cherubim. The temple is void; the glory has departed from it! In vain the cherubim of gold stretched forth their wings over a forsaken mercy-seat, and over a broken law - He who, till within a while, filled that throne of glory had quitted it. Nebuchadnezzar might take possession of the temple as of a corpse. The God of heaven had entrusted him with a kingdom. The glory of the Lord had forsaken His throne upon the earth. " Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above. And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city" (Ezek. 11:22,23).

The Lord had quitted Jerusalem; the throne on earth is given to the Gentiles. Has the Lord returned to Jerusalem to hold His throne in subjection to that of a Persian or a Greek? We have seen that, whatever may have been His compassion for His people, His presence has not returned to fill with His glory the new building. If God is not there, what meaning in the title, "The people of God"? And when is it that this poor, but ever-loved, people will find again its blessedness? When will "Lo Ammi" be forever effaced from its forehead, to make way for that precious title "Ammi." God had already accomplished His Word: "And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab; and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies" (2 Kings 21:13,14). As it is said in Jer. 12:7, "I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies." Already, at the moment of quitting Jerusalem, as He did before driving our first parents from Eden, he announced the

deliverance and the blessing. "I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel" (Ezek. 11:17).

But one sees at once that it is not of the return from Babylon that the prophet speaks, for it is added, " And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh" (ver. 19).

Now, we know, with the most perfect certainty, that this did not take place at the return from Babylon; nor, certainly, since the first coming of Jesus. The prophet passes to the latest days, in order that the people may be blessed. Let us again turn to Jeremiah, who announced and saw the taking of Jerusalem, of which we speak. He declares in chap. 30, that God will bring back the captives of Israel and of Judah, and that they shall possess the land given to their fathers. David their king shall be raised up, " and their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them " (ver. 21); and, adds the Lord, " You shall be my people, and I will be your God" (ver. 22). In chap. 31:31, we have the New Covenant: there is also the question of Israel and Judah, verse 27.

In chap. 32 Judah is again restored by an everlasting covenant; they shall no more draw back from God, they shall be His people, and the Lord will be their God (see ver. 38, 39, 40). Again, in chap. 33:7. God will bring back again Israel and Judah. " In those days, and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David" (ver. 16).

In Ezekiel, 34 David shall be prince (ver. 24). " They shall be my people", saith the Lord God (ver. 30). In chap. 36 we have the remarkable promise to which above all others the Lord Jesus made allusion in His conversation with Nicodemus, and which declares the necessity of that work in order that Israel may enjoy its privilege even in the land, and that it may be at the same time "Ammi," the people of God, and that God may be its God. We have also here the proof that this work (which shows that the people was not recognized as the people of God) is applicable to the people, such as it was at the return from Babylon, since the Lord so applies it, and that the promise of being the people of God cannot be fulfilled without this work of grace being made good; a work which was not made good in the days of the Lord, and which is not yet either, as to the restoration of the nation. In chap. 37, we see Judah and Israel reunited in a striking manner-the people of God "Ammi," and God their God-twice repeated and David king over them. They shall walk in the judgments and statutes of the Lord, David being their prince, in their own land forever. Upon these points chapters 38 and 39 may also be consulted. These passages show, in a way not to be disputed, that the epoch at which Israel should become " Ammi" (that is to say should no longer be " Lo Ammi," for " Lo" is but a negation) were not to be realized until the last days, when Christ will be their king; that this was to have its accomplishment by that grace which will write the law in their hearts, when God gives them a new heart according to the new covenant, and all Israel will be there. Judah and the ten tribes will form but one nation, which will never be divided nor driven from the land, over which Christ will reign forever. And all this is said on the occasion of the captivity of Babylon, in which God rejected Judah as he had rejected Israel; as also that the promise of the return from the captivity which would cause "Ammi" to be named upon Israel should be when all these things therein recited should be accomplished; so that the period during which "Lo Ammi" is the name of Israel was to last from the captivity of Babylon until the return of the Lord.

Lastly, to remove all possibility of question, I add, that the judgment of " Lo Ammi" was not executed before the captivity of Judah, for in the second chapter of Jeremiah, God still calls them His people; and to show that this was not because the term " Lo Ammi" could not apply but to Israel, I quote the fourth verse " Hear ye the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel." On the other hand, the new Testament shows us, that then also all Israel was thought of, and that God considered it as not his people, making an allusion to Hosea. We have seen the Lord showing that the kingdom of God, under which the people would be the people of God, could not come but by the fulfillment of the promises of the new covenant. And the Apostle Paul says (Acts 26) "Unto which [promise] our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night;" so also James, " To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad."

We have already seen that (Rom. 11) St. Paul only distinguishes between the Election and Israel; the latter, in the last days, when a Deliverer should come out of Zion. And the distinction was so lost at that time, that (in Acts 26) the expression of the twelve tribes is a neuter in the singular (το δωδεκαφυλον). So, in citing the passage which speaks of " Lo Ammi," Paul applies it to the state of the Jews, before being called by the revelation of Jesus as Savior without distinguishing " Lo Ruhamah" and " Lo Ammi." Peter is still more positive in his manner of expressing himself, and tells us in just so many words, that the term " Lo Ammi" applies to the state of the people before the Revelation of Christ, while those who received him quitted that position. I say " people," for it is without controversy that the expression " strangers scattered abroad" (παρεπιδημοις διασπορευς) belongs to Israel, while at the same time it restricts itself to such among them as believed. So that we have a direct revelation that the state of the people, after Babylon, was the state of " Lo Ammi" (see 1 Peter 2:10).

I believed it might be useful to present this point clearly for brethren who are interested in it. It treats not of the question of the Church, save so far as all truths are linked together; but it treats of an epoch, singularly important, as to the government of God, because God ceased to dwell upon the throne of the earth between the Cherubim, and entrusted sovereign power to a chief raised up among the Gentiles-a state of things which is to continue under one form or other until the judgment of the world.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."-Jer. 31:31-34.

Joshua

We have gone through, by the goodness of God, the five books of Moses. They have set before us, on the one side, the great principles on which the relations of man with God and of God with man are founded, and on the other, the deliverance of a people set apart for Himself, and the different conditions in which they were placed: whether under grace, under law, or under God's government established over them by the special mediation of Moses.

We have had occasion in them to examine the history of this people in the wilderness; and the pattern presented by the tabernacle, of things to be afterward revealed; sacrifices and priesthood, means of relationship with God granted to sinners, wherein is indeed wanting the image of our perfect liberty to approach God, the veil not being then rent, but wherein the shadow of heavenly things is placed before our eyes with most interesting detail;-finally, we have seen that God, having, at the end of the journey, in the wilderness, pronounced the definitive justification of His people, and caused His blessing to rest upon them in spite of the efforts of their enemies, declares under what conditions the people should retain possession of the land, and enjoy His blessing in it; and what would be the consequences of disobedience; revealing at the same time His purposes with respect to this people, purposes which He would accomplish for His own glory. This brings us to the taking possession of the land of promise by the people under the guidance of Joshua.

This book is full of interest and instruction, as setting before us in type the conflicts of the inheritors of heaven with spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places. If the church is blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, they were temporal blessings in earthly places which Israel was to enjoy. It is easy to understand, that if we may rightly use the name of Canaan as a figurative expression of the rest of the people of God, that which we have here to do with, is not the rest itself, but the spiritual conflict which secures the enjoyment of the promises of God to true believers. The epistle to the Ephesians presents that which precisely answers to the position of Israel in this book. The church having been quickened and raised up with Jesus, has her conflict in the heavenly places; it is there she gives testimony, the testimony of the infinitely manifold wisdom of God. Joshua then represents Christ, not as coming down in person to take possession of the earth, but as leading His people through the power of the Holy Ghost, who acts and dwells in the midst of this people. Yet in Joshua, as in all other typical persons, those errors and sins are found which betray the weakness of the instrument and the fragility of the vessel in which for the time, God had condescended to put His glory.

Let us apply ourselves now to the study of this book. The first chapter shows us Joshua placed in service by the Lord, who commands him to go over Jordan into the land which He had given to the children of Israel.

Let us pause a moment over this immediate commission from the Lord. Moses here holds the place, not of the living mediator, but of the written word. All that he commanded, being from God, was evidently the word of God for Israel. Joshua is the energy which brings them into possession of the promises.

First of all, we have the principle on which possession is taken. The knowledge of the bound aries assigned by God, was not enough; God had defined them very accurately, but a condition was attached to their possession. " Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you." They must go there, overcome the obstacles, with the help and by the power of God, and take actual possession. Without that, they could not possess it; and, in fact, that is what happened. They never took possession of all the land which God had given. Nevertheless, to faith the promise was sure. " There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life." The power of the Spirit of God, of Christ by His Spirit (true energy of the believer) is all-sufficient. For it is, in fact, the power of Christ Himself, who has Almighty power. At the same time, the promise of never being left nor forsaken, maintained all its force. This is what may be reckoned upon, in the Lord's service; such a power of His presence that alone shall be able to stand before His servant, a power which will never forsake him.

After this comes the Lord's exhortation, in verse 7- " Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses, my servant (the title always given him here), commanded thee." Spiritual strength and energy, the courage of faith, are necessary, in order that the heart may be free from the influences, the fears, and the motives which act upon the natural man, and that he may take heed unto the Word of God.

There is nothing so unreasonable in the world as the walk set before us in tne Word-nothing which so exposes us to the hatred of its prince. If, then, God be not with us, there is nothing so fbolish, so mad; if He be with us, nothing so wise. If we have not the strength of His presence, we dare not take heed to His Word; and in that case, we must beware of going out to war. But having the courage, which the almighty power of God inspires by His promise, we may lay hold of the good and precious word of our God: its severest precepts are only wisdom to detect the flesh, and instruction how to mortify it; so that it may neither blind nor shackle us. The most difficult path, that which leads to the sharpest conflict, is but the road to victory and repose, causing us to increase in the knowledge of God. It is the road in which we are in communion with God, with Him who is the Source of all joy; it is the earnest and the foretaste of eternal and infinite happiness.

If only this word from God, the Lord, is heard" Turn not from it, to the right hand nor to the left that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou guest," what joy for him who, through grace, comes forward to do the work of God.

The Lord then exhorts him to the diligent study of book of the law-" For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." Here, then, are the two great principles of spiritual life and activity: 1st. The assured presence of the almighty power of God, so that nothing can stand before His servant; 2nd. The reception of His Word, submission to His Word, diligent study of His Word, taking it as an absolute guide; and having courage to do so, because of the promise and the exhortation of God. In short,' the Spirit and the Word are all in all for spiritual life. Furnished with this power, faith goes forward, strengthened by the encouraging word of our God. The Spirit and the Word cannot be separated without falling into fanaticism on the one hand, or into rationalism on the other-without putting oneself outside the place of dependance upon God and of His guidance. Mere reason would become the master of some; Imagination, of others. Moreover, there is nothing more imaginative than reason, when destitute of guidance! In result, the enemy of souls would take possession of both. We should have man under Satan's influence, in

the place of God. Miserable exchange! for which the unbeliever is consoled by flattering himself that there is nothing beyond his reach, because he reduces everything to the limits of his own mind. Nothing appears to me more pitiful than this unbelief, which pretends that there is nothing in the moral and intellectual sphere beyond the thoughts of man, and which denies man's capacity to receive light from a more exalted mind; the only thing that raises man above himself, while, at the same time, rendering him morally excellent, by making him humble through the sense of superiority in another.

Blessed be God, that some are to be found who have profited by the grace which has communicated to man of His perfect wisdom! Even though the imperfect vessel which received it may have a little impaired its features and its perfection; they have, nevertheless, profited by it so as to take their true place. Happy place, before the presence of Him, whom to know is infinite and everlasting joy!

There is yet an important practical rule to be recognized in these words, 1:9, "Have not I commanded thee?"

If we are not conscious that we are doing the will of God, -if before we begin to act we have not assured ourselves of this in His presence, we shall have no courage in performing it. Perhaps, indeed, what we are doing is the will of God; but not being conscious of this, we act with hesitation, without confidence, and without joy: we are repulsed by the smallest opposition, whilst, when we are assured of doing His will, and that He has said, "Have not I commanded thee?" nothing, through grace, can alarm us. Nevertheless, I add one word, or rather I call the reader's attention to what God says; for although the command of God inspires us with a courage which we could not have had without it, yet no revelation is, by itself, strength for action. But God adds-" Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." We have in the New Testament a striking exemplification of this principle: Paul was caught up to the third heaven, where he heard things which it is not lawful for man to utter. Was that his strength in conflict? Doubtless it gave his views an inward bearing, which reacted upon his whole work; but this was not his strength for the work. On the contrary, it tended to feed the false confidence of the flesh; at least, the flesh would have used it for self-exaltation. Such revelations rendered humiliation needful, and drew from God-not fresh favors (though all was favor)-but that which humbled the Apostle, and rendered him weak and contemptible as to the flesh. Being then weak, strength is given him in another way: not in the use or in the consciousness of revelations-that would have made him weak, by ministering to the exaltation of the flesh; but in the grace and the strength of Christ, which were made perfect in this infirmity. There lay his only strength, and he gloried in this infirmity, in which the power of Christ was perfected in him, which gave occasion for the manifestation, of this power; and which, in proving that Paul was weak, proved that Christ Himself was in the work with Paul. We always need immediate strength from Christ, when acting on the part of Christ; strength which is made perfect in weakness, to do His work; abiding strength, for without Him we can do nothing. Let us remember this truth.

I add but one word on the end of the chapter. There are Christians, (I cannot say approved of God), who take their place on this side of Jordan; that is to say, on this side of the power of death and resurrection, applied to the soul by the Spirit of God. The place in which they settle is not Egypt; it is beyond the Red Sea, it is within the limits of Israel's country; outside Egypt and this

side the Euphrates, river of Babylon. But it is not Canaan. It is a land they have chosen for their cattle and their possessions; they establish their children and their wives there. It is not Joshua who conquered that land; it is not the place of testimony to the power of the Spirit of God, that Canaan which is beyond Jordan. However, although the children and the families might be placed there, yet the men of war must, whether they will or no, take part in the conflicts of the children of God who seek no rest, except where the power of God is found; that is to say, in Canaan, in the heavenly places, all enemies being driven out. And, indeed, when the sin of Israel and their consequent weakness, exposed the people to the successful attacks of their enemies, of the enemies of God, this country was the first that fell into their hands. "Know ye that Ramoth Gilead is ours" lead to no blessing to the people when sorrowful on account of its loss. For the time all was well; that is, as long as Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh remained under the authority of Joshua, and through him the power of God conducted the people. They too, say to Joshua, that which God had said, " Be strong and of a good courage."

How often among the children of God some principle or line of conduct is brought in, that is inferior in nature to the excellence of that work which is going on in the purpose of God; but which, as long as the power of God is working according to this purpose, does not disengage itself; so to say, from the work, so as to assume any prominence, and produce uneasiness and sorrow. But when this divine stream becomes shallow in consequence of man's unfaithfulness, then bitter fruits appear; spiritual declensions, weakness, heart-burnings, divisions, which' flow from the impossibility of reconciling that which is spiritual with that which is carnal, and of maintaining a spiritual testimony while conforming to the ways of the world. But this testimony belongs to the other side of Jordan. The two tribes and a half may follow this course if they will, but we cannot come out of Canaan to join them. Alas! these beautiful meadows, well suited to feed their flocks, have found but too many Lots and tribes of Israel to settle in them, to their loss. The shoals that are met with in our Christian voyage, may perhaps be safely crossed at high tide; but at low tide, skilful pilotage is needed to avoid them and to float always in the full current of the grace of God, in the channel it has made for itself. But there is a sure and steadfast pilot, and we are safe if we are content to follow Him. God has given us what we need for this. Perhaps we must be satisfied with a very little boat; the unerring pilot will be in it.

At the first, Moses was not pleased with the proposal of the two tribes and a half. The thing was permitted certainly. But in general the first thoughts of faith are the best; they only contemplate the promises, the full effect of the promises and the thoughts of God. After thoughts are not in connection with that.

The second chapter contains the interesting history of Rahab.

How beautiful it is to see the grace of God setting up its way-marks from the beginning, that the eye of faith might know where to rest when God was obliged to narrow His dealings with respect to man, and to limit Himself in His relations to man, until the precious blood of Christ gave that grace its full spring and liberty. Seed of the woman, seed of Abraham, seed of David, it narrows more and more. The promises even, as to the government of God, give place to the law, until a small remnant of Israel-proud in proportion to its poverty-becomes the vessel which contains the yet smaller remnant of faithful ones who were waiting for the redemption of Israel. And what shallow thoughts, though true ones, were found in the hearts of these precious saints, in comparison with

the hopes of an Abraham and the solemn declarations of an Enoch! The Lord, ever perfect, ever precious, might well say (one understands it, although the depths of His heart are infinitely beyond our reach) " I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." But there have always been these signals for faith. If God acts, He goes beyond the limits of the existing dispensation, and oversteps His established relations with man. It is thus that the divine nature of Jesus and the divine rights of His person manifested themselves. He was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That was the limit of His formal relations with man. But if faith lays hold of the goodness of God, can that goodness deny itself or limit itself to those who, for the time being, were the alone subjects of His dispensation? No, Christ could not say, God is not good, I am not good, to the degree you have imagined. How could God deny Himself? The Syrophenician woman obtains what she asks for. Precious prerogative of faith, which knows and owns God through everything; which honors Him as He is, and ever finds Him what He is.

Wherein was manifested that faith in Rahab which the Apostle cites as a pattern? Admirable proof that the way in which God acts in grace is before and above law, that grace overleaps the boundary which law prescribes to man, even while maintaining its authority: an authority, however, which can only manifest itself in condemnation. What then was Rahab's faith? It was the faith which recognizes that God is with His people, all weak and few as they may be, unpossessed of their inheritance, wandering on the earth without a country, but beloved of God. If Abraham believed God when there was not a people, Rahab identified herself with this people when they had nothing but God. She well knew that the inheritance was theirs, and that however strong their enemies might be, in spite of their walled cities and their chariots of iron, their heart was melted. This is always the case with the instruments of the enemy, whatever appearances may be, when the people of God are under the guidance of the Spirit of God, in the path of obedience which God has marked out for them.

Thus, in the midst of heathens, this poor simple woman, a bad and despised member of an accursed race doomed to destruction, is saved, and her name is a testimony to the glory of God. Her house, recognized by the sure mark, the line of scarlet thread; becomes the refuge and the security of all who take shelter in it, trusting to the promise given.

And now the people are to enter the promised land; but how enter it? For Jordan, with its flood at the highest, lay as a barrier before the people of God, guarding the territory of those that oppose their hopes. Now Jordan represents death-but death looked at rather as the end of human life, and the token of the enemy's power, than as the fruit and testimony of the just judgment of God. The passage of the Red Sea was also death; but the people were there, as participating (in type) in the death and resurrection of Jesus accomplishing their redemption, and setting them free forever from Egypt, their house of bondage-that is, from every claim of Satan. It was then that the people entered upon their pilgrimage in the wilderness.

Redemption, complete salvation, purchased by the precious blood of Jesus, introduces the Christian into this pilgrimage. With God, he only passes through' the world as a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; still this pilgrimage is but the life down here, although it is the life of the redeemed. But, as we have seen, there is the heavenly life, the warfare in the heavenly places, which goes on at the same time. When I say at the same time, I do not mean at the same instant, but during the same period of our natural life on the earth. It is one thing to pass through this world

faithfully, or unfaithfully, in our daily circumstances, under the influence of a better hope; it is another thing to be waging a spiritual warfare for the enjoyment of the promises, and of heavenly privileges, as men already dead and risen as being absolutely not of the world. Both these things are true of the Christian life. Now, it is as dead and risen again in Christ that we are in spiritual conflict: to make war in Canaan we must have crossed the Jordan. It is, then, death and resurrection in Christ, looked at in their spiritual power, not as to their efficacy for the justification of a sinner, but as to their realization for his life in the heavenly places, into which Christ has entered. A comparison between Phil. 3 and Col. 2 and 3 shows how death and resurrection are bound up with the true character of the circumcision of Christ. In Phil. 3 the return of Christ is introduced as completing the work by the resurrection of the body. In both passages the heavenly life is spoken of as a present thing; but there is entire separation, even down here, between the pilgrimage and this heavenly life, although the latter has a powerful influence on the character of our pilgrim. This influence was perfect and entire in the case of the Lord Jesus; but His life in connection with men, although the ever-perfect expression of the effect of His life of heavenly communion, was evidently distinct from it. The joy of the heavenly life entirely set aside all the motives of the lower life; and leading to the sufferings of his earthly life, in connection with man, produced a life of perfect patience before God. In Him all was sinless; but His joys were elsewhere. Thus, also, with the Christian: there is nothing in common between these two lives. Nature has no part whatever in that above; in that below there are things which belong to nature and to the world, not in the bad sense of the word "world," but considered as creation. Nothing of this enters into the life of Canaan. Christ alone could pass through death, and exhaust its strength, in being in it, as shedding the blood of the everlasting covenant; and He alone could rise again from death, according to the power of the life that was in Him, "for in Him was life." He has opened this way; He has converted death into a power that destroys this flesh which shackles us, and a deliverance from that in us which gives advantage to the enemy with whom we are to fight, being thenceforward brought into Canaan. Therefore the Apostle says, "All things are yours, whether life or death." Now, every true Christian is dead and risen in Christ; the knowing and realizing it is another thing. But the word of God sets Christian privilege before us according to its real power in Christ.

The Ark of the Lord passed over before the people, who were to leave the space of two thousand cubits between it and them, "that they might know the way by which they must go; for they had not passed this way before." Who, indeed, had passed through death until Christ, the true Ark of the covenant, had opened this way? Man, whether innocent or sinful, could do nothing here. This way was alike unknown to both, as was also the heavenly life that follows. This life is altogether beyond Jordan: the scenes of spiritual conflict do not belong to man in his life below. No wilderness experience, be it ever so faithful, has anything to do with it, although the grapes of Canaan may cheer the pilgrims by the way. But Christ has destroyed all the power of death for His people, so far as it is the power of the enemy and the token of his dominion. It is now but the witness of the power of Jesus. It is indeed death; but, as we have said, it is the death of that which fetters us.

I will add some brief remarks. "Lord of all the earth" is the title Joshua repeats, as that which God had here taken; for it is in testimony to this great truth that God had planted Israel in Canaan. Hereafter He will establish in power, according to His counsels, that which had been put into the hands of Israel, that they might keep it according to their responsibility. This last principle is the key to the whole history of the Bible; as to man, Israel, the law, and all it has to do with.

Thus this chapter supplies us with very clear indications of that which God has promised to accomplish in the last days, when He will indeed show Himself to be "Lord of all the earth," in Israel brought back in grace by His mighty power. And we must attend to this testimony of the purpose of God in establishing Israel in their land. Harvest time will come, and the strength of the enemy will overflow its banks; but we, as Christians, are already on the other side. The strength of the enemy passed all bounds in the death of Jesus; and we do not say now "Lord of all the earth," but "All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth."

Let us remark, also, how God encourages His people. They must combat; the sole of the foot must tread on every part of the promised land to possess, it; and it must be in conflict that the power of the enemy and entire dependence upon God are realized. But while fighting boldly for Him, He would have us know that victory is certain. The spies said to Joshua, "Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land, for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us." This is what we know and prove by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, so different from that of the flesh, as brought by the ten who came back with Caleb and Joshua.

But if we are introduced into a life which is on the other side of death, by the power of the Spirit of God, as being dead and risen in Christ, there must be the remembrance of that death, by which we have been delivered from that which is on this side of it; of the ruin of man, as he now is, and of the fallen creation to which he belongs. Twelve men, one out of each tribe, were to bring stones from the midst of Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood firm with the Ark, while all Israel passed over on dry ground. The Holy Ghost brings with Him-so to speak-the touching memorial of the death of Jesus, by the mighty power of which He has turned all the effect of the enemy's strength into life and deliverance. Death rises with us from the grave of Jesus: no longer now as death, it is become life unto us. This memorial was to be set up at Gilgal. The meaning of this circumstance will be considered in the next chapter; we will only dwell here on the memorial itself. The twelve stones, for the twelve tribes, represented the tribes of God as a whole. This number is the symbol of perfection in human agency, in connection here as elsewhere with Christ, as in the case of the show-bread.

Here also the Spirit sets us-Christians-in a more advanced position. There were twelve loaves of the show-bread, and we form but one in our life of union by the Holy Ghost with Christ our Head, which is the life we speak of here. Now, it is His death that is recalled to us, in the memorial left us by the loving-kindness of our Lord, who condescends to value our remembrance of His love. I only speak here of this memorial as the sign of that which should be always a reality. We eat His flesh, we drink His life given for us. Being one now in the power of our union with Christ risen, dead to the world and to sin, it is from the bottom of the river into which He went down to make it the way of life-heavenly life-for us, that we bring back the precious memorial of His love, and of the place in which He fulfilled His work. It is a broken body which we eat, a poured out blood which we drink; and this is the reason why blood was entirely prohibited to Israel after the flesh; for how can death be drunk by those who are mortal? But we drink it, because the death of Christ is our life, and it is in realizing the death of that which is mortal that we live with Him. The remembrance of Jordan, of death when Christ was in it, is the remembrance of that power, which secured our salvation in the last strong-hold of Him who had the power of death. It is the remembrance of that love which went down into death, in order that, as to us, it should lose all its power; except that of doing us good, and being a witness unto us of infinite and unchangeable love.

The power of resurrection-life takes all strength from Satan: "He who is born of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." In our earthly life, the flesh being in us, we are exposed to the power of the enemy; and the creature has no strength against him, even though it should not be drawn away into actual sin. But if death is become our shelter, causing us to die unto all that would give Satan an advantage over us, what can he do? Can he tempt one who is dead, or overcome one who, having died, is alive again? But, if this be true, it is also necessary to realize it practically. "Ye are dead, therefore mortify " (Col. 3). This is what Gilgal means.

The matter in hand was not yet the taking of cities, the realization of God's magnificent promises. Self must first of all be mortified. Before conquering Midian, Gideon must cast down the altar that was in his own house. The wilderness is not the place where circumcision is carried out, even though we may have been faithful there. Circumcision is the application of the Spirit's power to the mortification of the flesh in him who has fellowship with the death and resurrection of Jesus. Therefore Paul says (Phil. 3): "We are the circumcision." As to an outwardly moral life, Paul had that before. Had he now added true piety to his religion of forms, the true fear of God to his good works? It was far more than that. Christ had taken the place of all, in Him: first of all as to righteousness, which is the ground-work; but further, the Apostle says, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Therefore it is in "pressing towards the mark," that he waits for the coming of Jesus, to accomplish this resurrection, as to his body. In the Epistle to the Colossians chap. 2, he speaks to us of the circumcision of Christ. Is it only that he has ceased to sin (the certain effect indeed of this work of God)? No; for in describing this work, he adds, "Being buried with Him in baptism, wherein also we are risen with Him, through faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead.' The consequences of this heavenly life are found in chap. 3 ver. 1; which is in immediate connection with the verse just quoted. Here also the work is crowned by the manifestation of the Saints with Jesus when he shall appear.

Our Gilgal is in the 5th verse. " Mortify therefore." We see that it is founded on grace. " Ye are dead, mortify therefore." This being the standing, it is realized. " Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead," said the Apostle (Rom. 6), when speaking on the same subject. This is the practical power of the type of the stones brought from Jordan. They are a symbol of our union with Christ who was dead. Raised up together with Him, we can say that we were dead with Him: He, dead for sin; we dead in sin; God has quickened us together with Him. All that He did was for us. Associated with Him in life, united to Him by the Spirit, I appropriate to myself, or rather God ascribes to me all that He has done, as though it had happened to, myself; He is dead to sin, in Him I am dead to sin. Therefore I can "mortify;" which I could not do as being still alive. Now, circumcision being the practical application of that of which we have been speaking, we remember the death of Christ, and mortification is accomplished through grace, in the consciousness of grace. Otherwise it would only be the effort of a soul under the law, and in that case there would be a bad conscience and no strength. This is what sincere monks attempted; but their efforts were not made in the power of grace, of Christ and His strength. If there was sincerity, there was also the deepest spiritual misery. In order to die there must be life; and if we have life, we have already died in Him who died for us. The stones set up in Gilgal, were taken out of the midst of Jordan, and Jordan was already crossed before Israel was circumcised. The memorial of grace, and of death as the witness to us of a love which wrought out our salvation, by taking up our sins in grace, stood in the

place where mortification was to be effected. Christ dying for sins, in perfect love, in unfailing efficacy, is our strength in dying unto sin. In every circumstance, then, we must remember that we are dead, and say to ourselves, if through grace I am dead, what have I to do with sin, which supposes me to be alive? Christ is in this death in the beauty and in the power of His grace; it is deliverance itself. As to growth, the Apostle says: "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

Thus, in being dead, and only thus, will the reproach of Egypt be taken away. Every mark of the world is a reproach to him who is heavenly. It is only the heavenly man, who has died with Christ, that disentangles himself from all that is of Egypt. The life of the flesh always cleaves to Egypt; but the principle of worldliness is uprooted in him who is dead and risen with Christ and living a heavenly life. There is in the life of man a necessary link with the world as God sees it; with a dead man there is no such link. The life of a risen man is not of this world; it has no connection with him. He who possesses this life may pass through the world and do many things that others do. He eats, works, suffers; but as to his life and his object, he is not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. Christ, risen and ascended up on high, is his life. He subdues his flesh-he mortifies it-for in point of fact he is down here! but he does not live in it. The camp was always at Gilgal. The people-the army of the Lord-returned thither, after their victories and their conquests. If we do not the same, we shall be feeble, the flesh will betray us; we shall fall before the enemy in the hour of conflict, even though it may be honestly entered into in the service of God. It is at Gilgal the monument of the stones from Jordan is set up; for if the consciousness of being dead with Jesus is necessary to enable us to mortify the flesh, it is through this mortification that we attain to the knowledge of what it is to be thus dead. We do not realize the inward communion (I am not speaking now of justification), the sweet and divine enjoyment of the death of Jesus for us, if the flesh is unmortified. It is impossible. But if we return to Gilgal, to the blessed mortification of our own flesh, we find there all the sweetness (and it is infinite), all the powerful efficacy of this communion with the death of Jesus-with the love manifested in it. Thus we do not remain in Jordan; but there remains in the heart all the preciousness of this glorious work, a work which the angels desire to look into, which is for us, and which Christ, in His love, appropriates to us. We find Him with us at Gilgal-a place of no outward show or victory, to attract the eyes of men; but where He, who is the source of all victory, is found in the power and the communion which enable us to overcome.

But there were, also, twelve stones set up in the midst of Jordan; and, indeed, if we apply the power of the death of Christ to mortify the flesh, the heart-exercised in, and fully enjoying heavenly things-loves to turn again to Jordan, to the place where Jesus went down in the power of life and obedience, and to gaze upon that Ark of the Covenant, which stood there and stayed those impetuous waters till all the people had passed over. One loves, while viewing the power of death in all its extent, to behold Jesus there, who went down into it; but who destroyed its power for us. In the overflowing of the nations, Christ will be the security and the salvation of Israel; but He has been our security and our salvation, with respect to much more terrible enemies. The heart loves to stand on the banks of that river-already crossed-and to realize, while studying what Jesus was, the work and the wondrous love of Him who went down into it alone, until all was accomplished. But in one sense we were there; the twelve stones show that the people had to do with this work, although the ark was there alone when the waters were to be restrained. In the Psalms we can

especially there contemplate the Lord, now that we are in peace on the other side the stream. Oh, if the Church knew how to seat herself there, and there meditate on Jesus! In doctrine, the Psalms set forth, also, the connection between the death of Jesus and Israel passing through the waters of tribulation in the last days.

Behold, then, the people out of Egypt and in Canaan, according to the faithfulness of God's promise; not only redeemed out of Egypt, but brought into Canaan; the reproach of Egypt being rolled away, and the people of God having taken their place at Gilgal-the true circumcision of heart, of which we have spoken.

Israel encamped at Gilgal. The character of their communion with God is pointed out before their victories. They keep the Passover in the plains of Jericho. The Lord prepared a table before them, in the presence of their enemies. It was no longer, as in Egypt, the blood sprinkled upon the lintel and the two side-posts, that they might be sheltered from the destroyer, and preserved from the just judgment which spread terror throughout every house where the blood was not seen.

We need this aspect of the blood of Christ, being in the territory of sin and Satan, although called of God to come out of it. God's justice and our consciences require it. But here it is no longer this; it is the memorial of accomplished salvation. Neither is it participation by grace in the power of the death and resurrection of Christ. It is the soul's communion-it is the sweet spiritual recollection (while peacefully sitting in the heavenlies) of a work all His own, of His death as a lamb without blemish. We feed upon it, as His redeemed people, in the enjoyment of this position in the land of promise and of God-a land which belongs to us in consequence of this redemption, and of our being raised up with Christ. The death of Jesus can only be thus enjoyed on the other side of Jordan, as risen with Him. Then, in peace, in fellowship with Him, and with ineffable feelings of thankfulness, we return to the death of the Lamb; we contemplate it, we feed upon it; our heavenly happiness and intelligence only increase our sense of its preciousness.

On the morrow after the Passover the people eat of the old corn of the land. Thus raised up, and seated in the heavenly places, it is the "things above" which feed the soul, and maintain it in vigor and in joy. From thenceforward, also, the manna ceased. This is the more remarkable, because Christ, we know, is the true Manna; but Christ down here, Christ after the flesh. I contemplate Jesus (God manifest in the flesh) with adoration, my soul feeds upon the powerful attractions of His grace in His humiliation; but in that condition he remained alone. The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, otherwise it abideth alone. But-while knowing what He has been-it is a Christ seated above, who died and is raised again, whom I now know. Paul alludes to this when he says-"Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." The memorial of His death, of which we have spoken, is undoubtedly the basis of all. There is nothing more precious: but it is a heavenly Christ with whom we have now to do. We contemplate, while seeking to imitate, the precious model which He has set before us, as a heavenly man upon the earth. We delight ourselves with the contemplation of all His grace here below; but our fellowship is with a Christ in heaven. And the Christ, whom we know on earth, is a heavenly Christ, and not an earthly Christ, as He will be to the Jews by-and-bye. In passing through this wilderness (and we are passing through it), Christ, as the manna, is infinitely precious to us. His humiliation-His grace-comfort, relieve, and sustain us. We feel that He has passed through the same trials, and our heart is sustained by the thought that this same Christ is with us. This is the

Christ we need for the wilderness-the bread which came down from heaven. But, as a heavenly people, it is Christ at the right hand of God, and heavenly things, which we feed upon; for it is to Christ ascended up on high that we are united; it is there that He is our life. In a word, we feed on heavenly things, on Christ above, on Christ dying, as a sweet remembrance, on Christ living, as the power of life and grace. We feed on the remembrance of Christ on the cross; this is the Passover; but we keep the feast with a Christ who is the center of heavenly things, and feed upon them all (Col. 3:1, 2). It is the old corn of the land into which we have entered.

Thus, before giving battle, in front of the very walls of Jericho (representative of the enemy's power), God gives us to enjoy the fruit of this land as being all our own. We remember the death of Jesus, as redemption long since wrought out; and we feed on the old corn of the land, on heavenly things, as our own portion. For being risen with Christ by His grace, all is ours. After this beautiful picture of the position and the privileges of God's people, who-according to God's own rights- may enjoy everything before engaging in a single battle, we find that war must follow. But there is one thing necessary for making war and obtaining blessings by conquest.

The Lord presented Himself as Captain of the host; it is He Himself who leads us. He is there with a drawn sword in His hand. Faith owns no neutrality in heavenly things. "And Joshua said unto Him, Art thou for us or for our adversaries? And He said, Nay, but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I come." But the presence of the Lord as Captain of the host, as much demanded holiness and reverence, as when He came down to redeem His people (Ex. 3), in that divine holiness and majesty which were manifested according to their just requirements in the death of Jesus, who gave Himself that He might magnify and establish them forever. Such as he was, who called himself "I am," when He thus came down in righteousness and majesty; such also is He when standing in the midst of His people to bless and lead them in conflict.

The almighty power of God is with the Church in her warfare. But His infinite holiness is there also, and He will not make good His power if His holiness is compromised by the defilement, the negligence, the heedless levity of His people; or by the failure in those feelings and affections, which become the presence of God, for it is God Himself who is there.

In chapter 6, we find the principles on which the conquests of Israel are founded. The work is altogether God's; He may indeed exercise His people in conflict, but it is He who does all. "They went up every man straight before him." There is submission here in the use of means, readiness to follow a course which, in the eyes of the world, is absurd and without object; but which loudly proclaims the presence of the Lord in the midst of His people; there is entire dependence upon God, a perfect confidence in Him which openly declares it has nothing else to do but to obey Him.

The promise is sure, they act in obedience. That is the principle. Joshua-type of the energy and the mind of the Spirit in one who enjoys communion with the Lord-is certain of success; and in this assurance of faith he acts without hesitation. In effect, all the strength of the enemy falls to the ground without the use of any means that could account for it. Another principle is, that there must be no fellowship whatever with that which constitutes the power of the enemy of God with the world, and that which is its strength. All is accursed. It is so with us in this world. If the world of Sodom had enriched Abraham, he would have been dependent on that world, he would have owed it something; he would not have been at liberty from it to belong entirely to God. " And ye in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed." God may

use these things by consecrating them to Himself, if He will. But if man, if the Christian meddle with them, the Lord must judge him. Cities walled up to heaven-the greatest obstacles-are as nothing; but holiness, complete separation from the world because power is of God, that is the condition of strength. Jericho, representing the enemy's power and means of defense (inasmuch as it was the first city standing as a barrier to arrest the progress of God's people), is put under a curse forever; and sentence is passed against any one who should rebuild it (see 1 Kings 16:34). The abstract principles of the power of God and the enemy's strength, are presented by this city, in what evidences them, and in contrast. But, if God is there, and the world is utterly condemned, His grace calls out from this world a people saved by faith from its abominations.

The seventh chapter lays open the principles of God's government, or His ways in the midst of His people who are in conflict. Victory leads to negligence. The work is thought easy. After a manifestation of God's power, there is a kind of confidence, which in reality is only self-confidence, for it neglects God. What proves this is, that God is not consulted. Ai was but a small city. Two or three thousand men could easily take it. They went up and viewed the country, but God was forgotten. The consequence of this will be seen. If they had taken counsel of the Lord, either He would have given no answer, on account of the accursed thing, or He would have made its presence known. But they did not seek His counsel; they went forward, and they were defeated. The people of God, surrounded by the enemy, have lost their strength and flee before the least city in the land. What will they do now? This is more than they know. Engaged in battle, and unable to conquer, what can they do there, where victory alone is their safety? " The hearts of the people melted and became as water." Joshua cries unto the Lord, for in such a case even he who has the Spirit is taken by surprise, not having acted according to the Spirit. He must fall on his face before the Lord for their condition is not normal, not according to the Spirit, who is the only guide and wisdom of His people. Joshua, however, recalls the power by which God had brought the people over Jordon, and contrasts it with their present condition: so evidently inconsistent with it. " Wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordon, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordon! O Lord! what shall I say! "

This was a perturbed state of mind: the effect of a mixture of unbelief with the remembrance of the wonders which the power of God had wrought. Joshua loves the people, and he sets. before God the glory of His name; yet with a timorous wish that they had remained on the other side of Jordon (and what to do there? for unbelief ever reasons badly), away from the conflict which led to such disasters; a wish that betrayed the unbelief which disturbed his heart. Such is the state of a believer's soul in the conflict which the. Holy Ghost brings him into, when the state of his soul does not inwardly correspond with the presence of the Holy Ghost, who is our only strength for conflict. There is no escape. It is a position which absolutely requires strength; yet the very nature of God prevents His bestowing it. We lament; we recognize His power, we dread the enemy. - We talk of God's glory; but we are thinking of our own fears and our own condition. Yet the thing was very simple. "Israel hath sinned." Man, even when spiritual, looks at results (because he is in close contact with them), even while owning the power of God, and the connection between Him and His people. But God looks at the cause and also at what He is Himself. It is true that He is love, but He cannot sacrifice the very principles of His being, nor deny Himself in those relationships which are founded upon what He is. His glory is indeed connected, through grace, with the well-being of his

people. But He will vindicate His glory, and even bless His people in the end, without compromising these principles.

It would not be maintaining His glory in the midst of His people, if He tolerated amongst them anything contrary to His essential character, and made use of His power to maintain them in a condition which would deny His nature. The relationship would be broken, and God himself compromised; a thing absolutely impossible. They had sin amongst them, and the strength of God is no longer with them; for God cannot identify Himself with sin. And let us remember here that there was also sin in the neglect which went forwards without seeking counsel from God. Joshua's cry did not at once bring deliverance, but discovery first of all of the sin, with respect to which God is very precise and very exact. Observe that when the government of His people is in question, He searches into everything and takes cognizance of the smallest details, (see verse 11 of this chapter). Also, that God not only said " they could not stand" but "Thou canst not stand." Sorrowful change. Before, it was " No man shall be able to stand before thee." Now, they could not stand themselves. Where there is not holiness, God allows the weakness of His people to be practically seen; for there is no strength but in Him, and He will not then go out with them, nor thus sanction and encourage sin. Nevertheless let us remark here, that God does not always withdraw His blessing at once from those who are unfaithful. He frequently chastens them on the one side, and blesses them on the other. He deals patiently, He instructs them, in His grace; He does not bless them on the side where the evil is, but He acts with admirable tenderness and a perfect knowledge of its cause; taking the trouble so to say, of following the soul in detail, according to its condition and for its good, for He is full of grace. How often He thus waits for the repentance of His people! Alas! how often He waits for it in vain!

But we have here the great principle on which He acts; as in the case of Jericho, that of His power exercised on behalf of his people; proving that all is of God. Another important principle is here set before us. The people of God are corporate, as to the effects of sin amongst them. The presence of God is in their midst. Sin is committed there. He is there. But since there is only one God there, and the people are one, if He is displeased and cannot act, the whole people suffer in consequence, for they have no other strength but God. The only remedy is to put away the accursed thing. We find the same thing at Corinth, modified according to the principles of grace. The wicked person must be put away. If not, they are all identified with the sin, until they have put it away, and have thus "approved themselves to be clear." In doing so, they take God's part against the sin, and the relation between God and the body reassumes its normal state. Nevertheless all this cannot fail to produce certain painful effects. If the accursed thing is there, although trod may be glorified-in that the perfection of His ways is manifested, as well as His Jealousy of sin, and perfect knowledge of all that happens (for Achan's confession justifies God, and the people have not a word to say), yet, although the sin is no longer concealed, discipline must be carried out. The confession of Achan, whose sin had been brought to light, through the obedience of the people or of Joshua to the Lord's directions, does but ratify in the eyes of all, the just judgment of God. But it is well to remember here, that Christian discipline has always the recovery of the soul for its object. Even if the offender should be delivered unto Satan, it is for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. A most forcible reason for exercising this discipline, according to the measure of our spiritual power; for we cannot go beyond that. At the least we might always humble ourselves before God, in order that the evil may

be removed. To be indifferent to the presence of evil in the church, is to be guilty of high treason against God; it is taking advantage of His love to deny His holiness, despising and dishonoring Him before all. God acts in love in the church; but He acts with holiness and for the maintenance of holiness; otherwise it would not be the love of God which acted; it would not be seeking the prosperity of souls.

It is interesting to see that this valley of Achor, the witness and the memorial of the first sin committed by Israel after they had entered the land, is given them " for a door of hope" (Hos. 2:15), when the sovereign grace of God is in action. It is always thus. Fear sin, but do not fear the bitterness of its discovery, nor that of its, chastisement: for at this point God resumes the course of blessing. Blessed be His gracious name for it! Let us follow the history of the people's restoration to God's favor. Alas! Shinar (Babylon) and money soon begin to affect the ways of the people of God. They find these things amongst their enemies, and the carnal heart covets them. Observe also, that if there is faithfulness and obedience, God never fails to manifest and take away that which hinders the blessing of His people.

Chapter 8 exhibits the return of Israel to their strength in God.

If all the people were compromised by Achan's sin: it was needful that they should be sensibly restored to confidence, that they should be established, and consequently that they should go through whatever was necessary to their restoration. They must experience many things. Much experience of this kind would be avoided by walking in the simplicity and integrity of faith. Jacob had more of it than Abraham, and it was when unfaithful that Abraham went through the most; that is, of such experience as is really felt to exercise the heart. But God makes use of this, to teach us what we are, and what He is: two things which-if we know them not-render experience necessary.

Success is now certain; but all the people must go up against this small city which, judging by human strength, might have been taken by two or three thousand men. Pride and false confidence are sharply rebuked by this. How much trouble must Joshua now take I Lay an ambush, feign to flee, all this to take a small city, and not much glory after all. It costs more pains to return into the path of blessing, than it would have done to avoid the evil. But the simplicity of faith and its natural vigor can be regained no other way.

Meanwhile the power of God is with them, and everything success; although the manifestation of this power was not such as it had been at Jericho. At length by God's command Joshua stretches out the spear that was in his hand toward the city. It does not appear that the ambush saw it, or that it was a concerted signal. But as soon as it was stretched out, the ambush arose, entered the city and set fire to it. It is thus that the Lord, working by His spirit at the opportune moment, produces activity in those even who may not know why. At a given time they are impelled onwards and think they act from motives of their own, while it is the Lord who directs all their steps in harmony with what He is doing elsewhere; and thus He brings about the success of the whole affair.

It is highly interesting to see the Lord thus the hidden spring of all action, giving impulse to the activity of His children, who in detail are ignorant of what it is that puts them in motion; although on the whole the mind of God is revealed to them, even as Israel had the general orders of Joshua. When Christ stretches out the spear, all his activity to bring about the counsels of His wisdom, and

lead to the pre-determined results of His mighty grace. May we only have faith to believe it!

We have still two other important points to consider in this chapter. The Lord had already shown in the taking of Jericho, that it was His might alone that gave victory, or rather that made everything fall before Israel, the prince of this world having no power against Him; and that the gold and silver being the Lord's, the people were not to seek the treasures of the conquered world, nor to enrich themselves with its spoils. In general, however, when Israel had exterminated their enemies, they took possession of everything as of the promised land. Now that these two great principles are established, namely, that the power of God is with His people, and that He will have holiness and consecration to Himself maintained in the camp, Joshua takes formal possession of the whole country as belonging to the Lord.

This is not celebrating the memorial of their salvation by the blood of the Lamb; nor is it feeding on the old corn of the heavenly land, in the place of rest; where the grace and perfection of Christ, and the redemption He has wrought out, are peacefully remembered.

The people treat the land itself as belonging of right to the Lord, according to the strength of the spiritual might which is in activity to assert His rights, and which recognizes them although the conquest of the land is only just begun. At Jericho (in type) they had fellowship with the Cross and with things above, without striking a blow. Here, the conditions of the warfare being laid down, they publicly declare beforehand that it is the Lord's land. Though Satan is still in possession of the contested land, by right it is the Lord's. There were two actions by which Joshua verified this. He commanded the dead body of the king of Ai to be taken down from the tree, as soon as the sun was down. This was the ordinance in Deut. 21:22, 23. "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in anywise bury him that day (for he that is hanged is accursed of God); that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." Israel's victory was complete. The curse hung over their enemies, who were also God's enemies. They were made a curse, and declared to be so. Now, according to Joshua's faith, the land was so entirely Israel's, as the gift of God, that it ought not to be defiled; he had, therefore, the dead body taken down that it should not be so in fact.

The other action was Joshua's building an altar on Mount Ebal. Having taken possession of Canaan as a consecrated land, they recognize the Lord as the God of Israel, by worshipping Him in the land. The altar was there as a witness, and as a bond between the people and the Lord who had given them the land. The erection of this altar has been already spoken of, when considering the book of Deut. I will not recur to it. I leave it to the reader to judge whether Joshua would have done better to set up this altar as soon as they had crossed the Jordan. Be that as it may, we do not always turn at once to God, when we enjoy that which His power has wrought. Our not doing so only proves our folly, whether it be in things connected with our joy or our safety.

Joshua now reads before all the people, not only the curses attached to the violation of the law, but all that made known the ways of God in His government of the people.

But if such a position as this proclaims the rights of God, and manifests the confidence of the people, it soon leads to conflict. The enemy will not consent to the invasion and the taking possession of all the territory he has usurped. But the wiles of the enemy are more to be feared than his strength; indeed it is only these that are to be feared; for in his strength he meets the Lord.

In his wiles he deceives, or seeks to deceive, the sons of men. If we resist the devil, he flees; but to stand against his wiles, we need the whole armor of God. Christ met his wiles with scripture, and when he manifested himself, the Lord said, "Get thee hence, Satan."

The inhabitants of Gibeon pretended to have come from far. The princes of Israel use their own wisdom instead of asking counsel of the Lord. This time it is not confidence in the strength, but in the wisdom of man. The princes of the congregation, accustomed to reflect and to guide, are more likely to fall into this snare. Bad as they are in their unbelief, the people, eager for the result, are often nearer the mind of God, to whom the result is sure. The princes had some misgivings, so that they are inexcusable: apparently there was much advantage in gaining allies in a place where they had so many enemies. The Gibeonites flattered them too, as the servants of the Lord. Everything was calculated to set their minds at rest.

Satan can talk religiously as well as another; but he deceives only when we take the management into our own hands, instead of consulting the Lord. Communion with Him was needed to discern that these were people of the country, enemies who dared not be enemies: but to make peace with such, is to deprive oneself of a victory, and of one's right to make good the judgment and the glory of God, in the unmingled possession of the land of blessing. Allies can only set aside that single-eyed dependence upon God, and that purity of moral relationship which exist between God and His people, when it is His power alone that sustains them. They spare the enemy; and the name of the Lord, which has been brought in, obliges His people to retain a perpetual snare in their midst.

Four centuries later, in the days of Saul, this produced its sorrowful fruits. To a spiritual mind, the presence of the Gibeonites would always be an evil. Besides what had Israel to do with allies? Was not the Lord sufficient? May He give us always to trust in Him, to seek counsel of Him, to own none but Him, and to be always subject to Him! This will ensure victory over every enemy, and the land will be all our own. More- over, this peace with the Gibeonites only brought fresh attacks upon Israel. But now all is plain. The Lord says to Joshua: "Fear them not, for I have delivered them into thy hand." This is all that conflict means, for one who walks in the Spirit before God. There must be conflict, but conflict is only victory. It is the Lord who has delivered the enemy into our hands; none can stand before us.

All things are ours. The sun stands still, and the moon stays its course, witnessing to the power of God, and to the interest He takes in blessing His people. We may be sure that whithersoever the Spirit will go, there the wheels will go (Ezek. 1:20). Joshua defeated all his enemies, because the Lord, the God of Israel, fought for Israel. This time they were faithful, they made no peace. What had Canaanites to do in the Lord's land? Has Satan any right to the land of promise? This is the light in which Joshua always beholds the land of Canaan (10:27). But after the victory, Israel returned to the camp of Gilgal. We have already explained what Gilgal means. But the return thither of the conquerors of the Canaanitish kings, contains the instructive lesson, that whatever our victories and our conquests may be, we must always return to the place that becomes before God, in the annihilation of self; to the application of the knowledge we have of God, the resurrection of Christ having set us in the heavenly places; to the judging and the mortifying of the flesh; to spiritual circumcision, which is the death of the flesh by the power of resurrection. There is a time to act and a time to be still, waiting upon God that we may be fit for action. Activity, the

power that attends us, success, everything, tends to draw us away from God, or at least to divide the attention of our fickle hearts.

But the camp, the starting point for victory, is always at Gilgal. It is not there that the enemy attacks us if we are faithful. The attack will be on our side, what' ever the maneuvers of our adversaries may be.

Let us observe also, that in spite of the people's and Joshua's failures, everything turned out well in the end. There were faults, and these faults received their chastisement, as in the case of Gibeon, and of Ai. But the walk of the people being faithful in the main, God made everything work together for good. Thus the peace with Gibeon led to victory over the kings who attacked that people. There was cause for humiliation and for chastisement in the details of their history; but as a whole, the hand of God appears in it most manifestly. It is seldom that every step of our way is taken in faith and dependence upon God. We do well to humble ourselves on account of this; but when the object is the Lord's object, He goes before us, and orders all things for the triumph of His people in this holy war, which is His own war.

Israel's victories bring fresh war upon them; but the confederation of their enemies only serves to deliver them altogether into their hands. If God will not have peace, it is because He will have victory. A new principle is now set before us. God will in no wise allow the world's seat of power to become that of His people, for His people depend exclusively on Him. The natural consequence of taking Hazor would have been to make it the seat of government, and a center of influence in the government of God, so that this city should be that for God which it had before been for the world; " for Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms." But it was just the contrary: Hazor is totally destroyed. God will not leave a vestige of former power; He will make all things new. The center and the source of power must be His, entirely and exclusively His: a very important lesson for His children, if they would preserve their spiritual integrity.

In a certain sense the conquest of the land seemed complete;-that is to say, there was no outward strength left, either to stand before them or to form a kingdom. But Israel had still many enemies in this land, enemies who did not, indeed, molest them while they continued faithful, but who taught the people many things that afterward helped on their ruin. They had divided the conquered land-they had rest from war. When all is finished we may reckon up our victories, but not before; till then we ought rather to be occupied in gaining more. We may remark here, that in the result of God's dealings, the fault committed previously to the attack upon Ai, seems blotted out, and had even contributed to the development of His purposes. At the time it had kept them back, and was punished. But God applied Himself to Israel's moral restoration to the confidence of faith, and the grand object of His dealings was in no wise hindered. This is no excuse; but it is a sweet and strong consolation which leads so much the more into worship. The fault committed in the matter of the Gibeonites appears to me more serious. It did not delay their progress; but being the act of Joshua and the princes, it set them forever in a false position with respect to those whom they spared.

The 11th chapter closes the first division of the book, - that is to say, the history of Joshua's victories; typically, that of the Lord's power by the Spirit, giving His people possession of the promises.

The 12th is only a summary of their conquests. The Holy Ghost not only gives us the victory over our enemies, but makes us understand and know the whole extent of the country, and defines the particular portion of each, giving us details of everything it contains; of God's perfect arrangements for the appropriation of the whole, and the distribution of each part to His people, so as to produce a well-ordered whole, one and perfect in all its parts, according to the wisdom of God. But here we have to realize the distinction maintained in the New Testament between the gifts of God and the enjoyment of the gifts given. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." "He hath made us sit together in heavenly places," (by the same power which placed Christ there when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him above every name that is named.) Alas! how many earthly things are still unsubdued among Christians! But the Holy Ghost takes cognizance of this condition, in view of and in connection with that which rightfully belongs to them: it is this which enables us to understand the second division of this book.

Although there was still a considerable part of the land to be possessed, Joshua parcels out the whole amongst the tribes of Israel, according to the command of the Lord, who declares that He will Himself drive out its inhabitants before them. But the people poorly responded to this promise. The cities of the Philistines were indeed taken, but their inhabitants were not exterminated; they were spared, and soon regained power. Here we may remark, that wherever there is faithfulness there is rest. The effect of Joshua's work was, that "the land had rest from war;" so also with that of Caleb (14:15). When the cities of the Levites were allotted them, we find the same thing again (21:43, 44). It is not so in detail; the whole extent of country is given to Israel, and each tribe has his share; the portion, therefore, which fell to each tribe was given them in full right by the Lord Himself. Their borders were marked out, for the Spirit of God takes notice of everything in distributing the spiritual inheritance, and gives to each according to the mind of God. There is nothing uncertain in God's arrangements. But we find that not one tribe drove out all the enemies of God from his inheritance, not one realized the possession of all that God had given him.

Judah and Joseph take possession of their lots; we know that they always remained chief amongst Israel, fulfilling thus the counsels of God as to royalty for Judah, and the birthright which fell by grace to Joseph (16, 17). The Tabernacle of God was also set up in peace (18); but, once at rest, the tribes are very slow in taking possession of their portion: too frequently the history of God's people. Having found peace they neglect His promises; nevertheless, as we have seen, the Spirit of God did not fail to point out to the people in detail all that belonged to them.

The cities of refuge are appointed (20); that is, the land being the Lord's, provision is made that it may not be defiled, and for the return of every man to his inheritance, after he had fled from it for a time, because of killing some person unawares.

The establishment of the two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan gave rise to difficulties and suspicions; nevertheless, these tribes were faithful at heart. Their position had done them harm, their self-seeking having somewhat marred the energy of their faith; still faithfulness to the Lord was found in them.

Finally, Joshua sets the people in the way of warning -under curse, or under blessing, according to their obedience or disobedience; and then recapitulates their history, telling them that their fathers had been idolaters, and that the people around them were so still.

But the people, not having yet lost the sense of the power of God, who had blessed them, declare that they will serve the Lord alone. They are thus placed under responsibility; and undertake to obey, as the condition of their possessing the land and enjoying the fruit of God's promise. They are left there, it is true, in peaceable possession of it all, but under the condition of obedience, after having already allowed those, who should have been utterly destroyed, to remain in the land; and when, from the outset, they had not at all realized that which God had given them. What a picture of the Church ever since the days of the Apostles!

There is yet one remark to be made. When Christ shall return in glory we shall inherit all things, Satan being bound. Now, the Church ought to realize, by the Holy Ghost, the power of this glory. But there are things, properly called heavenly, which are ours, as being our dwelling-place, our standing, our calling; there are others which are subjected to us, and which are a sphere for the exercise of the power that we possess. Thus the limits of Israel's abode were less extensive than those of the territory to which they had a right. Jordan was the boundary of their abode, the Euphrates that of their possession. The heavenly things are ours; but the manifestation of the power of Christ over creation, and the deliverance of this creation, is granted to us. It will be delivered when Christ Himself shall exercise this power.

Thus the " powers of the world to come" were deliverances from the yoke of the enemy. These were not things proper to us; nevertheless, they were ours.

Judges

The book of Judges is the history of the failure of Israel. Joshua sets before us the energy of God acting in the midst of the people, who err nevertheless. In Judges we see the miserable state of the nation, now become unfaithful; and at the same time, the intervention of the God of mercy in the circumstances into which their unfaithfulness had brought them. This corresponds with what are called revivals in the history of the Church of God.

In this book we no longer see blessing and power marking the establishment of the people of God. Neither does it contain the fulfillment of God's purposes, after that the people had manifested their inability to retain the blessing they had received; nor the forms and government which, in spite of the evil and internal unfaithfulness of the people, could maintain their external unity, until God judged them in their leaders. God was still the only leader acknowledged in Israel; so that the people always bore themselves the penalty of their sin.

The misery into which their unfaithfulness brought them, moving the compassion of God, His mighty grace raised up deliverers by His spirit in the midst of the fallen and wretched people. "For His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." "And the Lord raised up Judges, which delivered them out of/ the hand of those that spoiled them." "And when the Lord raised them up Judges, then the Lord was with the Judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the Judge; for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them." But Israel was unchanged. "And yet they would not hearken unto their Judges." "And it came to pass, when the Judge was dead, that they returned and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way." This is the sorrowful history of the people of God; but it is also the history of the grace of God, and of His compassions towards His people.

Thus, in the beginning of the book, we see evil and failure, and also simple and blessed deliverances. But, alas! the picture darkens more and more. There are grievous features even in the conduct of the Judges, and the state of Israel becomes worse and worse; until, weary of the results of their own unfaithfulness, in spite of the presence of the Prophet, and the express word of God, they reject the kingship of the Almighty, to adopt human forms of government and establish themselves on the same footing as the world, when they had God for their king! This, indeed, was the reason why God left some of the nations in the midst of His people to prove them. The presence of these nations was in itself a proof of Israel's lack of energy and of confidence in the power of God, who nevertheless would have preserved them from their subsequent disasters. But, in the wisdom of his counsels, God, who knew His people, left these nations in their midst, as a means of proving them. They will be fully blest under Messiah, who by His might will bring in their blessing, and by His might will preserve it to them.

Alas! this history of Israel in Canaan is also that of the Church; set up in heavenly blessing on the earth, she has failed from the beginning in realizing that which was given her; and evil developed

itself in her as soon as the first and mighty instruments of blessing who had been granted her were removed. Things have gone from bad to worse. There have been revivals, but there was still the same principle of unbelief; and the decay of each revival has marked increasing progress in evil and unbelief, in proportion to the good which had been thus forsaken, by departing from the primitive source of blessing and of strength.

Nevertheless, God has always had His own people; and His faithfulness has never failed them, whether in secret, or openly, in His kindness, to manifest His grace towards His church and public power—a power that she ought always to have enjoyed. This sad succession of falls will have an end at the coming of Jesus, who will accomplish His purposes respecting the Church in her heavenly glory; purposes, of which she should have always been the faithful witness here below.

The power and the presence of God did not forsake Israel at the time of Joshua's departure. It was always to be found wherever there was faith to make use of it. This is the first truth which this book presents. It is what Paul said to the Philippians, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do." This presence of God with them in blessing, to faith, makes itself known at one time by victory over most powerful enemies (ch. 1:1-7) at another by the obtaining of special blessings "springs of water," (13-15) and in all the detail of their realization of the promises. The Philistines even were driven out (18). But at the same time, the faith of Judah and Simeon, of Ephraim and Manasseh, and of all the tribes failed; and consequently their energy, and their sense of the value of God's presence, and of their own consecration to Him failed also; together with their perception of the evil existing among their adversaries; a perception which would have rendered their presence in the midst of them insupportable.

What dishonor to God, what sin, to spare, to tolerate such people! What unfaithfulness towards God was this indifference; and what an infallible source of evil and corruption in Israel! But they were insensible to all this. They were wanting in spiritual discernment as well as in faith; and the sources of evil and misery dwelt beside the people, even in the land, the land of God and of Israel!

Alas! if such was the condition of the people, and they were satisfied with it, chastening, as at Ai, was no longer in question. But the angel of the Lord (the operative power of God in the midst of the people) quits Gilgal (that spiritual circumcision of heart which precedes victory and tempers the soul anew, that we may overcome in conflict) and comes up to Bochim, to the place of weeping, in the midst of the people, declaring that He will no longer drive out the enemy whom Israel had spared.

God had been then at Gilgal! What a blessing amid those exercises and inward conflicts of heart, in which true practical circumcision is accomplished, in which the source and influence of sin are felt in order to judge them before God; so that sin being mortified, we may in conflict (and also in communion) enjoy the strength of God, who cannot grant it to the flesh and to sin. This inward mortification is a work of no outward glory, it is little and pitiful in the eyes of man; historically it did not appear that the strength of God was at Gilgal; but when forsaken, it was discovered that the angel of the Lord had been there. It is exchanged for tears—God may be worshipped in Bochim. His relation to the people was unaltered. He accepts these tears. But what a difference! The strength and the light of the Lord's countenance are not there. Sorrowful position, although alleviated by grace! This change from Gilgal to Bochim is the key to the book; it is so, alas! but too often to the

condition of God's children.

The Holy Ghost having laid these general foundations, goes on to the historical development of Israel's position.

All the days of Joshua, and of the elders that outlived him, Israel walked before the Lord. It is the history of the Church; while the Apostles were there, she was preserved; but Paul (Acts 20:29) and Peter (2 Peter 2) alike warned the saints that unfaithfulness and rebellion would unhappily follow their departure.' These evil principles were already there. The intermixture of unbelievers (the enemy's work) would become the means through which the evil would unfold itself and gain ground amongst them.

The Lord had spoken of this (Matt. 13) and Jude develops its progress and results with solemn perspicuity and precision.

But, when another generation arises in Israel, which knew not the Lord, and had not seen all the great works of His hand; and when they serve the gods of the people whom they had spared, God no longer protects them. Unfaithful within, the Israelites fall into the hands of the enemy without. Then, as we have said, in their affliction, the Lord, moved with compassion, raised up Judges, who, acknowledging His name, brought back the manifestation of His power in their midst.

God, knowing what the people were, and what was their condition, had left within the borders of their land that which put obedience to the proof; the Philistines, the Sidonians, etc., that they might learn war, and experience the ways and the government of the Lord. Thus, the wisdom and foreknowledge of God, who knows what is in man, turned the unfaithfulness of the people into blessing. Outward prosperity, without trial, would not have remedied unbelief, whilst it would have deprived them of those exercises and conflicts in which they might learn what God was, His ways and His relations to them, as well as what their own hearts were.

We go through the same experience and for the same reasons.

I will now go over the principal subjects presented in the history of this book.-Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar were in succession the instruments raised up by God to deliver His people.

We remark here the fall of the people, who begin to serve false gods; after that their servitude; and then in their distress they cry unto the Lord. This is always the way in which deliverance comes (iii. 9, 15, iv. 3). In, this last instance, the Lord departs from His usual ways. The nation had lost its strength and energy, even as to its internal affairs. This is the effect of repeated falls; the sense of God's power is lost. At the period of which we speak, a woman judged Israel. It was a sign of God's omnipotency, for she was a prophetess. But it was contrary to God's ordinary dealings, and a disgrace to men. Deborah. calls Barak (for where the Spirit of God acts, He discerns and directs) she communicates to him the command of God. He obeys, but he lacks faith to proceed as one who has had direct instruction from God and consequently needs no other. These direct communications give the consciousness of God's presence, and that He interposes on behalf of His people. Barak will not go without Deborah. But this want of faith is not to his credit. Men will keep the place which answers to the measure of their faith; and God will again be glorified through the instrumentality of a woman. Barak has faith enough to obey if he has some one near who can lean immediately on God; but not enough to do so himself. This is too often the case. God does

not reject him, but He does not honor him. In fact, it is by no means the same faith in God. And it is by faith that God is honored.

Here also we have, not the immediate destruction of the enemy, but the discipline of the people in war, in order to recover them from the state of moral weakness into which they had fallen. They began with small things. A woman was the instrument, for fear does not honor God, and God cannot allow His glory to rest on such a condition as this; but little by little " the hand of the children of Israel prevailed against Jabin until they had destroyed him."

The usual effect of such a work of the Holy Ghost as this, is to present the people as willingly offering themselves (v. 2). Nevertheless, the Spirit of God has shown us that unbelief amongst the people had caused many of them to stay behind; and thus they lost the manifestation and the experience of the power of God. The judgment of God amounts to a curse where there was an entire holding back, a refusing to be associated with the people in their weakness.

But again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and He delivered them into the hand of Midian. And the children of Israel cried] again unto the Lord. God reveals the cause of their distress to the consciences of the people. This was indeed an answer; but, for the moment, He left them as they were. He did not act in their midst by delivering them at once; but He acted for them in the instrument whom He had chosen to effect their deliverance. God glorified himself in Gideon; but the concentration of this work in one man proves the people to be in a lower condition than before. Nevertheless, in these humiliating circumstances, God chooses means which display His glory in every way. Where He works there is strength; and faith also, which acts according to that strength, in its own sphere.

We will examine a little into the history of Gideon, and the features of the Spirit's work in this deliverance, as well as in the faith of Him whom He raised up. It is evident that many thoughts had occurred to Gideon, many serious reflections, before the angel spoke to him. But it was the angel's visit that caused him to give form and expression to the thoughts with which his heart was occupied. Gideon suffered with the rest from the oppression of God's enemies; but it led him to think of God, instead of making up his mind to endure the bondage as a necessary evil. The angel says to him " The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor."

That which pre-occupied the mind of Gideon is now manifested. It was not his own position, but the relation between the Lord and Israel. " If the Lord," said he, " be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hand of the Midianites." Faith, indeed, was the source of all these reasonings and exercises of mind. The Lord had wrought all these wonders. He had brought the people up from Egypt. If the Lord was with Israel, if such was His relation to His people, why were they in this sorrowful condition? (Oh how applicable would this reasoning be to the Church!) Gideon acknowledges too, that it is the Lord who delivered them into the hand of the Midianites. How the thought of God raises the soul above the sufferings one is enduring! While thinking of Him one recognizes in these very sufferings the hand and the whole character of Him who sent them. It was that which lifted up this poor Israelite, laboring under the weight of oppression. "And the Lord looked upon him and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel." The visit and the command of the Lord imparted their form and their strength to that which before was only heart-exercise. Nevertheless, it was this heart-exercise

which gave him strength; for it was the inward link of faith with all that the Lord was for His oppressed people, in the consciousness of the relation existing between them. We will look now at the development of this faith, and see it employed for the deliverance of God's people. Gideon experiences at first the sense of his own littleness, whatever may have been the relation between the Lord and the people (6:15). The Lord's answer shews him the one simple means-" Surely I will be with thee." Precious condescension! Sweet and powerful encouragement to the soul! Gideon's faith was weak. The present state of the people tended, by its duration, to blot out the remembrance of the wonders which the Lord had wrought when they came out of Egypt, and to weaken their consciousness of His presence. The angel of the Lord condescends to tarry with him in order to strengthen his faith. Gideon, who had addressed him with a secret consciousness that it was the Lord, now knows indeed that he has seen the angel of God face to face. It was a positive revelation, sufficient to annihilate him in himself, as was indeed the case; but also mightily to strengthen him in his walk amongst others, who had not known the Lord in the same way. Although not with similar visions, yet it is always thus when God raises up a special instrument for the deliverance of His people.

The Lord had made Himself known, and now he reassures Gideon; " Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die."

A man who is humbled by the presence of God, receives strength from God, if that presence is in blessing. Gideon recognizes and lays hold of this for himself; the Lord is with him in peace and in blessing. The word (Shalom) translated Peace be with thee," is the same as that used in the name of the altar.

When God acts powerfully on the heart, the first effect shows itself always in connection with Himself. Gideon's thoughts are occupied with the Lord, they were so before this manifestation. But being taken up with the Lord, it is by worship that he expresses his feelings, when he receives an answer from the Lord to all his thoughts. He builds an altar to the God of peace. The relations of peace are thus established between God and His servant; but all this is between Gideon and the Lord. Now comes his public service, which is also fulfilled by reestablishing first of all in the bosom of his own family, and in his own city, the relations between God and His people. Israel must put away Baal, before God can drive out the Midianites. How could he do so, while the blessing might be ascribed to Baal?

Gideon is therefore commanded to give a striking testimony, which calls the attention of the whole people to the necessity of casting out Baal, in order that God may intervene.

Faithfulness within, precedes outward strength: evil must be put away from Israel, before the enemy can be driven out. Obedience first, and then strength: this is God's order.

When Satan's power in superstition (in whatever way it may be outwardly manifested) is despised, it is destroyed; supposing always that God is with him who pours contempt on it, and that he is in the paths of obedience.

Gideon overthrows Baal; and " what can this god do?" said even he to whom the altar belonged. The power of God acted on their minds, for faith was there. But the opposition of the enemy did not cease on that account. There is nothing so despicable as a despised god. If Satan cannot be a god amongst men, he will incite them to open hostility against those who overthrow his altars; but if we

are standing on God's side, the only effect of this will be to give us victory, deliverance, and peace.

The Midianites come up against Israel. All is ready for the Lord's intervention. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon Gideon. This is a new phasis in the history; not only faithfulness, but power. Gideon blows the trumpet, and those who shortly before would have slain him, now follow in his train. He sends messengers to all his tribe. Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali, come up also. The power of the Spirit which sways the minds of men is with the faith that acknowledges God, that acknowledges Him in His relation to His people, and faithfully puts away the evil which is incompatible with that relation.

God gives another proof of His great condescension, by granting a sign to strengthen the weak, but real and sincere faith of Gideon; who feels, whilst repeating his request (ver. 39), that God might well chasten him for his lack of faith. Nevertheless, the Lord grants his petition.

Thirty-two thousand men followed Gideon. But the Lord will not have so many. He alone must be glorified in their deliverance. Their faith was indeed so weak, even while the Spirit of God was at work, that when in the presence of the enemy, twenty-two thousand men were content to return, at Gideon's invitation. The movement produced by the faith of another, is quite a different thing from personal faith. But ten thousand men are still too many. The Lord's hand alone must be seen. Those only may remain who do not stop to quench their thirst at their ease, but who refresh themselves hastily, as opportunity offers; more occupied with the combat, than with their own comforts by the way.

Gideon now displays entire confidence in God. Previously, the weakness of his faith had made him look too much at himself, instead of simply looking to God. His deep sense of Israel's condition, prevented his hesitating for a moment because the people were not with him; what could be done with this people? In the mistrust which arose from a disposition to look too much to himself, what he needed was the certainty that the Lord was with him. But having now the assurance that the Lord will deliver Israel by his means, he trusts entirely to Him.

The Lord throws terror and alarm into the midst of the enemy; and acquaints Gideon with this. It is affecting to see the care which God takes to impart confidence to His servant, suitably to the need which the state of things had created. Already the name of Gideon resounded with dread in the numerous army of the Midianites. Terror-stricken, they destroy each other. The confidence of the Midianites, founded only on Israel's want of power, melted away before the energy of faith; for the enemy's instruments have always a bad conscience.

It is the Lord who does everything. The trumpets and the lamps alone announce His presence, and that of His servant Gideon. The multitude of Israel pursue the enemy, profiting by the work of faith, although without faith themselves: the usual result of such a movement. Nevertheless, they did not all unite with Gideon in pursuit of the Midianites. But, for the moment, Gideon despises the cowardice which disowns him through a remaining fear of the oppressor's power. On his return, he chastises in the righteous indignation of faith, those who at such a moment had shown themselves favorable to the enemy, when the servants of God were "faint yet pursuing."

While the work was yet to do, they were taken up with the work and passed on; there is time enough for vengeance when the work is done. Gideon has also the prudence to set himself aside, in order to allay the jealousy of those who felt their pride wounded, because Gideon had had more

faith than themselves. They did not boast of their own importance, or request to be called, when Midian had power over the land of Israel. It would be wrong to contend with such persons. If you are satisfied with having done the work of God, they will be satisfied with the spoil they find in pursuing the enemy: they will make a victory of it to themselves. It must be allowed them; for, in fact, they have done something for the cause of God, although tardy in espousing it. They came when they were called, and willingly, as it appears; they followed Gideon's directions, and brought him back the heads of the princes. The secret of faith and of the Lord was with Gideon. It was useless to speak of it to them. The people did not know their own weakness. He must be strong on the Lord's side for Israel, since Israel could not be with him. But, for that very reason, they could not understand why they were not called before. It had to be left unexplained; a proof of the sad state of Israel. But the danger was removed, and the difficulty set aside, in that Gideon wisely contented himself with calming their minds, by not insisting upon his own importance, which arose from a faith of which they did not feel themselves incapable, and the difficulties of which they could not appreciate, since they possessed it not. We must be near God in order to feel what is wanting in His people's relations to Him; for it is in Him we find that which enables us to understand both His strength and the exigencies of these relations.

During the life-time of Gideon, Israel dwelt in peace.

Although the details of this deliverance have an especial interest, it appears to me to mark a lower condition of the people, than at the period of the preceding ones. It then seemed quite a natural thing that some servant of the Lord, trusting to His arm, should deliver the people from the yoke that oppressed them. Or else, the people-awakened by the words of a prophetess-released themselves, and, by the help of God, obtained the victory over their enemies. But in this case, even the sense of the Lord's relations to His people had to be restored. This is what God does with Gideon, as we have seen; and that, with touching condescension and tenderness. But it was requisite to do it. Therefore God alone accomplished the deliverance of His people. The people must not be employed in it, lest they should attribute it to themselves; for the farther off we are from God, the more ready we are to ascribe to ourselves that which is due only to Him.

After Gideon's death, we see the results of this distance from God, in the internal struggles which took place between the children of Israel. They are ungrateful to the house of Gideon, and war breaks out amongst them through the leader whom they set up, and who instead of fighting with the enemies of God, only seeks dominion over the people who are now at peace.

The overthrow of the men of Shechem and of Abimelech is followed by temporary peace, after which the people fall again into their idolatrous iniquity, and the Lord sells them into the hands of the nations whose gods they serve. Sorely distressed by their enemies, the children of Israel, cry unto the Lord; He reproaches them for their past conduct, and sends them back to the gods they had been worshipping. Then the people put away the strange gods from among them. The Lord is moved with compassion. Israel, without a leader, have recourse to the captain of a troop of "vain men," and promise to obey him if he will put himself at their head.

Jephthah consents. But although this was a deliverance, yet we see in it all, how deeply Israel had fallen. Jephthah himself suffers cruelly from his rash vow; and, moreover, when the pride of the Ephraimites led them to complain that they had not been treated with due respect, the calmness and wisdom of one who knew the Lord as Gideon did, were not found in Jephthah. What a

difference between these days and those of Joshua! God multiplies His deliverances; but this has no effect on the unbelief of the people, and their condition continues to grow worse and worse.

After Jephthah, Israel again enjoys an interval of peace, under the guidance of several judges whom God raises up. But they soon return to their former course of sin, and the Lord delivers them into the hand of the Philistines. Sampson's history gives us the commencement of Israel's relations with these bitter enemies, which only ceased when David had subdued them. The Philistines at this period were at the height of their power. But the important thing here is the history of Sampson.

Sampson, as a type, sets before us the principle of Nazariteship, entire separation to God, the source of strength in conflict with our enemies, looked at as enemies who seek to gain the upper hand amongst the people of God, even in their own dominion and in their own heart.

The Philistines were not a scourge, a chastisement sent from without; they dwelt in Israel's own territory, in the land of promise. Undoubtedly, before this, other nations whom the faithlessness of the people had left in the midst of Canaan, had been a snare to them; leading them to inter-marriage with idolators, and to the worship of false gods; and the Lord had given them up into the hands of their enemies. But now, those who had been suffered to remain in the conquered land, assume dominion over Israel.

Here, then, that which can give victory and peace to the heirs of promise, is the strength imparted by separation from all that belongs to the natural roan, and entire consecration to God, so far as it is realized. This Nazariteship is spiritual power; or rather that which characterizes it when the enemy is within. For Sampson judged Israel during the dominion of the Philistines (15:20). Afterward, Samuel, Saul, and above all, David, entirely changed the state of things.

When the Canaanite, when the power of the enemy, reigns in the land, Nazariteship alone can give power to one who is faithful. It is a secret unknown to the men of the world. Christ exemplified it in its perfection. Evil reigned amongst the people. The walk of Christ was a walk apart, separate from evil. He was one of the people, but like Levi (Deut. 33:9) He was not of them. He was a Nazarite. But we must distinguish with respect to this. Morally, Christ was as separate from sinners while on earth, as He is now. But, outwardly, He was in their midst; and, as the witness and expression of grace, He was spiritually in their midst also.

Since His resurrection, He is completely separate from sinners. The world seeth Him not and will see Him no more, save in judgment. It is in this last position, and as having put on this character of entire separation from the world, that the Church, that Christians are in connection with Him. Such a High Priest became us. The Church retains her strength, Christians retain their strength, so far only as they abide in this state of complete separation, which the world does not understand, and in which it cannot participate. Human joy and sociability have no part in it; divine joy and the power of the Holy Ghost are there. The life of our adorable Savior was a life of gravity, always grave, and generally straitened; not in Himself, for His heart was a springing well of love, but because of the evil that pressed Him on every side. I speak of His life and of His own heart. With regard to others, His death opened the flood-gates, in order that the full tide of love might flow over poor sinners. Nevertheless, whatever may have been the Lord's habitual separateness He could say with reference to His disciples, "These things I speak in the world that they might have my joy fulfilled in

them, selves." It was the best of wishes, divine joy instead of human joy. The day will come when these two joys shall be united, when He will again drink wine with His people in the kingdom of His Father; and all will be His people. But at present this cannot be; evil reigns in the world. It reigned in Israel, where there ought to have been righteousness. It reigns in Christendom, where holiness and grace should be manifested in all their beauty. The separation unto God, of which we have been speaking, is, under these circumstances, the only means of enjoying the strength of God. It is the essential position of the Church. If she has failed in it, she has ceased to manifest the essential character of her Head, in connection with herself," separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." She is but a false witness, a proof among the Philistines that Dagon is Stronger than God; she is a blind prisoner.

Nevertheless, it is remarkable, that whenever the world draws away, by its allurements, that which God has separated from it unto Himself, this brings down the judgment of God upon the world, and leads to its ruin. Look at Sarah in the house of Pharaoh, and in this instance, Sampson, blind and prisoner in the hands of the Philistines; and again also Sarah in the house of Abimelech, although God, on account of the integrity of his heart, did but chasten the latter.

The Nazarite, then, represents Christ, such as He was here below, in fact and by necessity; and also such as He now is completely and in full right, seated on the right hand of God in heaven, hidden in God, where our life is hid with Him. The Nazarite represents the Church, or an individual Christian, so far as the one and the other are separated from the world and devoted to God, and keep the secret of this separation.

This is the Church's position, the only one which God recognizes; the Church being united to Christ who is separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens, cannot be His in any other manner. She may be unfaithful to it, but this is the standing given her with Christ. She can be recognized in no other. Sampson represents to us also the tendency of the Church and of the Christian to fall away from this position, a tendency which does not always produce the same amount of evil fruit, but which causes the inward and practical neglect of Nazariteship, and soon leads to entire loss of strength, so that the Church gives herself up to the world. God may still use her, may glorify Himself through the havoc she makes in the enemy's land (which ought to be her own), He may even preserve her from the sin to which the slippery path she treads would lead her. But the state of mind which brought her there, tends to yet lower downfalls.

God makes use of Sampson's marriage with a Philistine woman, to punish that people. Still in the freshness of his strength, his heart with the Lord, and moved by the Holy Ghost, Sampson acts in the might of this strength in the midst of the enemies he has raised up against him; and, in point of fact, he never marries this Philistine woman. I have said that God used this circumstance. It is thus He may use the spiritual strength of the Church, so long as in heart she cleaves to Him, although her walk may not be faithful or such as He can approve. For it is evident that Sampson's marriage with a daughter of Timnath, was a positive sin, a flagrant infringement of the Lord's ordinances, which in no wise justifies the blessing that the Lord bestowed upon him when wronged by the Philistines. (For it was not in his marriage he found blessing, but quite the contrary). Accordingly, Sampson has not Israel with him in the conflicts occasioned by his marriage; the Spirit of God does not act upon the people as He did in the case of Gideon, of Jephthah or Barak. Moreover, when Nazariteship is in question, opposition must be expected from the people of God. A Nazarite

is raised up in their midst, because they are no longer themselves thus separated unto God. And this being the case, they are without strength; and will allow the world to rule over them, provided that outward peace is left them; and they would not have any one act in faith, because that disquiets the world and incites it against them. " Knowest thou not," said Israel, " that the Philistines are rulers over us?" Even while acknowledging Sampson as one of themselves, the Israelites desire to give him up to the Philistines, in order to maintain peace.

But in the part of Sampson's life now before us, there are some details which require more attention.

His marriage was a sin. But the separation of God's people had no longer that measure of practical application which the mind of God had assigned it. The fact itself was inexcusable, because it had its origin in the will of Sampson, and he had not sought counsel from God. But, owing to the influence of circumstances, he was not conscious at the time, of the evil he was committing, and God allowed him to seek peace and friendship with the Canaanite world (that is to say, the world within the enclosure of God's people), instead of making war against them; so that, as to the Philistines, Sampson had right on his side, in the contentions which followed.

Before his marriage, Sampson had slain the lion, and had found honey in its carcass. He had strength 'from God while walking in his integrity. This is the "riddle" the secret of God's people. The lion has no strength against one who belongs to Christ. Christ has destroyed the strength of him that had the power of death. By the might of the Spirit of Christ our warfare is victory, and honey flows therefrom. But this is carried on in the secret of communion with the Lord. David maintained this place better in the simplicity of duty.

Sampson did not keep himself from those connections with the world, to which the condition of the people easily led. This is always a Christian's danger. But whatever may be their ignorance, if the children of God make any alliance with the world, and thus pursue a line of conduct opposed to their true character; they will assuredly find disappointment. They do not keep themselves apart for God; they do not keep their secret with God, a secret which is only known in communion with Himself. Their wisdom is lost, the world beguiles them, their relations with the world become worse than before, and the world despises them and goes on its way, regardless of their indignation at its behavior towards them.

What had Sampson to do there? His own will is in exercise, and takes its share in the use of that strength which God had given him: like Moses when he slew the Egyptian. We always carry a little of the world with us, when-being children of God-we have mingled with it. But God makes use of this to separate us forcibly and thoroughly from it, making union impossible, by setting us in direct conflict with the world even in those very things which had formed our connection with it. We had better have remained apart. But it is necessary that God should thus deal with us, when this union with the world becomes an habitual and a tolerated thing in the Church. The most outrageous circumstances pass unnoticed. Think of a Nazarite married to a Philistine! God must break off such a union as this by causing enmities and hostilities to arise, since there is no intelligence of that moral nearness to God, which separates from the world and gives that quietness of spirit which, finding its strength in God, can overcome and drive away the enemy, when God leads into conflict by the plain revelation of His will. But if we are linked with the world, it will always have dominion over us; we have no right to resist the claims of any relationship which we ourselves

have formed. We may draw nigh to the world, because the flesh is in us. The world cannot really draw nigh to the children of God, because it has only its own fallen and sinful nature. The approximation is all on one side, and always in evil, whatever the appearance may be. To bear testimony in the midst of the world, is another thing.

We, cannot; therefore, plead the secret of the Lord, the intimate relations of God's people to Himself, and the feelings they produce; for the secret and the strength of the Lord are exclusively the right and the strength of His redeemed people. How could this be told to his Philistine wife? What influence would the exclusive privileges of God's people have over one who is not of their number? How can we speak of these privileges when we disown them by the very relationship in which we stand? We disown them by imparting this secret; for we then cease to be separated and consecrated to God, and to confide in Him as we can do in no other. This experience should have preserved Sampson, for the future, from a similar step. But, in many respects, experience is useless in the things of God, because we need faith at the moment, for it is God Himself whom we need. Nevertheless, Sampson here still retains his strength. The sovereign will of God is fulfilled in this matter, in spite of very serious faults, which resulted from the general state of things, in which Sampson participated. Once in the battle-field, he exhibits the strength of the Lord who was with him; and in answer to his cry, the Lord supplies him with water for his thirst.

It is here that this general history of Sampson ends. We have seen that the people of God, his brethren, were against him: the general rule in such a case. It is the history of the power of the Spirit of Christ exercised in Nazariteship, in separation from the world unto God; but in the midst of a condition entirely opposed to this separation; and in which he who is upheld by the power of this Spirit, finding himself again in his habitual sphere, is always in danger of being unfaithful; and so much the more so (unless he live & very near to God in the repose of obedience), from his consciousness of strength. Christ exhibited the perfection of a heavenly walk under similar circumstances. We see that no one understood the source of His power, or His authority. He must have given up all hope of satisfying men with respect to the principles by which He was guided.

They must have been like Him to comprehend Him, and then they would not have needed to be convinced. To walk before God and leave His justification with God, was all that could be done. He silenced His enemies by the well-known principles of God and of all good conscience; but He could not reveal the secret between Him and the Father, the element of His life, and the spring of all His actions. If the truth came out when Satan pushed things so far that nothing else could be said, His enemies treated Him as a blasphemer, and He openly denounced them as the children of Satan. We find this in John. But, at that time, Jesus held no longer the same relation to the people; from the beginning of this Gospel, they are treated as rejected, and the person of the Son of God is brought forward. From the commencement of His ministry, He maintained the place of an obedient servant, not entering on public service until called of God, after having taken the lowest place, in John's baptism.

This was the point at issue when He was tempted in the wilderness. The tempter endeavored to make Him come out of His place as the obedient man, because He was the Son of God. But the strong man was bound there; to remain in obedience is the only way to bind the adversary. Christ ever walked in this perfect separation of the inner man, in communion with His Father, and entire dependence upon Him; in obedience, without a single moment of self-will. Therefore was He the

most gracious and accessible of men; we observe in His ways a tenderness, and a kindness never seen in man, yet we always feel that He was a stranger. Not that He came to be a stranger in His relations to men; but that which lay deepest in His own heart, that which constituted His very nature, and consequently guided His walk by virtue of His communion with the Father, was entirely foreign to all that influences man. This spirit of self-denial, entire renunciation of His own will, obedience, and dependence upon His Father, is seen throughout the life of Jesus. After John's baptism, He was praying when He received the Holy Ghost. Before calling the Apostles, He spent the whole night in prayer. After the miracle of feeding the five thousand with five loaves, He went up into a mountain apart to pray. If the request is made to sit on His right hand and on His left in His kingdom, it is not His to give, but to them for whom it is prepared of His Father. In His agony of Gethsemane, His expectation and dread of death is all laid before His Father, and the cup which His Father has given Him, shall He not drink it? Thus all is calm before men. He is the Nazarite, separated from men by His entire communion with His Father, and by the obedience of a Son who had no other will than to fulfill the good pleasure of His Father. It was His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work.

But it was when man would not receive Him, and there was no longer any relation whatever between man and God, that Jesus fully assumed His Nazarite character, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens. It is Christ in heaven who is the true Nazarite, and who having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, has sent Him forth upon His disciples, in order that, by the power of the Holy Ghost, they might maintain the same position on the earth, through communion with Him and with His Father; walking in the separateness of this communion, and capable, therefore, of using this power with a divine intelligence that enlightens and sustains the obedience for which they are set apart unto the glory of Christ, and for His service. "If ye abide in me," said He to His disciples, "and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." They were not of the world, even as He was not of the world. The Church, which was formed of His disciples, should walk as separated from the world, and set apart unto Himself in a heavenly life.

Christ is, then, the Antitype of Sampson's history, as to the principle it contains. But its detail proves that this principle of strength has been entrusted to those who were, alas! but too capable of failing in communion and obedience, and thus of losing its enjoyment.

Sampson sins again through his intercourse with "the daughter of a strange god; he connects himself again with women of the Philistines, amongst whom his father's house and the tribe of Dan were placed. But he retains his strength until the influence of these connections becomes so great, that he reveals the secret of his strength in God. His heart, afar from God, places that confidence in a Philistine, which should have existed only between his soul and God. To possess and keep a secret, proves intimacy with a friend. But the secret of God, the possession of His confidence, is the highest of all privileges. To betray it to a stranger, be it who it may, is to despise the precious position in which His grace has placed us; it is to lose it. What have the enemies of God to do with the secret of God? It was thus that Sampson gave himself up to his enemies. All attempts were powerless against him, so long as he maintained his Nazariteship. This separation once lost, although Sampson was apparently as strong, and his exterior as goodly as before, yet the Lord was no longer with him. "I will go out, as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." We can scarcely imagine a greater folly than that of

confiding his secret to Delilah, after having so many times been seized by the Philistines, at the moment she awoke him. And thus it is with the Church; when she yields herself to the world, she loses all her wisdom, even that which is common to man. Poor ' Sampson | His strength may be restored, but he has lost his sight forever.

But who has ever hardened himself against the Lord, and prospered?

The Philistines ascribe their success to their false god. God remembers His own glory, and His poor servant humbled under the chastisement of his sin. The Philistines assemble to enjoy their victory and glorify their false gods. But the Lord had His eye on all this. In his humiliation, the thought of the Lord had more power over the heart of Sampson; his Nazariteship was regaining strength. He makes his touching appeal to God. Who would fear a blind and afflicted prisoner? But who, amongst this world, knows the secret of the Lord? A slave and forever deprived of sight, his condition affords an opportunity, which his strength had not been able to obtain, before his unfaithfulness deprived him of it. But he is blind and enslaved, and he must perish himself in the judgment which he brings upon the impiety of his enemies. He had identified himself with the world by hearkening to it, and he must share the judgment which falls upon the world.

If the unfaithfulness of the Church has given the world power over her, the world has, on the other hand, assailed. the rights of God, by corrupting the Church; and, therefore, brings down judgment upon itself at the moment of its greatest triumph: a judgment which, if it puts an end to the existence, as well as to the misery of the Nazarite; destroys at the same time, in one common ruin, the whole glory of the world.

In the details of prophecy, this applies to the closing history of the Jewish people.

The chapters that follow, are not comprised in the historical order of this book. They lift the veil to disclose some incidents of the inner life of this people whom the patience of God bore with so long, touched with the afflictions of His people in the sufferings occasioned by their sins. 'Had they been obedient when the Lord was their King, their prosperity had been secure. Self-willed as they were, the absence of restraint--when they had no king--gave room to all kinds of license. The last event related in this book, shows to what a height disorder had risen in Israel; but it affords a very important lesson. If the state of God's people, collectively, gives rise to the iniquities which require discipline, the whole people are involved in the chastisement that follows; the effect of which is to make them take their condition to heart. That condition had prevented the repression of iniquity, or its immediate punishment when committed. But the people are set in the presence of God, who judges the whole matter, and all the people must have to do with it. Israel, at first, did not even take counsel with the Lord, to learn how the sin should be dealt with. They acted from natural indignation (which was nevertheless quite righteous). The Lord allowed all this, in order that the people might learn where they were. The evil, which required chastening, rendered them incapable of waiting in the first place on the Lord to know what was to be done. Their course of action is determined before they consult Him, for they were far from Him. They merely ask who is to go up first. The Lord points out Judah, but Judah is defeated., Twice beaten when they expected an easy victory, the people, humbled and in tears, have recourse again to the Lord, and inquire if they shall go up. The Lord then gives them the victory. Gibeah well deserved this discipline; but to execute it, Israel needed discipline herself, and God allowed all to take part in it, in order to make it take effect upon all.

But what a state were they all in, when the whole tribe of Benjamin joined the men of Gibeah, when guilty of such enormities! And observe that Phinehas was still High Priest, although he had already grown to manhood in the wilderness. How patiently God dealt with this people, delivering them when they had so quickly fallen into sin, and into such depths of sin.

Love

The connection in which love is introduced in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians, must, I suppose, have struck most who study God's word. It bears the same impress of power and of suitability which ever characterizes His word. May we, therefore, led by the Spirit, the inditer, dwell upon it for a little.

The cause of all the mischief in the Corinthian Church was a remarkable one-one which testifies surely of the great goodness of God. It was the abundant grace and goodness of God acting upon unsubdued flesh. The testimony of Christ was confirmed among them (1:6): they were in everything enriched by (or, perhaps, in, as it is in the fourth verse) Him, in all utterance and all knowledge. But though there was much gift, grace was not in the same proportion. The seed had been cast abroad richly, but the earth had not been deeply plowed up; consequently, it much mixed its own productions with the gift of God. The testimony which had been brought among them was estimated by some external characteristic, rather than as the testimony of God, as with the happy Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2:13). And consequently, one was for Paul, another for Apollos, and another for Christ, sheaving that in a sectarian, independent spirit we may stand even for Christ, or apparently for him.

Their moral standing too, showed that there was not much depth of earth. In chap. 4 "they were full, they were rich, they reigned as kings" without the more faithful saints; they found themselves comparatively at ease in the world, a state which rendered them an easy prey to a doctrine which, in chap. 15, assured them that there is no resurrection of the dead; a doctrine which could not so readily suit one who had to say, "I die daily." Even when terrible evil came in, it did not disturb the light complacency of the flesh. Chapter 5 "they were puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he which had done the deed might be taken away from among them." The same lightness of work, too, made them bad judges about Christian liberty; for Christian liberty does not consider so much what we may do, as what will be for the glory of God, and the welfare of the brethren.

The same state of mind made them also but badly prepared for the use of the spiritual gifts which were so richly amongst them. Chapter 14:26 "every one of them had a psalm, had a doctrine, had a revelation," etc., a thing which he does not check, but regulates: therefore he says, "Let all things be done unto edifying." It is only in the Spirit that we can handle rightly the things of the Spirit.

It is, therefore, to meet this state of things that the Apostle introduces this digression in the midst of his discussion about gifts; for without it, gifts-I might say, even graces-would just split up the Church of God. He proposes it as the tempered mortar. "Though I speak," he says, "with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not love, I am a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." It is that which gives fullness to the sound, like the High Priest's bells of old, the bells of the sanctuary. "And though I have prophecy, and know all mysteries, and all knowledge [a thing by the way which pretty clearly defines the gift of prophecy, so often mentioned in the New Testament], and though there be all power, too, so as to remove mountains;" yea, and even though apparent grace and devotedness comes in, so that we either crumble our property into bits

(see Greek) to bestow it on the poor, or give even our body to be burned, and yet have not love, we are profited nothing. What a declaration at the hands of God, that nothing external-power devotedness, whatsoever it be-is of value before God without that love which makes it of savor to Him, and of real refreshment to others. "Love," he says, "beareth long, and is kind. Love envieth not: love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up: doth not behave itself unseemly [and this love teaches us our place, Eph. 5:21]: seeketh not her own [and, therefore, of all things most of Christ, Phil. 2:21]: is not easily provoked: thinketh no evil." It is remarkable that the quieter fruits of the Spirit indicate more of his power. Gal. 5, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Love is holy in its tastes and feelings, "It rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth," in kindredness of spirit; "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." How fully, then, does he let us into the real and noble nature of Love. It is the highest of all; those things which we are so apt to glory in, as setting us forth, tongues and prophecy, are only arguments of our imperfection. They are only to supply our mutual need, and are in us imperfect; "we know in part, and prophesy in part," until we obtain the perfect state of things. But when all need is satisfied, all imperfection is done away: love will still find its full element, as it will forever have to do with the God of love.

I have dwelt upon this, because it may be particularly suitable to us in present circumstances. Contention against evil has been, I believe, the great thing to which God has called us latterly. This has broken through, in some measure, that false love or charity, which is, perhaps, the great sin of this professing age, and which is just a counterfeit of the true. That false charity lets anything become of God's truth, rather than speak out faithfully, and disturb the robber in his prey. But it is required of stewards that they be found faithful: a man may dispose as he will of his own property, but if he dispose, in the same ready way, of another's, we remind him, that he must be just before he is generous. And so the truth is God's property, of which we cannot dispose, save as He guides us by His spirit; and He would have us careful of the trust. We are all in this sense stewards of the mysteries of God.

Paul, we find in Gal. 2, approached his elder Jewish brethren with something of trembling, lest, through his own weakness, he, by any means, should run, or had run, in vain. But when God's truth was really in question, he gave place by subjection not for an hour, but "withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed."

As I have said, thus it has been, and very, very much there is all around that will call to contend. Yet, meanwhile, let us seek to be careful, that, whilst contending against evil, We love fervently and cherish all that is, and all that are, of the truth. The Apostle John, after telling them in the fourth chapter of his first Epistle, not to believe every spirit, "but try the spirits," etc., then returns to his more pleasing, and still most incumbent, occupation; ver. 7. "Beloved, let us love one another: or love is of God." It is the "bond of perfectness," Paul tells us, in Col. 3:14, which throws its golden charm around all. We are so apt in securing one truth, to let go another kindred one. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye," etc., does not conflict with "Beloved, follow not that which is evil" (3 John 11).

I add no further. To see these two things combined, steady faithfulness against evil, on the one hand, and yet frank, confiding, upright, and hearty love, where it is fairly warranted, surely this were happy for us. It would lead one to say, "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended."

Our Lord himself is coming; happy indeed to be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless!

G.

The Love of Christ

There are, I think, three characters in which the love of Christ is presented to us, and is to be learned by us; that is, his love to the saints, for I speak not here of his love to the sinner. The first we shall find, I believe, in the third chapter of the Ephesians, that is, his love to the church. Paul had been dwelling there on the mystery of the church, as in union with Christ - its mystery as to its earthly calling, and constitution, "that the Gentiles, should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (chap. 3:6), that the middle wall of partition should now be broken down, and that God should form out of Jew and Gentile, "one new man" in Christ, and one "temple," (chap. 2) his own habitation by the Spirit. He had dwelt, I say, upon this external character of the mystery, and passed on, I believe, in his mind, to the interior, and essential mystery, in ver. 8, viz., that the body should be in union with Christ in heaven, for this is the "unsearchable riches of Christ," in view of which he becomes but the least of all saints; this is the mystery kept secret from the ages, and hid in God, when he created all things by Jesus Christ, and by which now principalities, and powers, are learning the manifold wisdom of God. It was, I judge, clearly in connection with these thoughts that he here speaks of the love of Christ. They are to learn it "with all the saints." It is the love of Christ to the church. And it is truly of infinite importance to know that there is a body, which Christ loves with a special, and peculiar love, and that body is the church, Christians commonly hindered by the trammeling systems of man, only think of themselves as individuals; they think of Christ's love to them as individuals; but they do not identify themselves with Christ's love to the church, as a body. But let me say, it is utterly impossible ever to enter into Christ's love in its fullness, without this; Christ is not thinking merely of individuals, he is thinking of a body, a body which God prepared for him, and gave to him (John 17:6), a body for which he died (Eph. 5:25), and for which he lives, and which lives in, and by him (John 14:19), soon, too, to be presented in glory to Him (Eph. 5:27). I say, upon this way, Christ's love dwells with infinite fullness. We must see this, then, in order to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge, and thus be filled with all the fullness of God.

This is true; yet is, it well also to see the love of Christ to us, as individual members of himself. This is presented in (Eph. 5). He there speaks much of the church, yet still he says, "We are members of his body, we are (Greek) of his flesh, and of his bones," we are individually in union with Him, He with us, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." And how blessed to think that the love of Christ rests upon us, individually, severally, and specially. What a comfort is this in affliction, and trial! Our flesh might perhaps think that the Lord deals hardly with us; but how impossible! "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but does nourish and cherish it, even as the Lord the church." Be the stroke ever so rude, and overwhelming, it is but the tender hand of Christ after all. It is wisely and gently dealing. It cannot do otherwise, for no one ever yet hated his own flesh, but does nourish and cherish it."

But beside these two characters, John, I think, opens to us another thought, which. "sealeth the sum;" and that is, that this love which is resting upon us, is a Divine love. That is the character of

our Lord, so much brought out in John, viz., as the Son of God; and that is what ever gives it such value to the saints. And so it is, I judge, very much in that character that our Lord acts here (John 13). He knew that he " came forth (Greek) from God, and that he goeth to God." He was in the full possession of what he was; and what he has, "that the Father had given all things into his hands." And then it comes out, that, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end." Yes, it is a Divine love that is resting upon us, upon his own; it is the love of the Son of God; it is the love of GOD. The other parts, as shown, bring out the love of Christ in constituted relationship to us; but this, as I said, brings out a higher thing still, the nature of Him that loves, and the nature of the love. May we learn all more fully, that we may more fully adore Him "that loves his own."

I will not dwell here upon the nature of the action he there performs for his own in type, the priestly intercession, and washing away of His people's defilements. Surely it is blessed to have such a One to " wash our feet"; and may we learn day by day more fully in quiet submissive love to leave all our sins there, where Jesus would put and leave them, in the basin-the laver. Let us not in apparent humility, but in real pride, and self-righteousness of heart, refuse to submit to this washing, saying, like Peter, " Thou shalt never wash my feet;" but since our Lord will have it so, even let it be so; let ours be the blessing, His the glory. "Behold," says Mary, the handmaid of the Lord; "be it unto me according to thy word." Soon shall we come where the streets are of pure gold: there will be nothing that defileth there; meanwhile, whilst wandering here, may we learn more fully the grace of Him with whom we have to do. It is our privilege, as I said, to leave even all our sins and all our defilements there in the basin, or laver, of Jesus; all our needless worldly cares and anxieties we may leave in the same place too; for, after all, it is but the dust of our feet. Jesus loves us: it is our privilege, like John, here to lean on his bosom; let us do heartily whatsoever we have got to do of earthly business; but as to needless care, it should find no place for one leaning on the bosom of Jesus. May sin and sorrow thus be more removed from us! G.

The Melchizedek Priesthood of Christ

The substance and verification of all blessing from God is to be found, now, and will be found hereafter in the sustainment of those offices by the Lord Jesus Christ, in which man has either failed, or has stood merely as the type, or shadow of "Him who was to come."

The brightness of both earth's and heaven's hope stands in this, that in the counsels of God, all power in heaven and in earth shall be administratively, in the hands of the once. humbled Son of Man; and that, in fact as well as of right, He shall apply that divine power for the creature's highest good and the Creator's glory, in the wide sphere of heaven and earth.

Many and precious will be the fruits of that dispensation; precious to the church, to Israel, and to the world. For then will come the time of Satan's casting down from his seat of power-of Israel's regathering in peace and joy-of the deliverance of creation from its bondage of corruption and its groans, and above all, the manifestation of Christ in glory, and ill's church's exaltation and companionship with Him in His throne.

Connected with this bright scene of happiness and glory, is the subject of this paper. For, whatever may be the intermediate importance of the Melchizedek Priesthood of Christ, it looks on for its full display to the time when "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." Thus is the record of Scripture which first presents this subject to our minds:- "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all" (Gen. 14 vers. 17-20).

In his Melchizedek character the Lord Jesus Christ stand's not so much " the high priest of our profession" as in Hebrews (as he does " the priest of THE MOST HIGH GOD); and that under the asserted power of him whose special title to praise and glory, as well as dominion, is, that he is "Possessor of heaven and earth." Most interesting is it thus to see in this earliest type of Christ's official glory, as God's royal priest, the most perfect presentation of that character in which he will finally stand, and fill heaven and earth with blessing and praise. In this we have an example, which is common in Scripture, as the expression of the Divine counsels, of that which is first in the order of revelation being the last in the order of accomplishment. This is manifest even in the first promise of mercy to man; in the terms of which are indicated the last exertion of Christ's power:- "He shall bruise thine head." For every part of Scripture is the word of Him who "sees the end from the beginning;" and who cannot rest short of the full accomplishment of His purpose and counsel.

The priesthood of Aaron historically may come in, after its exhibition in the hands of Melchizedek, and so shadow forth an essential part of the work of Christ, previously to the display of his royal priestly glory; still, overpassing the entire of these heaven-appointed types, the Spirit of God, by David, reverts to the brief expression of this glory, before us, saying " The Lord hath sworn and will not repent," Thou art a priest forever after the order. of Melchizedec (Psalm ex).

It is but a brief expression; but we find that after all has been accomplished, in the intermediate period, connected with sacrifice and intercession, of which the elaborated types and service of the tabernacle and Levitical priesthood are the expression; necessary indeed, most necessary, as the grounds of the sustainment before God of an erring and imperfect people—all reverts to the original and simple type in which is presented more prominently the exercise of this priesthood according to the dignity of him who bears it, also to the glory of him who confers it, as well as according to the purposed blessing of that double sphere to which its exercise extends.

In speaking of this bright and blessed aspect of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, so fraught with blessing from heaven's eternal stores of blessing, and introducing a scene so in contrast with the corruption and misery of the present, and therefore so knit-up with the longing of our hearts for the reign of righteousness; it may be well to advert, by way of illustration, to the general subject of priesthood as it is presented in the Scriptures.

All are familiar with the exhibition of the Levitical priesthood, and with the use that is made of these types in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as illustrating the present position and ministrations of Christ for His people.

But there were priests before the giving of the law, and before the setting apart of the tribe of Levi.

What may be characterized as the priesthood of worship, is the first that is presented in the order of God's revelations; as illustrated in the example of Abel. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering." "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Faith, not formal constitution, made him a priest, and directed him in the choice of his offering; and gained for him acceptance with God.

Subsequently, this priesthood is seen in the heads of the patriarchal families, as Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: not to mention "Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, [who] took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God."

Sacrifice, or the worship of the altar, was connected with all these instances; and sweet was the savor of their burnt offerings, though the formal title of priest was not assumed by any.

Melchizedec is the first historical person in Scripture bearing the title of priest; and in this king and priest is presented the true and perfected glory of the priesthood of Christ. Now he stands for his people in the "holiest," in intercessional grace; but then he will be presented in glory on earth; "and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne."

The Levitical priesthood it will be the less necessary, at this point, to speak of, as it is so interwoven with our present subject, in its treatment in the Epistle to the Heb. 1 merely notice, therefore, that its ruling characteristic is that of atonement and intercession; and in this respect it is in contrast with the Melchizedek priesthood, which is emphatically that of power and blessing.

No doubt the sacrifice and intercession of Christ are the necessary basis of this, because it is the blessing and glory of mediation in which man is brought nigh to God; still it is not in sacrifice and intercession, but in power and blessing that the peculiar character and glory of the Melchizedek priesthood are displayed.

The action of Melchizedek is alone expressed in blessing.-For though it is said, " He brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the Most High God;" these are in no sense sacrificial, nor are they, here, expressive of that which is sacrificial, but are the appropriate symbols of strength and joy, ministered to those who had just emerged from scenes of conflict and weariness; and needing thus to be cheered. Melchizedek, the King of Righteousness, thus coming forth from the city of peace, to meet the victors, stands appropriately as the figure of Him who, in anticipation of the full glory of the kingdom, has said, " Blessed are 'those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.'" Wondrous grace, that shall thus cheer poor wearied hearts in alliance with Himself, amidst the bright scenes of glory!

Thus is the blessing of Abram by Melchizedec; he said, " Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand."

The peculiar title attributed to Jehovah, of " the Most High God," and the intimation of the sphere of His power, " Possessor of heaven and earth," lead forward to a period in God's counsels regarding this world beyond the present dispensation of His grace, when His supremacy will be universally asserted and acknowledged. It may be observed that this title, " Possessor of heaven and earth," expresses far more than the claim of God to universal rule and governance, or His unchangeable supremacy. It is designed to indicate a dispensational display of Divine power, which will issue in the expulsion of all the powers of active and regnant evil, from the two spheres of heaven and earth, in order to the bringing in of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the first-begotten again into the world, in the beneficence of His reign of righteousness and the full display of His official glory.

In the conclusion of the 83rd Psalm, we find the acknowledgment of this title as regards the earth, presented as the result of the execution of God's judgments upon the confederated enemies of Israel, of which the destruction of Sisera and Jabin, of Oreb and Zeeb, and of Zebah and Zalmunnah, are but types. These enemies are thus pleaded against in the Psalm: " Lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee." It concludes, " Let them be confounded and troubled forever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: that men may know that Thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art THE MOST HIGH over all the earth."

Entirely in accordance with this, though the subject is looked at from another point, is the language of Psalm 110. The first verse, as is well known, presents the Lord at the right hand of God, "expecting. Till His enemies be made His footstool." In the second and third, "the rod of His strength" is sent out of Zion, and He is seen ruling in the midst of His enemies, and acknowledged by His willing people in the day of His power; while the issue of the whole is given in the accomplishment of the oath, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." The judgment that falls upon His enemies, and the blessing of His willing people, have their issue in the bringing out of the full character of this Priest upon His throne.

These and other Scriptures, and especially the way the subject is introduced in the Epistle to the Hebrews, necessarily throw the mind on the typical character of the scene in which Melchizedek first appears. So far as the abstract idea of Melchizedek's priesthood is concerned, any other point in Abraham's history might have served: but it is emphatically introduced thus: " This Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abram returning from the slaughter of the kings, blessed him " But I know not that it is necessary to argue this. The 14th chapter of Genesis presents the first recorded battle in the Scriptures, and there is the surest warrant to view it as typical of the last.

The titles of God in this chapter; the detailed history of the ravages of the confederated kings; their overthrow by Abram, who is in connection with " the Most High God;" the introduction of the royal priest at this point, with his titles and action; mark thus, in early type, the outlines of a scene of which the details of later prophecies are but the filling up. Happy is it to look on to that scene, which is thus portrayed, in the language of Israel's hope; " Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. Righteousness shall go before Him; and shall set us in the way of His steps ' (Psa. 85:9-13). And again in Isa. 30:31,32, " Through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod; and in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps."

Thus, though we know that a gloomy history, as to this world, must run to its close, in which " nation shall rise against nation," and woe after woe is pronounced against the dwellers upon earth, yet do we here see that joy and triumph-" tabrets and harps"-shall follow the course of this last conflict, in the day of the setting aside of the enemies of the Lord, and of the destruction of those who have destroyed the earth.

The titles of God in Scripture are always important and expressive, since they are His own peculiar attributions in His revelation of Himself and of His ways to us. This is perhaps too little noticed, and hence restrictedness of thought in regard to God and His blessed counsels.

This title of "the Most High God" is in contrast with the "gods many and lords many," which, through the power and craft of Satan, came to be acknowledged after the flood. But when this title of God is vindicated, all this power of the adversary must be set aside. For "the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day, and the idols he shall utterly abolish."

Hence, in reference to Israel's redemption out of Egypt-the cradle and fountain of idolatry-Jethro says, " Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them" (Ex. 18:11). As it is also said in the 12th chapter, " And against all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment: I am the Lord." And it was afterward given in commandment to the whole people, " Make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth."

It was to this truth of the sole supremacy of Jehovah that Israel were called to be witnesses, and in them finally, through their connection with the Messiah, this testimony will be established. "Ye are my witnesses saith the Lord.... I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed when there

was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God." But the possession of heaven and earth by the Most High God necessarily involves the dethronement and setting aside of Satan, from his seat of power, as "the god of this world," and "the prince of the power of the air;" as well as the resumption, into the hands of the Lord, of all delegated power on earth, which has been abused by man. Of this latter the 82nd Psalm gives the example; concluding with the words, " Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations."

It is greatly to be questioned, whether the importance of this is generally felt; and whether this further step of Satan's power and craft, in the introduction of idolatry into the world, and man's consequent further debasement and alienation from God, is at all appreciated.

In the current thoughts of men, idolatry is either associated with the ignorance and barbarity of modern times, or is connected with all the fascination of the past, in the history and genius, the subtle intellect and creations of the fancy, the philosophy and eloquence, of the more polished nations of the world. In either case its real evil is but little seen. The debasement of man only appears in the one, and excites pride by a comparison; and in the other the iniquity is so glossed and hidden by the meretricious dress in which it is disguised, that its deformity is effectually concealed.

But whether it be the hideous and misshapen gods of the South Sea Islanders, or the statue of Apollo or Jupiter, before which their votaries bow; behind either, Satan is the God that crouches to receive the homage of enslaved and deluded man. " The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to devils [Gr. demons] and not to God."

It is man taking the devil to be his god, liar and murderer as he is, and worshipping him instead of "the Most High God." Exclude this power of Satan from idolatry; and no reason can be given for the absolute dominion of false religions over the mind.

Nor must this power of the adversary against the claims of God be restricted to the men who make an idol from the stock of a tree. It is, alas! seen in that system of abominations which lays claim to the title of the only true Church. And, O what mockery must it afford to Satan, that he should become again enthroned, after the external subversion of idolatry in the Roman Empire by means of the corruption of that very power, of which one characteristic exercise was to "cast out devils! "

There is nothing more remarkable nor solemn than the way in which " seducing spirits and doctrines of demons " are spoken of, in relation to the Christian body, in 1 Tim. 4:1,2,3. " Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

There has been a ready application of this passage to the corruptions of Popery-and justly so, as its leading terms sufficiently indicate-but the connections of the passage show that a door may be opened for " seducing spirits and doctrines of demons," where nothing so gross, in the perversion of Christianity, as Popery is in question. In the last verse of the 3rd chapter, the whole blessed ground-work of faith is presented in " the mystery of godliness:" " And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." And the next thing

stated is, that " in the latter times some shall depart from the faith," etc. The connection of the two is striking enough, and full of warning, if the division of the chapters is disregarded.

But in the establishment of that kingdom to which the Melchizedek priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ looks forward, not only will the Church be delivered from Satan's power in conflict in heavenly places, as now, but Satan himself will be cast down from his position, and no longer be allowed to control the springs of power on high, as " the prince of the power of the air," and, with his emissaries, as " the rulers of the darkness of this world."

That which the Melchizedek priesthood especially sets aside, is apostate power on earth, and Satanic power, or "wicked spirits in the heavenlies." The one illustrated in Nebuchadnezzar, the first head of Gentile universal empire, and the first of whom we read, who used that power for the compulsory establishment of false religion; but more fully disclosed in the destruction of the fourth beast on account of the blasphemies of " the little horn," which makes way for the setting up of the kingdom given to the " Son of Man " by " the ancient of days." Of this kingdom it is said (Dan. 7:27), "The kingdom and dominion, and-the greatness of the kingdom, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." The other, viz., the setting aside of Satanic power in the heavenlies, is marked in the declaration, "the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high [as well as] the kings of the earth upon the earth." And the same thing is more fully seen in the casting of Satan and his angels down, so that " their place is not found any more in heaven;" and in his subsequent binding and being cast into the bottomless pit. Rev. 12:7-9, compared with 19:19 to 20:3.

Until then, the display of heavenly dominion must of necessity be circumscribed, and the channels of heavenly blessing be impeded. For " while Satan has the power, and while those hold the possession, subject to his power, sorrow, discord, and death, are the sad and unwelcome companions of man's voyage; he is seduced to every folly; he is but as the convict in the ship, its guidance and its power are in other hands." But when "the Most High God" is known as "possessor of heaven and earth," where shall be the tempter then? "Not in heaven: the Most High possesses that: not on earth; the Most High reaches in His possession to that; and the very ends of the earth shall feel the blessing of His pervading comprehensive blessedness."

When this wide sphere of heaven and earth shall be thus cleared-whether of " the gods many and lords many," that have held sway therein, or of those that have destroyed the earth-and, as in Solomon's kingdom, " there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent," this blessed priest of the Most High God will come forth in the full display of His Melchizedek glory, " King of Righteousness," and " King of Peace," the supreme and universal minister of blessing in heaven and earth.

It is not that power had not been in the hands of Him who is to be known as King of Righteousness and King of Peace, before He comes upon the scene as the Priest of the Most High God; but it is at this point that He comes forth as Melchizedek in the exercise of His priestly glory, based upon His kingly rule. As in Hebrews it is argued He was first, as His name imports, " King of Righteousness," and after that also, " King of Salem, which is King of. Peace."

In the same way, the glory of the first resurrection is seen in Rev. 20, in the thrones and those that sat on them, and their living and reigning with Christ. It is not the act of resurrection which is thus presented, but the sphere of glory which belongs to it, and belongs to the epoch which it marks. "

The first resurrection¹ has its result in this glory on the part of those who are partakers of it. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

From this and from other Scriptures, it appears that believers will not until then, in association with Christ, be known in their full priestly character and glory. "He hath made us kings and priests unto His God and Father" (Rev. 1 ver. 6). And again, "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10). And also "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).

No doubt in the sense of worshippers all believers are priests now; having in the sacrifice and intercession of the High Priest of their profession the full and perfected ground of free access to God; but their royal priesthood will not be seen until the Lord Jesus himself " shall sit and rule upon His throne, and He shall be a priest upon His throne."

This is but in accordance with the Lord's own position. For though He is a priest of no other order than that of Melchizedek, it is equally certain that His present service in the sanctuary is according to the pattern of Aaron's service and not of Melchizedek at all.

It is not sufficiently observed, that the Epistle to the Hebrews, merely asserts the order of the Lord Jesus Christ's priesthood to be after Melchizedek, and not after Aaron. This fact is reasoned upon in its bearing upon the dispensation that was now passing away; and it is shown that " the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law;" but the subject is not pursued in its prospective bearing. s That which is pursued is the blood-shedding of our Lord Jesus Christ, as giving Him a title " to enter into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us;" and where His present service is typified, by the position of Aaron on the great day of atonement, when he had entered within the veil with the blood of the sin offering.

The especial bearing of the Epistle to the Hebrews is upon the subject of worship; showing that a transfer has been made of all its grounds and elements from earth to heaven. And, therefore, it does not present the cross of Christ down here, as the display of the enormity of man's sin, and the infinite depth of God's love to sinners; but it rather insists on the efficacy of the sacrifice of the cross in heaven, as giving a place before God to Him who hung upon it, in atoning mercy, by which He can bring nigh to God, and sustain in that nearness, notwithstanding their being surrounded by infirmities and imperfections, " all that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

And most comforting is it to the heart of a saint, under the daily consciousness of imperfections and shortcomings, to see the whole force and efficacy of Christ's work on earth thus brought to bear upon his acceptance before God in his daily access and worship. Who can sufficiently estimate, in a day like this, the rest of soul afforded by the perception that all the typical value of " sacrifice, and offering, and burnt offerings, and offering for sin," is concentrated in the one accomplished sacrifice of Him who said, " Lo, I come to do thy. will, O God!" and that all the sanctifying efficacy of the washings and cleansings of the Tabernacle have their issue in that word of encouragement, " Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water; let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering!"

It is indeed no light thing for the people of God to find themselves thus recognized by God as duly anointed and cleansed as priests for his sanctuary; and to know that the full answer of all which was accomplished in type for Israel, in the High Priest's entrance into the holiest of all, with the blood of the sin-offering sprinkled seven times before the mercy-seat and upon the mercy-seat, is found in that one simple declaration. "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

It may seem hardly necessary for those to whom this paper will possess any interest, to notice that an air of mystery has been thrown around the person of Melchizedek, and much argument has been thrown away in attempting to prove him to have been a mystical and not a real person. This has arisen from a misapprehension of the terms employed in relation to Melchizedek in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and also from the desire to be "wise above that which is written." In Heb. 7:3, he is said to be "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God abideth a priest continually." But this language is evidently used merely to indicate the way in which he is introduced upon the scene-being in perfect contrast with that which marked the priesthood of Aaron. There is no genealogy, no descent, no intimation of his induction to the priesthood, nor any point in which he quits it; none preceded him in its exercise, none succeeds him in it. He stands in perfect isolation as to his history in the divine record, and is thus the fitting type of him, who, "because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."

But the whole force of the terms in question is clearly indicated in Heb. 7:6, "He whose descent is not counted from them," etc., i.e., his ancestry, or pedigree, is not deduced from this source.

And there is no more ground to question whether he was a real person than there is about Abram himself, or any others whose names occur in this historical scene. Nor is there any greater difficulty connected with his priesthood, than with that of Jethro, who is priest in the presence of both Moses and Aaron.

On the general subject of the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, some Christians have felt a difficulty in the assertion that its sphere is in the heavens, and that it was not entered upon until after His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension into the heavens. The objection springs from a jealousy which confounds the proper dignity of our Lord's person, with the work He accomplished and the offices to which the dignity of His person gives effect. But the Scripture is plain, "If He were on earth, He should not be a priest" (Heb. 8:4). And again, "We have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens" (4:14). And still further, "Christ glorified not Himself to be made a high priest; but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (v. 5). That is, His call to the Melchizedek priesthood (referring to Psa. 110) is declared to be in resurrection; as it of necessity must be, to be "after the power of an endless life."

But even the Aaronic part could only be in resurrection, and in the heavens, as the whole argument of the Hebrews is designed to show. Christ and His Church are indeed typically represented by Aaron and his sons; but then it is not in Christ on earth that the type finds its answer, but in Christ and His Church in their true position in the heavens-in the holiest of all-in the blessed presence of God, where there is now no vail to hide His presence, or to obscure for a moment the sight of Him who is "the High Priest of our profession"-and who is ever there for us.

But nothing of this marks the exercise of Christ's Melchizedek priesthood, except its continuity; for, whatever its display, His entire priesthood is " not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." As Melchizedek, there is the necessity, as we have already seen, of kingly rule; and the subjugation of enemies, and the possession of heaven and earth, in fact as well as by title, by the Most High God; and lastly, of universal blessing.

With all this, the communion of the Church will be Most perfect and full. Associated with Him in union and life, who bears this glory and exercises this priesthood, what joy will it be to witness that scene which in there will be a full accomplishment of that word, " I will hear, saith. the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel"- the seed of God!

But who can picture the joy of that scene, when the enemy shall be expelled from the higher sphere of Jehovah's praise, and every hostile banner that has been erected on earth shall be overthrown; when the bondage of creation shall be exchanged for " the glorious liberty of the sons of God;" when in the height of heaven, and to the uttermost parts of the earth, blessing shall be poured forth in tides, according to the measure of the desire of his heart, who to the death was obedient, that God might be glorified, and that He might in this joy see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied!

Precious is it to look forward, with the earnestness of a certain hope, to that day when He " whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things," shall come forth, and become the minister of blessing which will make heaven rejoice and the earth be glad: and when He will not only minister, but will " drink the new wine of the kingdom " with His saints! Poor, indeed, is man's best happiness and glory, in comparison with this! And poor and feeble are these thoughts, as the expression of that bright scene of joy which shall crown the counsels of grace and glory of our God; and of which Jesus, as the conqueror of sin and death and Satan, will be the center and the spring!

It is not always in the most lengthened descriptions and minute details, that we find the fullest subjects of heavenly truth; as the succinctness of Melchizedek's history, in contrast with the book of Leviticus, and other histories of the sacred Word may show. But every ray of Christ's glory is precious, though it may not reach the central luster which in certain portions bursts upon the soul. Every name which attaches to the Lord Jesus, and every office which He sustains-every perfection of His

nature-and every glory in which He will be revealed, should be the meditation of our hearts; and the more it is so, the more will the blessed force of that Word be understood, " Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord."

This is given to us of our God, to be the staple of our joy; and while the soul dwells on this, the world becomes dim, and all earthly hopes vanish, while the Word of promise is echoed back, " Even so, come Lord Jesus! come quickly!"

The Midnight Cry

"Behold the Bridegroom cometh"!-Matt. 25

"He comes! He comes! The Bridegroom comes!"

The "Morning Star" appears;

The "cloudless morning" sweetly dawns,

Saints quit this vale of tears!

Your absent Lord no longer mourn;

Reproach no longer bear;

"He comes! He comes!" Rise, happy saints,

To meet Him in the air!

"He comes! He comes! The Bridegroom comes!"

The Church is now complete;

Her Lord beholds her clean and fair,

A partner for Him, meet.

"He comes!" His purchased bride to claim;

Her mansion is prepared;

"He comes! He comes!" rise, ready saints,

To meet your ready [or waiting] Lord!

"He comes! He comes! The Bridegroom comes!"

He shouts, for great his joy;

As yet, unseen by mortal flesh,

He tarries in the sky.

The marriage o'er, to earth he'll come,

No longer hid from men:

He'll come! He'll come! With all His saints

As "Son of David" then!

"He comes! He comes!" The "Son of Man,"

The "Second Adam," now
The "King of kings," the "Lord of lords,"
All knees before him bow.
"He comes!" His Israel in the Land
Of promise to install;
"He comes! He comes!" to clear away
The ruins of the fall!
"He comes! He comes!" The "Lion" now!
Alas! rejecting world!
He'll meet your rebel standard raised,
Defiantly unfurl'd!
But naught shall stand before Him, then
In terror you will cry,
"He comes! He comes! Alas! Alas!
Where from Him can we fly?"
" He comes! He comes! The Bridegroom comes!"
O sinners hear the sound!
Accept Him now, if you among
His chosen would be found!
Still mercy's offer'd-costless-free
No longer turn away,
" He comes! He comes!" O linger not-
"Come" while 'tis call'd to-day!"
A. M.

A Prayer

Accept, O Lord, the simple prayer,
Which in Thine ear we pour;
Behold! it is our souls' desire
To know Thee more and more!
We know that we are Thine, O Lord,
Redeem'd with Thine own blood;
We know that we shall shortly be
Forever with our God.
But we would prove our fellowship,
E'en here, from hour to hour;
Would catch the Spirit's "Abba" cry,
And taste His heav'nly power.
So should our souls with holy love,
And deepest peace abound,
And we shine forth, O Lord, and yield
A light to all around!
G.

Psalm 32:8-9

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

The Seven Churches

The moral history of the Seven Churches appears to me to be simple. It is another and most solemn testimony to man's failure under all circumstances. That which was called as the bride of Christ, has become Babylon, mystery, not only a harlot herself, but the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth. In the Seven Churches we get, I think, the rise of this awful "mystery."

Ephesus is the first and most solemn witness. Ephesus had been, if I may so speak, the metropolis of the Spirit; at Ephesus Paul "continued by the space of two years: so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks." Paul wrought special miracles. Satan was mightily confounded. "So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed." The Ephesian Church, too, we find was highest in its character. Paul in addressing them, puts the Church at once in its true position, "Blest with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." In everything, then, it is presented to us as highest. And so it is looked upon, I think, here. It is taken up, I judge, as a preeminently fair specimen of the whole Church; and it is found failing when tested by the Son of Man. He walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks with the long foot-robe, which, therefore, would meet with any defilement, if the place be unclean. He holds the seven stars. The seven stars teach them, I think, that they have a responsibility to maintain before God in heaven, even as the seven golden candlesticks owe a light to earth. The Lord knows their works, their labor: "they cannot bear them which are evil:" they had not yet come to that. A high tone of spiritual understanding was yet preserved: and oh! let saints mark this, how consistent these things may be with apostasy begun, in principle, before God. They had tried even them which said they were apostles, and had found them liars. They had been told (Eph. 4) of true apostles given by Christ to the Church, and they had spiritual understanding to detect these false ones. But then comes out the principle of all apostasy, "they had left their first love" The germ of the dead Sardis, the lukewarm and nauseous Laodicea, and the judged harlot, Babylon, was in this: they had left their first love. That was all. But what is that to Christ? Everything. "Jealousy is cruel as the grave: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love (Sol. 7: 8), it would be utterly contemned." Blessed Lord That our love could ever be of so much consequence to Him. Again we find evidence that practical evil as yet could find no lodgement: they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes. The Lord, therefore, counsels them to do their first works, in other words, to renew their first love, which was just what He wanted. Otherwise their candlestick is threatened. It is required of stewards, that they be found faithful. At Smyrna we get another, and an interesting scene. We get no condemnation there. Their circumstances, I judge, would be favorable to their spiritual health; their poverty (which I take to be literal) and their tribulation. These were quickening them, and preserving them from the general decay. Yet I would not take this as necessarily an exception from the general rule of the decay of the Church. These things were quickening them. And even if there were anything of failure, that was not the time for the blessed Jesus to plead with them, but rather to support them in present faithful suffering for His name. We remark, accordingly, that He does not present Himself in His Church, or official character, but in His personal one: the great First-last, that was dead, and is alive again, who overcame death for himself, and will do so

for them: the same character which revived the fainting John, and which we should remember too. It is remarkable that, in the case of this lowly one, as of Philadelphia, the only other commended church, they are suffering under false church pretensions from without (Gal. 4:17).

At Pergamos we get sad evidence that the tide of corruption has gone on. The practical evil which could not be tolerated at Ephesus, "the deeds of the Nicolaitanes," can be tolerated here. The Lord's address shows, I think, clearly, that He held all responsible. "I will come to thee quickly, and fight against them with the sword of my mouth." He addresses Pergamos consequently, not as trying their spiritual state, as at Ephesus, but as judging their moral evil, "having the sharp two-edged sword."

We come now to Thyatira. There seems to have been in her personal state something even better than the preceding "the last works were more than the first." But nothing can palliate evil in the eyes of the Son of God. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. And the evil appears now to have been deeper in its character. There were not only those who held the doctrine, but there was an actual prophetess, an emissary of Satan, seducing his servants with a professed commission from God. This was a deeper phase of the evil—a greater depth of Satan. [I may observe, that allowing for the different standard of morality now and then, the combining of the love and pleasures of the world with the profession of Christ, is the same doctrine, in principle, as the one spoken of in these Churches].

The Lord, then, denounces His judgment against the guilty. And then He seems to "rest from His fury." He sees, perhaps, that it is vain to expect anything else from man: the torrent is set in so strong: His people are backslidden from him with a perpetual backsliding: and so as in the history of Israel in Kings, mercy comes in (2 Kings 14:26, Gen. 8:21); and so in grace He says to the rest, "I will put upon you no other burden. But that which ye have, hold until I come." And then He proposes a high reward.

Two-three warnings had been given, and now Sardis was dead—entirely dead. He seems to test her by the power of life, "the Spirits of God," and he finds her dead. She does not answer to it. There is a correspondence between this address and that of Ephesus.

Philadelphia opens to us a little revival in the time of the end. A little revival, I say. She has a little strength—not the strength; not the large place of Ephesus, but still a little strength. And let me say, beloved brethren, that that is our great power, that what we have should be real, held with God. It may not be as I said, the full compass of Ephesus, but yet it is real, her own, and that the Lord always honors. "A smoking flax He will not quench." She has a little strength, keeps His word, and does not deny His name. She is suffering under false church pretensions, as a remnant always does at the close of an apostate dispensation (Isa. 66:5; Mal. 3:15, 16); but the Lord will make all manifest.

She keeps the word of his patience, when she can, comparatively and humanly speaking, and the Lord keeps her when the hour of temptation is such around, that none otherwise could. This hour of temptation here spoken of; and the promise, "Behold, I come quickly," first addressed to her, identify it with the time of the end (Compare 2:25). An open door is set before her.

Laodicea closes the scene. Neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, nauseous to the Lord of love, He casts her out of His mouth. Her superior light to Sardis makes her superiorly responsible to Him.

This state of things is around us. The Gospel not denied as in a Sardis state, but acknowledged, yet acknowledged without power, corrupted by political pursuit, worldliness, education, and science, substituted for Christian and alone saving or sanctifying light; does not this bear every feature of Laodicea?

The cry of increased light, what is it? " Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked. I counsel thee," etc. The last state of the Church seems come down upon us and that at mid-day!

How true it is (Isa. 29:11), " The vision of all is become as a sealed book," and for the same reason (verse 13), " their fear is taught by the precept of men." The Church in great measure deceiving the world, joining it in its cry of " Peace and safety!" deceiving and being deceived; whereas sudden destruction comes.

We have thus traced the downward course of the Church. Throughout it all there is no command to separate-not even at Sardis, or Laodicea. Why? For one thing, I judge, love is best tested where there is no positive command. How many, doubtless, in different systems are waiting for a command to separate; while the evil may be pressing upon their consciences without a remedy. What are we to do then? Float down on the open stream, till we get into the wide gulf of Romanism in the eighteenth chapter? No! Whenever matters come to a test, whenever it comes to a question between adherence to a body on one hand, and, on the other, the deliberate giving up, and rejection of God's principles of truth, and holiness for His own house, then let the saints know what to choose. I see no other way of preservation from the "great house," which Satan is now forming, and which he is ever seeking to draw around us.

May the Lord bless all that is of truth in these observations! " He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen!" G.

The Son of God

The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father."

No. 1

I am sure that I dread reasonings where affections should animate us, and the withdrawing from the place of living power into anything like a region of notions or theories. But the mysteries of God are all of the highest practical value, in either strengthening for service, comforting under trial, or enlarging the soul's communion.

The Apostle speaks of himself and others as "ministers of Christ," and also as "stewards of the mysteries of God." And so all of us, in our measure. "We are to be "ministers" i.e. servants in all practical personal readiness and devotedness; patient, diligent, and serviceable in labors; in all of which, some of us may know how little we are in comparison with others. But we are also to be "stewards," and that, too, of "mysteries," keeping uncorrupt and in, violate the peculiarities of divine revelation. Reasoning men may not receive them. The cross was foolishness to such, and "the princes of this world," the men of philosophy who professed themselves to be wise, knew not "the wisdom of God in a mystery." But that mystery is not to be surrendered to them in any wise. Our stewardship is of such-and it is required of stewards, that a man be found faithful (see 1 Cor. 4:1, 2).

The guardianship and witness of the personal glory of the Son of God, is a chief part of this high and holy stewardship. I observe St. John guarding that glory with a jealousy quite of its own kind. There are, for instance, measures and methods recommended, when Judaizing corruptions or the like are to be dealt with. In the Epistle to the Galatians, where the simplicity of the Gospel is vindicated, there is a pleading and a yearning in the midst of earnest and urgent reasoning. But in John's epistles, all is peremptory. There is a summary forcing out, or keeping out, all that is not of that unction of the Holy One, which teaches the Son as well as the Father, which will admit no lie to be of the truth, and which distinctly says-" he that denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father."

This diversity of style in the wisdom of the Spirit has its value, 'and we should mark it. The observing of days or the not eating of meat are things which really depreciate the full glory and liberty of the Gospel. But they are to be borne with (Rom. 14). But depreciation of the Person of the Son of God would not be thus borne with, or have a decree passed in its favor after this manner.

A mere journeying from Egypt to Canaan would not have constituted true pilgrimage. Many a one had traveled that road without being a stranger and pilgrim with God. Nay, though the journey were attended with all the trials and inconveniences of such an arid, unsheltered, and trackless wild, it would not have been divine or heavenly pilgrimage. A merely toilsome, self-denying life, even though endured with that courage, that moral courage, which becomes God's strangers on earth, will not do. In order to make that journey, the journey of God's Israel, the ark must be in their company, borne by a people ransomed by blood out of Egypt, and tending, in their faith of a promise, to Canaan.

This was the business of Israel in the desert. They had to conduct the ark, to accompany it, to guard and to hallow it. They might betray their weakness and incur chastening and discipline in many a way, and on many an occasion; but if their direct business were given up, all was gone. And this did come to pass. The tabernacle of Moloch was taken up, and the star of Remphan, and this was despite of the ark of Jehovah; and the camp had, therefore, their road turned away from Canaan to Babylon or Damascus (Amos 5; Acts 7).

And what ark is in the midst of the saints now for safe and holy and honorable conduct through this desert-world, if not the name of the Son of God? What mystery is committed to our stewardship and testimony, if not that? " He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." The wall of partition is to be raised by the saints between them and Christ's dishonor.

It is upon the heart a little to consider the Lord Jesus as Son of God-and if He give help from Himself, the subject will be a blessing to us.

We are baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This carries with it the formal declaration of the mystery of the Godhead; the Son being a divine person (in the recognition or declaration of this sentence), as is the Father, and as is the Holy Ghost.

It appertains to other scriptures to give us the same mystery (that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, are three Persons in the one divine glory or Godhead), in other and more moral ways, showing it in its grace and power, and in its application to our need, our life, and our edification. John's gospel specially does this, drawing it out from its orderly form, as in the words of Baptism, and giving it to our understanding as saints, our affections, and our consciences, making it our possession in faith and communion.

In connection with this, I might observe, that in ch. 1:14, the saints are heard, as it were, interrupting the story of the glories of Jesus, and sealing, by their testimony, the great truth of " the Word being made flesh." And, in the fervor which became them at such a moment, they break or interrupt the current of their own utterance in that verse For they begin to speak of the Word made flesh, but, ere they end that record, they (in a parenthesis) publish His personal glory, which they say they had seen, even " the glory of the only-begotten of the Father." And this only-begotten of the Father (see ver. 18), is spoken of, very soon afterward, as "in the bosom of the Father"-words to be deeply cherished by our souls.

I doubt not the Lord is called "the Son of God" in different respects. He is so called as being born of the Virgin (Luke 1:35). He is so by divine decree, as in resurrection (Psa. 2:7, Acts 13:33). This is true, and remains true, though further revelation be made to us of His divine Sonship. He is the Son, and yet has obtained the name of Son (Heb. 1:1-3). Matthew and Mark first notice His Sonship of •God at His baptism. Luke goes further back and notices it at His birth. But John goes back further still, even to the immeasurable, unspeakable distance of eternity, and declares His Sonship in the bosom of the Father.

And there were, I doubt not, different apprehensions of Him, different measures of faith touching His Person in those who called on Him. He himself owns, for instance, the faith of the Centurion, in apprehending His personal glory, to be beyond what He had found in Israel. But all this in no

wise affects what we hear of Him, that He was the Son "in the bosom of the Father," or "the eternal life that was with the Father" and was manifested to us.

We must not, beloved, touch this precious mystery. We should fear to dim the light of that love in which our souls are invited to walk on their way to heaven. And (what is a deeper and tenderer thought, if I may be bold to utter it), we should fear to admit of any confession of faith (rather indeed of unbelief), that would defraud the divine bosom of its eternal, ineffable delights, and which would tell our God, that He knew not a Father's joy in that bosom, as He opened it, and which would tell our Lord, that He knew not a Son's joy in that bosom as He lay there, from all eternity. I cannot join in this. If there be Persons in the Godhead, as we know there are, are we not to know also that there are relationships between them? Can we dispense with such a thought? Is there not revealed to faith, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; the Son begotten, and the Spirit proceeding? Indeed there is. The Persons in that glory are not independent but related. Nor is it beyond our measure to say, that the great archetype of love, the blessed model or original of all relative affection, is found in that relationship.

Can I be satisfied with the unbelieving thought, that there are not Persons in the Godhead, and that Father, Son, and Spirit, are only different lights in which the One person is presented? The substance of the Gospel would be destroyed by such a thought. And can I be satisfied with the unbelieving thought, that these Persons are not related? The love of the gospel would be dimmed by such a thought.

It was once asked me, had the Father no bosom till the Babe was born in Bethlehem? Indeed fully sure I am, as that inquiry suggests, He had from all eternity. The bosom of the Father was an eternal habitation, enjoyed by the Son, in the ineffable delight of the Father-" the hiding-place of love," as one has called it, " of inexpressible love which is beyond glory; for glory may be revealed, this cannot."

The soul may have remained unexercised about such thoughts as these, but the saints cannot admit their denial.

"Lamb of God, thy Father's bosom

Ever was thy dwelling place!"

The soul dare not surrender such a mystery to the thoughts of men. Faith will dispute such ground with "philosophy and vain deceit." Even the Jews may rebuke the difficulty which some feel to it. They felt that the Lord's asserting His Sonship amounted to a making of Himself equal with God. So that, instead of Sonship implying a secondary or inferior Person, in their thought it asserted equality. And in like manner, on another occasion, they treat Jesus as a blasphemer, because He was making Himself God, in a discourse which was declaring the relationship of a Son to a Father (John 5 and x). The Jews may thus, again and again, rebuke this wretched unbelieving difficulty which " the vain deceit" of man suggests. They were wiser than to pretend to teat the light where God dwells by the prism of human reasonings.

"No man knoweth who the Son is but the Father," is a sentence which may well check our reasonings. And the word, that the eternal life was manifested to us, to give us fellowship with the Father and the Son (1 John 1:2), distinctly utters the inestimable mystery of the Son being of the

Godhead, having "eternal life" with the Father. And again, as we well know, it is written, " He that is in the bosom of the Father, the only-begotten Son, declares Him." I ask, can any but God declare God? In some sense God may be described. But the soul of the Church will not rest in descriptions of God, though the Wisdom of the world knows nothing else. It asks for declaration or revelation of Him, which must be by Himself. Is not then, I ask, the Son in the bosom a divine person?

Nothing can satisfy all which the Scriptures tell us of this great mystery, but the faith of this- that the Father and the Son are in the glory of the Godhead; and in that relationship, too, though equal in that glory. " He who was with God in the beginning, as eternal as God, being God Himself, was also the Son of God," as another has expressed it-and then adds; " God allows many things to remain mysteries, partly, I believe, that He may in this way test the obedience of our minds, for He requires obedience of mind from us, as much as He does obedience in action. This is a part of holiness, this subjection of the mind to God, and it is something which the Spirit alone can give. He alone is able to calm and humble those inward powers of mind, which rise and venture to judge the things of God, refusing to receive what cannot be understood; 'a disobedience and pride which has no parallel, except in the disobedience and pride of Satan," Holy, seasonable caution for our souls! "Who is a liar," asks the Apostle, " but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" And immediately adds, "he is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." And again, "whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father!" These are very serious sentences under the judgment of the Holy Ghost. And how can there be knowledge of the Father, but through and in the 'Son? How can the Father be known otherwise? And therefore is it written, " Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." I may say, Abba Father in the spirit of adoption-a poet may say, " We are all- his offspring,"-but God is not known as the Father, if the Son in the glory of the Godhead be not owned.

Sure we may be, nay rather assured we are on divine authority, that if the unction which we have received abide in us, we shall abide in the Son, and in the Father.

Can the Son be honored even as the Father (John 5:23), if He be not owned in the Godhead? The faith of Him is not the faith that He is a Son of God, or Son of God as born of the Virgin, or as raised from the dead-though those be truths concerning Him: assuredly so. But the faith of Him is the faith of His proper Person. I know not that I can call Jesus, "Son of God," save in the faith of divine Sonship. The understanding which has been given us, has been given us to know "Him that is True," as being " in Him that is True, even in His Son Jesus Christ;" and to this it is added, "this is the true God and eternal life."

Is not "the truth," in the sense of John's 2nd Epistle, " the doctrine of Christ," or the teaching which we have in Scripture respecting the Person of Christ? And in that teaching, is not the truth of Sonship in the Godhead contained? For what is said there? " He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son," And the door is required to be shut against those who bring not that doctrine-the very same Epistle speaking of Him as "the Son of the Father,' language which would not attach to Him as born of the Virgin by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost.

But still further. I ask, can the love of God be understood according to Scripture if this Sonship be not owned? Does not that love get its character from that very doctrine? Is not our heart challenged on the ground of it? " God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that

whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And again" herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved, us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.". And again, " in this was manifested the love of God' towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." And again, "and we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."

Does not this love at once lose its unparalleled glory, if this truth be questioned? How would our souls answer the man who would tell us, that it was not His own Son whom God spared not, but gave Him up for us all? How would it wither the heart to hear that such an one (see Rom. 8:32) was only His Son as born of the Virgin, and that those words, " He that spared not his own son," are to be read as human, and not as Divine?

Good care are we to take not to qualify the precious Word, to meet man's prejudices. Was it with his servant, or with a stranger, or with one born in his house merely, that Abram walked to Moriah? Was it with an adopted son or with his own son, his very son, his only son whom he loved? We know how to answer these inquiries. And I will say, I know not how I could speak of the Son loving me and giving Himself for me (Gal. 2:20), did I not receive Him by faith as Son in the bosom of the Father; Son in the glory of the Godhead.

The Son is the Christ. God, in the Person of the Son, has undertaken all office work for us, all work for which anointing or Christhood was needed. And this He has done in the person of Jesus. We therefore say, "Jesus Christ the Son of God." The Only Begotten, the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, are one. But it is in personal essential glory, in office, and in assumed manhood, we see Him under these different names.

We track His wondrous path from the Father's bosom to the Heirship of all things. What discoveries are made of Him, beloved! Read of Him in Prov. 8:22, 31; John 1:1, 3; Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:13, 22; Heb. 1:1, 3; 1 John 1:2; Rev. 3:14. Meditate on Him as presented to you in those glorious Scriptures. Let them yield to you their several lights, in which to view the One in whom you trust, the One who gave up all for you, the One who has trod, and is treading, such a path-and then tell me, can you part with either Him or it? In the bosom of the Father He was-there lay the eternal life with the Father, God and yet with God. In counsel He was then set up ere the highest part of the dust of the earth was made. Then, He was the Creator of all things in their first order and beauty; afterward, in their state of mischief and ruin, the Reconciler of all things; and by and bye, in their re-gathering, He will be the Heir of all things. By faith we see Him thus, and thus speak of Him. We say, He was in the bosom, in the everlasting counsels, in the Virgin's womb, in the sorrows of the world, in the resurrection from the dead, in the honor and glory of a crown in heaven, and with all authority and praise in the Heirship and Lordship of all things.

Deprive Him of the bosom of the Father from all eternity, and ask your souls, has it lost nothing in its apprehension and Joy of this precious mystery, thus unfolded from everlasting to everlasting? I cannot understand a saint pleading for such a thing. Nor can I consent to join in any confession that tells my Heavenly Father, it was not His own Son he gave up for me.

If we could but follow the thought with affection, how blessed would it be, to see the Lord all along this pathway, from the bosom of the Father to the throne of the glory.

And still further; in each stage of this journey, we see Him awakening the equal and full delight of God; all and as much His joy at the end as at the beginning, though with this privilege and glory, that He has awakened it in a blissful and wondrous variety. This blessed thought Scripture also enables us to follow. As He lay in the bosom through eternity, we need not (for we cannot) speak of this joy. That bosom was "the hiding place of love"- and the joy that attended that love, is as unutterable as itself.

But when His Beloved was set up as the center of all the Divine operations, or the foundation of all God's counsels, He was still God's delight, as unmixedly as when He lay in the eternal bosom. In such a place and character we see Him in Prov. 8:22-31. In that wondrous Scripture, Wisdom or the Son is seen as the great Original and Framer and Sustainer of all the Divine works and purposes, set up in counsel before the world was-as several Scriptures in the New Testament also present Him to us (see accordingly, John 1:2; Eph. 1:9, 10; Col. 1:15-17).

And in all this He can say of Himself, "then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him."

So when the fullness of time was come, the Son of God, who had from eternity lain in the Father's bosom, lay in the Virgin's womb. Who can speak the mystery? But so it is. But it is only another moment, and a fresh occasion, of joy-and angels came, in their feeble way, to utter, it, and tell of it to the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem.

Then again, in a new form the Son of His love was to run another course. Through sorrows and services as Son, of man, He is seen on earth, but all and as unmixedly awakening ineffable delight, as in the hidden ages of eternity. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," "behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth," are voices of the Father telling of this unchanging joy, while tracking the path of Jesus across this polluted earth.

And that same voice, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," is heard a second time-heard on the holy hill, as on the banks of Jordan, in the day of transfiguration, as at the baptism. And the transfiguration was, the pledge and type of the kingdom, as the baptism was entrance on His ministry and witness. But the same delight is thus stirred in the Father's bosom where the Son lay, whether the eye of God track Him along the lonely path of Jesus the servant in a polluted world, or on the heights of the King of glory in the millennial world.

It is delight in Him, equal and full delight all along the way from everlasting to everlasting; no interruption, no pause, in the joy of God in Him, though various and changeful joy-the same in its fullness and depth, let the occasions proceed and unfold themselves as they may. The One who awakens the joy is the same throughout, and so the joy itself. It can know no different measures, though it may differ in springs. And that One was alike unsullied through the whole path from everlasting to everlasting; as holy in the Virgin's womb as in the Father's bosom; as spotless when ending His journey as when beginning it; as perfect as a servant as a king; infinite perfection marking all, and equal complacency resting on all.

If the soul were but impregnated with the thought, that this blessed One (seen where He may be, or as he may be) was the very One who from all eternity lay in the Divine bosom, if such a thought were kept vivid in the soul by the Holy Ghost, it would arrest many a tendency in the mind which now defiles it. He that was in the Virgin's womb, was the same that was in the Father's bosom!

what a thought Isaiah's enthroned Jehovah, whom the winged Seraphim worshipped, was Jesus of Galilee! what a thought! as spotless as Man, as he was as God-as unstained in the midst of the human vessel, as in the eternal bosom-as unsullied in the midst of the world's pollutions, as when daily the Father's delight ere the world was!

Let the soul be imbued with this mystery, and many a rising thought of the mind will get its answer at once. Who would talk, as some have talked, in the presence of such a mystery as this! Let this glory be but discovered by the soul, and the wing will be covering the face again, and the shoe will be taken off the foot again.

I believe the divine reasonings in John's first Epistle suggest, that the communion of the soul is affected by the view we take of the Son of God. For in that Epistle, love is manifested in the gift of the Son, and love is our dwelling place. If, then, I judge, that when the Father gave the Son, it was only the gift of the Virgin's seed, the atmosphere in which I dwell is lowered. If I apprehend this gift to be the gift of the Son who lay in the bosom from all eternity, my sense of the love rises, and hence, the character of my dwelling-place, The communion of the soul is thus affected. I know, indeed, from converse with saints, that from simplicity of faith, many a soul has a richer enjoyment of a lower measure of truth, than some have of higher measures. But this does not affect the thoughts and reasonings of the Spirit in that Epistle. It is still true, that love is our dwelling-place, and our communion will therefore take its character from the love which we apprehend. And why, I ask, should we seek to reduce the power of communion, and thus hazard our enjoyment in God? The sorrow lies in this, (if one may speak for others), we but scantily care for the good things we have in Him.

The Son, the only begotten Son, the Son of the Father, emptied Himself that He might do the divine pleasure in the service of wretched sinners. But will the Father suffer it, that sinners, for whom all this humiliation was endured, shall take occasion from it to depreciate the Son This cannot be, as John 5:23, tells us. Jesus had declared that God was His Father, "making Himself equal with God." Is it a question, will God vindicate Him in that saying? And yet, He is scarcely justified in it by the thought of those who deny Sonship in the Godhead. But the Father will not receive honor, if it be not rendered to the Son-as we read, "he that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him."

The Spirit was given, breathed out, by Jesus risen (John 20). The Holy Ghost then proceeded from Him, and in that way became the Spirit. But will it be thought, that He was not the Spirit in the Godhead before? Never, by a saint. And so the Son. He was born of the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, and so became Son of God; but in like manner, shall that affect the thought that He was the Son in the Godhead before?

Look again at John's first Epistle. There he addresses "fathers, young men, and little children" (see second chap.). And he distinguishes them.

The fathers are they who "have known Him that is from the beginning." They "abide in the doctrine of Christ," having "both the Father and the Son." The unction is powerful in them, if I may so express it. They have listened, as it were with deep attention of soul, to the declaration, of the Father by the Son (John 1:18). Having seen the Son, they had seen the Father (John 14:7-11). They keep the words of the Son, and of the Father (John 14:21,23). They know that the Son is in

the Father, they in the Son, and the Son in them. They are not orphans (John 14:18,20).

The young men are they who "have overcome the wicked one," that wicked one who animates the world with the denial of the mystery of the Christ (see iv. 1-6). But they are not in the settled full power of that mystery, as the fathers are, and they need exhortation-so that the Apostle goes on to warn them against all that belongs to the world, as they had already stood in victory over that spirit in it which was gainsaying Christ.

The little children are they who "have known the, Father." But they are only little children, and need warning, teaching, and exhorting. Their knowledge of the Father was somewhat immature; not so connected with the knowledge of the Son, of "him that was from the beginning," as was that of the fathers. He, therefore, warns them of antichrists, describing them as set against "the truth" or "doctrine of Christ." He teaches them, that "he that denieth the Son the same hath not the Father;" that if the anointing they have received abide in them, they will surely abide in the Son and in the Father; and that the house of God was of such a character, as that none who savored not of such anointing could remain there. He reminds them that the promise which the Son has promised is eternal life. And finally, he exhorts them so to abide in what the Unction teaches, that they may not be ashamed in the day of the Son's appearing.

It is, therefore, all about the Person of the Son, or "the doctrine of Christ," that this distinguishing Scripture deals. It is their attainment in that truth, their relationship to it, and not their general Christian character, which distinguishes them as fathers, young men, and little children. These addresses, therefore, hold in jealous view the great object of the whole epistle, and that is, the Son of God. For the mention of the Son of God pervades it all from beginning to end. Thus,-It is the blood of the Son that cleanses. It is with the Father we have an advocate; which intimates the advocate to be the Son. It is in the Son the Unction causes us to abide. It is the Son who has been manifested to destroy the works of the devil. It is in the name of the Son we are commanded to believe. It is the Son who has been sent to manifest what love is. It is the Son in whom faith gives victory over the world. It is the Son about whom God's record or testimony is. It is the Son in whom we have life. It is the Son who is come to give us an Understanding. It is the Son in whom we are. It is the Son who is the true God and eternal life. All this is declared to us in this Epistle about the Son of God; and thus it is the Son who is the great object through the whole of it; and the fathers, the young men, and the little children: are distinguished by the Apostle because of their relation to that object, I believe, because of the measure of their souls' apprehension of it. All is, in this way, divinely and preciously consistent.

And in this same Epistle, John speaks much of love and of righteousness, as necessary parts or witnesses of our birth of God. But, in the midst of such teaching, He speaks of right or wrong confession to Christ. Does he, I ask, treat the former as living and practical matter, and the latter as speculative? He gives no warrant to any one thus to distinguish them. Not at all. All are treated as being equally of one character, and he lets us know, that the exercise of love and the practice of righteousness would not complete the witness of a soul being born of God, without the knowledge and confession of the Son.

Had the opened eye of Isaiah tracked the path of Jesus through the cities and villages of his native land, how must he have been kept in continual adoration?, He had been taken into a vision of His glory. He had seen the throne high and lifted up, his train filling the temple, and the winged

Seraphim veiling their faces as they gazed in Jesus the Godhead-glory. Isaiah " saw His glory, and spake of Him " (Isa. 6 John 12). And it is the like sight, by faith, which we need-the faith of the Son, the faith of Jesus, the faith of His name, the apprehension of His person, the sense of the glory which lay behind a thicker veil than a Seraph's wing, the covering' of the lowly and earth-rejected Galilean.

And let me, in closing, remember what the Lord says about giving the household their meat in due season (Matt. 24 Luke 12). We must be careful not to corrupt that meat. " Feed the Church of God which he has purchased with his own blood," says one Apostle; " feed the flock of God which is among you," says another. And the Church of God or the flock of God is to increase with " the increase of God." Wondrous language!

Let us watch, beloved, against the attempt of the enemy to corrupt the meat of the household. The unfoldings of John about the Son of God, and of Paul about the Church of God, are meat in due season now; and we are not to attemper the food, stored up of God for His saints, to man's taste or reasonings. The manna is to be gathered as it comes from heaven, and brought home to feed the traveling camp with angels' food.

" I commend you to God," says one in the Holy Ghost, "and to the word of His grace which is able to build you up, and give you inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

No. 2

" And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

In the history of flesh and blood given to us in Scripture, we learn that sin was necessary to death. To all as headed or represented in Adam, it was this:-" in the day thou eatest thou shalt die." Touching, however, the promised seed of the woman, who was not thus represented, it was said to the serpent, " thou shalt bruise his heel." The death of this seed was thus to be as peculiar as his birth. He was, in birth, to be the woman's seed; in death, He was to have his heel bruised. In the fullness of time this promised One was "made of a woman." The Son of God, the Sanctifier, took part of flesh and blood; He became " that holy thing."

Had death, I ask, any title? None whatever. Whatever title the everlasting covenant had on His heel, death had none on His flesh and blood. In this blessed One, if I may so express it, there was a capability of meeting the divine purpose, that His heel should be bruised; but there was no exposure to death in any wise.

Under the covenant, under this divine purpose, at His own divine pleasure, He had surrendered himself, saying, "Lo, I come." For the great ends of God's glory and the sinner's peace, He had taken "the form of a servant." And accordingly in due time He was " made in the likeness of men," and being found in that " fashion," He went on in a course of self humbling even to the death of the Cross" (Phil. 2).

In such a course we see Him through life. He hides His glory-"the form of God" under this "form of a servant"-He did not seek honor from men. He honored the Father that had sent him, and not himself. He would not make himself known. He would not shew himself to the world. Thus we read of him. And all this belonged to the "form" He had taken, and gets its perfect illustration in the histories or narratives of the Gospel.

Under the form of a tributary to Caesar, He hid the form of the Lord of the fullness of the earth and sea. He was asked for tribute; at least Peter was asked, did not his Master pay it? The Lord declares his freedom; but lest He should offend, He pays the custom for Peter and Himself: But who, all the while, was this subject to Caesar? None less than He, of whom it had been written, "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." For He commands a fish from the sea to bring him that very piece of money which he then passed over to the officers of Caesar (Matt. 17).

What an instance of the precious mystery that He that was " in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God " (using thus the treasures of the great deep, and commanding the creatures of God's hand as all His own), took on Him the form of a servant! What glory breaks through the cloud in that passing and trivial occurrence! It was all between the Lord and Peter; but it was a manifestation of "the form of God" from beneath "the form of a servant," or of a subject to the Power. The fullness of the earth was tributary to Him at the moment when He was consenting to be tributary to the Roman. As on another occasion, the unnoticed guest at the marriage-feast spread the feast, not merely as though He had been "the Bridegroom," but as the very Creator of

all that furnished it. There again "He manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him."

So again we read of Him, "He would not strive nor try, nor lift up His voice in the street." He would not break the bruised reed, but rather withdraw Himself: And all this because He had taken "the form of a servant." And, accordingly, on that very occasion the Scripture is quoted, "Behold my servant whom I uphold" (Matt. 12).

Very significant of His way, all this was. "Show us a sign from heaven," was another temptation to Him to exalt Himself (Matt. 16). The Pharisees then tried Him, as the devil tried Him when he would have Him cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, and as the kinsfolk were doing when they said " Show thyself to the world." But what said the perfect servant? no sign should be given but that of Jonas-a sign of humiliation, a sign that the world, and the prince of the world were apparently to get advantage over Him for a moment, instead of such a sign as would awe and silence the world into subjection to Him.

Excellent, indeed, are these traces of God's perfect servant. David and Paul, standing, as it were, on either side of Him, like Moses and Elias on the holy hill, reflect this servant thus hiding of Himself-as a well-known Tract has told us. David slew the lion and the bear, and Paul was caught up to the third heaven-but neither of them spoke of those things. And lovely reflections of the perfect Servant such actings were. But they and all like them, which we may find in scripture or among the saints, are more distant from the great original than we have measures to measure. He hid " the form of God" under " the form of a Servant." Jesus was the strength of David when he killed the lion and the bear, and He was the Lord of that heaven to which Paul was caught up, but He lay under the form of one "who had not where to lay His head."

So, on the top of " the holy hill," and again at the foot of it. On the top of it, in the sight of His elect, for a, passing moment, He was the Lord of glory; at the foot of it, He was " Jesus only;" charging them not to tell the vision to any till the Son of man was risen from the dead (Matt. 17).

Observe Him again in the vessel on the lake during the storm. He was there as a tired laboring man whose sleep was sweet. Such was His manifested form. But underneath lay "the form of God." He arose, and as the Lord who gathers the wind in His fists, and binds the waters in a garment (Prov. 30:4), He rebukes the sea into a calm (Mark 6).

It is in the full and varied glories of the Jehovah of Israel that our Jesus passes at times before us. In other days, the God of Israel had commanded the creatures of the great deep, and "a great fish" was prepared to swab: low up Jonah, and give him a burying-place for the appointed time. And so, in His day, Jesus approved. Himself the Lord of the fullness "of this great and wide sea," summoning a host of the " small beasts" thereof into the net of Peter (Luke 5). " Both small and great beasts," that find "their pastime therein;" thus in earlier and later days, owned the word of Jehovah-Jesus.

So, the God of Israel, as the Lord of the fullness of the earth as well as of the sea, would use the dumb ass to rebuke the madness of the Prophet. But more in character than even that, when the ark, had to be brought home from the land of the Philistines, the God of Israel controlled nature, forcing the kine that were yoked to the cart on which the ark was placed, to take the right and ready road to Bethshemesh, on the borders of Israel, though this journey was taken by them under

the strong resistance of all the instincts of nature.

The Lord Jesus acted afterward in the very striking assertion of this same glory and power of the God of Israel. For in His day, He, the true ark, had to be borne homeward. In the progress of His history, the moment came, when He needed, like the ark in the days of Samuel, to be borne from the place where He was. He had to visit Jerusalem in His glory. It was needful that as King of Zion He should enter the royal city-and He gets the ass, and the colt the foal of an ass, to do that service for Him. And He does this, in all the conscious dignity and rights of the Lord of the fullness of the earth.

The owner of the beast had to listen to this claim, " the Lord has need of him "-and, contrary to nature, opposed to all that the heart of man would have stood for and pleaded, " straightway he sent him."

Thus again was Jesus shining in the characteristic glory of the God of Israel. The veil may be very thick, and so it was. It was no other than that of Jesus of Nazareth, the Carpenter, the Carpenter's Son. The cloud that covered was heavy indeed-the glory that was under it was infinite. It was the full Jehovah-glory, and no ray of all the divine brightness would refuse to assert and express it. "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God," though "He made Himself of no reputation." Faith understands this veiled glory, and affection guards it as with a wall of fire. "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the winds in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell"?

We will not attempt to tell it-but like Moses, while Jesus passes by, we will learn to bow our head to the earth, and worship (Ex. 34).

What instances are these in which scripture teaches us to trace the form of a Servant hiding the form of God. But so also, I am bold to say, of this same character and meaning, are those cases in which He appears to be sheltering Himself from danger, or securing His life.

And a delightful task it should ever be to the soul to discover thus His beauty and His glory which lie hid from the eye of man. But many of us, who would not for worlds sully that glory, may still be unapt in apprehending it, and often mistake the way of it, or the form which it takes.

The Son of God came into the world the very contradiction of Him who is still to come, and after whom, as we read, "the whole world is to wonder." As He Himself says, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." And in accordance with this, if His life be threatened He does not at once become a wonder in the eyes of the world, but the very opposite. He makes Himself of no reputation. He would be nothing and nobody. He refuses altogether to be a wonder in the sight of men-the great and glorious contradiction of him whose deadly wound is to be healed, so that the whole world may wonder and worship, whose image is to live and to be made to speak, that all, both small and great, may take His name into their foreheads.

The Son of God was the very contradiction of all this. He came in His Father's name, and not in His own. He had life in Himself. He was equal with Him, of whom it is written, " who only hath immortality;" but He hid that brightness of the divine glory under the form of one who appeared to

shelter his life by the most ordinary and despised methods. Blessed to tell it had we but worshipping hearts! The other who is to come "in his own name" by and bye, may receive a deadly wound by a sword and yet live, that the world may wonder- but the Son of God will flee into Egypt to avoid the sword.

Are we wanting in spiritual apprehension so far that we cannot perceive this? Is the sight of the glory thus hidden to be indeed forced upon us? If we need that, the Lord even so far bears with us, and gives it to us. For under this veil there lay a glory which, like the flames of the Chaldean furnace, had it pleased, might have destroyed its enemies at once. For at the last, when the hour had come, and the powers of darkness were to have "their hour," the servants of those powers in the presence of this glory "went backwards and fell to the ground"-teaching us, that Jesus was entirely a willing captive then, as afterward He was a willing victim.

In connection with this, look at Him on the occasion to which I have already referred in Matt. 12. Did the Lord, I ask, fear at that moment the anger of the Pharisees, and feel as one that must provide for the safety of his life? That cannot be my thought. He was taking one suited and consistent stage in His beautiful and precious path as a servant, going on, not to get Himself a name of honor in the world, but such a name (through humiliation and death) as that the Gentiles might trust in it, poor sinners be saved through the faith of it.

Look at Him for another moment, when the sword of Herod was a second time threatened (Luke 13). How did the Lord rise before it or above it? In the consciousness of this-that let the king be as crafty as he may, let him add subtlety to force, He Himself must and would walk His appointed journey and do His appointed work, and then be perfected-and His perfection, as He, there sneaks, was to come, as we know, not by any prevailing of Herod or of the Jews over Him, but by His surrender of Himself to be made the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering. And on the same occasion, He recognizes this-that though as a prophet He may have to die at Jerusalem, it is that Jerusalem may fill up the measure of her sins, for that He, all the while, was Jerusalem's God, who throughout ages of patient love had borne with her, and pleaded with her, and would soon in judgment leave her desolate (Luke 13:31-35).

Again I say, what glories are hidden here under the lowly form of One who was threatened with the anger of a king, and had to meet the scorn and enmity of his people!

But I may refer to one or two cases still more marked than these. Look at one in the earliest time of His ministry, in His own city. There the same great principle is exhibited-for the hill of Nazareth is, in my sight, not a place of danger to the life of Jesus, but just what the pinnacle of the temple had been (see Luke 4:9, 29). The devil had no thought of the Lord's death at the bottom of the pinnacle; none whatever, He tempted Him, as he had tempted the woman in the garden, to magnify himself, to make himself if I may so speak, as he had said to Eve, to be as God. He sought to corrupt the sources in Christ, as he, had corrupted them in Adam, and to get "the pride of life" in as one of the master moving springs. But Jesus kept "the form of a servant." He would not cast Himself down, but obediently remembered "thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

So at the hill of Nazareth. That hill was not higher than the pinnacle of the temple. Jesus was in no more danger at the one spot than at the other. He would have been as entirely unhurt at the foot of the hill as at the bottom of the pinnacle. But how then should the Scripture be fulfilled, that He

came not to honor Himself? He, therefore, "passing through the midst of them went His way." He retired unnoticed and unknown, fulfilling His form as a servant, and manifesting His grace in the thoughts of His saints.

We dare not speak of such things as being done to save His life. The thought is contrary to the glory of His person, "God manifest in the flesh." Jesus was again and again in the days of His flesh refreshed in spirit when faith discovered His glory under the veil. When the Son of David, or the Son of God, or the Lord of Israel, or the Creator of the world, was known to faith under the form of Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus rejoiced in spirit. And so now, we may say, at this time, when the form of a servant is afresh presented to our thoughts, He will joy in the saints discovering the glory under the cloud.

The "flight," as we may call it, into Egypt in earlier days, the days of "the young child" at Bethlehem, is a very peculiar and beautiful incident. We may remember, that in the time of Moses, Israel in that land was like a bush in the midst of fire; but because of the sympathy and presence of the God of their fathers, the bush was unconsumed. Jehovah was above Pharaoh; and when Pharaoh would have destroyed the people, Jehovah preserved them, and caused them to multiply in the very heart of Pharaoh's land. And this was done, not "by might nor by power," for Israel was there no better than a bush, a bramble-bush which a spark might have consumed. But the Son of God was in the bush. That was the secret. He was with Israel in Egypt as afterward He was in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, and the smell of fire, though the bush were burning, and the furnace was heated seven times, did not pass on them.

A "wondrous sight," so that Moses turned aside to look at it. And we may still, in the spirit of Moses, turn aside and visit the same spot. We may read Ex. 1-15, and then look again at this strange sight, why the bush was on fire, and the bush was not burnt, how the poor bramble of Israel was kept in the midst of the Egyptian furnace unhurt, because of the presence of the Son of God.

Let the fire be heated again and again, it never prevails. And how at the last does Israel leave Egypt? Just as the three children afterward leave the furnace which Nebuchadnezzar had heated-in triumph-with nothing burnt but the hands which bound them. Pharaoh and the Egyptian host perish in the Red Sea, but Israel goes out under the banner of the Lord.

But was Israel in Egypt with the sympathies of the Son of God more secure than Jesus, "God manifest in the flesh"? Shall the Israelitish Bush be proof against the strength of the Egyptian fires, and shall not the lowly flesh of Jesus, though in the full enmity of man, the hatred of the king, the envy of the scribes, and the rage of the multitude, be unassailable when God Himself is manifested in that flesh? The full mystery of the burning and unconsumed bush lies in that. Israel could not suffer beyond divine appointment, because of the sympathies of the Son of God; Jesus could not be touched beyond his pleasure, because of the incarnation of the Son of God.

"Out of Egypt have I called my son," was true of Jesus as of Israel. Both Jesus and Israel, in their day, were burning unconsumed bushes-weak things to all appearance, and in the judgment of men, but unassailable. Both may know their sorrows in this Egyptian world, but life is unreachd; Israel from the sympathies they enjoyed, Jesus because of the Person that He was.

Was it then to save His life that " the young child was carried into Egypt"? Did Israel of old leave Egypt to save their lives? Did Shadrach and his companions leave the Chaldean furnace to save their lives? Israel's life was as safe in Egypt as out of it. The Jewish children were as little hurt by fire in it as out of it. Israel left Egypt to witness the glory of Jehovah their Savior; and so did Israel's children the Chaldean fires; and in like manner, and for the like end, the young child was taken from Judaea, from the wrath of Herod the king. The Son of God had taken the form of a servant. He had come not in His own name, but in His Father's. He had emptied Himself, made Himself of no reputation, and in the fulfilling of that form He began His course while yet but a " young child;" and He was, among other humiliations, obedient even to a flight into Egypt, as though to save His life from the wrath of the king, for the glory of Him who had sent Him.

We must watch indeed against taking these instances of His perfect Servant-form, and using them to the depreciation of His Person. He was unassailable. Till His hour came, and He was ready to surrender Himself, Captains and their fifties again and again would fail ere they could reach Him-but rather than this, He would again and again " humble Himself" - going into "Egypt" on one occasion, and into " another village" on another-the scorned, rejected Son of Man.

Shall we treat this mystery of the subjection, the voluntary subjection of the Son of God, with a careless mind? Shall we draw aside the veil irreverently? And yet, if these instances to which I have referred, and others kindred with them, be cited to prove the mortal condition of the flesh and blood which the Lord took, we do draw aside the veil with an irreverent and unskillful hand. Yes, and with more than that. We do Him double wrong. We depreciate His Person through acts which manifest His boundless grace and love to us, and His devoted subjection to God.

And yet it is now said, that nature or violence or accident would have prevailed over the flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus, to cause death as with us. But does not such a thought, I ask, connect the Lord Jesus Christ with sin? It may be said, it is not meant to do so. That may be. But is it not really so? Does it not link the Lord with sin, inasmuch as in the inspired history of flesh and blood (and we are to be wise only according to what is there written), death attaches to it only through sin? If flesh and blood in His Person were liable to die, or by its own nature and condition capable of dying (save by His gracious surrender of Himself), is it, not therefore, connected with sin? And if so, is Christ before the soul? This suggestion treats Him as one exposed to death. It takes such knowledge of Him as leaves Him liable to die in a way which He could never have taken up in the fulfilling of His form as a Servant. And beyond what He took up in that character, He was liable to nothing.

There is, indeed, something in this suggestion to make one fear that " the gates of hell" are again attempting " the Rock" of the church, the Person of the Son of God. And if it be vindicated on this plea, that it is designed only to illustrate the Lord's true humanity, the vindication itself becomes matter of increased suspicion. For, is it mere humanity, I ask, I get in the Person of Christ? Is it not something immeasurably different, even God. manifest in the flesh? He would not as a Savior, do for me a sinner, if He were not Jehovah's fellow. No creature of the highest possible order could work out meritorious righteousness. Every creature owes all that he can render. None but one who thinks it not robbery to be equal with God can take the form of a Servant-for he is a Servant already, as I have said before. No creature can supererogate, as another has said, the thought would be rebellion. No fellow creature could stand for us by his obedience. His obedience is

already due for himself. None could be qualified to stand surety for man, but one who could without presumption, claim equality with God, and consequently be independent. So that a suggestion which professes to illustrate true humanity in Christ, ought to alarm us, as though our "Rock" was assailed anew.

True humanity was capable of sinning. Adam in the garden was so, for he did sin. We may say more simply and certainly, that he was capable of sinning than that he was capable of dying. The history shows us the first, but forbids us to determine the second; inasmuch as it tells us, that death came in only by sin. By nature there was a capability of sinning, but we are not told the same as to a capability of dying.

If, then, by and bye, another were to come, and just to illustrate, as he might say, the true humanity of Christ, he were to suggest the capability or possibility of His sinning, I ask, what would the soul say to him? We may leave the answer to those who know Him. But we may, at the same time, be sure of this-that the devil is in all these attempts upon the Rock of the Church, which is the Person of the Son of God (Matt. 16:18). For His work, His testimony, His sorrows, His death itself, would be absolutely nothing to us, if He were not God. His Person sustains His sacrifice, and in that way His Person is our Rock. It was a confession to His Person, by one who was at that time ignorant of His work or sacrifice, which led the Son of God to recognize the Rock on which the church was to be built, and also to recognize that truth or mystery against which the gates of hell, the strength and subtlety of Satan, were to try their utmost again and again. And they have been thus engaged from the beginning, and are still so. By Arians and Socinians, the full glory of " God manifested in the flesh," was clouded long ago with either a deeper or a more specious falsehood. Lately the moral nature of the man Christ Jesus, " God over all, blessed forever," was assailed in Irvingism, and it was blotted and tainted, as far as that evil thought could reach. Still more lately, the relationships to God in which Jesus stood, and the experiences of the soul in which Jesus was exercised, have been the unholy traffic of the human intellect-and now His flesh and blood, the "temple" of His body, has been profaned. But one can trace a kindred purpose in all, the depreciation of the Son- of God. And whence comes this? And whence comes the very opposite and contradictory energy? What is the Father occupied with, or jealous about, if it be not the glory of the Son, in resistance of all that would depreciate Him, be it gross or subtle? Read, beloved, the Lord's discourse to the Jews in the 5th of John. There that secret is disclosed, that though the Son has humbled Himself, and can, as He says, " do nothing of Himself," the Father will see to it that He be not thereby dishonored, or in any wise depreciated-watching over the rights, the full divine rights, of the Son, by this most careful and jealous decree, "he that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent Him."

Patience in teaching, patience with the simply ignorant, is surely the divine way, the way of the gracious Spirit. The Lord exercised that way Himself. " Have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me Philip"? But no allowance of any depreciation of Christ is the divine way also. John's writings prove this to us-the most awful portions of the oracles of God, as well as being so peculiar and precious, because they so concern the personal glory of the Son. And they seem to me to show but little if any mercy to those who would sully that glory, or carelessly watch over and around it..

And let me add, other facts in the history of the blessed Lord, such as hunger and thirst and weariness, are not to be used as the least warrant for this thought about the mortality of His flesh and blood. The Son of God in flesh was exposed to nothing. Nothing outside the garden of Eden was His portion. He was hungry and wearied at the well of Samaria. He slept in the ship after a day of fatiguing service. But whatever of all this He knew in the place of thorns and thistles and sorrow and sweat of face, He knew it all and took it all, only as fulfilling that "form of a Servant" which in unspeakable grace He had assumed.

The "man of sorrows" may be addressed on one occasion as though He appeared to be nearly fifty years old. But I am to know from that, only how He had borne sorrows and services for our blessing and the Father's glory. In such features I am to read Him "whose visage was marred more than any man," because of His endurements for us, and the contradiction of sinners against Him, and not because of the decaying tendencies of natural old age in the smallest measure of them, as though such tendencies by possibility could attach to Him.

The Jews are again and again charged with being His murderers (Acts 2:36; 3:15; 7:52...) Surely they are, and rightly so. We are all in the same condemnation. It is the guilt of murder that lies at our door. The Jews took his blood on them and on their children. To all moral intent, in a full judicial sense, they were "His betrayers and murderers," though it was neither their spear, nor the pressure of the cross, nor the yielding of nature, which took that life away-He gave it up of himself. No man took it from Him. He laid it down of Himself. Strange it may sound in the ears of man, and strange it may seem to their reasonings, but what we read touching this is perfect in the esteem of faith. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father." He was free and yet under commandment. Strange all this, again I admit, to reasonings and unbelief, but perfect in the judgment of faith.

The Son of God died on the tree, where the wicked hand of man had nailed Him, and the eternal purpose and grace of God had appointed Him. There He died, and died because He was there. The Lamb was slain. Who would think of gainsaying such a thought? Wicked hands murdered Him, and God provided Him as His own Lamb for the altar. Who would touch for a moment so needed and precious a mystery? And yet the Lamb gave up His own life. No exhaustion under the suffering, no pressure of the cross, led Him to the death; but His life He yielded of Himself. In token of being in full possession of that which He was rendering up, "He cried with a loud voice," and then "gave up the ghost." The history of the moment admits of no other thought; and, I will add, neither should the worshipping affections of the saints. Pilate marveled that He was dead already; he would not believe it; he had to satisfy himself of it. No time had been passed on the cross sufficient to extort the life, so that the legs of the others had to be broken. But He was dead already. Pilate must make inquiry, and call for the witness, ere he would believe it. The thought we claim is thus the only interpreter of the strict literal history of the fact. And our souls, had we grace, would bless God for such a picture of His slain Lamb, and of our dying, crucified, killed, and murdered Savior. Do we blot out the record that He was the slain Lamb, or silence the song in heaven which celebrates that mystery when we see His life the slain Lamb rendered up Himself? The history of Calvary, which the Holy Ghost has written, sustains this thought; and again we say, what we claim is the only interpreter of the strict history of the fact. He was free, and yet under commandment. Faith understands it all. And according to this mystery, when the hour had come,

as we read, "He bowed the head and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30). He owned the commandment which He had received, and yet of Himself yielded up His life. He was obedient unto death, and yet laid down His life as of Himself.

Faith understands all this without difficulty-yea, understands that herein alone lies the true and perfect mystery. He died under covenant counsels, to the which He willingly yielded, being "the Fellow" of the Lord of Hosts.

But, as we have already said to His praise, the Son of God on earth was ever hiding His glory-the form of God, as we have been seeing, under the form of a servant. His glory had been owned in all parts of the dominions of God. Devils owned it, the bodies and the souls of men owned it, death and the grave owned it, the beasts of the field and the fish of the sea, owned it, winds and waves owned it, and so did the corn and the wine. I may say He Himself was the only One who did not own or assume it; for His way was to veil it. He was " Lord of the harvest," but appeared as one of the laborers in the field; He was the God of the Temple, and the Lord of the Sabbath, but submitted to the challenges of an unbelieving world (Matt. 9, 12).

Such was the veil or the cloud under which He thus again and again causes the glory to retire! And so, in entire fellowship with all this, as we have already said, did He carry Himself on those occasions when His life was threatened. Under despised forms He hid His glory again. At times the favor of the common people shelters Him (Mark 11:32; 12:12, Luke 20:19); at times He withdraws Himself in either an ordinary or a more miraculous manner (Luke 4:30, John 8:59;10. 39); at times the enemy is restrained from laying hands on Him, because His hour was not come (John 7:30; 8:20) and on one distinguished occasion, as we have seen, a flight into Egypt removes Him from the wrath of a king who sought His life to destroy Him.

In all this I see the one thing from first to last-the Lord of Glory hiding Himself, as one who had come in another's name and not His own. But He was " the Lord of Glory," and " the Prince of life." He was a willing captive, as I have already observed, and so was He at the very last a willing victim. "He gave His life a ransom for many."

In other days the Ark of the Lord was in the hands of the enemy; it had been taken captive by the Philistines at the battle of Ebenezer. Then God "delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemies' hand"; but it was unassailable. It was apparently a weak thing-a thing of wood and gold. Its presence troubled the uncircumcised-their gods, their persons, their lands

It was all unaided and alone, and in the midst of enemies who were fresh in the heat and pride of victory. Why, then, did they not break it to pieces? Apparently, to dash it against a stone would have been to destroy it. It was constantly in their way, and appeared to be always at their mercy. Why, then, did they not rid themselves of it? They could not; that is the answer. The Ark among the Philistines was another burning and unconsumed bush. It might appear to be at the mercy of the uncircumcised, but it was unassailable. The Philistines may send it from Ashdod to Gath, and from Gath to Ekron; but no hand can touch it to destroy it (see 1 Sam. 4-6).

And so the True Ark, the Son of God in flesh, may be the sport of the uncircumcised for a little season Pilate may send Him to Herod, and Annas to Caiaphas, the multitude may lead Him away to Pilate, and Pilate may give Him up again to the multitude; but His life is beyond their reach. He was the Son of God, and though manifested in flesh, still the Son as from eternity. Whatever

sorrows He had gone through, whatever weariness He had endured, or hunger or thirst, all had been filling out " the form of a servant," which He had taken. But He was the Son who had "life in Himself," the unassailable Ark- the Bush, even in the midst of the raging flames of the world's full hatred, unconsumable.

Such was the mystery I doubt not.

But, while saying this while going through the meditations of this paper with some desire of my soul, and, I trust, profit also - there is nothing I would more cherish than to feel as a true Israelite should have felt on the day when the Ark of God returned home out of the land of the Philistines. He should then have rejoiced and worshipped; he should have been very careful to assure himself that this great event had indeed taken place, even though he were living at a distance from the scene. As an Israelite of any of the tribes, this thing deeply concerned him - that the Ark had been rescued, and that the uncircumcised were not still handling it, or sending it hither and thither among their cities. But being satisfied of that, he, had to be watchful that he himself did not touch it or inspect it-that he did not sin against it, like a Bethshemite, even after it had come from among the Philistines.

We are right. I am sure, in refusing those thoughts upon the mortal condition of the blessed Lord's body. All such words and speculations are as the handling of the Ark with uncircumcised or Philistine hands. And we are to show the error of the thought itself, as well as its irreverence; that is, we are to be satisfied only with the full deliverance of the Ark, and its return to us. But then, another duty becomes us - we are not to handle it, or inspect it, as though it were ordinary. Our words are to be few; for in the multitude of words, on such a matter, " there wanted not sin." Physical considerations of such a subject are not to be indulged, even though they may be sound and not, to be gainsayed; for such considerations are not the way of the Spirit, or of the wisdom of God. The Lord's body was a temple, and it is written, " Ye shall reverence my sanctuary; I am the Lord."

If one were to refuse to follow these speculations, and instead of answering them to rebuke them, I could say nothing. It might be with many a soul a holy sensitive refusal to meddle beyond one's measure, and the standard of Scripture with what must ever be beyond us. I remember the words -" Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him!" But these speculations on the person of the Son of God began in other quarters. The Ark got into uncircumcised hands - and this word which I have taken on me to write is an endeavor to recover it thence - and what I would indeed desire, is to take it down from " the new cart" with the reserve and holiness that become the soul in doing such service.

I will just add, that all this present question is made to profit the soul. A lion's carcass, forbidding as such an object must have been, of old time was forced to yield even honey, delicate as it is, and good for food. St. Paul had to do the forbidding work of vindicating the doctrine of resurrection in the very face of some among the saints at Corinth; but that was made fruitful, like the carcass of the lion. For not merely does a vindication of the doctrine itself come forth, but glory after glory, belonging to that mystery, passes before him. He is given, through the Spirit, to see resurrection in its order, or in its different seasons; the interval between such seasons, and the business to be done in each of them, according to divine dispensations, the scene which is to succeed the last of those seasons, and also the great era of the resurrection of the saints, in all its power and

magnificence, with the shout of triumph which is to accompany it (1 Cor. 15). Here was honey, and honey again, I may say, out of a lion's carcass, for such is controversy among brethren. But as it was once written, so is it, in the abounding grace of God, still existent. " Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake."

Thoughts on the Book of Jonah: Jonah

I have been much struck with the way in which the Book of Jonah and the 139th Psalm mutually illustrate each other. There are several points of coincidence which may have escaped even intelligent readers and which it may be well to notice. First, as to the import of the name Jonah. It signifies "a dove." This at least seems to be one of the meanings of the word (see Cruden). It was a godly wish in the Psalmist, "O that I had wings like a dove" to escape from the presence of the ungodly (see Psa. 4:6). But it was a most ungodly wish in Jonah to seek to flee from the presence of the Lord. And the presence of the Lord is the thought with which the 139th Psalm opens: "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. This taken by itself is one of the simplest truths of natural religion. It needs no grace to perceive' (though it needs much grace to remember and act upon it) that He that formed the eye can see, that He that planted the ear can hear. This nature itself teaches us; and thus learned men of the world are very familiar with the doctrine of God's omnipresence. They admit it without hesitation, they prove it logically from the very being of a God, nay, from the existence of anything at all, or as if all proof were superfluous, rank it among the first and simplest axioms of philosophy. Still they know rather than believe it.

But this truth sat heavy on the mind of Jonah, he felt the omnipresence of God. And whether in the case of Jonah, the Lord's disobedient servant, or in that of Adam immediately after his fall, the conscience of a sinner can only suggest to him the false and fruitless endeavor to get away from the presence of God. Adam leeks to screen himself behind the trees in the garden. Jonah's plan, if possible, is more deliberate. " But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord." Here then we have the "silly dove without heart" taking the wings of the morning (i.e. going from the east), and preparing to dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, forgetting that there should God's hand lead her, and his right hand hold her. And God's right hand does overtake her. Strictly speaking, with God there is no time. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever God had formed the earth and the world, God knew what the heart of Jonah would be, and knew the precise spot at which the storm would overtake him. "But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken." To the eyes of men the storm was an accident, the natural accompaniment, perhaps, of that season of the year. But to the eye of faith it was the Lord that sent it. If God makes His angels spirits it is also true that he makes the winds his angels (i.e. messengers). Or, again, some may advance a step farther and do more than merely attribute the storm to natural causes. They may know something of morality and something of Providence, but they know nothing of grace. And these might say, "Jonah was an Israelite, the mariners were heathens, therefore God sent the storm against them." But this would have been a mistake. Servants of God were not yet called Christians, and the discipline of God's house was not yet set up; but the same principle was so far in exercise that even then it was true "them that are without God judgeth (or will judge)." "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." Jonah's conscience does its office, "For my sake

this tempest is come upon you." He was the lightning conductor of the vessel, at once attracting and carrying off the storm. " The men rowed hard." Men have often prevailed against wind and tides but no one has ever prevailed against God. Who has hardened himself against God and prospered? And here I would notice the striking contrast between Jonah's history and the event recorded in John 6. In both cases the problem is to bring the ship to land. In the one case, Jonah must be cast out; in the other, Jesus must be taken in. Jonah is cast out and the sea ceases from its raging. Jesus is taken in, and the boat is " immediately at the land whither they went." God is Jonah's God, therefore Jonah is afflicted.

It is now time to remark, that a greater than Jonah is here. One antitype in Scripture has often many types; and sometimes, though not so frequently, one type has several antitypes: This will be found to be the case in several of the Psa. 1 would instance the fortieth. There we have. David, the Lord Jesus, the Jewish people, and less strictly the Church, and every individual saint belonging to the Church.

We must, of course, bear in mind that sometimes the antitype goes beyond the type, and also that neither David nor any other mere man can come up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of that character which exactly describes the Lord Jesus. None but Jesus could say in the same high sense, "Thy law is within my heart: Lo I come to do thy will, O God."

The case of Jonah, however, is more simple. He is a real, historical, and at the same time, typical personage. He represents, as a little Sunday-school child knows, the Lord Jesus laid in the heart of the earth and raised again. He also represents the Jewish people, and every individual saint. In other words the following order is found in the case of all three of the parties death, resurrection, testimony. There was of course, this difference, that Jesus could be a witness without death, but not be the head of His people. They, whether Jews or gentiles, must pass through death before they can testify. And here again we find a coincidence between the Book of Jonah and Psa. 139 That Psalm may be divided into three parts:-The unburied, unraised, unquickened soul, apprehends (at all events may apprehend) the truth of God's searching presence carnally. There is no echo of the spirit to the voice of God, no heart Amen; to bid the light welcome as it enters the recesses of but soul. There is all this at the end of the Psalm; but this is the very doctrine we are taught, as it seems to me, by the threefold division of it, that death and consequently resurrection must come between the beginning and the-end. The Apostle, once alive without the law-Jonah, without the experience of the whale's belly-the Psalmist, contemplating the naked doctrine of God's omnipresence apart from grace-these three agree in one. And the Apostle thanking God through Jesus Christ when the law of the spirit of life had made him free from the law of sin and death Jonah knowing that Jehovah was God, and that salvation was of the Lord, and the Psalmist, crying at the end of the Psalm, "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts," all bear witness to the same gospel fact-that spiritual life can only be attained through death. It is one of our Father's most glorious titles that He is " God which _raiseth the dead;" and it would seem that He would have us acknowledge the principle of resurrection in several distinct and what some might think dissimilar processes. I would especially mention the finding the lost, and the ushering an infant into the light of the natural world from the place where it was "made in secret" and visible to no eye but God's. Birth and resurrection are clearly associated in the mystic generation of our Lord from the grave (who we know was the Son of God in another sense from all eternity). "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee." Again, resurrection and finding the lost

one are identified in the case of the Prodigal Son: "This my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found." May we not then, seeing that not man, but God has joined these ideas together, consider that both in Jonah and the 139th Psalm the Spirit (to say the least), glances at the finding the lost tribes of Israel (qy. the body of Moses?) which God buried, whose sepulcher no man knows of, and which none but God can find?

But we must not forget that in each of these cases of deliverance the Lord has a practical purpose to answer, "Let my people go that they may serve me." This people have I formed for myself and they shall show forth my praise." The prophet, the restored house of Israel, and the converted sinner in our own day, are all in turn witnesses of this. God not only sets their feet on a rock and orders their goings, but he also puts a new song into their mouth, even praise unto their God. He opens their lips, and their mouths show forth His praise. Jonah has learned two lessons. The one is his own badness, " They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy." The second is God's goodness: " Salvation is of the Lord." In giving utterance to this critical truth, Jonah seems to have touched the spring which made the doors of his prison-house fly open. For immediately after we read, "And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." I would mention one or two parallel cases in Scripture (2 Cor. 3). "When it (i. e. the heart of the Jews) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away." Another instance, as it seems to me, is afforded by the account of Zacharias as the representative of unbelieving Israel. He is dumb for a season, because he believed not the words of the angel. But at last he gives a striking proof of faith. He refuses, as we may say, to know his own child after the flesh, and though none of his kindred were so called, he gives him the name of John (i.e. the grace of the Lord). " And his mouth was opened immediately and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God." May not the case of Zacharias, I would ask, lawfully remind us of the condition of Israel as described in the first verse of Psa. 65 (marginal reading). "Praise is silent for thee, O God, in Zion"? Israel is dumb till they can speak of grace. Then shall the veil be taken away, and the tongue of the dumb sing.

But praise to God is testimony to man, and conversely we then honor God in this world, when we faithfully (i.e. obediently) testify for Him in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. This, Jonah, raised from the dead in a figure, is now prepared to do. Marvelous is the grace of God in thus dealing with this rebellious one, not only pardoning, but employing him in His service. And this is the privilege of all believers. To preach, i.e. bear testimony for God, was what Jonah was first commanded to do, he is not prepared to do it till he has been through the waters of death. He is God's missionary to Nineveh, the great gentile city, typical, we may suppose, of Israel in the latter day when they, or part of them, shall "call the people to the mountain."

I would not pursue the history of Jonah farther, instructive as the two last chapters are, but conclude with a few thoughts suggested by the latter part of the 139th Psalm, in connection with that which has been our subject throughout. We have seen that resurrection must precede testimony, and of course death must precede resurrection; but there is a certain moral qualification which fits us for testimony, and which we only possess in virtue of our interest in Christ's death and resurrection. This is truth or truthfulness, " Grace AND truth came by Jesus Christ." And this truth or truthfulness, this honesty of soul, is the special subject of the concluding verses of the 139th Psalm, " Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

A good conscience toward God is the great practical blessing of the new covenant. The leading thought of the New Testament, as regards God, we may say is grace, as regards man is conscience (see Hebrews, passim). And where the one is purged by the operation of the other, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ. The word conscience does not appear in the Old Testament; and this very omission is not without significance, for the veil was not rent. But though the name of a good conscience does not occur in the vocabulary of the Old Testament, the nature of it is described in Psa. 32:2. "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." The light of the Gospel has a reciprocal effect. It enables us to see God, and makes us willing that God should see us. Then we are spiritually Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile. Then having beheld with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, and having received mercy, we faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty. And thus the conscience being purged from dead works, we are prepared to serve the living God. Many know that faith without works is dead, who do not know that works without faith are dead also. And service to the living God rendered by a living soul is the essence of real good works, or usefulness, or testimony.

To recapitulate briefly what has been said, the beginning of the Psalm states the fact of the omnipresence of God, the latter part says Amen to it willingly. The first part gives us a doctrine, the last the experience of a soul capable of contemplating the doctrine without fear. Between the two, in a confessedly obscure passage, we may discern the secret formation of a predestinated body, described in one verse as a process of covering in the womb, in another as a curious operation in the lowest part of the earth. Viewing this Psalm in connection with other parts of Scripture, it is almost impossible not to perceive the same principle in action whether in the restoration of the Jews, the resurrection of the saints, or the conversion of a soul. The lowest parts of the earth clearly testify of burial and death, and generation is a type of regeneration. If any question the analogy between the raising of the dead and the restoration of Israel, that point seems to be settled by the divine authority of the 37th of Ezekiel, ver. 11, "Son of Man, these bones are the whole house of Israel." There may be more room for doubt, though I confess I do not think there is much as to whether Dan. 12:2, does not at least allude to the restoration of Israel; and still less reason do I perceive for questioning whether Isaiah 26:19, refers to the same subject.

I would add a few words to prevent mistake on the subject of the body of Moses. To speak, as some have done, of Israel being the body of Moses in the sense in which the Church is the body of Christ is foolish, not to say profane, but to say there is a striking coincidence between what Scripture says of Israel and what it says of the body of Moses is only to state a fact of which any reader of the Bible may judge for himself. In Deut. 34.5,6, we read that the Lord buried Moses, and no man knows where sepulcher is to this day. In Ezek. 20.23, and elsewhere, the Lord threatens to scatter Israel. Ezek. 37:21, Israel is scattered, of course by the Lord, and, referring to ver. 11, this seems to be the antitype of the figure of the resurrection of the dry bones. It is not unworthy of notice that both the burial of Moses and the vision of the dry bones are said to have taken place in a valley, (i.e. if the translation of Ezekiel is correct). Again, it will hardly be denied that in Zech. 3, whatever else may be meant, the brand plucked from the burning is Israel or some part of Israel. There we read, "And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee." In Jude, ver. 9, we read, "Michael the archangel when contending with the Devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against, him a

railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

Exhibition of Three Hebrew Words in the Psalter

In the Hebrew Psalter, the three following words occur, **גוים**, **גויות**, **גוי**, or **גויות**. In the-authorized version, these words are somewhat indefinitely rendered, by the words "heathen," "nation," or "people."

It has been attempted, in the present case, to translate the Hebrew more accurately, by rejecting the word "people" altogether, and by substituting "gentiles" for "heathen."

The word " people," even when occasionally modified by the plural form to suit the Hebrew plural, is far too indefinite to convey accurately the meaning of the original. "Peoples," indeed, would signify the same, or nearly the same as " nations"; but it is hardly English, nor has it been employed in the authorized version of the Psalms. "People, in the singular number, leaves the reader in the dark as to whether it means:-1. the Jewish people; 2. the Gentiles; 3. all nations, including the Jews: or, lastly, whether it is a generic term for Mankind.

The word " heathen" was probably more nearly correct when the authorized version was made than now, it having acquired in our own day a peculiar signification, i.e. not Gentiles as distinct from Jews, but any nation who does not professedly worship the one true God; in other words, all mankind, except Jews, Christians, and Mahometans.

The plan, then, that has been adopted, is:-

1. Always to render the above Hebrew words by "nation" when they occur in the singular, always by "gentiles" when they occur in the plural.
2. As this rule has been universally adopted in the text, the very few cases of exception in which even the word "people" might be preferable, are noticed in the margin.
3. Never to depart from the words of the authorized version, except in the employment of the words "nation" or "gentiles"; or where such a change having been made, the grammar or sense absolutely requires some farther alteration.

As the writer's object has been to furnish a critical help, rather than a new version to supersede the old, he hopes he has in some measure succeeded?

Psa. 2: 1. Why- do the gentiles (■ pl.) rage, and the gentiles (■ pl.) imagine a vain thing?

8. Ask of me, and I will give thee the gentiles (■ pl.) for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

3:6. I will not be afraid for ten thousands of the nation (■ sing.), that have set themselves against me round about.

8. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord; thy blessing is upon thy nation (■ sing).

7:7. So shall the congregation of the gentiles (■ pl.) compass thee about: for their sakes, therefore, return Thou on high.

8. The Lord shall judge the gentiles (■ pl.): judge me, O God, according to my righteousness, and according to the integrity that is in me.

9:5. Thou hast rebuked the gentiles (■ pl.), thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name forever and ever.

8. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the gentiles in uprightness (■ pl.)

11. Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion; declare among the gentiles (■ pl.) his doings.

15. The gentiles (■ pl.) are sunk down in the pit that they made; in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.

17. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the gentiles (■ pl.) that forget God.

Psa. 9:19. Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail: let the gentiles (■ pl.) be judged in thy sight.

20. Put them in fear, O God; that the gentiles (■ pl.) may know themselves to be but men.

10:16. The Lord is king forever and ever; the gentiles (■ pl.) are perished out of his land.

14:4. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my nation (■ sing.) as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord.

7. O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his nation (■ sing.), Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

18:27. For thou wilt save the afflicted nation (■ sing.); but wilt bring down high looks.

43. Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the nation (■ sing.); and thou hast made me the head of the gentiles (■ pl.); a nation (■ sing.) whom I have not known shall serve me.

47. It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the gentiles (■ pl.) under me.

49. Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the gentiles (■ pl.), and sing praises unto thy name.

22:6. But I am a worm, and no man: a reproach of men, and despised of the nation (■ sing.).

27. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the gentiles (■ pl.) shall worship before thee.

28. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the gentiles (■ pl.).

31. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a nation (■ sing.) that shall be born, that he hath done this.

28:9. Save thy nation (■ sing.), and bless thine inheritance; feed them also, and lift them up forever.

29:11. The Lord will give strength unto his nation (■ sing.); the Lord will bless his nation (■ sing.) with peace.

33:10. The Lord bringeth the counsel of the gentiles (■ pl.) to naught; he maketh the devices of the gentiles (■ pl.) of none effect.

12. Blessed is the nation (■ sing.) whose God is the Lord; and the nation (■ sing.) whom he has chosen for his own inheritance.

35:18. I will give thee thanks in the great congregation; I will praise thee among a great nation (■ sing.).

43:1. Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation (■ sing.): O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

44:2. How thou didst drive out the gentiles (■ pl.) with thine hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the gentiles (■ pl.), and cast them out.

11. Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; thou hast scattered us among the gentiles (■ pl.).

12. Thou sellest thy nation (■ sing.) for naught, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.

14. Thou makest us a byword among the gentiles (■ pl.), a shaking of the head among the gentiles (■ pl.).

Psa. 45:5. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the gentiles (■, pl.) fall under thee.

10. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own nation (■ sing.), and thy father's house.

12. And the daughter of Tire shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the nation (■ sing.) shall entreat thy favor.

17. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the gentiles (■ pl.) praise thee forever and ever.

46:6. The gentiles (■ pl.) raged, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

10. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the gentiles (■ pl.), I will be exalted in the earth.

47:1. O clap your hands, all ye gentiles (■ pl.); shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

3. He shall subdue the gentiles (■ pl.) under us, and the gentiles (■ pl.) under our feet.

8. God reigneth over the gentiles (■ pl.): God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

9. The princes of the gentiles (■ pl.) are gathered together, even the nation (■ sing.) of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.

49:1. Hear ye this, all ye gentiles (■ pl.); give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world.

50:4. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his nation (■ sing.).

7. Hear, O my nation (■ sing.), and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.

53:4. Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people (■ sing.) as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.

6. O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when God bringeth back the captivity of his nation (■ sing.), Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

56:7. Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the gentiles (■ pl.), O God.

57:9. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the gentiles (■ pl.); I will sing unto thee amongst the gentiles (■ pl.).

59:5. Thou, therefore, O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the gentiles (■ pl.): be not merciful to any wicked transgressors.

8. But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the gentiles (■ pl.) in derision.

11. Slay them not, lest my nation (■ sing.) forget; scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield.

60:3. Thou hast showed thy nation (■ sing.) hard things, and thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

62:8. Trust in him at all times; O nation (■ sing.), pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.

65:7. Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the gentiles (■ pl.).

66:7. He ruleth by his power forever; his eyes behold the gentiles (■ pl.): let not the rebellious exalt themselves.

8. O bless our God, ye gentiles (■ pl.), and make the voice of his praise to be heard:

Psa. 67:2. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all gentiles (■ pl.).

3. Let the gentiles (■ pl.) praise thee, O God; let all the gentiles (■ pl.) praise thee.

4. O let the gentiles (■ pl.) be glad and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the gentiles (■ pl.) righteously, and govern the gentiles (■ pl.) upon earth.

5. Let the gentiles (■ pl.) praise thee, O God; let all the gentiles (■ pl.) praise thee.

68:7. O God, when thou wentest forth before thy nation (■ sing.), when thou didst march through the wilderness;

22. The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan. I will bring my nation again from the depths of the sea:

30. Rebuke the company of the spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the gentiles (■ pl.) till every one submit himself with pieces of silver; scatter thou the gentiles (■ pl.) that delight in war.

35. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places; the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his nation (■ sing.).

72: 2. He shall judge thy nation (■ sing.) with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

The mountains shall bring peace to the nation (■ sing.) and the little hills, by righteousness.

He shall judge the poor of the nation (■ sing.), he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

11. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all gentiles (■ pl.) shall serve him.

17. His name shall endure forever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all gentiles (■ pl.) shall call him blessed.

73:10. Therefore his nation (■ sing.) return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.

74:14. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the nation (■ sing.) inhabiting the wilderness.

18. Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish nation (■ sing.) have blasphemed thy name. [77 ver. 14, thou hast declared thy strength among the people (■ pl.) Ed.]

77:15. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy nation (■ sing.), the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

20. Thou leddest thy nation (■ sing.) like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

78:1. Give ear, O my nation (■ sing.), to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

20. Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his nation (■ sing.)?

52. But made his own nation (■ sing.) to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

Psa. 78:55. He cast out the gentiles (■ pl.) also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

62. He gave his nation (■ sing.) over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.

71. From following the ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his nation (■ sing.), and Israel his inheritance.

79:1. O God, the gentiles (■ pl.) are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps.

6. Pour out thy wrath upon the gentiles (■ pl.) that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.

10. Wherefore should the gentiles (■ pl.) say, Where is their God? let him be known among the gentiles (■ pl.) in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed.

13. So we thy nation (■ sing.) and sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks forever; we will show forth thy praise to all generations.

80:4. O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry with the prayer of thy nation (■ sing.)?

8. Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the gentiles (■ pl.), and planted it.

81:8. Hear, O my nation (■ sing.) and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;

11. But my nation (■ sing.) would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.

13. O that my nation (■ sing.) had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways

82:8. Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all gentiles (■ pl.).

83:3. They have taken crafty counsel against thy nation (■ sing.) and consulted against thy hidden ones.

4. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation (■ sing.); that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

85:2. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy nation (■ sing.), thou hast covered all their sin.

6. Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy nation (■ sing.) may rejoice in thee?

8. I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his nation (■ sing.), and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

86:9. All gentiles (■ pl.) whom thou hest made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.

87:6. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the gentiles (■ pl.) that this man was born there.

89:15. Blessed is the nation (■ sing.) that knoweth the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.

Psa. 89:19. Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the nation (■ sing.).

50. Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of all the mighty gentiles (■ pl.);

94:5. They break in pieces thy nation (■ sing.), O Lord, and afflict thine heritage.

8. Understand, ye brutish among the nation (■ sing.): and ye fools, when will ye be wise?

10. He that chastiseth the gentiles (■ pl.), shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?

14. For the Lord will not cast off his nation (■ sing.), neither will he forsake his inheritance.

95:7. For he is our God; and we are the nation (■ sing.) of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To-day if ye will hear his voice...

10. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a nation (■ sing.) that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

96:3. Declare his glory among the gentiles (■ pl.), his wonders among all gentiles (■ pl.).

5. For all the gods of the gentiles (■ pl.) are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.

7. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the gentiles (■ pl.), give unto the Lord glory and strength.

10. Say among the gentiles (■ pl.) that the Lord reigneth; the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved; he shall judge the gentiles (■ pl.) righteously.

13...before the Lord: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the gentiles (■ pl.) with his truth.

97:6. The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the gentiles (■ pl.) see his glory.

98:2. The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of the gentiles (■ pl.)

9...before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the gentiles (■ pl.) with equity.

99:1. The Lord reigneth; let the gentiles (■ pl.) tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.

2. The Lord is great in Zion; and he is high above all the gentiles (■ pl.)

100:3. Snow ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his nation (■ sing.), and the sheep of his pasture.

102:15. So the gentiles (■ pl.) shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

18. This shall be written for the generation to come: and the nation (■ sing.) which shall be created shall praise the Lord.

22. When the gentiles (■ pl.) are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.

105:1. O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the gentiles (■ pl.).

Psa. 105:13. When they went from one nation (■ sing.) to another (■ sing.), from one kingdom to another nation (■ sing.)

20. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the gentiles (■ pl.), and let him go free.

24. And he increased his nation (■ sing.) greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.

25. He turned their heart to hate his nation (■ sing.), to deal subtly with his servants.

40. The nation asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.

43. And he brought forth his (■ sing.) nation with joy, and his chosen with gladness.

44. And gave them the lands of the gentiles (■ pl.): and they inherited the labor of the gentiles (■ pl.);

106:4. Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy nation (■ sing.): O visit me with thy salvation;

5. That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation (■ sing.), that I may glory with thine inheritance.

27. To overthrow their seed also among the gentiles (■ pl.), and to scatter them in the lands.

34. They did not destroy the gentiles (■ pl.), concerning whom the Lord commanded them:

35. But were mingled among the gentiles (■ pl.), and learned their works.

40. Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his nation (■ sing.), insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

41. And he gave them into the hand of the gentiles (■ pl.); and they that hated them ruled over them.

47. Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the gentiles (■ pl.), to give thanks unto thy holy names and to triumph in thy praise.

48. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the nation (■ sing.) say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord.

107:32. Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the nation (■ sing.), and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

108: 3. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the gentiles (■ pl.); and

108:3. I will sing praises to thee among the gentiles (■ pl.)

110:3. Thy nation (■ sing.) shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

6. He shall judge among the gentiles (■ pl.), he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

111:6. He hath showed his nation (■ sing.) the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the gentiles (■ pl.).

9. He sent redemption unto his nation (■ sing.): he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and reverend is his name.)

113:4. The Lord is high above all gentiles (■ pl.), and his glory above the heavens.

8. That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his nation (■ sing.).

Psa. 114:1. When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a nation (■ sing.) of strange language;

115:2. Wherefore should the gentiles (■ pl.) say, Where is now their God?

116:14. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his nation (■ sing.).

18. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his nation (■ sing.)

117:1. O praise the Lord, all ye gentiles (■ pl.): praise him, all ye gentiles.

118:10. All gentiles (■ pl.) encompassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.

125:2. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his nation (■ sing.) from henceforth even forever.

126:2. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the gentiles (■ pl.), the Lord hath done great things for them.

135:10. Who smote great gentiles (■ pl.), and slew mighty kings.

12. And gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his nation (■ sing.)

14. For the Lord will judge his nation (■ sing.), and repent himself concerning his servants.

15. The idols of the gentiles (■ pl.) are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

136:16. To him who led his nation (■ sing.) through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth forever.

144: 2. My goodness and my fortress; my high tower and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my nation (■ sing.) under me.

15. Happy is that nation (■ sing.) that is in such a case: yea, happy is that nation (■ sing.) whose God is the Lord.

147:20. He hath not dealt so with any nation (■ sing.): and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.

148:11. Kings of the earth, and all gentiles (■ pl.); princes, and all judges of the earth:

14. He also exalteth the horn of his nation (■ sing.), the praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel, a nation (■ sing.) near unto him. Praise ye the Lord.

149: 4. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his nation (■ sing.): he will beautify the meek with salvation.

7. To execute vengeance upon the gentiles (■ pl.), and punishments upon the gentiles (■ pl.);

The Editor suggests that in Psa. 7:8 and Psa. 9:20 the word rendered "God" should be as in the authorized version, "Lord." In noticing the omission of the word "Selah" from this paper, he would avail himself of the opportunity to remark that Jerome renders the word "Selah " by Semper, i.e. Always; comm: vol. i v. 49

On Worship

The habits of a vast number of Christians, and the moral atmosphere in which they are placed, have tended to produce the very vague notions they have as to worship. Having passed from formalism and superstitious views (which left the care of their religion to others) under the influence of the feeling of the need in which they stood of the truth, they have found in the recognition of the truth, in owning and hearing it-the sum total of their ordinary religious exercises. But, surely, heaven should have some place in our religion while here below. In heaven, doubtless, the truth will be known in all its perfectness; but truth formerly received into the heart will be actually realized there in the glory of God and of the Savior, about whom this truth treats. There will be no longer any need to hear the truth, nor to recognize it,-we shall live in it. The power of it in our hearts will be expressed in adoration. Such is the characteristic of heaven. But, surely, this should be realized, in some measure, while on earth, among those at least who have received the truth, and who, by it, have the knowledge of the God who has communicated it to us-of the Savior who came to accomplish his work of love and of righteousness on our behalf;-among those who have received not only the truth, but even the very Spirit who gave to the truth its place in their hearts, and to them the desire of glorifying Him whom it has revealed to them. When the Holy Spirit communicates heavenly truth to the renewed heart, it always re-ascends in thanksgiving and praise. True worship is but the return to God which is made by the heart, when filled with the deep feeling of that which has been communicated from on high. The Holy Spirit, who makes the communication to us, causes the feelings produced by the revelation of God-of His love in Jesus -of His glory, and of all the blessings wherewith He loadeth us ("our cup runneth over") to re-ascend to God in adoration. And, surely, the heart which is penetrated with the grace of God will feel the need of returning back to Him the homage of its adoration and of its gratitude, for all the blessings which are so many, proofs of the infinite and eternal love which God has had, and which He has had for us.

Let us, then, examine this subject according to the Scriptural ground which the Spirit has given us.

What, then, is worship?

"It is the honor and adoration which are rendered to God by reason of that which He is, and of that which He is for those who render it."

It is the employment of heaven; blessed and precious privilege for its upon earth, if the enjoyment of it be vouchsafed -to us. One might, indeed, add to this definition "rendered in common." So to speak would not contain the denial of the possibility of worship from an isolated individual. If Adam had continued innocent he would, doubtless, as an individual have adored God.

But it is not, therefore, the less true, that in point of fact, worship is a homage rendered in common; because, in fact, God has blessed many and many together; be it angels or men; and hence communion in adoration is of the essence of the act, because the blessing is one in common, and the joy which I have in the blessing of others is part of my own individual blessing. Their blessing

forms part of the grace to which my heart responds; and love (which is the source and spring of it all) is defective if I enjoy not their blessing. If I bless not God for it, I am myself incapable of worship; for to bless God supposes that I am sensible of His love, and that I love.

We may, then, say, since God was not pleased that we should be alive, but that our blessing should be in communion, that worship is the honor and adoration rendered to God in common, by virtue of that which He is, and which He is in behalf of those who render it.

But it is not to an abstract definition that I desire to confine myself; quite the contrary. But it is well to know what the subject is on which we speak.

No work of God towards man is worship. Nor is any testimony rendered as to Him and His grace worship. Preaching the gospel-testimony (of infinite value) to His grace-has naught in common with worship. It may produce it, as being the means of communicating the knowledge of God in grace, which awakens the spirit of adoration in the heart; but no preaching (how blessed soever it may be) is worship rendered to God.

It is a testimony rendered on God's part to man. This does not derogate from the value of such preaching; without it no Christian worship could exist, for the gospel makes known the God who ought to be adored, and, acting by grace, leads the soul into the state in which it is able to render true homage to God, even that which is in spirit and in truth. But it is not, therefore, the less true that no sort of testimony addressed to man from God, is worship rendered to God by man. A sermon has nothing in common with worship. It may be the means of producing it. The ministry of the word is a distinctive characteristic of the Christian economy. The Jewish people were counted to be already in relationship with God; externally they were so. There was no question about bringing them to God; they were already His people, and God dwelt in the midst of this people, as a people whom He had redeemed; but now the kingdom of heaven and the grace of salvation are proclaimed to sinners, and there is a ministry of the gospel for the calling of souls, and to invite them to enter into relationship with God, as in Israel there had been a priesthood for the maintenance of the relationship already formed.

Neither are prayers, addressed to God in order to obtain that of which we stand in need, worship, properly so called. They more immediately connect themselves with it, because they suppose the existence of the knowledge of God and of confidence in Him, and that we draw near to Him by virtue of that which He is, and which He is for him who presents his prayers to Him. But supplications addressed to God (while founded upon confidence in Him, and thus intimately allied to adoration), have not the characteristic proper to adoration itself. Praises and thanksgivings, adoration, the making mention of the attributes of God and of His acts-whether of power or in grace-in the form of adoration, and of adoration, too, addressed to Himself, constitute that which is, properly speaking, worship. In it we draw near to God and address ourselves to Him. To make mention of His praises, not in an address to Himself, is undoubtedly connected with worship, and the heart refers them to Him; but such mention of his praises has not the form proper to worship, although it may enter into it subordinately, as also the prayers which adoration itself suggests. And this distinction must not be thought to be of little importance. Sweet is it to record, the one to the other, the excellencies of Him whom we love, but the redeemed delight to have God Himself in their thoughts-delight to address themselves to Him, to speak to Him, to adore Him personally, to converse with Him, to open the heart to Him, to tell Him that we love Him., To the redeemed it is a

delight that these things pass between God personally and themselves, and to testify to Him the feeling they have of His greatness and of His goodness, because God Himself is in it. In this case the communion is between ourselves and God; and God is more precious to us than are even our brethren. Such is the feeling of our brethren also. God is the portion of all in common. In short, in the cases first supposed, we speak to ourselves, or to one another, to say for ourselves how worthy God is to be praised; in the second, we address ourselves to God personally. It is plain, to him at least who knows God, that the latter is the more excellent, that it has a charm, an excellency, which the other possesses not. The spiritual affections are evidently of a higher tone, the communion is more complete.

Having presented these general thoughts as to the nature of worship, or rather having distinguished that which, as all are agreed, is properly meant by this word worship from other acts which are mixed up with it in the mind by reason of the actual practice of Christians, I will now examine: What is Christian worship according to the Word? I remarked, by the way, that there is a ministry in the Christian economy as there was a priesthood in that of the Jews. I turn back to this remark, in order to develop my subject, strengthened by the recollection that the Lord connects that which He says concerning the worship which the Father seeks, with that which formerly existed at Jerusalem.

The worship of Israel, as a whole, supposed, it is true, -that the people were in relationship with God, and even that God had come to dwell in the midst of them; but, in all the circumstances which characterize that worship, He made it plain, that the people themselves could not draw near to God. Moreover, this was a thought which was essential to all the relationships which existed between God and the people. God had redeemed them out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, had borne them as upon eagles' wings, and had brought them even to Himself. He had given them, as a token of their deliverance, the promise that they should worship him upon mount Sinai, to the foot of which He in truth conducted them-with proofs innumerable of His patience and of His goodness. There God shows himself; but it is amid thunders and fire and the voice of a trumpet, which made even Moses (already familiar with the wondrous manifestations attendant upon the presence of God) to tremble. In harmony with such a revelation of his glory, the Lord commands bounds to be set around the mountain, and that if even a beast approach unto it, it should be stoned or thrust through with a dart. He spake, indeed, directly to the people, but in such a way as made the people ask that He should speak unto them no more: and God Himself approved the request. The ordinary worship of the people in the tabernacle and in the temple, while wearing an appearance which was more gentle and calm, and less terrific towards the worshipper, contained in its basis the same character. If God did not shake the earth with His voice, if His presence did not cast terror amid the people-this was because He was hid behind the veil which concealed Him from their sight. He made Himself known but by His acts of blessing and of judgment alone, and revealed not Himself to the hearts of the people. The consequence of this was natural and evident.' The people came to acknowledge His benefits and to humble themselves in the thought of His just judgments, while they drew near toward the Holy place; but to Himself within the veil they never drew near. They did not even enter into His house. Within the veil the high priest alone was wont to enter once every year, in order to carry in the blood of the ram and of the bullock, of propitiatory victims, in order to make reconciliation for the people with a God who could not endure iniquity, and thus to renew their relationships with Him who demanded

that His abode also should be purified from the defilements of the people among whom he vouchsafed to dwell. Doubtless, if dwelling between the cherubim, He judged from His throne that which was evil; He also heaped up blessings upon the people whom He had redeemed, with the assurance that, if they were faithful, they should be protected from all the attacks of their enemies. The people sought His protection and worshipped Him for the benefits He had conferred. The faith of the individual seized perhaps more immediately the glory of the Lord, but did not go, and could not, beyond the revelation which He had given of Himself in the government of Israel. The institution of the priesthood was the natural consequence of such a state of things; but the priests themselves fulfilled their service outside the veil which hid from them the God they adored. The way into the Holy place, says the apostle, was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing. Here, then, we see the character of Jewish worship as God established it. But all is changed now. Christian worship is founded upon principles which are in direct contrast with all that about which we have just spoken. There was a shadow as to persons and circumstances in connection with which worship is now occupied, but the principles of its exercise, at that time, were in perfect opposition to those upon which Christian worship is based.

The honor and adoration rendered to God by virtue of that which He is, and of that which He is for us, depend necessarily upon the revelation which He makes of Himself. God changes not; but no one draws near to Him in the light to which no man can approach. It is when He reveals Himself that our relationships with Him begin—be they partial or be they perfect. Now God, under the law, manifested Himself as requiring of man that which man ought to be, and, having placed him, by Divine power, in a position in which he ought to have brought forth fruit to the glory of Him who had made Israel to be His own vine, He blessed man if he was faithful to his duty, and He judged him if he was not so. Under such circumstances, God could not fully reveal Himself. Man was capable of bearing neither the brightness of His majesty nor the light of His holiness. His sovereign love, as Savior, agreed not with the peremptory demand for services under pain of a curse—a just demand, nevertheless, which served to manifest the need in which man was placed of that love and of that grace which brings salvation. God might act, bless, and punish; but, if He revealed Himself fully, it must needs be in order to be found in relationship with what perfectly responds to that which He Himself is. Otherwise it would be to endure iniquity (and that would not be Himself) or to drive it absolutely from before His face; in which case love would not have its place—and God is love. The immediate revelation of Himself such as He is to man is impossible.

God putting Himself in relationship with man as a sinner yet responsible, acted, and concealed Himself.

Now Christianity is based upon an altogether new interposition of God; an interposition arranged in His counsels before the world was, but which waited for its accomplishment, not only the act of sin in man, but that sin should come to its full height, and should have taken the form (which was nothing else than its essential character) of enmity against God, and against God in the most perfect manifestation which was possible of His goodness and of His authority, and of His authority to be exercised in grace over man. Christ appeared, and man crucified Him!

What relationship then was possible between man and God? All is judgment, or all is grace. The former, (which will surely be exercised against all iniquity, and specially against those who have despised grace,) is not, (I thank God), our present subject. It forms only the dark and solemn

background of the picture, and throws into relief the perfection, necessity, and brilliancy of grace.

It is with the latter (blessing God therefore), that we have to be occupied. Now, if man crowned his iniquity in rejecting, in the person of Jesus, not only the authority, but also the goodness of God, the same act which perfected the manifestation of the sin which was in the heart of man, and gave its full development to the positive evil which flowed thence-accomplished at the same time all that which the justice of God required with regard to that sin, and manifested His perfect love. Man is there fully made manifest: God also has there acted in all the full plenitude of His holy justice against sin. In Christ He was perfectly glorified in that respect. The affections and the majesty of God have no longer aught to claim from him who comes to God by Jesus Christ. His love is free to bless. The holiness of God is an infinite delight to those who can draw near to Him; for there is no longer any question about guilt between the worshipper and God. Christ has abolished it by the sacrifice of Himself. Entirely cleansed according to the efficacy of the work of Christ Himself, we draw nigh to that place where there is no guilt, to enjoy all that God can heap upon us of blessing; there, where His love has free course, without the hindrance which sin puts in its way, whether we consider His affections or His justice. Passing over it all we come to enjoy Himself. We are in relationship with God, without guilt in His sight, for the enjoyment of that which He is, having been led to the knowledge of Him by means of that which He has been for us in that glorious work by which He has reconciled us unto Himself, and has introduced us into His presence in the light-Christ, having accomplished the work which glorifies God as to sin, has appeared in His presence for us. And further, a necessary consequence, or rather striking expression of these truths, the veil (which was the sign that no one could draw nigh to God), has been rent from the top to the bottom. We have full liberty of entrance into the most holy place; God Himself is perfectly and fully manifested. The stroke which rent the veil and made manifest the God of holiness who cannot endure iniquity; who must needs smite the very Son of His love when He took upon Himself our sin-that same stroke removed the guilt which would have barred our approach to Him thus unveiled, because it could not have appeared in His sight. The light of that presence shines upon us cleansed from all guilt; and that which manifests all the holiness of His justice, which throws out into prominency all its vastness-has rendered us able to abide in the presence of that holiness without spot, and in joy.

All that God is has been manifested in that which He has been for us; and we can enjoy Him as our portion, according to His infinite love in Christ. Such is the basis of worship. That which the angels desire to look into is the daily aliment of all our precious relationships with God; and no one recognizes as he should the glory of the work of Christ, or of the love of his God, to which he is debtor for everything, who takes not up this place for himself. No one can render worship worthy of God upon any other footing. Indeed, no one has recognized himself to be a sinner aright who pretends to offer worship to God otherwise than in this liberty; for who would dare to present himself before God, if all guilt had not been removed? Who would dare to place himself in His presence without a veil; he cannot do it otherwise, for the veil is rent. God will not, cannot any longer, now that He has manifested Himself; now that the true light shines-endure any sin, in any manner, in His presence. Who is free from sin out of Christ? On whom, of those who are in Christ, does it rest? No: in Him it is ours no longer in the presence of God, since He has cleansed us from it; cleansed us by a work which could not possibly be done a second time, the efficacy of which is at once eternal and perfect. And this alone gives freedom to the spiritual affections. For us God is

perfect love, and introduces us into the light as He is in the light. But who can fully enjoy that love if there be a bad conscience? Attracted he may be-but find enjoyment he cannot. His affections cannot have free play if his conscience reproaches him with offenses against Him who loves Him-if it produces fear in his soul. The heart must be free, if the affections are to be in exercise. But the work of Christ cleanses the conscience, and sets the heart free by the thought of the perfect love of God which is known by the perfect love which He has had for us, of which Christ is the proof and fullness. The light of His holiness is the joy of our souls. It is in that light that we see all that we love. This relationship, which exceeds all our thoughts, is presented to us in the most striking manner in the title " God of our Lord Jesus Christ." When God calls himself the God of any one, he alludes to a tie of intimacy formed between that person and Him who bears his name superadded to His own-a relationship which has for its basis that which God is for the one, whose God he is, and which implies the purpose to bless and honor according to the relationship, to which God cannot be unfaithful, and which is the subject of enjoyment, in God, by faith, of him whose name is added to the name of God; at least, that which he has the right to appropriate as pertaining to himself on the part. of God. Thus, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, besides being specially their God as the objects of distinctive blessing, is that which God was for these patriarchs, according to the revelation which He had made to them of Himself-that upon which their faith could count in their relationships with Him;-that which they were called to realize. He placed Himself in relationship according to that which His name expressed. Their spiritual privileges had this name for their character and measure. Thus God, in relation to us, is that which is expressed in the title, " God of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is thus that He reveals Himself to us in order that we may be in relationship with him according to the import of this title.

When this is understood, we can comprehend what a glorious position we have in drawing near to God by virtue of this title, " God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory." For, here, Christ is as a man, as being at the head of a new family, ascended to his God and our God. This God, to whom we draw near, is, for us, all that He is for Christ entered into His presence, as having perfectly glorified Him upon earth; His beloved Son, in whom He is always well pleased. This truth stands out in full prominency in chapters i. and ii. of the Epistle to the Ephesians. The Apostle in chapter i. prays that the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we may know what is the hope of the calling of God, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the 'saints (ver. 18). Then he unites us with Christ in that which he shows to be the true import of that glory-and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from among the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, etc. And

you Days he] who were dead in trespasses and sins, He hath quickened together with Him-raised up together, and made sit together in heavenly places in Christ,-in order that He might show, in the ages to come, what are the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us by Jesus Christ. And what are the relationships which God has with Jesus Christ? What is there that belongs to Him, on God's part, in justice, in love, even as a man? Who can sound the love of God toward Christ? What are His claims upon the affection of His Father? See, then, in what a wondrous place we are when we come into the presence of God! The glory, even, which God has given unto Him, He has given unto us, in order that the world may know that we are loved even as He is loved. The words of the Lord will be remembered. " I ascend unto my Father and to your

Father, to my God and to your God."

The two prayers, that of chapter 1 of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and that of chapter 3 will be seen to be respectively based upon these two titles. The prayer of chapter 1 is founded upon the second title, viz., that of " God;" chapter 3 upon the former, viz., that of " Father:" the first in view of glory, and the second in view of communion in love. The passage just cited from John 17, shows that the communication of the glory, all wondrous as it is, is, after all, but the proof that we are loved even as Jesus is loved. What simplicity in this truth, but what love, and what Divine depth even in the proportions of its very simplicity! "I was" as the first Adam; "I am" as the second Adam; I have borne the image of the first, "shall" bear the image of the second. Yes, it is simple; but who would have thought of it but God? It is Himself whom we know therein. The names of the tribes of Israel borne upon the breast of the high priest, as was also their judgment according to the light and perfection of God, were, after all, but a shadow (as says the Apostle) of such blessings. Therefore God, in speaking of the true circumcision (Phil. 3), says, "we worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." All that puts us out of this position, and supposes the need of anything as a means of our drawing near to God-all that suggests that there needs something intermediate, inasmuch as we are in Christ, puts us out of Him, and places us in Judaism which has, as a system, been nailed to the cross, and which, since the cross, is no better than any heathen ordinance (see Gal. 4) We are in Christ, or we are out of Christ; one with Him, or separate from Him. If we are separate from Him-the distance matters not-we are not in union with the fountain of life. The body separated from the head by a space more minute than the imagination of man can conceive; the body having between it and the head anything, thinner than the beaten leaf of gold, is a body without life. In Christ we are the objects of God's delight in Him, and we are as He is. Out of Christ, we are but objects of His judgment. What should we be before the God of our Lord Jesus Christ-our God? Therefore we are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; but to follow out the glorious consequences of our position would lead us away from our subject.

But there is yet another thing which is connected with the work of Christ, and on which worship necessarily hangs. Not only has Christ borne away our sin, cleansing us for the presence of God, whose love is manifest in the, unspeakable gift of His Son; but in order that we may enjoy this, He has gained for us, at the same time, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Not only do we receive a new nature, which is holy and capable of sentiments suitable to the position in which Holy has placed us as before God, but we receive the Holy Spirit, who communicates to us the things which are in the Divine presence, and inspires sentiments such as they should awaken. We are strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man, in order that being rooted and grounded in love, Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, and that we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length, and breadth, and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us, and all that the Father hath is Christ's. That which eye hath not seen, which ear hath not heard, which came not into the heart of man-the things which God has prepared for him whom He loves-God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

The Holy Spirit is the unction which we receive of God, by the which we know the things which are freely given to us of God; by the which we know all things. He is the seal which God has put upon us unto the day of redemption: God has marked for that day of glory those who believe. He is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. He gives us the full assurance of the efficacy of the work of Christ, the knowledge of the position in which we are placed, cleansed by the blood of the Savior, in the sight of God-without spot in the light. By Him the love which was ready to undertake, and which has accomplished all these things, and which has brought us to the enjoyment of such great blessing, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. He is the originator in us of all the thoughts and of all the affections which are the response to it, even as He communicates all that produces them. But He does more, He is more than all this for us. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. This is not merely an imagination, a feeling, but is a fact; the same Spirit, whose fullness is in Christ, abides in us, and we are united to Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. By One Spirit we have all been baptized, that we might be one body. Not only is He the power, the link of this union, but He gives us the consciousness of it. " In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." The Holy Spirit, then, gives us, first of all, the assurance of our redemption. Where the Spirit is, there there is liberty. He reveals to us the glory of Christ, as to Stephen, who, full of the Holy Ghost, beheld the glory of God, and the Son of Man at the right hand of God. Moreover, He gives us the consciousness of our union with Christ on high. We know that we are quickened together with Him, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. Besides all this-and which is its spring and fountain of joy while we think of it-He sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. All this also turns into rivers of joy and of love overflowing toward this poor world and toward Christians; but I enter not into this precious consequence and blessed privilege, because our subject is worship.

Another truth, of minor importance, but very precious in its place, depends upon this presence of the Holy Spirit: we are of the same body, and thus members one of the other. If Christ is the Head of the body, each Christian is a member of it, and consequently united by the Holy Spirit (who forms the bond of the whole) to every other member. The same Spirit dwells in each Christian; his body is His temple, and having thus united them together, the whole is also His temple. God dwells there by Spirit, in a manner less palpable, but far more excellent, than in the temple of Jerusalem.

Now, it is in this position, according to this glorious revelation of God, which His love has made to us, and by this Spirit which He has given that we might enjoy it, that true Christian worship is offered to God.

It is thus we know what He is, and what He is for us who offer it to Him. Beholding Him, without a veil, according to the perfection of His Being, of His love, and of His holiness-rendered capable of abiding in the light, as He Himself is in the light, by the selfsame work by which He has revealed it-and thus according to the same perfectness; the objects of that love which spared not His well-beloved Son, in order that we might be in it; having received His Spirit in order that we might comprehend this love, and thus be enabled to adore Him according to His heart's desire, we offer our worship to Him according to that which He has manifested Himself to be in heart toward us, in those things which angels desire to look into, and by the which He will make known in the ages to come the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Jesus, yet whom we already

know by the Spirit.

But there remains yet another element of our intelligent service-the character of the Father. God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, for He is a Spirit: but then again, the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

To worship in spirit, is the powerful energy of communion which the Spirit of God gives (in contrast with the forms and ceremonies-with all the religion of which the flesh is capable)-and in the true nature of Him whom we worship (comp. Phil. 3)

To worship God in truth-that is, to worship Him according to the revelation which He has given of Himself.

The Samaritans worshipped God neither in spirit nor in truth. The Jews worshipped God in truth, so far as that can be said of a revelation which was imperfect; for the truth came not but by Jesus Christ (the darkness, says the apostle, is past, and the true light now shineth); but they worshipped Him in no respect in spirit. Now, to worship God, both are needful: the true revelation of Himself, in order that we may worship Him in truth; and to do so according to His nature, that is in spirit.

Yet this is not all that is presented to us in this passage; another precious element is found there: The Father seeks such worshippers. It is grace which makes such now. Grace desires such, but it desires them. It is not a responsibility imposed by the flames of mount Sinai, which, in the very act of demanding worship, in the name of the holy majesty of the Lord, placed, by the very requirement, a barrier which no one could pass under penalty of death: Majesty so terrific that it closed the way of access to God by the very act of requiring that we should draw near to Him-leaving the worshipper far off from God, trembling under the sense of responsibility although encouraged by the benefits he received from Him whom he dared not approach. No. Love seeks worshippers under the gentle name of Father. It places them in a position of freedom before Him as the children whom He loves; the Spirit who acts in them to produce worship is the spirit of adoption which cries Abba Father! It is not that God has lost His Majesty, but that He whose majesty is far better known bears this tender character of Father towards us. The Spirit who makes us worship the Father, gives us to perceive all the love of God, who has led us to worship Him there as His children.

The sense of this, God be thanked, belongs to the most simple and the most ignorant among Christians. The Christian, when once he has understood grace and has received the spirit of adoption, possesses it without any reasoning, as a child knows his father before he can give any account of that which he enjoys. I have written these things unto you, says St. John, addressing himself to the little' children, in Christ, because you have known the Father. The feeblest Christian is, therefore, perfectly competent for worship. At the same time, it is sweet to be able to account to oneself for, and the more one thinks, the more one examines the word on this subject, the more will one see the import, the deep blessedness of, this relationship with God. The simple fact that God is our Father, and that we possess the enjoyment of such a relationship with Him by the Spirit, is in itself an immense privilege for creatures such as we are. Every child of God has this privilege in unquestioned right; but it is in Christ that we possess it, and with Christ. He is the first-born among many brethren. He is gone to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God. What a precious relationship, what a family is that into which we are introduced; and how are we to

learn, we, who were formerly strangers to these affections and to this love, how do we learn these things? How learn what the Father is, the knowledge of whom gives birth to these things in our hearts? It is the only begotten son, the first-born in this new relationship, who reveals Him unto us, who reveals Him as he himself has known Him. Eternal son of the Father, enjoying the infinite love of Him in whose bosom he dwelt. Become man upon this earth, Jesus ceased not to be the object of the same affection -affection which, when challenged, could not retain silence-This is my beloved son (said the voice of the Father), in whom I am well pleased. Nor did He in anything put Himself at a distance from it. Upon earth Christ was the object of this love, and He revealed Him in whom it was found. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed Him. Jesus, a man, the Son, in the enjoyment of the fullness of this affection, dwells, being upon earth, in the bosom of the Father, to originate here below, as being the object of it, all the beauty, all the force of that affection. Himself also He loved his disciples even as the Father loved him. As man, He was the object of this love, in order that we might understand it in its application to men. So He associates us with Himself in the joy of this love, and He reveals it to us as he himself knows it. How could He reveal it save as he knew it himself? But what grace and what a position for us! How does Jesus himself, who, by his sufferings, by his devotedness, has placed us therein, become for us an object of love and of adoration, of devotedness of heart. The very glory which we possess is presented to us by the Savior as a proof of this love. "The glory," said He, in chap. 17 of John, "which thou hast given unto me I have given unto them, that the world may know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." He loves us enough to make him desire that we may enjoy this, so he renders us capable of it. "I have declared," says he, in the same chapter, "thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world, and I will declare it, in order that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them." Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus. This fellowship expresses itself in adoration towards Him who is revealed and towards him who reveals.

It will be easily seen how the work of Christ is at the foundation of all this, whether in order to present us without spot and without fear in the presence of the God whom we adore in the light, or in order to place us in the relationship of children toward the Father. It was after his resurrection that Christ could say, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Then it was that He could say, "Go to my brethren." Now the Spirit which He gives from on high, answers to this blessing: He is the Spirit of adoption, as He is the Spirit of liberty, because we are accepted in the Beloved, and have the enjoyment of a redemption which has made us the righteousness of God in him, placing us in God's presence without spot.

Thus we have, in principle, at least, the great foundation truths of Christian worship. Perfect in Christ; united to him; objects of the same love, in the presence of God, whose love and holiness are manifest without a veil, and constitute the infinite joy of our hearts; children beloved of the Father with Christ the first-born; we worship together according to the power, affections, and energy which the Spirit, who has been given to us inspires; the God of glory, whose presence is the stay instead of being the terror of our souls; the God of love, whose will was to lead us thither, in order to render us perfectly happy in Him; that He Himself might enjoy our perfect happiness, Himself finding more happiness in our blessedness than even we ourselves; love, nevertheless, which we recognize while we love; we adore our Father with endearing confidence in His kindness,-kindness which blesses us with all spiritual blessings, and counts the very hairs of our

heads while thoughtful of all our needs. We adore Him for that which he is; we adore Him for that which He is for us, the children of His house for eternity. We act thus in the consciousness that we are His beloved children, we present ourselves before the same Father-our common Father; so that the affections of brethren are developed, the joy of the blessing of each is reciprocally the joy of all, and praises multiplied ascend to God; for a joy full of love, and which is renewed by the blessing of another, by a common blessing, is far more powerful than the joy which flows merely from one's own peculiar blessing: it has more of God in it. Hence we see in the New Testament, that, while indeed the consciousness of this relationship must necessarily be individual in order for us to enjoy it together, and must be maintained in personal relationship with God and upon individual responsibility; yet at the same time the Spirit constantly uses the word Us when speaking of Christian affections and feelings. The Holy Spirit shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts, it could not be otherwise.

But the effect of the presence of this one Spirit goes yet much further. Not only does He give us the consciousness of being in Christ, perfect before God, presented according to the efficacy of the redemption which He has accomplished, the consciousness of being children with the Father who loves them, and who has introduced them into His house, but He gives us also the consciousness of being but one body, the body of Christ, and members one of another. The Church which God has created-that one new man-the redeemed who have been all baptized into one body-not offering worship save by the Spirit, they necessarily offer it as but one body, and that with all the redeemed-they are the tabernacle of God through the Spirit, and that Spirit uniting them all in the unity of the body of Christ, the adoration goes up on high toward the God who formed them to be but one new man in Christ. If Israel was, as a whole, represented by the priests who officiated in the tabernacle, the faithful who render direct worship to God, do it in the unity in which they are all one body in Christ. There is more than brotherhood, there is unity, not of nation, and not only of family, but of the members of one body by one Spirit. It is the Church's portion, which alone is baptized in order to be one body in Christ, the Head being ascended up on high, in order that she may do it freely and with joy before God. by that unction which descends from Him.

Let us state some of the practical effects which flow hence:-

First: it is evident that worship is the privilege only of the children of God-being to be offered in spirit and in truth-to be offered to Him who cannot admit sin into His presence. He who is washed in the blood of the Lamb and who has received the Spirit, and such only, can draw near to God to adore Him. That a man who is not converted should render worship to God, is simply what is impossible. God can bless such a one in temporal things. The man may, perhaps, ask such a blessing, and be heard: God may have tender compassion for him, as for a poor sinner, but as yet he knows not God, as yet he has not the Spirit, he is not as yet washed in the blood of Christ. That he thinks to draw nigh to God, is but the proof that he is ignorant of that which he is in himself, and of that which the God, whom he thinks to serve, is. Who else can enter into the sanctuary save he who is sanctified?-who address himself to a Father, as such, save a child? Moreover, the fact of the unity of the body of Christ, and that the worship is offered by the Spirit which has formed this unity and dwells in the body as in a temple, excludes, by the fact itself that the worship is offered, him who is not of the body. It is to deny its existence, to suppose that a person who has not the Spirit can be of it; it is to deny its end and its nature; for if a man, not converted can enter and worship the God who is served there, there is no need that there should be either such a body or

the redemption which is the basis of it. Why should there-be the redeemed, if the worldling can serve God in his presence? Wherefore a body of Christ, if the worldling forms a part of it? Wherefore. adore God by the Spirit, if he who has not the Spirit can adore just as well? Worship in common, supposes that I can say We, in sincerity, when addressing God; it supposes persons united in one body by the same Spirit. A hypocrite may be there-he will be a hindrance in the worship; but its validity will not be thereby destroyed when the worshipper says Us, in truth, in the name of all. It is believers who worship God.

To render true worship to God, supposes that a soul is set at liberty. That is to say, that such a one finds himself free to draw near to God in virtue of the efficacy of the work of Christ. If I see a soul ever so timid which loves God, and which has no other hope than the work of Christ, clearly my part is to encourage such a one; but if such a one has no real knowledge of the efficacy of the work of Christ, he will be ill at ease even in drawing near to God, because His presence will communicate to it rather the conscience of its sin, than of the joy which that presence inspires to him who enjoys it in the peace which is by Christ. Nevertheless, in such cases, right affections often precede the being set free, and are more correct than the reasoning of the soul which is still trembling; but this state is not the normal state of worship. Before God, in the light, purified from all sin by the blood of Christ, such is the position of the true worshipper. The believer is always thus. In order to worship truly, he must know himself to be so. Sometimes the bad teaching one has had neutralizes in the mind the liberty, though the soul, all the while in solitude with God, cries Abba, Father! As a principle, whatever be the allowance made by charity for these cases of ignorance, true worship offered to God supposes that we can draw near to Him without fear; but this is a necessary and absolute effect of the blood and of the work of Christ, of which every true believer has the benefit. It is the presence of the Spirit who gives the enjoyment of it.

What joy, to be able thus to adore God! What a source of joy is He whom we adore! How great the blessedness of finding oneself in His presence, no cloud between, and without fear, being the righteousness of God in Christ-that presence being but an inexhaustible spring of joy for the nature which. He has given us, and which is capable of finding its enjoyment in Him! What joy, to be able to express one's acknowledgments, to render to Him one's thanksgivings, knowing that they are acceptable to Him! What a blessing to have His very Spirit, the Spirit of freedom and of adoption, as our power of acting thus, inspirer of praise and of the feeling of confidence and of adoration! What joy to act thus in unity, as members of the same family and of the same body, sensible that the joy is one common to all; sensible that those whom we love are perfectly acceptable to the Lord, and that they all find their pleasure in praising Him, who is worthy and who has loved us,- the God who is the source of our happiness and the object of our adoration-the Lord who gave Himself in order that He might be our portion!

The perfection of all this will be in heaven. But Christian worship is the realization here below, in weakness, without doubt, of that which will form our eternal blessedness and our life. We have the privilege of feeling ourselves for a little while delivered from the world, withdrawn even from the work of faith, in order to enjoy the state of things in which Christ will see all the travail of His soul and be satisfied. I repeat it is in weakness, but in truth, through the Spirit. Also, the worship being offered by the Spirit, is offered in the unity of the whole body; it may be there are but two or three present; but He who is the center and bond of all the members, is found there; and also by His Spirit we are necessarily and in love bound up with all the other members of His body, which is but

one. " We comprehend with all saints be the number of those uniting together what it may] the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." The truth abides in undiminished force, that life is cultivated in private; but it is exercised before God in all the common joy of the Church. I believe there will be in heaven itself an individual joy and communion, and which will be known but to him who enjoys it. This precious truth, I think, is taught in that which is said to the Church of Pergamos: " To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and a name written thereon, which no one knoweth saving he that receiveth it." I add, that the ability actually to enjoy worship in communion depends upon the maintenance of the inward life; for how enjoy it, if God is not known in the soul? I add these few words lest any one should suppose that the joy of fellowship may lead to a neglect of the hidden walk with God individually. This is far from my thought; if the latter exist not, either the worship will be cold, or the joy will be carnal. But the true blessedness of worship depends upon the presence of the holy Spirit, and, therefore, upon the spiritual condition of those who are present, as taking part in it, save so far as the sovereign goodness of God interferes. This leads me to refer to a very important principle. Namely, that the holy Spirit is the energy, the sole-living source of all that takes place in worship, so far as it is genuine. Moreover, it is a principle, which is universally true-true of all the Christian life. We live by the Spirit; we walk by the Spirit; we worship in spirit and in truth. It is the Spirit who contends against the flesh; it is the affection of the Spirit which is the expression of the whole of the inward Christian life; but in Christian worship, the members of Christ being united together, the Spirit acts in the body. All that which is real and blessed comes from Him. Sovereign in action, but acting according to the spiritual capacity of each; he makes use of this, in order to express the feelings which are suitable to the assembly before God, but He raises them up to Him, for God is there in order to nourish by His grace. That which takes place ought to be according to the spiritual capacity of the assembly, raising it up, however, causing it to draw nigh to God. It is thus that the holy Spirit acts, for he acts in man, but according to the energy and grace of God. When Christians are met together in companies, the members each acting in his place through the Spirit, the opportunity is presented for the exercise of the gifts of the members, which are used in view of the edification of the body. I say the members of the body, because evangelization is necessarily addressed to the world. That is to say, an assembly which has worship for its primary object is the occasion, by its very nature, for the exercise of all the gifts which tend to the edification of the body, although such exercise be in no wise the object proposed by the meeting.

This is clearly established by the fourteenth chapter of the 1st Corinthians, which speaks in the most express manner of the exercise of gifts when the assembly is together, and gives directions to regulate the order of such exercise. This is easily understood. The meeting, being formed as the body of Christ, and the Spirit acting by the members of this body, edifies itself by that which is furnished by each member according to the gift which is distributed to each; the Spirit guiding all, in order that it may be for edification, which is His object. But the principal matter is to draw near to God Himself; the exercise of gifts is but a means; the joy of love in the presence of God, in worshipping Him, the eternal aim. Gifts will cease in heaven, as also the ignorance which makes instruction needful, and the idleness which needs exhortation. Worship will, thank God, never cease. Under the law, the service of the priest was more excellent than that of the Levite; the Levite served; the Priest drew nigh to God, according to the unction which he had received. In the use of gifts we are Levites. In worship we are priests. Moreover, he, who through the Spirit takes part in the worship itself, does not use a gift, which is in general a faculty given of God to act

among men. At the same time, it is the measure of spirituality which gives the capability of being the organ of the assembly. The Spirit, then acting in spiritual men, in order to express the spiritual affections of the assembly-is the mode in which worship is rendered to God.

We have remarked, which, moreover, in every Christian soul, connects itself with the foundation of the truth, that the sacrifice of Christ is the necessary and fundamental basis of all Christian worship. We know that it is by means of this sacrifice alone that we can draw nigh to God, and that it is only in confiding in its efficacy that we can present ourselves before God, who has demanded all the holiness of it, all its perfect value; who, in his nature, could demand no less. But this is not all the relation which exists between worship and the sacrifice of Christ. Christ having opened to us this new and living way through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, we have full liberty to enter, through His blood, into the most holy place. But is that all? Do we forget the precious sacrifice when once we have entered by virtue of its worthiness? No. It is there that we recognize it, that we learn to appreciate its full value. Before entering thither, we might measure the value of the work of Christ, by the needs into which sin had pinned us. Now, happy, and in communion with God, tasting the sweetness of His love, instructed in his thoughts and feelings, we measure [what yet surpasses all measure], this work by the grace of God, which has been unfolded in it; we see in it that which God sees in it, instead of seeing only that which the sinner sees in it, all precious as such perception may be for us at the time in which it was vouchsafed to us..In the enjoyment of peace, being in heaven [spiritually speaking] by virtue of this sacrifice, we contemplate its value with the eyes of God; we are nourished with all its perfectness according to God's thoughts. For these thoughts, and this vision are given to us by the Spirit to sanctify us, to bring our hearts into harmony with that which is in heaven. We see also in the offering He made of Himself what the love of Christ has been for us.

The death of Christ has such a value in God's sight, that the Lord who, only begotten Son of the Father, was all His delight before the world was, could say, " Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." His devotedness to the glory of His Father, was in it, absolute. All that belonged to the moral development of that glory, was therein accomplished, at the cost of Him who suffered. All that mysterious evil, by means of which Satan had sway in this world, and misery, death and condemnation had entered, was turned to the manifestation of the glory of God. The righteousness of God, his majesty, his love, [impossible to reconcile together in the midst of sin] were thrown out in relief by sin itself, by means of Him who consented to be made sin for us. On the other hand, if we consider the personal perfection of Christ,' His devotedness to the will of His Father, His love, obedience, submission, sacrifice of all, even to His life, in order that the Father might be glorified, and that those whom He loved might be saved. His perfect patience-the confidence in God which never failed, even when He was forsaken, all are found united in the cross. And when one thinks who He was-when one thinks that it was for us that He did it, what a value ought His death to have in our sight. Add to all this, the power of Satan overcome; death destroyed-become even a gain for us; the veil removed from before the presence of God; a perfection beyond the possibility of a taint, introduced into the whole wide universe, which it fills with peace and light, and of which it has made us the heirs; and more than all, the perfect enjoyment of the love of God. What moral worth has that cross in our eyes, however feeble may be our ability to proclaim it-however feeble our hearts may be, as vessels, to contain the sentiments it inspires. Our adoration necessarily links itself with the cross, the God

whom we adore was there glorified, and could not be suitably so without it; there it is that we have learned that which He is.

But is it a glory which is far from us, which dazzles us, and which forces us to a distance by its very greatness? Quite the contrary. Christ hung upon the cross for us, in our stead, as the very lowest from among the children of men; His visage marred more than any man's. His cross is the expression of tender affection toward us, stronger than death. He loved us even unto the end. He took upon Himself to render us happy in the presence of the Father; able to enjoy His presence-He counted nothing too dear to Him that He might accomplish this. And His heart, perfect in love, is attached to those whose cause he has undertaken. He has 'associated them with himself. He who had need of naught, had need of us. I go to prepare a place for you, said he, and if I go and prepare a place, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also. Whom seek ye, said he, in the garden of Gethsemane; if ye seek me, let these go their way, that his word might be accomplished. Of those whom thou gavest me I have lost none. He gave himself for us. With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you, said He, before I suffer, for I will no more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. As the Passover was the memorial of the deliverance out of Egypt for Israel, so the Supper is the memorial, not only of our deliverance, but moreover, of the love of Him who has delivered us. If Jesus attaches value to our remembrance, if he puts Himself thus near us with so much tenderness-it is a love, at the same time, which produces the very deepest affections; affections which are connected with what is most exalted in the grace of God, and which express themselves in the adoration of the heart. We can understand, then, that although worship is offered in various ways, by hymns, by thanksgivings, in the form of prayers, in praise, etc., we can understand, I say, that the Supper, as representing that which forms the basis of all worship, is the center of its exercise, around which the other elements that compose it are grouped. The worshipper is reminded of that which is the most precious of all things in the sight of God, the death of his beloved Son. He recalls the act in which the Savior testifies his love to himself in the most powerful way. Other considerations add their weight to those which we have just presented with regard to the Supper. One is at table in the house of God. One eats, as the priests, of the things with which expiation has been made; one enters with spiritual affection into the perfection of that expiation, and of that which Christ has been in the accomplishment of it; he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood, dwells in me and I in him. I apply not this exclusively to the supper; though it is the most vivid expression of it.

The peace offering presents, with the passover, the most lively images of the true character of the supper. The former was a feast consequent upon a sacrifice, in the second Israel fed upon the sacrifice, the blood of which was their guarantee against judgment. In the former the partakers were, God, the priest who officiated, the priests, the worshipper, and those who were with him. The fat burnt upon the altar was called the food of God. This is the fell satisfaction of God in the sweet odor of the work of Christ. The priest who offered the blood had his part. This is Christ, who has enjoyment in the joy of those that are His, produced by the efficacy of His death-of the fruit of the travail of His soul: the other priests eat another part-they represent Christians in general; lastly, the guests of Him who makes the sacrifice represent united worshipers. God himself has His part in the joy, so has Christ, the Church in general, and lastly, the assembly which participates therein. This figure of the peace offering is found, again, in a manner more precious in the supper. We feed on, and are nourished, through faith, by that holy victim, already offered, the sweet savor of which

ascends to God. Christ has His joy in our joy, we share in it with all the Church. Already in heaven, in spirit, we bethink ourselves of what has given us the right to enter there, of that which will be precious above all to our souls when we are there. As Joshua celebrated the passover in Canaan before the walls of Jericho-separated from the world, and united in one body, we show forth the death of Jesus, which is the foundation of our salvation, until he come, and we are forever with Him on high, where remembrance will be useless because we shall be with Himself. Praises, the devotion of our adoration, our thanksgivings are necessarily linked up with the acceptance by our God, in heaven, of the sacrifice of Christ. This is ever true as to the heart; but it is this which makes the supper to form a part of the worship, if that is, so to speak, perfect. In the Old Testament this truth was expressed in figure in a remarkable manner. In the peace-offering, if any one eat the flesh of the victim on a day which was too far removed from the moment when the fat was burnt upon the altar as a sacrifice to God-it was, instead of being communion, a sin. In the case of thanksgivings, a man might eat of the flesh only on the same day. In the case of a voluntary offering, on the morrow also. The joy of the worshipper must be in immediate connection with the offering made to God; otherwise it was profane. Greater energy of piety gave more force to this association, so that in the latter case, the repast on the morrow was not really separate from the sacrifice.

The importance of the Lord's supper in worship, whether in connection with the sacrifice offered to God, foundation of all our relationships with him, or in connection with the affection and the devotedness of Christ for us (which are the two things which form the sphere of the spiritual affections in exercise in worship), will be clear enough when we reflect upon the truths of which we have just spoken. But there is another point also connected with it.

We have seen that the Holy Spirit being the source, force, and conductor of all true Christian worship offered to God, the unity of the body formed by him and in which he acts, is found necessarily to hold a prominent place in the worship which he produces in its members united together. Love, which is the soul of it, is defective in one of its most perfect forms, if the conscience of this unity is wanting. The presence of the Holy Spirit produces the consciousness of this unity, of which he is the author and the bond. Now, considered in one aspect, the supper is the expression of this unity. We are all but one body, inasmuch as we partake of but one loaf. If the bread broken represents, on the one hand the broken body of Christ, the unity of the bread represents, on the other, the unity of his spiritual body. When I knew (said the Apostle) "your love unto all Saints," comprehending with all Saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and what is the love of Christ which passes, knowledge, in order that ye may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power which worketh in us to Him be glory in the Church.

How sweet to find oneself united to all Saints, where-ever they may be, in the unity of the body of Christ, as together members of that body, according to all the privileges which attach to it by reason of the love of Him who nourishes and cherishes it as a man does his own flesh; to feel, by means of the Spirit, one's union with all that is united to Christ, and to feel it with the thought, full of deep joy, that all those who are infinitely-dear to us, as pertaining to Him, have the privilege of the care (which can never fail) of his love. What joy, by faith, to apply to them all that love of which, while worshipping, we have the consciousness-a faith, moreover, which never fails in its aim. Thus it is that intercession connects itself so intimately with worship, properly so-called, being inspired

by the affections which are in exercise in virtue of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The requests for grace for themselves, made by those who worship, are scarcely further removed from it, because the feeling of what we owe to God, which is expressed in worship, necessarily produces the desire of glorifying him, and the need of the grace which alone can render us capable of doing so.

With regard to the supper, we find, indeed, that not only it forms the prominent feature of the religious exercises of the faithful; but that it was, with this end in view, that they were wont to unite in the irregular and solemn assemblies-and " they continued with one consent in the temple and breaking bread" at home-that is, in their private houses in contrast with the temple. " They continued steadfast in the doctrine and fellowship of the Apostles, and in the breaking of bread and in prayer."-Acts 2 and 4.

It appears, then, that they partook of the supper even daily, and that, being still Jews, as we know, in many respects, they diligently frequented the temple; but then they had, in their houses, in remembrance of Christ this special service, as to which he had said, " Do this in remembrance of me."

In the twentieth chapter of the Acts we are told, that on the first day of the week (now called Sunday), when the disciples were gathered together to break bread- that is to say, this act, though others might accompany it, was the object of their meeting.

It has been supposed that breaking of bread might apply to something besides the supper, since there is proof that they made a meal at the same time. There is no doubt as to the meal. Christ instituted the supper at the time of His own last evening's repast; and, at first, there was a supper at the same time that they broke bread; but the breaking of bread had a character proper and distinctive to itself even as it had its formal appointment. Not to perceive this when it is celebrated, is what the apostle calls " not discerning the body of the Lord," and, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he corrects this abuse, by appointing that the repast which previously had accompanied the Lord's Supper, should be separated from it. The passage shows that they came together to eat, but alas! their feast had at Corinth set aside the spiritual service, and some came to take their surfeit in eating and drinking, and left the poor in want. The supper was not observed in their private abodes, but in a building common to all, and every one brought his own supper, and the service had entirely lost its character as the Lord's Supper. The passage plainly shows that they came together in order to eat, and that they supped together in the public building, but that the Supper of the Lord was the avowed object of the meeting. To maintain this last institution in all its importance, the apostle ordained that the supper should be separate, and that each should eat his own supper at home; that so they might come together in the spirit of devotion, and not bring down upon themselves chastisement.

The two grand elements of the ordinary worship of Christians, are the presence of the Holy Spirit and the remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ, which is commemorated in the supper. We have seen that it was with the latter of these in view, that Christians assembled themselves together, according to that which is said in the Bible.

But in this worship, the affections, which are connected with all our relationships with God, are developed. God, in His Majesty, is adored; the gifts even of His providence are recognized; He who is a spirit is worshipped in spirit and in truth. We present 'to our Father-the Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ-the expression of holy affections which He has produced in us, for He sought us when we were afar off from Him, and has placed us near to himself, as his beloved children, in the spirit of adoption-associating us (wondrous grace!) with His well-beloved Son.

We adore the Savior God, being in His presence without spot; His holiness and His perfect righteousness being a joy for us which passes not away, for we are in the light, through the perfect work of Christ, as He Himself is in the light. It is the Holy Spirit Himself who reveals to us these heavenly things and the glory to come, and acts in us so as to produce feelings and affections suitable to such a blessing, to such relationships with God. He it is who is the bond of union between the heart and these things. But He does it by making us feel that we are children of the same family and members of the same body. Uniting us in this worship by means of mutual affections and feelings, common to all, towards Him who is the object of the worship which together we render. In short, the worship is exercised in connection with the very sweetest recollection of the love of Christ, whether we regard His work or whether we recall the thought of his tender affection for us. He desires our remembrance of Him. Sweet and precious thought for the heart. Oh! how precious to our souls, and yet at the same time how solemn ought such worship to be! What sort of life should we be careful to lead in order to render it? with what ardor ought we to seek the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in order to render it suitably? Yet it should be very simple, for true affection is always simple-at the same time, devout, for such interests give devoutness. The majesty and the greatness of the love of Him whom we adore, gives solemnity to every act by which we draw near to Him. With what deep affections and thankfulness should we also think of the Savior, at such times, when we can, by Him, abide in the presence of God, far removed from all evil, in the foretaste of our eternal blessing, and where we recall all His love for us. These two great subjects, about which Christian worship is occupied, viz., the love of God our Father and that of the Lord in His work and as head of His body the Church, afford slight changes in the character of the worship, according to the state of those who render it. There are times in which Jesus will be more present to the thoughts, others in which the Father will be more before the mind. The Holy Spirit alone can guide us in this; but, as our thoughts ought to be true, this will depend upon the state of those who compose the assembly. Effort in such things has no place. He who is the channel of worship (let me say it here) should not present that which is proper and peculiar to himself, but that which is truly the exercise through the Spirit of the hearts of those who compose the assembly. This will make us feel our entire dependance upon the Comforter for truthful service to God in communion. Nothing, however, is more simple or more evident, than the truth that the worship rendered should be that of all.

Another observation we may make here is, how much the worship will be affected by all that grieves the Holy Spirit; every impediment, even in one person, will make itself felt (at least if there be spirituality), for we are there as but one body. It is of the utmost importance that this delicacy of spiritual feeling should be maintained, that we should not habituate ourselves to the having the presence of God but little felt in worship, the action of the Holy Spirit little known. If there is true spirituality, if the Holy Spirit fills the assembly with His presence, evil of every kind is quickly discovered. For God is a jealous God, and He is faithful. A single Achan was discovered at the commencement of the history of Israel-a single lie in Ananias in the beginning of the Church's history. Alas! what things occurred afterward in Israel! what things took place afterward in the Church without any one having even the feeling that evil was present! May God make us humble,

watchful, and true, and enable us to bear in mind that His Spirit always abides with us, in order that we may be able to render, by the action of that Spirit in us, spiritual worship! For it is the lovely and powerful testimony to the efficacy of the work of Christ, by the which we can abide in the presence of God, without blame and full of joy, to present to Him worship which, rising from hearts which find in His presence the source of their happiness, render testimony before the angels of heaven to His perfect love, and pre- sent to God -Himself the most acceptable proof of the efficacy of that work which takes from us all fear in His presence, and renders the full and perfect exercise of that love, in which He finds His delight, possible to God.

The privilege of being able to render worship to God is granted to two or three gathered together in the name of Jesus: that is to say, when His name has gathered them together, as the tie among them, by its power common to them all, and known of all, and recognized 'among them as the principle of their assembly. Jesus is there as the joy and strength of their common service. The Lord said to Israel, " In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee" (Ex. 20:24). Further on it is said (Dent. xii.), that they should offer their offerings in the place which He would choose to set His name there; which had its definitive accomplishment at Jerusalem (1 Kings 8:25).

But now, in Jesus, God sets His name there where two or three are gathered together in that name, with a promise (similar to that of Ex. 20:24), that there Jesus Himself would be in the midst of them; precious encouragement for the feebleness of His people, if there were thousands of disciples. How great soever the encouragement given by such an action of the Spirit, the presence of Jesus Himself (the most precious of all things) is vouchsafed to two or three of the least of those that are His, if it is truly in His name that they are met. Let it be only His name in which it is done; the fleshly pride which loves to make much of a gift, and would appropriate a flock as its own-human arrangement which would seek to avoid that which is painful to the flesh or the world-the narrowness which would welcome some upon the ground of a peculiar view-none of these is the name of Christ. Those who unite in the name of Christ embrace in heart and mind all those who are His, all the members of His body; they embrace them in the principle upon which they are met; otherwise it would not be in His name that they were united: for one cannot exclude from the power of His name those that are His; His heart embraces them. We are not united according to His heart, if, in principle, our assembly does not embrace them. Clearly His name does not embrace the world, nor sin, nor that which denies the truth which that name reveals.

His name unites in one those that are His. He that gathers not with Him scatters abroad.

Christians are bound to maintain holiness and truth, and to make constant progress towards the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. If any would hinder this, would seek to fashion souls according to the mold of particular views, his action tends towards the destruction of practical unity.

Nothing but spirituality, subject to the Word and regulated by grace, (in a word, the action of the Spirit of God), can, in certain cases, discern between that which is a step forward, and that which is the insisting upon some private view of one's own. For the spirit of the world, which loves not progress nor that which presents more of Christ, will stamp with the name of " particular views" all that which tends to make our responsibility to Christ deeper and more felt: and a spirit of narrowness will treat as progress all that makes much of its own notions. Moreover, if an assembly

of worshippers is truly founded upon the basis of the unity of the Church of God-if the mass of the assembly is not in a state to bear that which would be a true step in advance-it is useless to insist upon it; to do so would tend to division rather than to progress. Such was the case of the Corinthians. The Apostle had to nourish them with milk. They were not able to bear anything else, even when he wrote to them.

On the contrary, when it is a return to a Jewish spirit, which would compromise the Gospel, the Apostle refuses to stop (Heb. 5:12, 14; 6:1, 4). The energetic wisdom of the Spirit of God is needed by the Church. It is not the intention of God that she should be able to do without it, or be exempt from dependance upon Him who gives it. I have added these few practical words which only concern things which are accessory to my subject, because they refer to difficulties which are constantly occurring in the Christian's path when assembling for worship, or which are presented as such to prevent their walking in this path. I take it for granted all along, that the meeting is upon the eternal foundation of the unity of the Church of God; if that is compromised, there is no ground for any union at all, the meeting itself is not according to God. One must first of all be perfectly clear upon this point.

But I desire that our souls may be brought back to the foundation of the subject which I treat. That which I have said is connected with the assembling of the children of God for worship. Sweet and precious privilege, to anticipate that which will be our eternal employ in heaven! There our worship will be perfect. There, all the Church, come to its full perfection, will be assembled to render worship in the midst of the general assembly on high; without distraction, and without fear of change in its joy, it will enjoy it eternally in the perfect favor of God. What a privilege, even here below, to close the door for a moment upon all the distractions of this nether world, and by the Spirit to satisfy the desire of the heart by rendering to God the thanksgiving which He is worthy to receive, and which He has, in His bounty, breathed into our hearts!

I will notice yet a few passages which may help individuals to seize the spirit of worship. The first passage which I will notice is Phil. 3-" We serve God in spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." We may remark, that there is here no question about sin, in the ordinary sense, of the flesh, but of confidence in the flesh. That is its religion, altogether as evil as its lusts; for, after all, it is but one of them, though covered up with the veil of works and of holiness. The touchstone is, that it does not tend to the glory of Jesus, or yet better, that it does not glory only in Jesus. The religion of the flesh can be occupied much in good works, be without reproach as to conduct, have much of self-denial, much of piety, plenty of humility, be much occupied with the love of God; but while pretending, perhaps, to found it upon His love (which is infinite), it will be that love of God which is in the heart-our love to Him.

One may ask, But if all these things can exist in a person, and be nothing but the flesh, how can we discern the true circumcision? It rejoices in Jesus Christ. Nothing is easier than to judge these things, if Christ is our all. The fact that He is so, makes us feel, without hesitancy, that all this is flesh, and yields its help to that which destroys Christianity from its foundations. Is there another mark desired, by which one can judge this religion of the flesh with all its pretensions? It does not hold the Head; that is to say, he who is in this state never has the consciousness of his own union with Christ, so as to be placed, as raised up together with Him, in the heavenly places: bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, one spirit with the Lord, a member of His body. Such an one will, perhaps,

recognize this as true for the Church, in an abstract manner (for the religion of the flesh can be orthodox), but not that oneself is there. Now faith is an individual thing, and places him who possesses it in the enjoyment-or personally under the effects-of the object which it regards. Col. 2, as well as the chapter cited above, judges all this fair but specious appearance. The Lord, in His addresses to the Scribes and Pharisees, judged it in its grosser forms. Another thing which marks carnal religion is, that however apparently elevated be its piety, it accords with things which are not of heaven, and seeks not, in every respect, the things which are on high, which is the sentiment of one who is dead and raised up together with Christ. The religion which is of the Spirit, true worship, serves God in Spirit, and has no confidence in the flesh; it knows not the religion of its forefathers, even though it may have been true. Of one's forefathers one inherits but a sinful nature. It confides not either in its zeal or in any devoutness which it can offer to God, nor in its love to Him. It does not rejoice save in Jesus Christ alone before God. The soul has learned that it was dead in its sins, and the precious Savior having come down even to the point of being made sin for us, as dead and raised up together with Him-for it is lost if it lives according to the natural life-it knows in God's sight but one sole thing, which it puts forward, in which it rejoices, in which it glories before Him, on which it knows that God has placed all his delight; it rejoices in Jesus Christ. One cannot fail to observe how this practical description of circumcision, i.e., of the true people set apart for God, and as to the flesh, dead-connects itself with the grand foundations upon which we have already seen the true Christian placed in the service which he renders to God. Let us bear in mind also, that it will profit nothing to mingle carnal religion with that of the Spirit. The flesh of the Christian finds in such a course its aliment. The effort of the adversary, at the commencement of the Church, was not to substitute circumcision in the flesh, and the law in place of Christ, but to add them. But the Apostle saw clearly, by the Spirit, that in admitting this, all was lost. The Christian is one with the Head, which is Christ; the least thing between them, and the body is-naught more than a corpse. The work of Christ is not sufficient if anything is to be added. And, not only so, but all the Christian position was swept away. For instead of being in Christ, happy in God's presence, by virtue of one work already accomplished by the glorious Savior alone, " rendered complete in Him," " accepted in the beloved," man has still to seek means of rendering himself acceptable to God, to find the way by which he may present himself before Him. One is fallen from grace. The nature of Christianity is changed; it is denied, though not in word. The truth of the Gospel no longer remains.

May God grant us to have no confidence in the flesh, but to rejoice in Christ Jesus!

One may ask oneself, But is it not possible to maintain these truths in all their height, and still to be carnal? I answer, doubtless: yet the flesh then takes the form of licentiousness, its real character, and not that of religiousness. It is very pious when it acts the pious, for it always desires to rejoice in itself.

I will cite another passage to show the spirit of worship, although it formally applies, of necessity, to things on earth. I refer to Deut. 26. In type, Canaan represents heaven. Now, Israel arrived in Canaan, enjoyed the effect of the promise. Read now Deut. 26 The worshipper, already come to a good land which God had given to him as an heritage, presents himself with the fruits of the land. This is that which we have to offer to God, the joy of heavenly love- all that is found for our hearts-in the possession of heaven, whither we are entered in spirit-in Christ, who fills it with His glory and His perfections-in the love of God Himself, who has introduced us thither. Holiness and

love characterize the land, are the fruits which grow there spontaneously, as are the thanksgivings in the hearts of those who find themselves there.

The worshipper professed aloud that his God had accomplished all; it was thus that he presented himself. This was due to God, since Israel was indeed there through His faithful grace, and there would have been failure as to the only true feeling of his position if he had not come thus. Is it then that he forgot his own wretchedness? No. But he was in it no longer; it served only to exalt the thought of his deliverance. " And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became a nation, great, mighty, and populous: And the Egyptians evil entreated us and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage: And when we cried unto the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labor, and our oppression: And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders: And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God, and worship before the Lord thy God."

The Christian was the slave of Satan, and in himself miserable; but God delivered him by Christ, therefore He adores. Not only so, the Lord had given Israel this good land, full of that which makes the glory of every land, He brought the fruit of it, in testimony, with thanksgiving.

If we are seated in peace in the heavenly places, have our hearts naught there to offer? Has the country produced nothing which we can offer to God in testimony of the value of His gifts, of the feeling which we have of His goodness? Further, the worshipper addressed God directly, rendering the worship to Him which was due; the fruit of a heart happy in His bounty.

Thus the spirit of grace and of love was shed abroad in his heart, and he enjoyed all in simplicity and with gladness of heart; causing others also to enjoy with Him, rendering the desolate and the stranger happy.

" And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you. When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them." Pure in walk, carefully preserving the holiness of God, and that which was hallowed for Him, from being profaned, he could, from his heart, implore a blessing upon all the people of his God, and ask that it might rest on the whole state of things in which God had placed them. It was the memorial of a tie between God and His people.

In examining also chapter 16 of Deut. we shall find, in the directions given for the feasts of the Lord, an unfolding of what the spirit was in which Israel should have observed them, and in a measure, an instructive contrast between the state of soul which they respectively inspired.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net