

# PRESENT TESTIMONY VOLUME 8, 1856

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*A collection of articles and writings by G.V. Wigram from Present Testimony Volume 8, 1856, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.*

42 Chapters

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## Present Testimony Volume 8, 1856

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## Thoughts on the Experience of Abraham and of Jacob

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The experiences of the heart occupy a large place in the thoughts of Christians. It is, nevertheless, important always to judge them by the word of God. These experiences are the expression of the inward state of the heart, and of our relations with others, as well as of the sentiments which our conduct, in these same relations, produces in our hearts and in our consciences.

It is not necessary here to speak of the experience of an unconverted person, although such a one is, nevertheless, not without experiences. It is true, that he does not know God; but, in a certain sense, he enjoys His goodness in nature-his conscience can blame him-he can be weary of sin, and alarmed at the thought of judgment. He can even forget the latter in the enjoyment of his family and society in a life naturally amiable; but he can do no more.

Nevertheless, there is a great variety in the experiences of men in whom the Spirit of God is working. This difference arises, on the one hand, from the relations in which we stand to God, and, on the other, from our conduct in the same relations. It is true that God has not put us under the Law; yet, nevertheless, an awakened conscience is, as regards its relationship to God, either under the law or under grace. The Spirit of God, who has awakened it, has caused its light to enter, and produces there the feeling of its responsibility. I am under the law as long as I make my acceptance with God to depend on my faithfulness to God, that is, on the fulfillment of my duties. If, on the other hand, the love of God and His work in Christ are, for my conscience, the only and perfect ground of my adoption, then am I under grace. The Holy Spirit cannot weaken the responsibility; but He can reveal to me that God has saved my soul, which was lost because my life did not answer this responsibility.

As long as the awakened soul remains under the law, it has sad experiences; it feels that it is guilty according to the law, and that it has no power to keep it. It is well aware that the law is good; but, in spite of all its efforts, it does not attain its object, which is obedience.

The experiences of souls in such a state are the experiences of their sin-of their weakness and of the power of sin. Even supposing such a soul should not be as yet altogether brought to despair by the expectation of the just judgment of God, because it experiences in a slight degree the love of God, and because it hopes in the work of Christ, there will not be less uncertainty as to its relations with God, and this gives place to alternations of peace and trouble.

In the latter case, the soul has indeed been drawn by grace; but the conscience has not been purified, and the heart not set at liberty. These experiences are useful, in order to convince us of sin and weakness, and to destroy all confidence in ourselves. It is necessary that we should feel ourselves condemned before God, and that we should know, that henceforth all depends on His unmerited grace.

It is otherwise when our conscience is purged, and we have understood our position before God in Christ. Condemned in the presence of God, we understand that God

has loved us, and that He justifies us by the work of His Son; we understand that sin is taken away, and our conscience is made perfect. We have no longer conscience of sins before God, because He Himself has taken them away forever by the blood of Christ, and that blood is always before His eyes; we know, that being united with Christ, who has fully glorified God in that which concerns our sins, we have been made the righteousness of God in Him. So the heart is free to enjoy His love in the presence of God.

Thenceforth we are under grace; our relations with God depend, thenceforth, on God's nature, and the righteousness which Christ is become for us. Our relations with God do not depend on what we are before Him as responsible beings. Our experiences thenceforth ever return to this: that God is love, that Christ is our righteousness, and God our Father. We have communion with God and with His Son Jesus Christ. We enjoy all the privileges of that relation. Nevertheless, the use which we make of our privileges affects that enjoyment. These relations remain constantly the same, as well as the perception which we have of them; but the enjoyment of what God is in that relation, depends on our conduct in such a position.

The experiences are always founded on my relations with God. Am I sad? It is because the communion with God—communion which answers to my relations to Him—is interrupted. I feel that I do not enjoy the blessed communion to which I have attained, and it is this that causes my sadness; but this does not arise from uncertainty as to the communion itself. The flesh has no relations with God; and the flesh is ever in us. And "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5). By this Spirit we have communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7); and we are called on to walk in the light, as God Himself is in the light (1 John 1:7). Our communion with God depends on our walking in the light, although, when we have lost it, God can visit us by His grace, and restore communion. But God is faithful, and, does not permit sin in His children. If they do not walk with Him in the light, He will cause them to pass through all the trials and all the conflicts necessary to bring them to the knowledge of themselves, that they may remain in the light, and that their communion may be true and pure.

It is true that these trials and conflicts do not affect our relations with God, because they depend on what God is in Christ, according to His grace and righteousness; but the suspension of communion with God, a suspension which puts us outside of the enjoyment of the light, brings us into all kinds of conflicts, and painful and humbling experiences of what our own heart really is. God Himself also employs correction to humble us and break our will. Not only is the actual fall into sin an opportunity for the dealing of God with our souls, but all that is hard and rebellious in our souls also affords an opportunity for it. The consequence of these truths is, that the experiences of a soul that walks with God are far more simple than the experiences of an unfaithful soul; and, nevertheless, the knowledge of God and of the heart of man will be far deeper in the former case. As long as we walk in communion with Him, we walk in the light; and we have, in His presence, the continual sense of His fatherly love. Nevertheless, this presence acts upon our soul, to manifest all that is not in harmony with the light.

The judgment of ourselves takes place in the presence of God, in the sense of His love, and in connection with that love. Sin has the character of everything which is not light; and is judged, not only because sin cannot agree with holiness, but also because it does not agree with the love of

God.

With hearts purified by the love of God, and strengthened by communion with Him, the grace which acts thus in us, takes the place of sin which has been judged, and thenceforth our walk in the world is the effect of the communion of God in our hearts. We carry God, so to speak, through the world in our hearts. Filled with His love, and living in the power of the life of Christ, that which Satan offers does not tempt us. Our worldly trials become a motive to obedience and not to sin. The presence of God in our hearts preserves us in our relations with men. Thenceforth we experience proofs of our corruption in the presence of God, and in communion with Him. It is thus we judge sin in ourselves, and sin thus judged does not appear in our walk. But if we do not walk in fellowship with God, if sin is not thus judged, we walk more or less in the world with a rebellious will and lusts unjudged.. The action of our self-will makes us uneasy, because we are not satisfied. Are we satisfied? Then God is forgotten. Satan presents temptations which answer to unjudged lusts; then the corruption of the heart manifests itself by a fall, and by our relations with Satan, which take the place of our relations with God. Such a knowledge of the corruption of the heart will be never so deep, never so clear, never so true, as that which we shall have obtained in the presence of God by the light itself. We shall know sin by sin, by a bad conscience instead of knowing it by the light of God Himself. -We shall be humbled, instead of being humble. The faithfulness of God will restore the soul; but the continued power and growing light of His communion will not be the same. It is true we shall experience His patience and His goodness; but we shall not know God in the same way as when walking faith-fully in communion with Him. It is true, God glorifies Himself by His ways with such a soul, because all things concur to His eternal glory; but the knowledge of God grows by our communion with Him.

The life of Abraham and that of Jacob come in the way of interesting examples, in support of what we have been saying. It is true, that neither the law, nor the fullness of grace, had been as yet revealed. Nevertheless, as we see in Heb. 11, the principles of the life of faith on the promises of God were in general the same.

" In many things we offend all." Abraham himself failed. in faith on some occasions; but, in general, his life was a walk of faith with God. This is the reason why his experiences are of another nature, far more intimate with God, and more simple, than those of Jacob. His history is short, and not rich in incidents; while the communications of God to this patriarch are numerous and frequent. In his history there is much about God, and little about man. With one single exception, Abraham always remained in the land of promise. He was indeed a stranger and pilgrim, because the Canaanites dwelt there (Gen. 12:6) but he was in relation with God, and walked before Him.

At first when God had called him, he had not fully answered this call. It is true he left indeed his country and kindred, but not his father's house, and so he did not arrive in Canaan. It is true, he had given up a great deal; he had. gone from Ur in Chaldea, but he came no farther than Charran and rested there (11:31, 32). So it is with the heart that has not learned that it belongs entirely to God. It is only in conformity with the call of God that we can enter into the position of the promise.

After the death of his father Terah, Abraham started at the command of God; and they set out to come into the land of Canaan, and they entered into it (12:5). Here we have the position of the heavenly people. Placed, by the grace and power of God, in a heavenly position, of which Canaan is a figure, they dwell there; they have everything in promise, but nothing as yet in possession. The

Lord revealed Himself to Abraham in calling him; He reveals Himself anew to him in the place which he now knew, and which he was going to possess: "I will give this land to thy posterity" (ver. 7). Such is, in general, our confidence in God, that we shall possess really in future that which we know now as strangers.

"And Abraham built there an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him" (ver. 7). He serves God and enjoys communion with Him. Thence he goes into another place and there pitches his tent; he builds anew an altar to the Lord, and calls on the name of Jehovah (ver. 8). He is a pilgrim in the land of promise; and that is his entire history. We dwell in the heavenly places, we enjoy them by faith; and we have communion with God who brought us thither. Abraham's tent and altar in this place give a character to his whole history, and all the experiences of faith consist in that.

His unbelief brings him into Egypt (ver. 10-21). There he had no altar. An Egyptian servant-maid becomes afterward the occasion of his fall, and a source of trouble to him. She is, as we learn in Gal. 4:24,25, a type of the law; for the law and the flesh are always in relationship with each other. The grace of God brings Abraham back; but he does not regain an altar till he has returned to the place where he first pitched his tent, and to the altar which he had built before: there he has communion afresh with God (13:3, 4).

The promises of God are the portion of Abraham. He lets Lot take what he pleases: "Is not the whole land before thee? Depart from me, I pray thee. If thou choosest the left, I will take the right; and if thou take the right, I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and saw the whole plain of Jordan, which, before the Lord had destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, was watered throughout until one comes to Zoar, like the garden of the Lord, and like the land of Egypt. And Lot chose for himself the whole plain of Jordan" (ver. 9-11). Lot is the type of a worldly believer. He takes that which for the moment appears the better part, and chooses the place over which the judgment of God is suspended. Abraham had given up everything according to the flesh, and God shows him the whole extent of the promise. He gives him a visible proof of that which he has given him; and confirms it to him forever (ver. 14-18). Lot, the worldly believer, is overcome by the princes of the world. Abraham delivers him. With the servants of his house he overcomes the power of the enemy (14:1-21). He will receive nothing of the world. He says to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted up my hand to the Lord, the mighty God, the Sovereign, the possessor of heaven and earth, saying, Surely I will take nothing of all that belongeth to thee, I from a thread to a shoe-latchet, lest thou shouldest say, have made Abraham rich" (14:22, 23).

Afterward God reveals himself to Abraham as his buckler and great reward. He promises him a posterity at a time when his body was now dead; justified by faith, he receives the confirmation of the promises of God, who binds Himself by a sacrifice, type of the sacrifice of Christ. Then the inheritance is shown him in its details (15).

Following the counsels of the flesh, Abraham desires for a moment the fulfillment of the promise by the law; that is to say, by Hagar. But thus he only learns that it is impossible that the child of the law should inherit with the child of promise (16). Then God reveals Himself anew as God Almighty. He tells him that he shall be the father of many nations, and that God will be his God forever (17:1-14). The posterity according to the promise is promised again (17:15-19).



After that, God once more visits Abraham, and gives him positive promises respecting the approaching birth of his son (18:9-15). He looks upon him as His friend, saying, " Shall I hide from Abraham what I am going to do?" (18:17). He communicates to him His thoughts concerning the world, and Abraham converses with Him in perfect peace and familiarity. He prays for those who had forgotten the Lord (18:23-33). It was necessary that Abraham should again experience, in the case of Ishmael, that the law produces sadness and anguish; and at the court of Abimelech he learned to know, that when unbelief is in action, it only produces troubles and sorrow. But God, in His faithfulness, watches over Him, as well as over the mother of the posterity.

Afterward, Abraham was tried in the highest degree, till he had to give up everything according to the flesh, and even the promises. But the promises in a Christ raised in figure are confirmed to Christ Himself, and in Him to all the spiritual posterity of Abraham (22:15-19; compare Gal. 3:16-18).

Abraham then has learned by a fall that neither the law nor the promise are of any avail for the flesh; nevertheless, in general, his peculiar experiences consisted in pilgrimage and adoration, all the time he continued in the promised land. We have now remarked that his life is characterized by a tent and an altar. The whole experience, the whole life of the faithful Abraham, consists almost entirely of worship, intercession, and revelations from God; so that he learned to comprehend these latter with increasing clearness and accuracy. He passed his time in the place to which God had called him. The revelations of God were for him rich, sweet, and admirable. His knowledge of God intimate and deep-his personal experiences happy and simple-for he walked with God, who had revealed Himself to him, in grace.

Now let us also examine a little more closely the life and history of Jacob.

Jacob was the inheritor of the same promise, and, as a believer he valued it; but he did not trust in God alone did not walk, like Abraham, in daily fellowship with the Lord, and waiting upon the Lord. It is true he received the promise, but his experiences were very different from those of Abraham. Although at the end of his life he could say, " The angel that delivered me from all evil" (Gen. 48:16) he nevertheless was constrained to add, " The days of the years of my pilgrimage have been few and evil, and have not arrived at the days of the years of the life of my fathers, of the time of their pilgrimages" (47:9). The variety of his experience is a proof of unfaithfulness.

In compliance with his mother's advice, he employed profane means to obtain his father's blessing; and was obliged, through fear of his deceived but profane brother, to leave the land of promise (27:28). Now his position is altogether changed; his unbelief has driven him out of the land of promise. His pilgrimage is not, like that of Abraham, in the land, but outside of it.

It is true, God watches over him, waits on him, and preserves him; but he does not walk with God. He has no altar till his return, after a course of painful experiences (33:20). He had no full communion with God till he returned to the place where he had last enjoyed the revelation of God, and where he had been strengthened by His promises. For one-and-twenty years he had to do with men who cheated and oppressed him, while God preserved him in secret; but he could not possibly have an altar outside the land of promise.

We also worship God, and we have communion with God, while we dwell in spirit in heavenly places, there, where God Himself has given us our proper place. But if we get outside of it, we can

have no fellowship with Him, although He knows how to keep us by His grace and faithfulness.

At the end of twenty-one years, God orders Jacob to return. He must flee far from his father-in-law like a guilty fugitive. It is impossible to be pure from the world if we have lost heavenly communion with God; and it is difficult not to carry away something that belongs to the world, if we abandon that communion. But God is faithful. From that moment a course of experiences begins for Jacob (as they are generally called), but which, nevertheless, are nothing more than the effects of his getting away from God.

Delivered from Laban, Jacob pursues his journey towards Canaan; and God, to comfort and fortify him, sends an army of His angels to meet him (32:1). Nevertheless, notwithstanding this encouragement from God, unbelief, which deliverance from danger does not destroy, renews Jacob's fear in the presence of his brother Esau. One does not get rid of the difficulties of the path of faith by trying to avoid them; one must surmount them by the power of God. Jacob had brought these difficulties upon himself, because he had not trusted in God. The host of God was forgotten, and the army of Esau, who no longer cherished in his heart hatred against his brother, frightened the feeble Jacob (32:7). He could then employ all kinds of means to appease the presumed and dreaded anger of his brother. He causes flock after flock to pass; and that does more to show the state of the heart of Jacob, than to change that of Esau. Nevertheless, Jacob thinks of God; he reminds Him that He told him he ought to return; he implores Him to save him from the hands of his brother; he thinks of the state in which he left the country, and acknowledges that God has given him all his possessions (32:9-11). But his prayer discovers an ungrounded fear. He reminds God of His promises, as if it were possible that He had forgotten them. It is true there is faith there, but the effect of unbelief produces a wild and confused picture. The timid Jacob has not only sent forward his flocks to appease Esau (32:13-20), but he sends his whole family across the brook, and remains behind alone (ver. 22, 24). His heart is filled with anxieties. But God, who guides all, awaits him precisely there. Although He had not permitted Esau to touch so much as a hair of Jacob's head, He nevertheless had Himself to judge him, and bring him into the light of His presence; for Jacob could in no other way enjoy the land of promise with God. God wrestles with him in the darkness till daybreak (ver. 24). It is not here Jacob wrestling with God of his own accord; but it is God wrestling against him.

He could not bless him simply, like Abraham; he must first correct the unbelief of his heart. Jacob must experience the effects of his conduct—he must even suffer, because God will bless him. Nevertheless, the love of God is acting in all this. He gives strength to Jacob during the conflict in which he must engage to obtain the blessings, to persevere in waiting for them. He will nevertheless have to retain a lasting proof of his weakness and previous unfaithfulness. His hip-joint had been put out while God wrestled with him (ver. 25). And not only that, but God also refuses to reveal His name to him unreservedly. He blesses Jacob. He gives him a name in memorial of his fight of faith, but He does not reveal Himself. How great is the difference here between Jacob and Abraham! God reveals His name to the latter without being asked to do so, that Abraham may know Him fully; for Abraham generally walked with Him in the power of this revelation. He had no conflict with God; and, far from having to fear his kinsfolk, he overcame the power of the kings of this world. He is there as a prince among the inhabitants of the land. God frequently converses with him; and instead of wrestling with Him to obtain a blessing for himself, Abraham intercedes for others. He sees the judgment of the world from the height where he was in

communion with God. -Let us return to the history of Jacob.

Notwithstanding all, his fear never leaves him. Blessed by God by means of his conflict, he still trembles before his brother Esau. He divides his children and wives according to the measuring of his affections, so that those whom he most loved were at the greatest distance from Esau. Only then does he undertake to go to meet his brother. But nevertheless he deceives him again. He evades the offer of an escort which Esau makes him; and promises to follow him a little more gently to his residence near Seir (33:14). But Jacob went to Succoth (ver. 17).

Now Israel (Jacob) is in the country, nevertheless his heart having been long accustomed to the condition of a traveler without God, he knows not how to become a pilgrim with God. He buys a field near Sichem, and settles himself in a place where Abraham was only a stranger, and where, knowing the will of God, he had not possessed a spot of ground whereon to set his foot (ver. 19). It is at Sichem for the first time, and after having returned into the land, that he builds an altar; the name of the altar recalls the blessing of Israel, but not the name of the God of the promises. He calls the altar " God, the God of Israel"(33:20). Thank-fulness, it is true, recognizes the blessing which Jacob has received; but the God who blessed him is not yet revealed.

We now find corruption and violence in his family (34). The wrath of his sons, cruel, and void of the fear of God, brings him out of his false rest, which was not founded on God; but again the faithfulness of God preserves him. Hitherto Jacob had not thought of the place where God Himself had made him the promise, from the time of his departure, and where Jacob had promised to worship when he should have returned by the help of God. God Himself sends him there now, and says to him, " Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there, and there set up an altar to the strong God who appeared to thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother" (35:1). God, who had guarded, guided, chastened him, had prepared him to come into communion with Him. But first it was necessary that he should leave his false home, where God was not. He must lodge at Bethel (the house of God), and in that very place build an altar to God who had first revealed Himself to him. We here see the instantaneous effect of the presence of God with Jacob, a presence which he had not yet learned to know, in spite of all his experiences up to that moment. The thought of that presence immediately recalls to his mind the false gods which were still among his furniture. These false gods were the effect of his connection with the world; and Rachel, from fear of Laban, had hid them under the camels' furniture. Jacob knew well that they were there; nevertheless he said to his family and to all those who were with him, " Put away the false gods that are in the midst of you and purify yourselves, and change your garments, and. arise and let us go to Bethel, and I will build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and who has been with me in the way that I came. Then they gave Jacob all the false gods that they had in their hands, and the rings that were in their ears, and he hid them under the oak that was by Sichem" (35:2, 4). The thought of the presence of God made him remember the false gods; it awakens in his soul the conviction that the gods, the objects of the. adoration of this world, can never be kept together with a faithful God. Nothing else can awaken this conviction. No possible experiences can ever have the effect which the presence of God produces on a soul. Such experiences are useful to humble us, they are a means of stripping us of ourselves. Nevertheless it is only the presence of God as light which can cause us to condemn ourselves, and give us power to purify ourselves from our deepest and well-known though hidden idols. Abraham had nothing to do either with Jacob's idols or Jacob's experiences.

The fear of God reigned over the enemies of Jacob, so that they did not follow him, notwithstanding the murderous violence of his sons (35:5). Now God could reveal himself to Jacob; and although he remained lame, all went on as if he had not before passed through. any experience. Jacob had come to Bethel, from whence he had started. There he built an altar to the God who had made him the promises, and who had always been faithful to him. The name of his altar no longer reminds us of Jacob blessed, but of Him who blesses, and of His house. It is not called the altar of God, the God of Israel, but the altar of the God of Bethel, that is to say, of the house of God (35:7). God at this hour speaks with Jacob, without saying anything at all of his experiences. These had been necessary to chasten Jacob, and empty him of himself, because he had been unfaithful. God Himself appeared to him now without being entreated. We read in Gen. 35:9, God appeared again to Jacob when he came from Padan-Aram and blessed him. He gave him the name of Israel, as if 'he had not given it him before, and reveals to him His name without Jacob having asked it of Him. He converses with him as formerly with Abraham. He renews the promises, and confirms them to him-at least, those which have reference to Israel; and after having ended his communication with him, God went up from him, for He had visited him (Gen. 35:13).

Jacob was then returned, after a course of experiences, to the place where he could have communion with God-to a position in which, by the grace of God, Abraham had almost always kept himself. Jacob is a warning to us, but Abraham is an example. The first has, it is true, found the Lord again by His grace; but he has not had the many and blessed experiences of the other, he does not pray for others. The highest point of attainment with him is Abraham's starting point, even the home of his soul. With the exception of a few falls, this was the habitual state of Abraham, the state in which he lived. " Abraham died in a good old age, old and full of days, and he was gathered to his people." But Jacob said, "The days of the years of my life have been few and evil, and have not amounted to the days of the years of the life of my fathers, even the time of their pilgrimages" (Gen. 25:8, and 41:9). He ended his life in Egypt.

The experiences of Jacob are the experiences of what the hearts of men are. The experiences of Abraham are the experiences of the heart of God.

We have described three kinds of experiences: 1st. Those which take place under the law, the position of a believer not known, or when, without being ignorant of it, he is there, having his heart all the time under the law. 2ndly. The experiences which one has of his own heart, from the time that one walks far from that position where God reveals Himself to cherish and keep up this communion. 3rdly. The simple and blessed experiences which one has in walking with God, in the place where God has set us, to enjoy communion with Him in lowliness and thankfulness. These last are experiences of the heart of God, which bring us into the knowledge of His counsels, and of the faithful love which is contained in them. They consist in a close communion with God Himself; the others are, as it has been said, the painful experiences of the heart of man, among which the highest degree-and also precious for us-is, that God remains faithful in the midst of our unfaithfulness, and that He is patient towards our folly, by the which we put ourselves at a distance from His presence.

Our privilege is to walk like Abraham; our refuge when we are unfaithful (for God is faithful who does not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear) is that God remains faithful, and

draws us out of all danger to the end. May God give us grace to dwell near to Him, to walk with Him, that our experiences may have for their end the growing knowledge of His love and of His nature (Col. 1:9-12).

A HYMN.

O Jesus, let Thy mercy throw  
Its guardian shadow o'er me,  
Preserve me while I'm here below,  
And guide me safe to glory.  
I'm weaker than a bruised reed,  
And cannot do without Thee;  
I want Thee here each hour of need,  
I'll want Thee too in glory.  
And though my efforts now to praise,  
Are often cold and lowly,  
A nobler, sweeter song, I'll raise  
With all Thy saints in glory.  
We'll lay our trophies at Thy feet,  
We'll worship and adore Thee,  
Whose precious blood has made us meet  
To dwell with Thee in glory.

## Acts 7

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CT 7{This chapter has a special importance in a double way. First, it shows, that not only had the Jewish people rejected the Christ, but that besides, they resisted the testimony of the Holy Ghost. They would not have this grace; thus showing what man's heart is, left to itself. They had sinned against God, despised His law, and rejected the grace of Jesus; and now they resist the testimony of the Holy Ghost. The stoning of Stephen is the last grand act of their sins. But, secondly, this puts the first person of the church of God into heaven. The heavenly company is now beginning. The first soul has gone into heaven, consequent on- the full redemption of Christ. And here all is bright. It is not now as in the Psalms, "In death there is no remembrance of Thee," etc. Thus we have the contrast between those who were resisting the Holy Ghost, and one full of the Holy Ghost.

The burden of Stephen's testimony was, that whatever God had sent in grace they had rejected, and that the temple, in which they trusted, God had prophesied against. For example, Joseph they had rejected; and when Moses came they rejected him in the same way. And so with Christ. It was always the same. Whenever God had sent a person in a remarkable way, they had rejected him. Thus, on the one hand, we get them resisting the testimony of God; and, on the other, trusting in that which God had rejected.

Now this shows us what we are, as to our natures. For Scripture always takes a remarkable case, and by means of it presents to us what is in everybody's heart. There is just the same principle governing man now that there was then. There is just the same resistance of the testimony of the Holy Ghost when He sends it now that there was then, and just the same trusting in ordinances. The Holy Ghost gives us, by the mouth of Stephen, a picture of human nature in its most advantageous circumstances. And what the Jews were doing then, is just what we are doing now, as to our natures. Men are as rigid about ordinances now as ever the Jews were, and as determined in rejecting the testimony of the Holy Ghost. But God must have life and holiness, and these, ordinances cannot give.

The testimony of Stephen cut the Jews to the heart, and " they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost," etc. Here Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost, not merely as a prophet, but for himself. Here he takes share in the sufferings and rejection of his Master. The power of the Holy Ghost puts him in the place of testimony, and this draws down the hatred.

We now get the wonderful state and testimony of this man full of the Holy Ghost. Everything is changed by it. " But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." This opening of heaven is a wonderful fact: and it has not been closed. Unless, as in Ezekiel, heaven was never opened until Christ came. God could take Elijah up to heaven, but until Christ Came there was no object on whom heaven could open. We read of heaven being opened four times. On the first two occasions as to Sonship (Matt. 3) and angels seen in service (John 1) - it was confined to Him; but

on the occasion before us, as well as on the last (in Rev. 19), through grace it is to us too. Christ having been rejected, heaven cannot open on any object here; but it opens and we see the object there. Heaven does not open on us, but to us. When heaven was opened to Jesus He had no object. He was the object. Heaven opens to us, for the object is given to our hearts there.

He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Now, the principle of this is true for us all. When full of the Holy Ghost (not merely having the Holy Ghost), He so takes possession of all our faculties that nothing else intrudes.

The first effect of this being full of the Holy Ghost is, that Stephen sees only one thing- Christ in heaven. Another thing follows, namely, the capability to persevere. We all know how liable our thoughts are to wander. But why is this? We are not full of the Holy Ghost. When He takes possession of the soul it is not so. How often is a person occupied all day long with his business or his family, or his pleasure, and when he goes to pray for ten minutes, instead of all the fixedness of soul in the presence of God, in come swarming all the thoughts that the heart is on. Now this is a test of the condition of the heart. 'The house is a little empty, and the door left open to Satan. When the Holy Ghost is there it is not so. Then the heart is steadfast in the things of God. And. when there is not this fixedness, we ought to recognize it as failure.

When heaven is opened, Stephen sees a Man in the glory of God. Never had such a thing been seen since the beginning. It was prophesied about, but now there was the thing itself. How came He there -this Man? He came there by perfectly accomplishing redemption. He could never have been there otherwise. The Holy Ghost is the seal of our union with Him. That is what the eye of Stephen was fixed on. Glory is natural to heaven, but Stephen now saw the Son of Man in the glory of God. That is what we see. The One with whom we are united is there for us. Thus we know the perfectness of redemption. Because if He as a man is standing where redemption has brought Him, He gives the Holy Ghost as the seal of our full participation in this place with Him. We have to be filled with the Holy Ghost, in order to know and enjoy it.

" We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The effect on Stephen of seeing Christ in glory as the fruit of accomplished redemption is, that he is changed into the same image. What did Jesus say on the cross? " Father, into Thy hands I commit my Spirit." What did Stephen say? " Lord Jesus receive my spirit." He does not say, "I commit," but 'he can say, " Receive my spirit." Thus we see the same spirit animating Stephen. He has the same unhesitating confidence in the Person he was looking to. What is death here? " Absent from the body and present with the Lord." Thus we see the Spirit of Christ in Stephen as he looks upwards. And when he looks down on those who were stoning him, what does he say? What did Jesus say?- " Father, forgive them." And, in the same spirit, Stephen says, " Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." It is lovely to see that the moral effect-grace-is just the result of looking up steadfastly at Jesus.

We have never been in heaven. But the home of a child is where its father and mother are. And the One we know better than any mortal being is there. The poor thief had his heart on Jesus. " Well," said Jesus, " you will be with me." Jesus had a hold on his heart. So with Stephen -" Lord Jesus receive my spirit." And so in two other passages, which speak of our portion in dying. "We are willing rather to be absent from the body, and present"-in heaven, is it? No; but "present with

the Lord." " I desire to depart and to be -in heaven, does Paul say, "which is far better"? No; but -"to be with Christ, which is far better." It is to be "where the Forerunner is for us entered."

How we should bless God that He has given us a known object in heaven. The Holy Ghost has come down to tell us of all His glory, and so to fix our hearts upon Him. He is, moreover, the seal and assurance that we belong to heaven and not to earth. The Lord give us so to walk, that the Holy Ghost can occupy us with heaven. If we fail, He must occupy us with ourselves; and that is not Christ.



## The Acts of the Apostles

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The Acts of the Apostles are divided essentially into three parts - chap. 1, 12, and 13 to the end. The 11th and 12th may be termed transitional chapters, founded on the event related in the tenth. Chapter 1 gives us that which is connected with the Lord's resurrection; 2-12, that work of the Holy Ghost, of which Jerusalem and the Jews are the center; 13, and the succeeding chapters, the work of Paul; the fifteenth connecting the two, in order to preserve unity in the whole course. We have, indeed, the admission of Gentiles in the second part; but it is in connection with the work going on among the Jews. The latter had rejected the witness of the Holy Ghost, as they had rejected the Son of God; and God prepared a work outside them, in which the Apostle of the Gentiles laid foundations that annulled the distinction between Jew and Gentile, and which unite them- as in themselves equally dead in trespasses and sins - to Christ, the Head of His body, the Church, in heaven.

Let us now examine the chapters in their course. Chapter 1 supplies us with the narrative of that which relates to Jesus risen; and the actions of the apostles before the descent of the Holy Ghost. The Lord's communications present several very interesting points. Jesus, the risen man, acts and speaks by the Holy Ghost, after His resurrection as before it. Precious token of our own position, when the energy of the Holy Ghost, being no longer engaged in restraining and mortifying the flesh, will be entirely consecrated to eternal joy and worship, and to the service committed to us by God. The risen Lord then gives His disciples commandments in connection with the new position He assumes. Their life and their service are to be formed and guided, in view

of His resurrection; a truth of which they had irrefragable proofs. They were still on earth, but they were pilgrims there; having Him in view who had gone before them raised from among the dead. Their relations with Him are still connected with their position on earth. He speaks to them of the kingdom and of that which concerned the kingdom. Jerusalem was the starting point of their ministry, even more than of His own. For He had gathered together the poor of the flock wherever He had found them; but now, resurrection having made Him in power the vessel of the sure mercies of David, He calls Israel afresh to own as Prince and Savior, the One whom they had rejected as the living Messiah on earth. The epistles of Peter are connected with the Gospel in this point of view. Nevertheless, to exercise this ministry, they -were to wait for the accomplishment of the Father's promise, the Holy Ghost with whom they were to be baptized, according to John's testimony, which the Lord assured them should soon take place. This mission of the Holy Ghost, led them at the same time out of the Jewish field of purely temporal promises. The Father's promise of the Holy Ghost was a very different thing from that of the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, by the power of Jehovah, the God of judgment. It was not for them to know the time and season of this restoration, the knowledge of which the Father kept in his own possession, but they should themselves receive the power of the Holy Ghost, who would come down upon them; and they should be witnesses unto Jesus (as they had known Him, and according to the manifestation of Himself after His resurrection), both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth; thus making Jerusalem the center and starting point. Nevertheless,

their testimony was founded on thus beholding their Master and their Lord caught up from their midst, and received into the clouds of heaven which hid Him from their sight. While looking steadfastly upwards, as this took place, two messengers from heaven come and announce to them that He will return in like manner. His manifestation in this lower world, beneath the heavens, is, therefore, here intended. He will return to earth, to be seen of the world. With the knowledge of Jesus taken up out of the world, and to come again into the world, they return to Jerusalem; there to wait for the Holy Ghost who was promised unto them. It is not into Galilee that they go. They are to be witnesses in Jerusalem of the heavenly rights of that Christ who had been rejected on earth by Jerusalem and the Jews.

All this dearly shows the position in which they were placed, and the mission committed to them. But before they receive the Holy Ghost for its fulfillment, some other characteristic circumstances find their place in this chapter. They act, under the guidance of Peter, according to intelligence in the Word, before they are endowed with power from on high. These two things are therefore distinct from each other.

It appears that, although Peter was not directly led of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit put His seal on that which was done in accordance with the word of the Old Testament, understood by the apostle. We have before seen that Christ, after His resurrection, opened the understanding of certain disciples, that they might understand the scriptures. They act according to a Jewish principle. They present the lot to the Lord that He may decide. Nevertheless, the lot was not all; nor was it drawn without making a distinction. Apostolic authority flowed from the nomination of Christ Himself. Intelligence of the scriptures made them understand that which ought to be. The object which the Lord had assigned to their service, narrowed the choice to the little circle of those who could fulfill that object. Their history made them capable, as Jesus had said, of being His witnesses; because they had been with Him from the beginning, and could now testify that this same Jesus whom the Jews had rejected and crucified, was indeed risen from among the dead. Two are chosen, according to these needful qualifications, and the lot falls upon Matthias, who is numbered with the eleven apostles. But they were still without the promised power.

CT 2{Chapter 2 relates the fulfillment of this promise, in answer to the spirit of dependence manifested in their united prayers.

Apostolic authority is exercised in Jerusalem on the Jewish principle, before the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Here there was neither research, nor the exercise of the human mind. The Spirit comes from above, in His own power, to possess and fill the dwelling-place prepared for Him.

This event, important beyond all others, with respect to man's condition here below, has here a very simple character, because there is no question of the causes of this marvelous gift, of the work on which it depends, of the glory with which it is connected, and which it reveals, and of which it is the earnest; we have here only the fact of its power. The disciples "were endued with power from on high."

The form of its appearance, however, is characteristic. On Jesus, the Holy Ghost descended in the shape of a dove, because He was not to make His voice heard in the streets, nor break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. But here it was the power of God in testimony, the

Word; which was like consuming fire, judging all that came before it. Nevertheless, it was in grace, and went beyond the narrow limits of Jewish ordinances, to proclaim the wonderful works of God to every tongue and nation under the sun. It was that mighty wind from heaven, which manifested itself to the disciples, and came upon them in the form of tongues of fire, each one divided into several. This marvel attracts the multitude; and the reality of this divine work is proved, by the fact that persons from numerous countries hear these poor Galileans proclaim to them the wonderful works of God, each one in the language of the country whence he came up to Jerusalem. The Jews, who did not understand these languages, mock; and Peter declares to them in their own tongue, and according to their own prophecies, the true character of that which had taken place. He takes his stand upon the resurrection of Christ, foretold by the prophet-king, and upon His exaltation by the right hand of God. This Jesus, whom they had crucified, had there received the promise of the Father, and shed forth that which produced the effects that they heard and saw. They were therefore to know, assuredly, that God had made that same Jesus whom they had rejected, both Lord and Christ. The character of this testimony will be remarked here. It goes no farther than the affirmation of the fact, that He who had been rejected, is made in heaven Lord and Christ. It begins with Jesus known of the Jews on earth, and establishes the truth of His being raised again, and exalted to the position of Lord. God has done this. The apostle does not even proclaim Him as the Son of God. We shall see that if this is not done by Peter in the Acts, Paul, on the contrary, does it from the first moment of his conversion. Peter states the result at that moment in power, and does not speak of the kingdom. He only reminds them that the Spirit was promised in the last days, and alludes to the terrible day of the coming judgment, which would be preceded by alarming signs and wonders. Without speaking of the fulfillment of the promise of the kingdom, the time of which the Father had kept secret, he puts the fact of the gift of the Holy Ghost in connection with the responsibility of Israel, to whom God still acted in grace, by preaching to them a glorified Christ, and by giving them proofs of His glory, in the gift of the Holy Ghost, made sensible to all. This is the presence of the Holy Ghost according to John 15:26,27. The testimony was addressed to the Jews; nevertheless, it was not confined to them, and it was separative. This separation was founded on a real and moral work, publicly demonstrated by their reception into the new house which God was building. He who came in, finding at the same time the remission of his sins, and participating in this heavenly gift of the Holy Ghost who was there. "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." There was the real change, the admission into the house, and the participation in the Holy Ghost who dwelt in it. We see at once the difference between the moral charge and the reception of the Holy Ghost. This gift depended on being received into the house, built in the name of Jesus. Afterward, the promise is declared to belong to them and to their children, to the house of Israel as such; to them and to their children after them. But it went beyond the limits of God's ancient people. The promise was also to those that were afar off; for it was fulfilled, in connection with faith in Christ, to all who through grace should come into the new house, all whom the Lord, the God of Israel, should call. The call of God characterized the blessing. Israel, with her children, was owned; but a remnant called out from among them. The Gentiles, being called, shared the blessing.

The result of this ineffable gift is related to us. It was not merely a moral change, but a power which set aside all the motives that individualized those who had received it, by uniting them as one soul, and in one mind. They continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, they were in

communion with each other, they broke bread, they spent their time in prayer. The sense of God's presence was powerful among them; and many signs and wonders were wrought by the hands of the apostles. They were united in the closest bonds; no man called anything his own, but all divided their possessions with those that needed. They were daily in the temple, the public resort of Israel for religious exercises, whilst having their own apart, breaking bread at home daily. They ate with joy and gladness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people around them. Thus the assembly was formed; and the Lord added to it daily the remnant of Israel, who were to be saved from the judgments that should fall on a nation which had rejected the Son of God, their, Messiah. God brought into the assembly thus owned of Him by the presence of the Holy Ghost - those whom He spared in Israel. A new order of things had commenced, marked by the presence of the Holy Ghost. Here was found the presence and the house of God, although the old order of things still existed until the execution of the judgment. The assembly was formed, therefore, by the power of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, on the testimony that Jesus, who had been rejected, was raised up to heaven; being made of God both Lord and Christ. It was composed of the Jewish remnant who were to be spared, with the reserve of bringing in Gentiles whenever God should call them.

CT 3{In chap. 3, the Spirit addresses His testimony to the people, by the mouth of Peter. God still acted in patience towards His foolish people, and with more than patience. He acts in grace towards them, as His people, in virtue of the death and intercession of Christ. Alas! in vain. Their unbelieving leaders silenced the word.

The attention of the people is attracted by a miracle that restored strength to a poor lame man, known to all who frequented the temple; and the multitude crowding to behold him, Peter preaches Christ to them. The God of their fathers, said he, had glorified His servant Jesus, whom they had denied, when Pilate would have set Him free. They denied the Holy One and the Just- desired a murderer-killed the Prince of life; but God had raised Him from the dead. And His name, through faith, had healed the impotent man. Now he was willing to believe that they had done it through ignorance, and their rulers also. We see here the Holy Ghost responding to the intercession of Christ. Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" Guilty of the ten thousand talents, the great King remits it them, sending the message of mercy which calls them to repentance. To this, Peter invites them, "Repent ye, and be converted; in order that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus, whom the heaven must receive," he tells them, until the time ordained of God for the restoration which should accomplish all that the prophets had foretold. That is to say, he preaches repentance to the Jews, declaring, that on their repentance, Jesus who had ascended up to heaven, would return; and the fulfillment of all the blessing spoken of by the prophets, should take place on their behalf. The return of Jesus with this object, depended (and still depends) on the repentance of the Jews. Meanwhile, He remains in heaven.

Moreover, Jesus was the Prophet announced by Moses; and whosoever would not hear Him, should be cut off from the people. His voice still sounded in especial grace, by the mouth of His disciples. All the prophets had spoken of these days. They were the children of the prophets, the natural heirs of the blessings which they had announced for Israel, as well as of the promises made to Abraham of a Seed in whom all nations should be blessed. To them also, in consequence, God, having raised up His servant Jesus, had sent Him to bless them, in turning

away every one of them from his iniquities. In a word, they are invited to return by repentance, and enjoy all the promises made to Israel. The Messiah Himself should return from heaven to establish their blessing. But, while they were speaking, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came to lay hands on them, being grieved that they preached the resurrection, which their unbelief and dogmatic system did not receive. They put them in prison, for it was evening. The hope of Israel was set aside; the grace of God spoke in vain, great and patient as it was. Many, however, believed their word: five thousand persons already confessed the Lord Jesus.

We have seen the address which God, in His grace, sent to Israel by the mouth of Peter. We shall now see, not only the reception (already noticed) which it met with from the rulers of the people, but the deliberate answer of their inmost heart, as we may call it. On the morrow, the rulers, the elders, and the scribes assemble at Jerusalem, together with Annas and his kindred; and, setting the apostles in the midst, they demand by what power or in what name they have wrought this miracle on the impotent man. Peter, full of the Holy Ghost, declares-announcing it to all Israel, and with the utmost readiness and entire boldness-that it was by Jesus, whom they had crucified, and whom God had raised from the dead. Thus the question between God and the rulers of Israel was very formally stated, and that by the Spirit of God. Jesus was the Stone rejected by them, the builders, which had become the head of the corner. Salvation could nowhere else be found. No carefulness not to offend, with regard to the adversaries and the rulers. With the people, as such, ignorant and misled, everything to win them. The council recognized them as former companions of Christ; the man who had been healed was there. What could they say or do, in face of the multitude who had witnessed the miracle? They could only exhibit a will in decided opposition to the Lord and His testimony, and yield to the public opinion which was necessary to their own importance, and by which they were governed. With threats, they command the apostles to teach no more in the name of Jesus. We may remark here, that Satan had Sadducean instruments arrayed against the doctrine of the resurrection.

Now, Peter and John allow of no ambiguity with respect to their course. God had commanded them to preach Christ; the prohibition of man had no weight with them. "We cannot," say they, "but speak the things which we have seen and heard." What a position for the rulers of the people! Accordingly, a testimony like this, plainly demonstrates that the leaders of Israel were fallen from the place of interpreters of the will of God. The apostles do not drive them away, do not attack them; God would judge them; but they act immediately on the part of God, and disregard their authority altogether, with respect to the work that God had committed to themselves. The testimony of God was with the apostles, and not with the rulers of the temple.

Peter and John return to their own company-for a separate people was formed; and all, moved by the Holy Ghost (for it was there that God dwelt by His Spirit), lift up their voice to God, the Governor of all things, to acknowledge that this opposition of the rulers was but the accomplishment of the word and the counsels and the purposes of God. These threatenings were but the occasion of asking God to manifest His powers in connection with the name of Jesus. In a word, the world (including the Jews, who formed a part of it in their opposition) had stood up against Jesus, the servant of God, and opposed itself to the testimony rendered to Him. The Holy Ghost is the strength of this testimony, whether in the courage of those who bore witness (ver. 8), or in His presence in the assembly (31), or in the energy of service (33), or in the fruits that are again produced among the saints with a power which makes it manifest that the Holy Ghost has

dominion in their hearts over all the motives that influence man, making them walk by those of which He is the source. It is the energy of the Spirit in the presence of opposition, as before it was His natural fruit in those among whom He dwelt. Fresh persons sell their goods, and lay their price at the apostles' feet; among others, a man whom the Holy Ghost is pleased to distinguish-Barnabas, from the island of Cyprus.

To sum up: this chapter demonstrates, on one side, the condition of the Jews, their rejection of the testimony which was addressed to them in grace; and on the other, the power of the Holy Ghost elsewhere, namely, in the midst of the disciples. Alas! evil shows itself there also. If the mighty Spirit of God is there, the flesh also is there. There are some who wish to have the credit of the devotedness which the Holy Ghost produces, although devoid of that faith in God, and that self-renunciation, which, showing itself in the path of love, constitutes all the value and all the truth of this devotedness. But it only gives fresh occasion to manifest the power of the Spirit of God, the presence of God within, against evil; as the preceding chapter showed His energy outside, and the precious fruits of His grace. God cannot endure evil where He dwells; still less than where He does not dwell. However great the energy of the testimony which He sends to those who are outside, He exercises all patience until there is no remedy. Within, the more His presence is realized and manifested (and even in proportion as that is done), the more He shows Himself intolerant of evil. It cannot be other-wise. He judges in the midst of His saints, where He will have holiness; and that according to the measure of the manifestation of Himself. Ananias and Sapphira, disregarding the presence of the Holy Ghost, whose impulse they pretend to follow, fall down dead before the God whom, in their blindness, they sought to deceive in forgetting Him. God was in the Church. Mighty, though painful, testimony to His presence! Fear pervades every heart, both within and outside. In fact, the presence of God is a serious thing, however great its blessing. The effect of this manifestation of the power of a God present with those whom He acknowledged as His own, was very great. Multitudes joined themselves by faith to the confession of the name of the Lord-at least, from among the people, for the rest dared not. The more position we have in the world, the more we fear the world which gave it us. This miraculous testimony to the power of God was also displayed in a still more remarkable way, so that people came from far to profit by it. The apostles were constantly together in Solomon's porch.

But, alas! the manifestation of the power of God, in connection with the despised disciples of Jesus, and working outside the beaten track in which the self-importance of the high priest and those that were with him found its path, together with the progress made by that which they rejected, and the attention drawn to the apostles by the miracles that were wrought, excite the opposition and jealousy of the rulers, and they put the apostles in prison.

A power different from that of the Holy Ghost in the Church now displays itself. The providence of God, watching over His work, and acting through the minis-try of angels, frustrates all the plans of the unbelieving heads of Israel. An angel of the Lord opens the prison doors, and sends the apostles to pursue their accustomed work in the temple. The officers whom the council send to the prison find it shut and everything in order; but no apostles. Meanwhile, the council are informed that they are in the temple, teaching the people. Con-founded and alarmed, the council send to fetch them; but without violence, fearing the people. For God holds everything in check, until His testimony be rendered, when He will have it rendered. The high priest remonstrates with them on the ground of his former prohibition. Peter's reply is more concise than on the former occasion,

and is rather the announcement of a settled purpose, than the rendering a testimony by reasoning with those who will not hearken, and who showed them-selves to be adversaries. It is the same in substance as what he had said when previously brought before the rulers: God is to be obeyed rather than men-opposed to God, the heads of Israel were merely men. In saying this, all was decided-the opposition between them and God was evident. The God of their fathers had raised up Jesus, whom the rulers of Israel had crucified. The apostles were His witnesses, and so was the Holy Ghost, whom God had given to those who obeyed Him. All was said; the position clearly announced. Peter, in the name of the apostles, formally takes it, on the part of God and of Christ, and in agreement with the seal of the Holy Ghost, who, given to believers, bore witness in the Savior's name. Nevertheless, there is no pride, no self-will. He must obey God. He still takes his place in Israel ("The God," he says, "of our fathers"); but the place of testimony for God in Israel. The advice of Gamaliel prevails to turn aside the purposes of the council; nevertheless they cause the apostles to be beaten, and command them not to preach, and send them away. That they were at a loss what to do, only made the opposition of their will the more evident.

The object of this latter part of the chapter is to show that the providential care of God, whether miraculously by means of angels, or by disposing the hearts of men to accomplish His purposes, was exercised on behalf of the Church-even as the Spirit of God bore testimony in it, and manifested in it His power. The apostles, in no wise terrified, return, full of joy at being counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus; and every day, in the temple or from house to house, they ceased not to teach and to preach the good news of Jesus the Christ. However weak they might be, God Himself maintains His testimony.

Other evils, unhappily, assail the Church. The flesh begins to show itself, in the midst of the power of the Holy Ghost, in the form of the different circumstances of the disciples; and in those things in which grace had been especially manifested, on the side that was connected with the flesh. The Hellenists (Jews of Greek origin) murmur against the Hebrews (natives of Judea), because the widows of the latter were favored, as they imagined, in the distribution of the goods bestowed on the assembly by its members. But here the wisdom given by the Spirit meets the difficulty, profiting by the occasion to give development to the work, according to the necessities that were growing up; and seven persons are named to undertake this business, for which the apostles would not forsake their own work. We also find, in the case of Philip and Stephen, the truth of what Paul says: "Those who have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus."

Observe here, that the apostles put prayer before preaching, in their work; their conflict with the power of evil being more especially carried on in it, as well as their realization of the power of God for the strength and wisdom they needed; and, in order that they might act directly on God's part, it was necessary that grace and unction should be maintained in their hearts.

Observe, also, the grace that discovers itself, under the influence of the Spirit of God, in this matter-the names are all those of Hellenists.

The influence of the word extended, and many priests were obedient to the faith. Thus, until now, the opposition from without, and the evil within, did but minister occasion to the progress of the work of God, by the manifestation of His presence in the midst of the Church. Take especial notice of this fact. It is not only that the Spirit does good by His testimony-but, although evil is there,

without and within, yet where His power displays itself, that evil does but bear witness to the efficacy of His presence.

The energy of the Spirit manifests itself especially in Stephen, who is full of grace and power. The Hellenist Jews oppose him; and not being able to answer him, they accuse him before the council, and in particular of having announced, in the name of Jesus, the destruction of the temple and of the city, and the change of the customs of their law. Here, observe, we see the free power of the Holy Ghost. It is not in the apostles, it is not in the Jews of Palestine. He distributes to whom He will. It is the godly and devoted Hellenist, who renders the last testimony to the heads of the nation. If priests believe on the one side, Jews from without bear testimony on the other, and prepare the way for a still more extended testimony; but at the same time for the definitive rejection of the Jews, morally, as the basis and center of the testimony and of the work of gathering together. Judgment is pronounced on them by the Holy Ghost, through the mouth of Stephen. It is not the apostles who by official authority break off with Jerusalem. The free action of the Holy Ghost anticipates a breach, which did not take place so as to form a part of the scripture narrative. The thing is done by the power of God; and the taking up to heaven of the witness raised up by the Spirit to denounce the Jews as adversaries, and to declare their fallen condition, placed the center of gathering in heaven, according to the Spirit; that heaven to which the faithful witness, who was filled with the Spirit, had gone up. Already, while on earth, he had the appearance of an angel to the eyes of the council who judged him; but the hardness of their hearts would not let them stop in the path of hostility towards the testimony rendered to Christ-a testimony which comes out here in a special way as the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

Stephen, as far as we are told, had not known the Lord during His life on earth. Certainly, he was not appointed, like the apostles, to be a witness of that life. He was simply the instrument of the Holy Ghost, distributing to whom He would.

He traces the history of the Jews from Abraham, called out by the revelation of the God of glory, slow indeed to obey, but at length led by the patient grace of God into Canaan. Nevertheless, he was a stranger in the promised land; and bondage was to be the portion of his descendants, until God interposed in grace. The lot, therefore, of the blessed patriarch, was not that of possessing the promises, but of being a stranger; and that of his descendants, was to be captives until God delivered them with a strong arm. Two persons are prominent in Stephen's account, in connection with the goodness of God towards Israel at this period- Joseph and Moses.

Israel had rejected them both - given up Joseph to the Gentiles, rejected Moses as judge and leader. It was in cases which the Jews could not deny or object to; the history of Christ too, who, also, at the time appointed of God, will indeed be the Redeemer of Israel. This is the substance of Stephen's argument. There are two other elements in his discourse. The Jews had always rejected the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the prophets, who had spoken of the Christ; whom they had now betrayed and slain. Besides this, according to Moses, they had worshipped false gods, even from the time of their deliverance out of Egypt; a sin which, however great the long-suffering of God, would cause them to be carried away, now that they had filled up the measure of their iniquity, beyond the Babylon which had already been their punishment.

God Himself had been, as it were, a stranger in the land of Canaan; and if Solomon built Him a house, it was in order that the Holy Ghost might declare that He who had heaven for His throne,



and earth for His footstool, whose dominion was universal, would not dwell in houses of stone which was the creation of His own hands. Now this is the summing-up of their history; connected thus with the last days of their judgment. They always resisted the Holy Ghost, as they had always disobeyed the law.

Their conscience convicted, and their heart hardened, the members of the council were filled with rage, and gnashed upon him with their teeth. But if Stephen was to bear this definitive testimony against Israel, he was not so much to render the testimony, as to place it in its true position, by a living expression of that which a believer was, in virtue of the presence of the Holy Ghost here below dwelling in him.

Such are the elements of this touching and striking scene, which forms an epoch in the history of the Church. The heads of Israel gnash their teeth with rage, against the mighty and convincing testimony of the Holy Ghost, with which Stephen was filled. Let us follow out the effect as to himself. He looks steadfastly up into heaven; now fully opened to faith. It is thither that the Spirit directs the mind; making it capable of fixing itself there. He reveals to one who is thus filled with Himself, the glory of God on high, and Jesus in that glory at the right hand of God, in the place of power. Afterward, he gives the force of the testimony borne in the presence of the power of Satan, the murderer.

" I see," said Stephen, " the heavens opened." Such, then, is the position of the true believer heavenly upon the earth. - in presence of the world that rejected Christ, the murderous world; the believer, alive in death, sees by the power of the Holy Ghost into heaven, and the Son of Man at the right hand of God. Stephen does not say, " Jesus." The Spirit characterizes Him as the Son of Man. Precious testimony to Man! It is not to the glory that He testifies, but to the Son of man in the glory; heaven being open to him.

With regard to the progress of the testimony, it is not now, Jesus is the Messiah, and He will return if you repent (which, however, does not cease to be true), but it is the Son of Man in heaven, which is open to the man that is filled with the Holy Ghost, that heaven to which God is about to transport the soul, as it is the hope and the testimony of those that are His. The patience of God was doubtless still acting in Israel; but the Holy Ghost opened new scenes and new hopes to the believer. In principle, Stephen much resembles Jesus - a fact precious in grace to us - except that Jesus did not need a vision to present an object to His faith. But " Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit," is found in " Lord, Jesus, receive my spirit." And the affection for Israel which expresses itself in intercession, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," is found again in " Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"; save that, here the Holy Ghost does not affirm that they are ignorant. Observe also, that which brings out more clearly the especial position of Stephen, the vessel of the Spirit's testimony, as far as it was definitively rejected by the Jews. Heaven is open to Jesus, the Holy Ghost descends upon Him, and He is acknowledged the Son of God. Heaven opens on Jesus, and the angels descend upon the Son of Man. He has no object presented to Him; He is Himself the object on which heaven is gazing. Heaven will open at the end of the age, and Jesus Himself come forth on the white horse, i.e., in judgment and in triumph. But here heaven opens, and the disciple (in principle, the Church) full of the Holy Ghost sees into it; and there beholds Jesus at the right hand of God. Jesus is still the object, but that of the believing man who is filled with the Holy Ghost; so that, as to the object of faith and the position of the believer,

this scene is definitively characteristic. Rejected - and rejected by the Jews -like Jesus, partaking in His sufferings, and filled with His Spirit of grace, his eyes are fixed on high, on the heaven which the Holy Ghost opens to him, and he sees the Son of Man there, ready to receive his spirit. The rest will come later; but it is not only Jesus whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution, but also the souls of His believing people, until the moment of resurrection and the whole church, in spirit, detached from the world that rejected Him and from Judaism, that opposed the testimony of the Holy Ghost. The latter is no longer at all recognized; there is no longer any room for the long-suffering of God towards it; its place is taken by heaven, and by the Church, which follows her Master there in spirit, while waiting for His return.

Saul was present at Stephen's death, and consenting to it.

This is the end of the first phasis of the Church of God; its history in immediate connection with Jerusalem and the Jews, as the center to which the work of the apostles related "beginning at Jerusalem"; carried on, however, in a believing remnant, but inviting Israel, as such, to come into it, as being nationally the object of the love and care of God. Some accessory events follow, which enlarge the sphere of labor, and maintain the unity of the whole, previously to the revelation of the call of the Gentiles as such, properly speaking, and of the Church as one body, independent of Jerusalem, and apart from the earth. These events are the work of Philip; the conversion of Samaria, of the Ethiopian, of Cornelius, with Peter's vision that took place after the vocation of Saul, who is brought in by a Jew of good report among the Jews, as such; the labors of Peter in all the land of Canaan; and finally, the connection established between the apostles at Jerusalem and the converted Gentiles at Antioch; the opposition of Herod the false king of the Jews, and the care which God still takes of Peter, and the judgment of the king. After-wards comes the direct work among the Gentiles, having Antioch for its starting point; already prepared by the conversion of Paul, through means and with a revelation. that were quite peculiar. Let us follow the details of these chapters.

After the death of Stephen persecution breaks out. The victory, gained by a hatred the accomplishment of whose object was allowed by Providence, opens the flood-gates to the violence of the Jewish leaders; enemies to the Gospel. The barrier that restrained them once broken, the waves of passion overflow on all sides. People are often held back by a little remaining con-science, by habits, by a certain idea of the rights of others; but when the dykes are broken, hatred (the spirit of murder in the heart) satiates itself, if God permit, by actions that show what man is when left to himself. But all this hatred accomplishes the will of God, in which man would, perhaps, otherwise have failed, and which, in some respects, he could not or ought not even to have executed; that is to say, the will of God in sovereign-judgment. The dispersion of the church was Israel's judgment; a judgment which the disciples would have found it difficult to declare and to execute, by the communication of greater light; for whatever may be the blessing and energy in the sphere where the Spirit of God acts, the ways of God in directing all things, are in His own hand.

The whole Church, then, except the apostles, is scattered. It is questionable, also, that the apostles did right in remaining, and whether a more simple faith would not have made them go away, and thus have spared the Church many a conflict and many a difficulty in connection with the fact that Jerusalem continued to be a center of authority. The Lord had even said, with Israel in

view, " When they persecute you in one city, flee into another;" and after His resurrection He commands them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, beginning at Jerusalem, but unto all nations. This last mission fell into the hands of Paul; being placed on a new footing. The 'Word tells us nothing of the accomplishment of this mission of the twelve towards the Gentiles. God is mighty in Peter towards the circumcision, and in Paul towards the Gentiles. It may be said that the twelve were not persecuted. It is possible, and I say nothing decided on the point; but it is certain, that the passages which I have quoted have no fulfillment in the Bible history, and that another arrangement, another order of things took place, in lieu of that which the Lord prescribed, and that Jewish prejudices had in fact an influence, resulting from this concentration at Jerusalem, from which even Peter had the greatest difficulty to free himself.

Those who were scattered abroad preached the Word everywhere, but only to the Jews, before some of them arrived at Antioch (chap. 11:19).

Philip, however, went down to Samaria, and preached Christ to them, and wrought miracles. They all give heed to him, and are even baptized. A man who until then had bewitched them with sorcery, so that they had said he was the great power of God, even he also submits to a power which eclipsed his false marvels, and, convinced him so much the more of its reality, as he was conscious of the falseness of his own. The apostles make no difficulty with regard to Samaria. The history of Jesus must have enlightened them in that respect. Moreover, the Samaritans were not Gentiles. Still, it was a Hellenist who preached the Gospel there.

A new truth comes out here, in connection with the regular progress of the Church; namely, that the apostles conferred the Holy Ghost by means of prayer and the laying on of hands: a very important fact in the history of God's dealings. Moreover, Samaria -was a conquest which all the energy of Judaism had never been able to make. It was a new and splendid triumph for the Gospel. The spiritual subjugation of the world appertained to the Church. Jerusalem was set aside; its day was over in that respect.

The presence of the power of the Holy Ghost acting in Peter, preserves the Church as yet from the entrance of hypocrites, the instruments of Satan. The great and powerful fact that God was there, manifested itself, and made the darkness evident which circumstances had concealed. Carried along by the strong current, Simon had yielded, through his intelligence, to the authority of Christ, whose name was glorified by Philip's ministry. But the true condition of his heart, the desire for his own glory, the complete opposition between his moral condition and all principle, all light from God, betrays itself in presence of the fact, that a man can impart the Holy Ghost. He desires to buy this power with money. "What a thought! It is thus that the unbelief which appears quite to pass away, so that the things of God are outwardly received, betrays itself by something which, to one who has the Spirit, is so grossly contrary to God, that its true character is manifest even to a child taught by God Himself.

Samaria is thus brought into connection with the center of the work at Jerusalem, where the apostles still were. Already, the Holy Ghost being bestowed on the Samaritans, was an immense step in the development of the Church. Doubtless they were circumcised, they acknowledged the law, although the temple had in a certain degree lost its importance. The body of believers being more consolidated, and so far as they still held to Jerusalem, it was a positive gain; for Samaria, by receiving the Gospel, entered into connection with her ancient rival, as much as the apostles

themselves were so, and submitted to her. Probably the apostles, during that time of persecution, did not go to the temple. God had opened a wide door to them outside, and thus made them ample amends in their work, for the success of the rulers of Israel who had stopped it in Jerusalem: for the energy of the Spirit was with them. To sum up: that which is presented here, is the free energy of the Spirit in others than the apostles, and outside Jerusalem, which had rejected it; and the relations maintained with the apostles and Jerusalem, by their central action, and the authority and power with which they were invested.

Having accomplished their work, and themselves evangelized several villages of the Samaritans, Peter and John return to Jerusalem. The work outside goes on, and by other means. Philip, who presents the character of prompt, unquestioning obedience in simplicity of heart, is called to leave his prosperous work, with which all his personal importance (if he had been seeking it) was connected, and in which he was surrounded with respect and affection. "Go," said the angel of the Lord, "toward the south, unto the way that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza." It was a desert. Philip's ready obedience does not think of the difference between Samaria and Gaza, but of the Lord's will; and he goes. The Gospel now extends to the proselytes from among the Gentiles, and makes its way to the center of Abyssinia. The queen's treasurer is admitted among the disciples of the Lord, by baptism, which sealed his faith in the testimony of the prophet Isaiah; and he goes on his way, rejoicing in the salvation which he had taken a toilsome journey, from a far country, to seek in Jerusalem. Beautiful picture of the grace of the Gospel! He carries away with him, and to his home, that which grace had bestowed on him in the wilderness—that which his wearisome journey to Jerusalem had not procured him. The poor Jews, who had driven away the testimony from Jerusalem, are outside everything. The Spirit of the Lord carries Philip far away, and he is found at Azotus; for all the power of the Lord is at the service of the Son of man, for the accomplishment of the testimony to His glory. Philip evangelizes all the cities unto Caesarea. A work and a workman of another character, begin now to dawn upon the scene.

We have seen the inveterate opposition of the heads of Israel to the testimony of the Holy Ghost, their obstinacy in repelling the patient grace of God. Israel rejected all the work of the God of grace in their behalf. Saul makes himself the apostle of their hatred to the disciples of Jesus, to the servants of God. Not content with searching them out at Jerusalem, he asks for letters from the high priest, that he may go and lay hands on them in foreign cities. When Israel is in full opposition to God, he is the ardent missionary of their malice-in ignorance, no doubt; but the willing slave of his Jewish prejudices.

Thus occupied, he approaches Damascus. There, in the full career of an unbroken will, the Lord Jesus stops him. A light from heaven shines round about him, and envelopes him in its dazzling brightness. He falls to the earth, and hears a voice saying unto him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The glory which had thrown him to the ground, left no doubt-accompanied as it was by that voice—that the authority of God was revealed in it. His will broken, his pride overthrown, his mind subdued, he asks, "Who art thou, Lord?" The authority of the One who spoke was unquestionable; Saul's heart was subject to that authority: and it was Jesus. The career of his self-will was ended forever. But, moreover, the Lord of glory was not only Jesus—He also acknowledged the poor disciples whom Saul desired to carry prisoners to Jerusalem, as being Himself. How many things were revealed in those few words! The Lord of glory declared Himself to be Jesus, whom Saul persecuted: the disciples were one with Himself. The Jews were at open war

with the Lord Himself. The whole system which they maintained, all their law, all their official authority, all the ordinances of God, had not prevented their being at open war with the Lord. Saul himself, armed with their authority, found himself occupied in destroying the name of the Lord and His people from off the earth; a terrible discovery, completely overwhelming his soul: all-powerful in its effects, not leaving one moral element of his soul standing before its strength. Extenuation was fruitless; zeal for Judaism was zeal against the Lord. The authorities constituted of God, surrounded with the halo of centuries of honor enhanced by the present calamities of Israel, who had now nothing but her religion; these authorities had but sanctioned and favored his efforts against the Lord. The Jesus whom they rejected was the Lord. The testimony which they endeavored to suppress, was His testimony. What a change for Saul! What a new position, even for the apostles themselves who remained at Jerusalem, when all were dispersed; faithful in spite of the opposition of the rulers of Israel, but themselves in connection with the nation.

Other important points are brought out here. Saul had not known Jesus on earth. He had not a testimony because he had known Him from the beginning, declaring that He was made Lord and Christ. It is not a Jesus who goes up into heaven where He is out of sight; but the Lord who appears to him for the first time in heaven, and who announces to him that He is Jesus. A glorious Lord is the only one whom he knows. His gospel (as he expresses himself) is the gospel of the glory. If he had known Christ after the flesh, he knows Him no more. But there is yet another important principle found here. The Lord of glory has His members on the earth. "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." It was Himself; those poor disciples were bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh. He looked upon them as His own flesh. The glory, and the oneness of the Church with Jesus, its Head in heaven, are the truths connected with the conversion of Saul, with the revelation of Jesus, with the creation of faith in his heart, and that in a way which overthrew Judaism in all its bearings in his soul; and that in a soul in which this Judaism formed an integral part of its existence, and gave it its whole character.

Nevertheless, he comes into the Church by the usual Means; like Jesus in Israel, humbly taking His place there where the truth of God was established by His power. Blind for three days, and fully engrossed - as was natural - with such a discovery, he neither eats nor drinks; and afterward, besides the fact of his blindness, which was a quiet, continual, and unequivocal proof of the truth of that which had happened to him, his faith must have been confirmed by the arrival of Ananias, who can declare to him from the Lord that which had happened to him, although he had not been out of the city; a circumstance so much the more striking, because in a vision, Saul had seen him come and restore his sight; and this Ananias does. Saul receives sight, and is baptized. He takes food, and is strengthened. The conversation of Jesus with Ananias is remarkable; as showing with what distinct evidence the Lord revealed Himself in those days, and the holy liberty and confidence with which the true and faithful disciple conversed with Him. Ananias reasons with the Lord in regard to Saul, and Jesus answers him by declaring that Saul is a chosen vessel to bear His name before Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel; and that He will show him how great things he must suffer for His sake.

Saul makes no delay in confessing and declaring his faith; and that which he says is eminently worthy of notice. He preaches in the synagogue that Jesus is the Son of God. It is the first time that this is done. That He was exalted to the right hand of God - that He was Lord and Christ - had been already preached; the rejected Messiah was exalted on high. But here it is the simple

doctrine as to His personal glory; Jesus is the Son of God.

In the words of Jesus to Ananias, the children of Israel come last.

Saul does not yet begin his public ministry. It is, so to speak, only the expression of his personal faithfulness, his zeal, his faith, among those that surrounded him, with whom he was naturally connected. It was not long before opposition manifested itself, and the disciples send him away, letting him down by the wall in a basket; and through the agency of Barnabas, a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, whom grace had taught to value the truth with regard to the new disciple, the dreaded Saul, found his place among the disciples, even at Jerusalem. Wonderful triumph of the Lord! Singular position for himself there, had he not been absorbed by the thought of Jesus. At Jerusalem he reasons with the Hellenists. He was one of them. The Hebrews were not his natural sphere. They seek to put him to death; the disciples bring him down to the sea and send him to Tarsus, the place of his birth. The triumph of grace has silenced under God's hand the adversary; the assemblies are left in peace, and edify themselves; walking in the fear of God and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, the two great elements of blessing; and their numbers increase. Persecution accomplishes the designs of God. The peace which He grants, gives opportunity for ripening in grace, and in the knowledge of Himself.

Peace being established through the goodness of God - sole resource of those who truly wait upon Him, in submission to His will - Peter passes throughout all parts of Israel. The Spirit of God relates this circumstance here, between the conversion of Saul and his apostolic work, to show us, I doubt not, the apostolic energy in Peter existing at the very time when the call of this new apostle was to bring in new light, and a work that was new in many important respects; thus sanctioning as His own, and in its place, that which had been done before; whatever progress in accomplishment His counsels might make; and in order to show us the introduction of the Gentiles into the Church as she was at first founded by His grace in the beginning; preserving thus the unity of the Church, and putting His seal upon this work of heavenly grace.

The Church existed. The doctrine of her oneness, as the body of Christ, outside the world, was not yet made known. The reception of Cornelius did not announce it, although paving its way.

The undiminished power of Peter - his apostolic authority - in the midst of which, the entrance of Cornelius into the spiritual house of God takes place, in connection with Peter's ministry; and that, after the calling of Saul, which opened a new perspective, all these facts taken together, confirmed that which went before; the original work was in no wise set aside to bring in another. Nevertheless, Peter's vision did not reveal the Church, neither did the admission of Cornelius. They only showed that in every nation he who feared God was acceptable to Him; in a word, that the favor of God was not limited to the Jews; and that there was no need of becoming a Jew, in order to share the salvation that is in Christ. The oneness of the body united to its Head in heaven was not brought out by this event; but it prepared the way for the promulgation of that truth, since in fact, the Gentile was admitted on earth without becoming a Jew. The thing was done on earth individually, although the doctrine itself was not taught. Repentance unto life eternal was granted to the Gentiles as such. The Holy Ghost; the seal of Christian blessing - the Jews - the fruit of redemption accomplished by Jesus - was given to Gentiles as to Jews. The latter might be astonished at it; but there was no resisting God. Through grace, they could praise Him for it.

From 9:32, to 11:18, we find then the power of the Spirit of God with Peter in the midst of Israel, and the admission of Gentiles into the earthly assembly, without their becoming Jews, or submitting to the ancient order which was passing away; the seal of the Spirit put upon them, and the heads of the assembly at Jerusalem, and the most ardent of the circumcision accepting the fact as the will of God, and praising Him while submitting to it, in spite of their prejudices. The door, then, is open to the Gentiles. This was an immense step. The precious doctrine of the Church had yet to be announced.

Peter had proclaimed the call of the Gentiles in his first discourse; but to realize it, and give form to its conditions, in connection with that which already existed historically, required the intervention, the authority, and the revelation of God. Progress is evident, through the patient grace of God; for it was not the wisdom of man. Altogether Jewish at the commencement, the people of Jerusalem were taught that Jesus would return if they repented. This testimony of grace is rejected, and, in the person of him who bore it, the first-fruits of the Church go up to heaven. The Holy Ghost, in His sovereign liberty, acts in Samaria and among the proselytes. The Church being scattered by the persecution, Saul is brought in by the revelation of a glorious Christ, and by a testimony from His mouth which implies the union of saints on earth with Himself, their Head, in heaven, as only one body. After this, a pious Gen-tile, converted, but still a Gentile, receives faith in Christ and the Holy Ghost; so that, marked out by this testimony-this seal from God Himself to his faith-the apostle and the disciples who were the most attached to Judaism receive him; Peter by baptizing him, and the others by accepting Peter's act. Let us notice here, that salvation is not only the fact of eternal life, but that of complete deliverance to present us to Himself, which God grants to every one who has life through the operation of God. Finally, the seal of the Holy Ghost upon believing in Jesus, is the ground on which those whom God accepts are acknowledged. That is to say, it is the full evidence for man.

The nineteenth verse of chap. 11 begins the narration of the new order of things by which the ministry of Paul is distinguished. Among those who were scattered abroad on the occasion of Stephen's death, and who went as far even as Antioch preaching the Lord Jesus, there were some, who, being men of Cyprus and Cyrene, were more habitually connected with Greeks; they addressed the Greeks, therefore, in this ancient capital of the Seleucid, and many received their word and turned to the Lord. The church at Jerusalem; already prepared through the conversion of Cornelius,- by which God had shown them the entering in of the Gentiles, accept this event also; and send Barnabas - himself a man of Cyprus-to Antioch. A good man, and filled with the Holy Ghost, his heart is full of joy on seeing this work of the grace of God, and much people is added unto the Lord.

As yet, all is linked with the work at Jerusalem, although extending now to the Gentiles. Barnabas, apparently, no longer sufficient for the work, and at all events, led of God, departs in search of Saul, who had gone to Tarsus, when they sought to kill him at Jerusalem. And these two assemble with the Church at Antioch, teaching much people. Still, everything takes place in connection with Jerusalem, whence some prophets come down and announce a, famine. The links between the flock and Jerusalem as a center, are shown and strengthened by the sending of relief to that religious metropolis of Judaism, and of Christianity looked at as having its commencement in the Jewish remnant who believed in Jesus as the Christ.

Barnabas and Saul are themselves charged with this service, and go up to Jerusalem to accomplish it. This circumstance carries us back to- Jerusalem, where the Spirit has still something to show us of the ways of God.

CT 12{Chapter 12. Herod, to please the Jews, begins to persecute the assembly in that city. We may remark here, that the company of believers at Antioch -are also called the assembly (church) which is the case no where else as yet. All were accounted as forming a part integrally of the work at Jerusalem, even as all Jews were in connection with that center of their religious system, how-ever numerous their synagogues, or great the influence of their rabbis. Every Jew, as such, sprang from Jerusalem. Barnabas and Saul assemble with the church at Antioch: a local assembly, conscious of its existence-, distinct from, while connected with, Jerusalem-had been formed; and churches without a metropolis begin to appear.

To return to Jerusalem. Herod, an impious king, and in certain-respects a type of the adversary-king at the end, begins to persecute the faithful remnant at Jerusalem. It is not only the Jews who are opposed to them; the king - whom, as Jews, they detested - unites himself to them by his hatred to the heavenly testimony, thinking to win their favor by this means. He kills James, and proceeds to take Peter and put him in prison. But God preserves His servant, and delivers him by His angel, in answer to the prayers of the saints. He allows some to be slain - happy witnesses to their heavenly portion in Christ- and preserves others to carry on the testimony on earth, in spite of all the power apparently irresistible, of the enemy; a power which the Lord baffles by the manifestation of that which belongs to Him and to Him alone, and which He employs when He will and how He will. The poor saints, although praying fervently, can hardly believe when Peter comes to the door, that God has really granted their prayer. The desire presents itself sincerely to God, faith can scarcely reckon upon Him.

Herod, confounded by the power of Him whom he resisted, condemns the instruments of his hatred to death, and goes away to the Gentile seat of his authority. There displaying His glory, and accepting the adulatory homage of the people, as though he were a god, God Himself smites him, and shows that He is the Governor of this world, however great the pride of man. But the word of God extends through His grace; and Barnabas and Saul having fulfilled their ministry, return to Antioch, taking with them John whose surname was Mark.

CT 13{Chapter 13. We come now to the beginning of the direct history of this work, new, in some important respects that are connected with Paul's mission by the immediate intervention of the Holy Ghost. It is not now Christ upon earth, who by His personal authority sends forth the twelve; afterward endowed with the power of the Holy Ghost from on high, to announce His exaltation to heaven and His return; and to gather under the standard of the Cross those who should believe in Him.

Paul has seen Christ in glory, and therefore has united himself to the church already assembled; but here there is no Christ personally present to send him forth as the witness of His presence on earth, or of His rejection as One whom Paul had known on earth. The Holy Ghost Himself sends, him, not from Jerusalem, but from a Greek city, in which in free and sovereign power, He had converted and gathered together some Gentiles, doubtless some Jews likewise, but forming an assembly whose existence was first marked by the fact that the Gospel had been preached to the Greeks.



In chap. 13 we find ourselves again in the assembly at Antioch, and in the, midst of the independent action of the Spirit of God. Certain prophets are there; Saul among them. They fasted, and were occupied with the service of the Lord. The Holy Ghost commands them to separate unto Him Barnabas and Saul for the work to which He had called them. Such was the source of the ministry of these two. Assuredly it bore testimony to Him in whom they had believed, and whom Saul, at least, had seen, and it was under His authority they acted; but the positive and obvious source of their mission was the Holy Ghost. It was the Holy Ghost who called them to the work. They were sent forth (ver. 4) by Him; an all important principle as to the Lord's ways upon earth. We come out from Jerusalem, from Judaism, from the jurisdiction of the apostles nominated by the Lord while He was on earth. Christ is no longer known after the flesh, as Saul (when become Paul) expresses it. They have to strive against the Judaic spirit - to show consideration for it, as far as it is sincere; but the sources of their work are not now in connection with the system which that work no longer knows as a starting-point. A glorious Christ in heaven, who owns the disciples as members of His body, as Himself on high; a mission from the Holy Ghost on earth, which only knows His energy as the source of action and authority (bearing testimony of course to Christ); this is the work which now opens, and which is committed to Barnabas and Saul. Barnabas, it is true, forms a link between the two. He was Himself a Hellenist of Cyprus; it was he who presented Saul to the apostles, after his conversion near Damascus. Barnabas had more largeness of heart, was more open to the testimonies of divine grace, than even the apostles and the others who had been nurtured in a strict Judaism; for God, in His grace, provides for everything. There is always a Barnabas, as well as a Nicodemus, a Joseph, and even a Gamaliel, whenever needed. The actings of God in this respect, are remarkable in all this history. Would that we trusted only more entirely, while by the Spirit doing His will, to Him who disposes all things.

Nevertheless, even this link is soon broken. It was still in connection with the " old cloth," the " old bottles;" blessed as the man himself was, to whom the Holy Ghost rendered so fine a testimony, and in whom we see an exquisite character. He determined to take his kinsman also (see Col. 4:10), Mark; Mark returns to Jerusalem almost from the beginning of the work of evangelization in the Gentile regions; and Saul continues his work with such instruments as God formed under his hand, or a Silas who chose to remain at Antioch, when the particular service which had been committed to him at Jerusalem being ended, he might naturally have returned thither with Judas.

Sent forth thus by the Holy Ghost, Barnabas and Saul, with John Mark as their ministering servant, go away to Seleucia, then to Cyprus, and being at Salamis, a town in that island, they preach the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. Whatever therefore might be the energy of the Holy Ghost, He acts in connection with the counsels and the promises of God; and that with perfect patience. To the end of his life, notwithstanding the opposition of the Jews, vexatious and implacable as it might be, the apostle continues - as the ways and counsels of God in Christ had commanded - to the Jew first, and then to the Gentiles. Once brought in where truth and grace were fully revealed in the church, there was no difference between Jew and Gentile. God is one in His character; sin is one in its character, and is opposed to God; the foundation of truth changes not, and the oneness of the church is connected with the height of grace in God and comes down to the deep totality of sin, in which that grace has displayed itself. But with regard to the ways of God upon earth, the Jews had the first place, and the Spirit, who is above all, can therefore act in full liberty in recognizing all the ways of God's sovereignty even as Christ, who made Himself a

servant in grace; submitted to them all; and now being exalted on high, unites all these various ways and dispensations in Himself as head and center. A glory to which the Holy Ghost bears witness, in order to accomplish it here below, as far as may be, by grace.

This does not prevent his giving a distinct and positive judgment as to the condition of the Jews when the occasion requires it.

Even here, at the commencement of his ministry, the two things are presented together. We have already noticed that he begins with the Jews. Having traversed the island, he arrives at the seat of government; there, the proconsul, a prudent and thoughtful man, asks to hear the Gospel. Beset already by a false prophet, who took advantage of the felt need of a soul that, while ignorant, was earnestly desirous of something that could fill up the void it experienced in the nothingness of pagan ceremonies, and in its disgusting immorality; he sends for Barnabas and Saul. Elymas withstands them. This was natural. He would lose his influence with the governor if the latter received the truth that Paul preached. Now Elymas was a Jew. Saul (who is henceforth named Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost, pronounces on him the sentence, on God's part, of temporary blindness; executed at the moment by the mighty hand of God. The proconsul, struck with the power that accompanied his word, submits to the gospel of God. I do not doubt that in this wretched Bar-jesus we see a picture of the Jews at the present time, smitten with blindness for a season; because jealous of the influence of the gospel. In order to fill up the measure of their iniquity, they withstood its being preached to the Gentiles. Their condition is judged; their history given in the mission of Paul. Opposed to grace, and seeking to destroy its effect upon the Gentiles, they have been smitten with blindness; nevertheless, only for a season.

Departing from Paphos, they go into Asia Minor, and now Paul definitively takes his place, in the eyes of the historian of the Spirit. His whole company are only those who were with Paul, an expression in Greek which makes Paul everything (ο■ παρ■ Πα■λον). When they reached Perga, John Mark leaves them, to return to Jerusalem: a milder and more moderate form of the Judaic influence, but showing that wherever it exercised itself, if it did not produce opposition, it at least took away the vigor needful for the work of God, as it was now unfolding among the Gentiles. Barnabas, however, goes farther, and still continues with Paul in the work. The latter, when they were come to Antioch, again begin, first with the Jews. He goes on the Sabbath day into the Synagogue, and, on the invitation of the ruler, pro-claims Jesus, rejected by the Jews at Jerusalem, and crucified, but by the power of God raised up again, and through whom they might be justified from all things; from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. Here, the testimony of Paul is very like that of Peter, and is very particularly allied to the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews, with regard to the character of the testimony: verse 33 is quite Peter's testimony in Acts 3. In ver. 31, he sets the twelve distinctly in the place of testimony to Israel, as those who had personally accompanied the Lord, and who had seen Him after His resurrection; "they are," he says, "His witnesses unto the people." But Paul's testimony which-as to the fulfillment of the promises by the coming of Christ, and the mercies of David, made sure in His resurrection - returns into the order of Peter's preaching; departs from it in an important point. He says nothing of God's having made Jesus both Lord and Christ. He announces that the remission of sins is proclaimed in His name; exhorting his hearers not to neglect this great salvation.

Many follow Paul and Barnabas in consequence of this announcement, and are exhorted by them to continue in the grace which had been proclaimed to them. The mass of the people come together the following Sabbath to hear the word of God; the Gentiles having besought that this gospel of grace might be preached to them again. Their souls had found more truth in the doctrine of the one only God, acknowledged by the Jews, than in the senseless worship of the Pagans, which, to an awakened and unsatisfied mind, no longer presented any food that could appease it: a mind that was too active to allow the imagination to amuse itself with ceremonies that had no charms but for ignorance, which could be captivated by the pageantry of festivals, to which it was accustomed, and which gratified the religious element of the flesh.

Still, the coldly acknowledged doctrine of one only true God, although it set the mind free from all that shocked it in the senseless and immoral mythology of Paganism, did not at all feed the soul as did the powerful testimony of a God acting in grace, borne by the Holy Ghost through the mouth of messengers whom He had sent. A testimony which, while faithful to the promises made to the Jews, yet addressed itself as a "word of salvation" (ver. 26), to all those who feared God. But the Jews, jealous of the effect of the Gospel which thus met the soul's need, in a way that their system could not, withstand Paul and blaspheme the doctrine- of Christ. Paul, therefore, and Barnabas turn boldly to the Gen-tiles. It was a decisive and important moment. These two messengers of the Holy Ghost quote the testimony of the Old Testament with regard to God's purpose to-wards the Gentiles, of whom Christ was to be the light; a purpose which they accomplished according to the intelligence in it that the Spirit gave them, and by His: power. The passage is in Isaiah (chap. 49), where the opposition of Israel that made the testimony of Christ useless to themselves, gave God occasion to declare that this work was but a small thing, and that Christ should be a light to the Gentiles, and great, even to the ends of the earth.

The Gentiles rejoice at the testimony, and the election believe. The word spreads through all the region. The Jews now show themselves in their true character of enemies to the Lord and to His truth. With regard to them, Paul and Barnabas shake off the dust of their feet against them. The disciples, whatever might be their difficulties, were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost. Difficulties are no hindrance to this. The position here taken by the Jews-which, moreover, we find every-where-makes us understand what a source of grief and pain they must have been to the apostle.

CT 14{Chapter 14. Their missionary labors continue in Iconium, with the same opposition from the Jews who, incapable themselves of the work, stir up the Gentiles against those who are performing it. As long as it was only opposition, it was but a motive for perseverance, but being warned in time of an assault that was planned against them, they depart to Lystra and Derbe. There, having healed a cripple, they excite the idolatrous respect of these poor pagans; but filled with horror they turn them from their error by the energy of the Holy Ghost, faithful to the testimony of their God. Hither also the Jews follow them. Now, if man will not ally himself with the idolatry of the heart, and accept exaltation from men, the power of his testimony which they began by admiring, as long as they thought they could elevate man and acquire importance through their flatteries being accepted, ends by exciting the hatred of their hearts. The Jews bring this hatred into action, and stir up the people, who leave Paul for dead. But he rises up and re-enters the city, remaining tranquilly there another day; and on the morrow he goes with Barnabas to Derbe. Afterward they revisit the cities through which they had passed, and at Lystra, Iconium, and

Antioch, they confirm the disciples in the faith, and teach them that they must pass through tribulation to inherit the kingdom. They appoint elders for them, and passing through some other cities to the place where they had disembarked,, they return to Antioch, from whence they had been commended to God for the work; causing great joy to the disciples there, in that the door of faith was open to the Gentiles. This is the first formal mission among the Gentiles, where churches are formed, elders appointed by the Apostles, and the hostility of the Jews to the grace of God, outside their nation and independently of their law, is distinctly marked. The work assumes a positive character among the Gentiles, and the energy of the Holy Ghost displays itself to this end, constituting and forming them into a Church, establishing local rulers in it, outside and independently of the Church at Jerusalem.

A question concerning this (i.e. whether it could be allowed) is soon raised at Antioch. It is no longer the opposition of the Jews hostile to the Gospel, but the bigotry of those who had embraced it, desiring to impose the law on the converted Gentiles. But the grace of God provides for this difficulty also.

CT 15{Chapter 15 contains the account of this. Certain persons come from Jerusalem, where all was still going on in connection with the requirements of the law; and they seek to impose these requirements on the Gentiles in this new center and starting point of the work, which was formed at Antioch. It was the will of God that this matter should be settled, not by the apostolic authority of Paul, or by the action of His spirit at Antioch only, which might have divided the church, but by means of conference at Jerusalem so as to maintain union, whatever might be the prejudices of the Jews. The ways of God in this respect are remarkable, showing the way in which He has held a high hand in grace over the church in reading the Epistle to the Galatians, we see that in reality things were in question that touched Christianity to the quick, that affected its very foundations, the deep principles of grace, of the rights of God, of the sinful condition of man; principles on which the whole edifice of man's eternal relations with God is founded. If any one was circumcised, he was under the law; he had given up grace, he had fallen away from Christ. Nevertheless, Paul the apostle, Paul full of faith, of energy, of burning zeal, is obliged to go up to Jerusalem, whither he had not desired to go, in order to arrange this matter. Paul had labored at Antioch; but the work in that city was not his work. He was not the apostle of Antioch as he was that of Iconium, of Lystra, and afterward of Macedonia and of Greece. He went out from Antioch, from the bosom of the church already formed there. The question was to be settled for the church, apart from the apostolic authority of Paul. The apostle must yield before God and His ways.

Paul disputes with the men from Judea, but the end is not gained. It is determined to send some members of the church to Jerusalem, but with them Paul and Barnabas, so deeply interested in this question. Moreover, Paul had a revelation that he should go up. God directed his steps. It is good, however, to be obliged to submit sometimes, although ever so right or so full of spiritual energy.

The question then is entered upon at Jerusalem. It was already a great thing that the subjecting of the Gentiles to the law, should be resisted at Jerusalem, and still more that they should there decide not to do it. We see the wisdom of God in so ordering it, that such a resolution should have its origin at Jerusalem. Had there been no bigotry there, the question would not have been necessary; but, alas! good has to be done in despite of all the weakness and all the traditions of

men. A resolution made at Antioch would have been a very different thing from a resolution made at Jerusalem. The Jewish church would not have acknowledged the truth, the apostolic authority of the twelve would not have given its sanction to it. The course at Antioch and of the Gentiles, would have been a course apart; and a continual struggle would have commenced, having (at least in appearance) the authority of the primitive and apostolic church on the one side, and the energy and liberty of the spirit, with Paul for its representative, on the other. The Judaizing tendency of human nature, is ever ready to abandon the high energy of the Spirit, and return into the ways and thoughts of the flesh; this tendency, nourished by the traditions of an ancient faith, had already given sorrow and difficulty enough to him who, was especially laboring among the Gentiles according to the liberty of the Spirit, without the additional strength of having the course of the apostles and of the church at Jerusalem to countenance it.

After much discussion, full liberty for which was given, Peter, taking the lead, relates the case of Cornelius. Afterward, Paul and Barnabas declare the wonderful manifestation of God through the power of the Holy Ghost, which had taken place among the Gentiles. James then sums up the judgment of the assembly, which is assented to by all, that the Gentiles shall not be obliged to be circumcised, or to obey the law; but only to abstain from blood, from things strangled, from fornication, and from meat offered to idols. We shall do well to consider the nature and the stipulations of this decree.

It is a direction which teaches, not that which is abstractly good or evil, but that which was suitable to the case presented. It was "necessary" (not "righteous before God") to avoid certain things. The things might be really evil, but they are not here looked at in that way. There were certain things to which the Gentiles were accustomed, which it was proper they should renounce, in order that the church might walk, as it ought, before God in peace. To the other ordinances of the law, they were not to be subjected. Moses had those who preached him. That sufficed, without compelling the Gentiles to submit to his laws, when they joined themselves, not to the Jews, but to the Lord. This decree, therefore, does not pronounce upon the nature of the things forbidden, but upon their opportuneness-the Gentiles having, in fact, been in the habit of doing all these things. We must observe that they were not things forbidden by the law only. It was that which was contrary to the order established by God as Creator, or to a prohibition given to Noah when he was told to eat flesh. Woman was only to be connected with man in the sanctity of marriage. Life belonged to God. All fellowship with idols was an outrage against the authority of the true God. Let Moses teach his own laws; these things were contrary to the intelligent knowledge of the true God. It is not, therefore, a new law imposed by Christianity, nor an accommodation to the prejudices of the Jews. It has not the same kind of validity as a moral ordinance that is obligatory in itself. It is the expression to Christian intelligence, of the terms of man's true relations with God in the things of nature; given by the goodness of God, through the leaders at Jerusalem. to ignorant Christians, setting them free from the law, and enlightening 'them with regard to the relations between God and man, and to that which was proper to man: things, of which, as idolatrous Gentiles, they had been ignorant. I have said, addressed to Christian intelligence: accordingly, there is nothing inconsistent in eating anything that is sold at the shambles, for I acknowledge God who gave it, and not an idol. But if the act implies communion with the idol, even to the conscience of another, it would be provoking God to jealousy; I sin against Him or against my neighbor. I do not know whether an animal is strangled or not, but if people act so as to imply that it is indifferent whether

life belongs to God or not, I sin again; I am not defiled by the thing, but I fail in Christian intelligence with regard to the rights of God as Creator. With regard to fornication, this enters into the category of Christian purity, besides being contrary to the order of the Creator; so that it is a direct question of good and evil, and not only of the rights of God revealed to our intelligence. This was important as a general principle, more than in the detail of the things themselves. In sum, the principles established are these: purity by marriage according to God's original institution; that life belongs to God; and the unity of God as one only true God; Godhead, life, and God's original ordinance for man. The same thing is true of the foundations laid by the assembly as the basis of their decree, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

The Holy Ghost had manifested Himself in the case of Cornelius and of the conversion of the Gentiles; of which Peter and Paul and Barnabas had given the account. On the other hand, the apostles were the depositories of the authority of Christ, those, to whom the government of the Church as founded in connection with the true Jewish faith had been committed. They represented the authority of Christ ascended on high, even as the power and will of the Holy Ghost had been shown in the cases I have just mentioned. That authority was exercised in connection with that which in a certain sense was the continuation of a Judaism enlarged by fresh revelations, and which had its center at Jerusalem, acknowledging the ascended Jesus as Messiah rejected by the people. Christ had committed to them the authority necessary to govern the Church, to bind and to loose. They had also been sealed on the day of Pentecost, in order to perform it.

The spirit of grace and wisdom is truly seen in their way of acting. They give their full sanction to Paul and Barnabas, and they send with them persons of note in the assembly at Jerusalem, who could not be suspected of bringing an answer in support of their own pretensions, as might have been supposed in the case of Paul and Barnabas.

The apostles and elders assemble for deliberation; but they act in concert with the whole flock.

Thus Jerusalem has decided that the law was not binding on the Gentiles. These, sincere in their desire of walking with Christ, rejoice greatly at their freedom from this yoke. Judas and Silas, being prophets, exhort and confirm them, and afterward are dismissed in peace. But Silas thinks it good to remain on his own account, influenced by the Spirit. He prefers the work among the Gentiles, to Jerusalem. Judas returns from it to Jerusalem.

The work continues at Antioch by means of Paul and Barnabas and others. At Antioch we again see the full liberty of the Holy Ghost.

Paul proposes to Barnabas that they should go and visit the assemblies already formed by their means in Asia Minor. Barnabas consents, but he determines to take John, who had formerly forsaken them. Paul wishes for some one who had not drawn back from the work, nor abandoned the stranger for his own home. Barnabas insists, and these two precious servants of God separate.

Barnabas takes Mark and goes to Cyprus. Now Mark was his kinsman and Cyprus his own country. Paul takes Silas, who had preferred the work to Jerusalem, instead of Jerusalem to the work, and departs. From his name, we may believe that Silas was a Hellenist.

It is happy to find, that, after this, Paul speaks of Barnabas with entire affection; and desires that Mark should come to him, having found him profitable for the ministry. Moreover, Paul is commended by the brethren to the grace of God in his work. The title given to Paul and Barnabas by the apostles, shows the difference between the apostolic authority established by Christ in person, and that which was constituted such by the power of the Holy Ghost. Sent by Christ Himself, no doubt, but in point of fact, going forth by the direction of the Holy Ghost, and their mission warranted by His power. With the apostles, Paul and Barnabas have no title, except their work- "men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." They are that which the Holy Ghost has made them. The apostles are the twelve.

The liberty and the power of the Spirit characterize Paul. He is that which the Spirit makes him. If Jesus has appeared to him, although Ananias can testify it, he must in reality prove it by the power of his ministry. The effects of this ministry are related, as well as its character, in chapters 16-20. The action and the liberty of the Holy Ghost are there displayed in a remarkable manner.

There is, perhaps, no example of this more remarkable than that which Paul does with regard to Timothy. He uses circumcision in all liberty, to set aside Jewish prejudice. It is very doubtful whether, according to the law, he ought to have been circumcised. Ezra and Nehemiah show us the strange, wives sent away-but here, the mother being a Jewess, Paul causes the child of this mixed marriage to follow the rule of the Jews, and submit to that rite. Liberty fully recognizes the law in its place, although itself exempt from it, and distinctly states, for the assurance of the Gentiles, the absence of all pre-tension on the part of the Judean Christians, to impose the law upon Gentiles. He would become a Jew to the Jews, from love; but the Jews themselves must renounce all pretension to impose the law on others. The decrees given at Jerusalem are left with the churches, a plain answer to every Jew who desired to subject the Gentiles to Judaism. The decrees, we may remark, were those of the apostles and the elders. It is the Holy Ghost atone who directs the apostle. He forbids him to preach in Asia (the province), and will not suffer him to go into Bithynia. By a vision in the night, they are called to go into Macedonia. Here the historian meets them. It is the Lord who calls them into Macedonia.

Here the apostle goes first to the Jews, even when it was only a few women who came together by the river side. A place, as it appears, usually chosen where there was no Synagogue. A Greek woman, who worshipped the God of Israel, is converted by grace. Thus the door is opened, and others also believe (ver. 40). Here Satan tries to tamper with the work by bearing a testimony to the ministers of the word. Not that this spirit acknowledged Jesus - he would not then have been an evil spirit, he would not have thus possessed the damsel. He speaks of the agents, in order to have a share in the glory, and of the Most High God; compelled, perhaps, by the presence of the Spirit, to speak: as had been the case with others by the presence of Jesus, when His power was before their eyes. The testimony of Satan could not go so far as to own Him Lord; and if Paul had not been faithful, it would have mixed up the work of the enemy with that of the Lord. But it was not a testimony to Paul that Paul sought, nor a testimony rendered by an evil spirit, whatever might be the appearance of its testimony. The proof which the evil spirit was to give that the power of God was present, was to submit to it by being driven away. It could not be a support to the work of God. We see in this circumstance, the disinterestedness of the apostle, his spiritual discernment, the power of God with him, and the faith which will have no other support than that of God. It would have been useful to have a testimony rendered to his ministry; the reasonings of the flesh might

have said, "I did not seek it." Persecution would have been avoided. But God will have no other testimony than that which He bears to Himself. No other can be a testimony from Him, for He reveals Himself where He is not known; faith waits only on Him to render it. Paul went on without troubling himself about this malicious attempt of the enemy's, until by its persistency, the apostle was forced to attend to it. The Spirit of God does not tolerate the presence of an evil spirit when it makes itself actively manifest before Him. He does not lend Himself to its devices by giving it importance through a voluntary interposition, for He has His own work, and He does not turn away from it to occupy Himself about the enemy. He is occupied, in love, about souls. But if Satan comes in His way, so as to perplex these souls, He reveals Himself in His energy, and the enemy flees before Him.

But Satan is not without resources. The power which he cannot exercise in a direct way, he employs in exciting the passions and the lusts of men, in opposition to that power against which he cannot himself stand, and which will neither unite itself to him, nor recognize him. Even as the Gadarenes desired Jesus to depart, when He had healed Legion, so the Philippians rise up tumultuously against Paul and his companions, at the instigation of the men who had lost their dishonest gains. But God makes use of all this to direct the progress of His own work, and give it the form He pleases. There is the jailer to be converted, and the magistrates themselves are to confess their wrong with respect to the messengers of God. The Church is gathered out, a flock, as the Epistle addressed to them bears witness, full of love and affection. The apostle goes to labor elsewhere. We see a more active, a more energetic testimony here, than in the similar case that happened to Peter, and the intervention of God is more striking in Peter's case. It is the old Jerusalem, worn out in everything except hatred, and God, faithful to the one who trusted in Him. The hatred is disappointed. Paul and Silas sing, instead of quietly sleeping; the doors burst suddenly open; and the jailer himself is converted, and his family. The magistrates are obliged to come as supplicants to Paul. Such is the result of the tumult. The enemy was mistaken here. If he stopped the work at Philippi, he sent the apostles to preach elsewhere, according to the will of God.

We must not pass over in silence this energy which embraced whole houses, and subdued them to the Christian faith. We only see it, however, when it is a question of bringing in the Gentiles. But Cornelius, Lydia, the jailer of Philippi, are all witnesses to this power.

In the last case, it was the power exercised by the enemy over the passions of the Gentiles, that caused the persecution of the apostles; at Thessalonica we again find -the old and universal enmity of the Jews. Nevertheless, many Jews and proselytes received the Gospel. After a tumult there also, the apostles go away to Berea. There, the Jews are more noble; they examine what they hear, by the word of God. Through this a great number among them believed. Nevertheless, the Jews of Thessalonica, jealous of the progress the Gospel made, go over to Berea. Paul leaves the city, and passes on to Athens. Silas and Timothy remain for the moment at Berea, Paul being the special object of the Jews' pursuit. At Athens, although he resorted to the Synagogue, yet, his spirit stirred at the sight of the universal idolatry in that idle city, he disputes daily in public with their philosophers; consequent on these interviews he proclaims the true God to the chief men of that intellectual capital. He had sent word to Silas and Timothy to join him there.



With a people like the Athenians-such is the effect of intellectual cultivation, without God-he has to come down to the lowest step in the ladder of truth. He sets forth the oneness of God, the Creator and the relation-ship of man to Him; declaring also that Jesus will judge the world, of which God had given proof by raising Him up from the dead. With the exception of the judgment of this world being put in place of the promises respecting the return of Jesus we might think it was Peter addressing the Jews. We must not imagine that the historian relates everything that Paul said. The Holy Ghost gives us that which characterized the manner in -which the apostle met the circumstances of those he addressed. That which remained on the minds of his hearers, was that he preached Jesus and the resurrection. It appears even that some took resurrection, as well as Jesus, to be a God. It is, indeed, the basis of Christianity, which is founded on Jesus personally and the fact of his resurrection. But it is only the basis.

I have said that we are reminded here of Peter's preaching. I mean as to the degree of height in his doctrine with regard to Christ. We shall observe at the same time, the appropriateness of the application of facts in either case, to the persons addressed. Peter set forth the rejected Christ ascended on high, and ready to return on the repentance of the Jews, and who would establish at His coming all things of which the prophets, had spoken. Here, the judgment of the world-sanction of the truth to the natural conscience-is presented to the learned men, and to the inquisitive people; nothing that could interest their philosophic minds, but a plain and convincing testimony to the folly of their idolatry, according even to that which the natural conscience of their own poets had acknowledged.

The dishonest gain, to which Satan ministered opportunity, met the Gospel at Philippi; the hardness and moral indifference of knowledge that flattered human vanity, at Athens; at Thessalonica, the efforts of Jewish jealousy; the Gospel goes on its way - victorious over the one, yielding to the effect of another, and after laying bare to the learned Athenians all that their condition tolerated, leaving them, and finding amid the luxury and the depraved manners of the wealthy city of Corinth, a numerous people to bring into the Church. Such are the ways of God, and the exercises of His devoted servant led by the Holy Ghost.

We may notice, that this energy which seeks the Gentiles, never loses sight of the favor of God towards His elect people, a favor that sought them until they rejected it.

At Thessalonica, Paul twice received succor from Philippi; at Corinth, where money and commerce abounded, he quietly works with two of his countrymen of the same trade as himself. He again begins with the Jews, who oppose his doctrine and blaspheme. The apostle takes his course with the boldness and decision of a man truly led of God, calmly and wittingly, so as not to be turned aside. He shakes his garments, in token of being pure from their blood, and declares that now he turns to the Gentiles, according to Isa. 49, taking that prophecy as a command from God. We shall do well to observe this last circumstance, the energy in action imparted by spiritual intelligence, and the way in which prophetic declarations turn into light and authority for action, when the Spirit of God gives the true practical meaning-the application. Another might not, perhaps, understand it; but the spiritual man has a full guarantee for his own conscience, in the word which he has understood. He leaves the rest to God.

In Corinth, God had " much people." He therefore uses the unbelieving indifference of Gallio, to defeat the projects and malice of the Jews, jealous as ever of a religion that eclipsed their

importance, whatever might be its grace towards them. Paul, after laboring there a long time, goes away in peace. His Jewish friends, Priscilla and Aquila, go with him. He was going himself to Jerusalem. He was also under a vow. The opposition of the Jews does not take away his attachment to his nation-his faithfulness in preaching the gospel to them first-in recognizing everything that belonged to them in grace before God. He even submits to Jewish ordinances. Possibly, habit had still some influence over him, which was not of the Spirit; but, according to the Spirit, he had no thought of disallowing that which the patient grace of God granted to the people.

He addresses himself to the Jews at Ephesus. They are inclined to hear him, but he desires to keep the feast at Jerusalem. Here he is still a Jew, with his feasts and vows. The Spirit has evidently introduced these circumstances, to give us a true and complete picture of the relationship that existed between the two systems. The degree of freedom from the influence of the one, as well as the energy that established the other. The first remains often to a certain degree, when energy to do the other is in a very high degree. The liberty that con-descends to prejudices and habits, is not the same thing as subjection to these prejudices in one's own person. In our feebleness the two mingle together; but they are in fact opposed to each other. To respect that which God respects, even when the system has lost all real force and value, if one is called to act in connection with this system, when it is really nothing more than a superstition and a weakness, is a very different thing from putting oneself under the yoke of superstition and weakness. The first is the effect of the Spirit; the last, of the flesh. In us, alas, the one is often confounded with the other. Charity becomes weakness, giving uncertainty to the testimony.

Paul takes his journey; goes up to Jerusalem, and salutes the assembly; goes down to Antioch, and visits again all the first assemblies he had formed; thus binding all his work together -Antioch and Jerusalem. How far his old habits influenced him in his ways of acting, I leave the reader to judge. He was a Jew. The Holy Ghost would have us see that he was as far as possible from any contempt for the ancient people of God, for whom divine favor will never change. This feeling was surely right. It appears elsewhere that he went beyond the limits of the Spirit and of spirituality. Here, we have only the facts. He may have had some private reason, that was valid in consequence of the position in which he stood. One may be in circum-stances which contradict the liberty of the Spirit, and which, nevertheless, when we are in them, have a certain right over us, or exercise an influence which necessarily weakens in the soul the energy of that liberty. We may have done wrong in putting ourselves into those circumstances; but being in them, the influence is exercised, the rights assert their claim. A man, called to serve God, driven out from his father's house, walks in the liberty of the Spirit. Without any change in his father, he goes into the paternal house - the rights of his father revive where is his liberty? Or, a man possessed of much clearer spiritual intelligence, places himself in the midst of friends who are spiritually altogether below him; it is almost impossible for him to retain a spiritual judgment. However it may have been here, the link is now formed on the side of liberty and grace, and the Christians in Jerusalem remain at the level of their former prejudices, and claim patience and indulgence from him who was the vessel and the witness of the liberty of the Spirit of God.

This, with the supplement of his work at Ephesus, forms the circle of the active labors of the apostle, to show us in him the ways of the Spirit with men, in the Gospel.

From ver. 24 of chap. 18, to ver. 7 of 19, we have a kind of summary of the progress made by the doctrine of Christ, and of the power that accompanied it. Apollos knew only the teaching of John; but, upright in heart, he publicly confessed and preached that which he knew. It was the faith of a regenerate soul. Aquila and Priscilla enlighten him fully with regard to the facts of the gospel, and the doctrine of a dead and glorified Christ. At Corinth, he becomes a powerful teacher of the gospel of the Lord among the Jews; thus confirming the faith of the disciples. The energy of the Holy Ghost manifests itself in him, without any intervention of the apostle or of the twelve. He acts independently; i.e., the Spirit acts independently in him. People could say, "I am of Apollos." It is interesting to see these different manifestations of the power and liberty of the Spirit, and to remember that the Lord is above all, and that if He acts greatly by a Paul, He acts also in whom He will.

In that which follows, we find on another side the progress of the divine revelation in union with Paul's apostolic power, made very prominent by the capability of communicating the Holy Ghost. Twelve persons believed, but with no other instruction than that of John; their baptism was in reference to it. It was a Christ to come and a Holy Ghost whom He would communicate, that they looked for. Now John's baptism required repentance, but in no way came out of the Jewish pale; although it opened a perspective of something different, according to the sovereignty of God, and as the effect of Christ's coming. But it was a baptism unto repentance for man on the earth, and not his death and resurrection. Grace acted in a remnant; but of whom Jesus was a companion on earth. Now Christianity (for man's sin has been manifested) is founded on death and resurrection; first, that of Christ, thus accomplishing redemption, and then on our death, and resurrection with Him, so as to place us in Him, and as Him, before God, in sinless life, life of His life, and washed in His blood from all our sins. But John's baptism, in fact, only taught repentance here below in order to receive Christ; Christianity taught the efficacy of the death and resurrection of a rejected Christ, in virtue of which the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, come down from heaven, should be received.

These twelve men - although John had announced that the baptism of the Holy Ghost should be the result of Christ's intervention did not know whether there was yet any Holy Ghost. A plain proof that they had not come into the house of God, in which He dwelt. Paul explains this to them, and they are baptized in the name of Jesus. Paul, in his apostolic capacity, lays his hands on them and they receive the Holy Ghost. They speak with tongues, and they prophesy.

This power, and he who was its instrument, was now to be brought out into distinct relief. The capital city of Asia (i.e., of the Roman province so named) is the theater on which this was to be effected. We shall see a power displayed in this locality, which acts independently of all traditional forms; and which governs all that surrounds it, whether man, conscience, or the enemy. An organizing power, which forms of itself, and for itself, the institutions and the body that suit it, and which governs the whole position. The power of active grace had been displayed in the work of Paul, beginning with Antioch; and had shown itself in different ways. Here we have some details of its formal establishment in a great center.

During three months of patience, he preaches Christ in the synagogue, and reasons with the Jews; conscious of his strength and of the truth. He grants precedence, as the sphere of testimony, to that which had been the instrument and the people of God: "To the Jew first." It is no longer said, "Salvation is of the Jews," but it is preached to them first.

But this work having had its development, and many taking the place of adversaries, Paul acts as the founder of that which was according to God, and on the part of God. He separates the disciples, and discourses upon Christianity in the hall of a Greek who had a public class. This went on for two years; so that the doctrine was spread through all the country, both among the Jews and the Greeks. God did not fail to bear testimony to the word of His grace, and His power was displayed in a remarkable manner in connection with the person of the apostle who bore the testimony. The manifestations of the enemy's power disappear before the action of this liberative power of the Lord, and the name of Jesus was glorified. Now the reality of this action was demonstrated in a striking way; i.e., its source in the personal, positive, and real action of the Lord, on the one side; and on the other, the mission of Paul, and faith as the instrument by which this supernatural power wrought. Certain Jews desired to avail themselves of it for their own self-interest; and, devoid of faith, they use the name of "Jesus whom Paul preached" as though, it had been a kind of charm. But the evil spirit, whose power was as true and real in its way as that of the Lord which he was forced to acknowledge when it was in exercise, knew very well that here it was not so, that there was neither faith nor power. "Jesus I know," said he, "and who Paul is I know; but who are ye?" And the man who was possessed, attacked and wounded them. Striking testimony to the action of the enemy, but, at the same time to that superior force, to the reality of that intervention of God, which was carried into effect by means of Paul. Now, when God shows Himself, conscience always shows itself; and the power of the enemy over it, is manifested and ceases. The Jews and Greeks are filled with fear; and many who became Christians brought the proofs of their sorceries.

The mighty action of the Spirit showed itself by the decision it produced; by the immediate and unhesitating acting out of the thoughts and resolutions produced in the heart. There were no long inward arguments- the presence and the power of God produced their natural effects.

The enemy's resources were, however, not exhausted. The work of God was done, in the sense of the establishment of the testimony through apostolic labor; and God was sending His servant elsewhere. The enemy, as usual, excites a tumult; stirring up the passions of men against the instruments of the testimony of God. Paul had already intended to go away, but a little later; he had therefore sent Timothy and Erastus before him into Macedonia, purposing to visit Macedonia, Achaia, and Jerusalem, and afterward to go to Rome; and he still remains some time in Asia. But after the departure of these two brethren, Demetrius excites the people against the Christians. Inveterate against the Gospel, which shook the whole system in connection with which he made his fortune, and which was linked with all that gave him importance, this agent of the enemy knew how to act on the passions of the workmen who had the same occupation as himself; for he made little portable shrines to Diana in silver. His employment was connected with that which all the world admired, with that which had possession of men's minds- a great comfort to man who feels the need of something sure - with that which had long given its hue to their religious habits. A great part of the influence exercised was, not "Great is Diana!" but "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" it was, in short, the power of the enemy among the Gentiles. The Jews, apparently, sought to avail themselves of this, by putting one Alexander forward; the same possibly who had withstood Paul, and whom they supposed would therefore be listened to by the people. But it was the evil spirit of idolatry that agitated them; and the Jews were foiled in their hope. Paul was prevented, both by the brethren and by some of the rulers of Asia, from showing him-self in the theater. The assembly

was dissolved by the town-authorities; and Paul, when he had seen the disciples, went away in peace.

His work there was finished, and the Gospel planted in the capital of the province of Asia, and even in the whole province; Greece and Macedonia had already received it. There was yet Rome. In what manner should he go thither? This is now the remaining question. His free and active life ended with the events which now occupy us, as far as it is given us by the Holy Ghost. A life blessed with. an almost unequaled faith - with an energy that surpassed anything that has been seen in men, and which, through the divine power that wrought in it, produced its effects in spite of obstacles apparently insurmountable; in spite of every kind of opposition; in contempt and destitution, and which stamped its character on the Church by giving it, instrumentally, its existence; and that not only in spite of two hostile religions which divided the civilized world between them, but in spite of a religious system which possessed the truth, but which ever sought to confine it within the boundary of traditions that granted some place to the flesh; and when this system had the plea Of priority, and was sanctioned by the habits of those apostles who were nominated by the Lord Himself.

The Church indeed, as Paul foresaw, soon returned to its Judaic ways, when the energy of the apostle was absent. It requires the power of the Holy Ghost to rise above the religiousness of the flesh. Piety does not necessarily do this; and power is never a tradition, it is itself; and thereby independent of men and of their traditions, even when bearing with them in love. The flesh therefore always returns to the path of traditions and forms; because it is never power in the things of God, although it, can recognize duty. It does not, therefore, rise to heaven, it does not understand grace; it can see what man ought to be for God (without, however, perceiving the consequences of this, if God is revealed), but it cannot see what God, in His sovereign grace, is for man. It will perhaps retain it as orthodoxy, where the Spirit has wrought; but it will never bring the soul into it. This it was, more than the violence of the pagans or the hatred of the Jews, which wrung the heart, and caused the anguish of the faithful and blessed apostle, who, by grace, had a character, or rather a position more like that of Christ than any other on earth. These conflicts will be unfolded to us in the Epistles, as well as that ardent heart, which, while embracing in its thoughts all the revealed counsels of God, and putting each part in its place; and embracing in its affections the whole of the work and of the Church, could equally concentrate its whole energy of thought on a single important point, and of affection on a poor slave whom grace had given to him in his chains. The vessel of the Spirit -he shines with a heavenly light throughout the whole work of the Gospel. He condescends at Jerusalem, thunders in Galatia when souls were being perverted, leads the apostles to decide for the liberty of the Gentiles, and uses all liberty himself to be as a Jew to the Jews, and as without law to those who had no law; but always subject to Christ. Yet how difficult to maintain the height of life and of spiritual revelation, in the midst of so many opposing tendencies. He 'was also "void of offense." Nothing within hindered his communion with God: whence he drew his strength to be faithful among men. He could say (and none but he), "Be ye imitators of me, as I am of Christ." Thus also he could say " I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." Words which would not be improper in the Lord's mouth, in a more exalted sense, doubtless, because He endured for Paul himself the wrath that would have been his eternal condemnation, yet words which bring out the remarkable position of this man of God as the vessel of the Holy Ghost by

whom he was used. "I fill up," said he, "that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ, for His body's sake, which is the Church; whereof I am made a minister to complete the word of God." John, through his intimate knowledge of the person of Christ, born on earth and Son of God, was able to maintain this essential and individually vital truth, in the same field in which Paul labored; but it was Paul's part to be the active instrument for propagating the truth which saves the soul, and brings ruined man into connection with God by faith, by communicating all His counsels of grace.

Still, Paul was a man; although a man wonderfully blest. The intrinsic power of Judaism in connection with its relationship to the flesh, is marvelous. As to the result, indeed, if man takes his place below grace, i.e., below God, it is better in a certain sense that he should be man under law than man without law. He will be the one or the other, but in taking up the exclusive idea of duty, he forgets God as He is - for He is love; and too often forgets also man as he is, for he is sin. If he unites the ideas of duty and of sin, it is continual bondage, and this is what Christianity in general is reduced to; with the addition of ordinances to ease the burdened conscience, forms to create piety where communion is absent; clothing it all with the name of Christ, and with the authority of the Church, the very existence of which is identified with the principle of sovereign grace.

But let us return to the history of Paul.

CT 20{Chapter 20 After the uproar had ceased, he sends for the disciples, embraces them, and departs for Macedonia; visits that whole country, and comes into Greece. The beginning of the second epistle to the Corinthians, gives the details of this part of his history. In Greece, he re-mains three months; and when the Jews lay wait for him, he goes round by Macedonia, instead of sailing straight to Syria. At Troas (where a door had been opened to him on his way into Greece, but where 'his affection for the Corinthians had not allowed him to re-main) he spends his Sunday, and even the whole week, in order to see the brethren. We perceive the usual object of their assembly; they "came together to break bread"; and the ordinary occasion of holding it, "the first day of the week." Paul avails himself of this to speak to them all night; but it was an extraordinary occasion. The presence and the exhortations of an apostle, failed in keeping them all awake. It was not, however, an assembly held in secret or in the dark. There were many lamps to light the upper chamber in which they met. We see by the place in which they came together, that the churches were not composed of very many persons. The upper room in Jerusalem received, perhaps, one hundred and twenty. It appears by different salutations that they met in private houses - probably in several, if the number of believers required it; but there was only one Church.

Eutychus pays the penalty of his inattention; but God bears testimony to His own goodness, and to the power with which He had endued the apostle, by raising him from a state of death. Paul says, that his soul was yet in him; it was only to renew the connection between it and his physical organization. In other cases, the soul had been recalled. Paul chose to go alone from Troas to Assos. We see all through the history, that he arranged, by the power that the Spirit save him over them, the willing services of his companions. Not, doubtless, as their master, yet more absolutely than if he had been so.

He is (under Christ) the center of the system in which lie labors; the center of energy. Christ alone can be the center by right, of salvation and of faith. It was only as filled with the Spirit of God, that

Paul was the center, even of that energy; and it was, as we have seen, by not grieving Him and by exercising himself to have a conscience void of offense both towards God and towards men.

Paul does not stop at Ephesus, because in so central a place he must have stayed some time. It is necessary to avoid that which has a certain moral claim upon us if we would not and ought not to be detained by the obligation it imposes upon us.

It was no want of affection for the beloved Ephesians, nor any thought of neglecting them. He sends for the elders, and addresses a discourse to them which we must examine a little, as setting before us the position of the Church at that time, and the work of the Gospel among the nations.

The Church was consolidated over a pretty large extent of country, and the churches in divers places at least, had taken the form of a regularly ordered institution. Elders were established and recognized. The apostle could send for them to come to him. His authority also was acknowledged on their part. He speaks of his ministry as a past thing - solemn thought! but he takes them to witness not only that he had preached the truth to them, but a truth that spoke to their conscience; setting them before God on the one hand, and on the other, presenting Him to them, in whom God made Himself known, and in whom He communicated all the fullness of grace on their behalf - Jesus, the object of their faith, the Savior of their souls. He had done this through trouble and through difficulty, in face of the unprincipled opposition of the Jews, who had rejected the Anointed One, but in accordance with the grace that rose above all this evil, and declared salvation to the Jews; and going beyond these limits (because it was grace) addressed itself to the Gentiles, to all men, as sinners and responsible to God. Paul had done this, not with the pride of a teacher, but with the humility and the perseverance of love. He desired also to finish his ministry, and to fail in nothing that Jesus had committed to him. And now he was going to Jerusalem, feeling bound in spirit to do so; not knowing what should befall him, but warned by the Holy Ghost that bonds and afflictions awaited him. With regard to themselves, he knew his ministry was ended; and that he should see their face no more. Henceforth, responsibility would specially rest upon them.

Thus, what the Holy Ghost here sets before us is, that now, when the detail of his work among the Gentiles to plant the Gospel, is related as one entire scene among Jews and Gentiles, he bids adieu to the work; in order to leave those whom he had gathered together, in a new position, and in a certain sense, to themselves. It is a discourse which marks the cessation of one phase of the Church - that of apostolic labors - and the entrance into another; its responsibility to stand fast now that those labors had ceased; the service of the elders, whom "the Holy Ghost had made overseers," and at the same time, the dangers and difficulties that would attend the cessation of apostolic labor and complicate the work of the elders, on whom the responsibility would now more especially devolve.

The first remark that flows from the consideration of this discourse is, that apostolic succession is entirely denied by it. Owing to the absence of the apostle, various difficulties would arise, and there would be no one in his place, to meet or to prevent these difficulties. Successor, therefore, he had none. In the second place, the fact appears that this energy, which bridled the spirit of evil, once away, devouring wolves from without, and teachers of perverse things from within, would lift up their heads and attack the simplicity and the happiness of the Church; which would be harassed by the efforts of Satan, without possessing apostolic energy to withstand them.

This testimony of Paul's is of the highest importance, with regard to the -whole ecclesiastical system. The attention of the elders, who are left in charge, is directed elsewhere, than to present apostolical care (as having no longer this resource, or anything that officially replaced it), in order that the Church might be kept in peace, and sheltered from evil. It was their part to care for the Church, in these circumstances. In the next place, that which was principally to be done for the hindrance of evil, was to feed the flock; and to watch, whether over themselves or over the flock, for that purpose. He re-minds them how he had himself exhorted them night and day with tears. Let them therefore watch. He then commends them neither to Timothy nor to a bishop -but in a way that sets aside all official resource to God, and to the word of His grace, which was able to build them up and assure them of the inheritance. This was where He left the Church; that which it did after-wards, is not my subject here. If John came later to work in these parts, it was a great favor from God, but it changed nothing in the position officially. His labors, with the exception of the warnings to the seven churches, in the Apocalypse, where judgment is in question, regarded the individual life, its character, and that which sustained it.

With deep and touching affection, Paul parts from the Church at Ephesus. Who filled the gap? At the same time he appealed to their consciences for the uprightness of his walk. The free labors of the apostle of the Gen-tiles were ended. Solemn and affecting thought! He had been the instrument chosen of God to communicate to the world His counsels respecting the Church, and to establish in the mind of the world this precious object of His affections, united to Christ at His right hand. What would become of it down here?

After this time, the apostle has to give account of himself; and to accomplish in a striking manner the pre-dictions of the Lord. Brought before tribunals by the malice of the Jews; given up through their hatred into the hands of the Gentiles, it was all to turn to a testimony; kings and rulers shall hear the Gospel, but the love of many will grow cold. This in general is his position; but there were details personal to himself.

We may remark here, a leading feature in this book which has been little noticed; i.e., the development of the enmity of the Jews, bringing on their final rejection, such as they were. The Acts end with the last case presented; the work in the midst of that people is left in oblivion, and that of Paul occupies the whole scene in the historical narrative given by the Spirit. The antagonism of the Jews to the manifestation of the Church which took their place, and blotted out the distinction between them and the Gentiles, by bringing in heaven and full sovereign grace (grace, of which the sinner availed himself by faith), this antagonism, presenting itself at every step in the career of the apostle, although he acted with all possible circumspection, is aroused in its full intensity at Jerusalem, its natural center, and manifests itself by violence and by efforts made with the Gentiles for the purpose of cutting off Paul from the earth. This rendered the apostle's position very serious with regard to the Gentiles at Jerusalem; a city the more jealous of its religious importance from having, in fact, under Roman bondage, lost the reality of it, through its being transformed into a spirit of rebellion against the authority which crippled it.

After the history of Christianity, viewed as connected with Judaism (in reference to the promises and their fulfillment in the Messiah), we find Paul in three different positions. 1st. Condescending, for the purpose of conciliation, to take account of that which still existed at Jerusalem, and even addressing the Jews everywhere in their Synagogues, as having administratively the first right to



hear the Gospel; " To the Jew first and then to the Greek," for Jesus was the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to fulfill the promises made to the fathers. In this respect he never failed, and he establishes these principles clearly and dogmatically in the Epistle to the Romans. We next find him, in all the liberty of the full truth of grace, and of the purposes of God, in his own especial work, from which he condescended in grace. This is recorded in the Epistle to the Ephesians. In both these cases he acts under the guidance of the Holy Ghost fulfilling the Lord's will. Afterward, in the 3rd place, we see him in conflict with the hostility of legal Judaism, the emissaries of which he met continually, and into the very focus of which he at length threw himself, by going to Jerusalem, in that part of his history which we are now considering. How much was of God, how much was the consequence of his own steps, is matter for consideration in this narrative. That the hand of God was in it for the good of the Church, and in conducting His beloved servant for his own good in the end, is beyond all doubt. We have only to search out how far the will and the mind of Paul came in; as means which God used to bring about the result He intended, whether for the Church or for His servant, or for the Jews. These thoughts are of the deepest interest, and require humble examination of that which God has set before us to instruct us on this point, in the history which the Spirit Himself has given us of these things.

The first thing which strikes us at the beginning of this history, is that the Holy Ghost tells him not to go to Jerusalem (21:4). This word has evident importance. Paul felt himself bound, there was something 'in his own mind which impelled him thither, a feeling that forced him in that direction; but the Spirit, in his positive and outward testimony, forbade his going.

The apostle's intention had been to go to Rome. The apostle of the Gentiles, sent forth to preach the Gospel to every creature, there was nothing of self in this project that was not according to grace (Rom. 1:13-15). Nevertheless, God had not allowed him to go thither. He was obliged to write his Epistle to them without seeing them. Heaven is the metropolis of Christianity. Rome and Jerusalem must have no place with Paul, except as to bearing with the one in affection, and being ready, when he might, to evangelize the other (Acts 19:21), which is translated " in the spirit," only means the spirit of Paul. He purposed in his own mind, saying, " When I have been there, I must also see Rome." Afterward he charged himself with the offerings of the saints in Achaia and Macedonia. He wished to prove his affection for the poor of his own people (Gal. 2:10). This was all well. I do not know if it was an apostolic function-it was an evidently Jewish feeling, which set peculiar value on the poor of Jerusalem, and so far, on Jerusalem itself. A Jew would rather be poor at Jerusalem than rich among the Gentiles. Poor Christians were there, no doubt, from the time of their conversion, but it was the origin of this system (compare Neh. 11:2). All this belonged to relationship with Judaism (Rom. 15:25-28). Paul loved the nation to which he belonged after the flesh, and which had been the people beloved of God, and was still His people, although rejected for a time, the remnant having to enter the kingdom of God through Christianity. This attachment of Paul to them, which had its right and deeply affecting side, but which on another side had to do with the flesh, led him into the center of Judaism. He was the messenger of the heavenly glory, which brought out the doctrine of the Church composed of Jews and Gentiles, united without distinction in the one body of Christ, thus blotting out Judaism; but his love for his nation carried him, I repeat, into the very center of hostile Judaism, Judaism enraged against this spiritual equality.

Nevertheless, the hand of God was doubtless in it. Paul, individually, found his level.

As the instrument of God's revelation, he proclaims in all its extent and all its force, the purpose of the sovereign grace of God. The wine is not adulterated - it flows out as pure as he had received it. And he walked in a remarkable way at the height of the revelation committed to him. Still, Paul individually is a man, he must be exercised and manifested, and in those exercises to which God has subjected us. Where the flesh has found its pleasure, the sphere in which it has gratified itself, it is there that when God acts, it finds its sorrow. Yet, if God saw fit to prove His servant and manifest him to himself, He stood by him, and blessed him, even through the trial itself, turned it into testimony, and refreshed the heart of His beloved and faithful servant. The manifestation of that in him which was not according to the Spirit, or to the height of his calling, was in love, for his blessing and for that of the Church. Blessed is he who can walk as faithfully and maintain his standing to the same degree, through grace, in the path of grace. Nevertheless, Christ is the only model. I see no one who (in another career) so much resembled Him in His public life. The more we search into the apostle's walk, the more we shall see this resemblance. Only that Christ was the model of perfection in obedience; in His precious servant there was the flesh. Paul would have been the first to acknowledge that perfection may be ascribed to Jesus only.

I believe then, that the hand of God was in this journey of Paul's, that, in His sovereign wisdom, He willed that His servant should undertake it, and also have blessing in it; but that the means employed to lead him into it according to that sovereign wisdom, was the apostle's human affection for the people who were his kinsmen after the flesh; and that he was not led into it by the Holy Ghost acting on the part of Christ in the Church. This attachment to his people, this human affection, met with that among the people which put it in its place. Humanly speaking, it was an amiable feeling; but it was not the power of the Holy Ghost founded on the death and resurrection of Christ. There, there was no longer Jew nor Gentile. In the living Christ, it was right. Christ went on in it to the end, in order that He might die. For this purpose He came.

Paul's affection was good in itself, but as a spring of action it did not come up to the height of the work of the Spirit who, on Christ's part, had sent him afar from Jerusalem to the Gentiles, in order to reveal the Church as His body united to Him in heaven. Thus, the Jews hearkened to him till it came to that word, and then they cried out and raised the tumult which caused Paul to be made prisoner. He suffered for the truth, but where that truth had no access, according to Christ's own testimony. "Depart hence for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me." It was necessary, however, that the Jews should manifest their hatred to the Gospel, and give this final proof of their inveterate opposition to the ways of God in grace.

At the same time, whatever may have been the subsequent labors of the apostle (if there were any) the Holy Ghost does not make mention of them. Paul sees the

Jews in his own house, and receives all who come to him, but the page of the Spirit's history closes here. This history- is ended. The apostolic mission to the Gentiles in connection with the founding of the Church, is concluded. Rome is but the prison of the apostle of the truth, to whom the truth had been committed. Jerusalem rejects him, Rome imprisons him, and puts him to death, as they had done to Jesus, whom the blessed apostle had to resemble in this also, according to his desire in Phil. 3, for Christ and conformity to Him, was his only object. It was given him to find this conformity in his service, as it was so strongly in his heart and soul; with the necessary difference between a ministry which was not to break the bruised reed, nor lift up its voice in the

street, and one which in testimony was to bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

The mission of the twelve to the Gentiles, going out from Jerusalem (Matt. 28), never took place, so far as recognized by the Holy Ghost. Jerusalem detained them. They did not even go over the cities of Israel. The ministry of the circumcision was given to Peter, that of the Gentiles to Paul, in connection with the doctrine of the Church and of a glorious Christ, a Christ whom he no longer knew after the flesh. Jerusalem, to which the apostle was drawn by his affection, rejected both him and his mission. His ministry to the Gentiles, so far as the free effect of the power of the Spirit, ended likewise. Ecclesiastical history may, perhaps, tell us more--nevertheless, God has taken care to bury it in profound darkness. Nothing farther is owned by the Spirit. We hear no more of the apostles at Jerusalem; and Rome, as we have seen, had none, so far as the Holy Ghost informs us, excepting that the apostle of the Gentiles was a prisoner there, and put to death. Man has failed everywhere on earth. The religious and political centers of the world--centers according to God, as to the earth--have rejected the testimony, and put the testifier to death; but the result has been, that heaven has maintained its rights inviolate, and in their absolute purity. The Church, the true heavenly and eternal metropolis of glory, and of the ways of God, the Church which had its place in the counsels of God before the world was, the Church which answers to His heart, in grace, as united to Christ in glory, remains--the object of faith. It is revealed according to the mind of God and perfectly such as it is in His mind, until, as the heavenly Jerusalem, it shall be manifested in glory, in connection with the accomplishment of the ways of God on the earth, in the re-establishment of Jerusalem as the center of His earthly dealings in grace, His throne, His metropolis in the midst even of the Gentiles, and in the disappearance of Gentile power, the seat and center of which was Rome.

Let us now examine the thoughts of the apostle, and that which took place historically. Paul wrote from Corinth to Rome, when he had this journey in view. Christianity had flowed towards that center of the world, without any apostle whatsoever having planted it there. Paul follows it. Rome is, as it were, a part of his apostolic domain, which escapes him (Rom. 1 | 3-15). He returns to the subject in chap. xv. If he might not come - for God will not begin with the capital of the world--(compare the destruction of Hazor in Canaan, Josh. 11:11). He will at least write to them on the ground of his universal apostleship to the Gentiles. Some Christians were already established there. So God would have it. But they were in some sort of his province, many of them had been personally in connection with him--see the number and the character of the salutations at the end of the Epistle, which have a peculiar stamp, making the Roman Christians in great part the children of Paul.

In Rom. 15:14-29, he develops his apostolic position with respect to the Romans and others. He desired also to go into Spain when he had seen the brethren at Rome a little. He wishes to impart spiritual gifts to them, but to be comforted by their mutual faith, to enjoy a little of their company. They are in connection with him, but they have their place as Christians at Rome, without his ever having been there.

When, therefore, he had seen them a little, he would go into Spain. But he was disappointed with regard to these projects. All that we are told by the Holy Ghost

is that he was a prisoner at Rome. Profound silence as to Spain. Instead of going farther when he had seen them, and imparted gifts, he remains two years a prisoner at Rome. It is not known

whether he was set free or not. Some say yes, others no - the Word says nothing. It is here, when he had laid open his intention and the character of his relationships in the Spirit with Rome, and when a large field opens before him in the West, that his old affection for his people and for Jerusalem intervenes-" But now I go unto Jerusalem to carry help to the saints" (Rom. 15:25-28). Why not go to Rome according to the energy of the Spirit, his work being finished in Greece (ver. 23)? God, no doubt, ordained that those things should happen at Jerusalem, and that Rome and the Romans should have this place with respect to the testimony of a glorified Christ and of the Church, which the apostle rendered before the world. But as to Paul, why put rebellious Jerusalem between his evangelical desire and his work? The affection was good; and the service good, for a deacon, or a messenger of the churches; but for Paul, who had the whole West open before his evangelizing thought! For the moment, Jerusalem intercepted his view. Accordingly, as we have seen, the Holy Ghost warned him on his way. He foresaw himself also the danger he was running 'into (chap. xv. 30-32). He was sure (ver. 29) of coming in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; but he was not sure that he should come with joy. The thing for which he asked their prayers turned out quite otherwise than he desired. He was delivered -but as a prisoner. He took courage when he saw the brethren at Appii Forum and The three taverns. There was no journey into Spain either.

All this is, to me, very solemn. The Lord, full of grace and tenderness, was with His poor but beloved servant. In the case of such a one as Paul, it is a most affecting history, and the Lord's ways adorable and perfect in goodness. The reality of faith is there in full. The ways of grace perfect, and perfect in tenderness also, in the Lord. He stands by His servant in the trial in which he finds himself, to encourage and strengthen him. At the same time, with regard to the desire of going to Jerusalem, he is warned by the Spirit, and its consequences are set before him; and, not turning back, he undergoes the needed discipline which brings his soul into its place, and a full place of blessing before God. His walk finds its level as to spiritual power. He feels the power outwardly, of that whereof he had felt the moral power seeking to hinder his ministry; and a chain upon his flesh answers to the liberty he had allowed it. There was justice in God's dealings. His servant was too precious for it to be otherwise. At the same time, as to result and testimony, God ordered everything for His own glory, and with perfect wisdom as to the future welfare of the Church. Jerusalem, as we have seen, rejects the testimony to the Gentiles, in a word, the ways of God in the Church (compare 1 Thess. 14-16); and Rome becomes the prison of that testimony; while, according to the Lord's promise, the testimony is carried before rulers, and kings and before Caesar himself.

I have said that, grace put Paul into the position of Christ given up to the Gentiles by the hatred of the Jews. It was a great favor. The difference-besides the infinite love of the Lord who gave Himself up-was that Jesus was there in His true place before God. He had come to the Jews: that He should be delivered up was the crowning act of His devotedness and His service. It was in fact the offering Himself by the Eternal Spirit. It was the sphere of His service as sent of God. Paul re-entered it-the energy of the Holy Ghost had placed him outside: " Delivering thee," said the Lord, " from the people and from the Gentiles, to whom I now send thee to open their eyes," etc. (Acts 26:17). Jesus had taken him out from them both, to exercise a ministry that united the two in one body in Christ in heaven, who had thus sent him. Paul knew no one after the flesh; in Christ Jesus there was neither Jew nor Greek.

Let us resume his history. He is warned by the Holy Ghost not to go up (21:4). Nevertheless, he continues his journey to Caesarea. A prophet, named Agabus, comes down from Judea, and announces that Paul shall be bound and given up to the Gentiles. It might be said that this did not forbid his going. It is true; yet, coming after the other, it strengthened the warning already given. When he walked in the liberty of the Spirit, warned of danger, he fled from it; while braving every peril if the testimony required it. At Ephesus he allowed himself to be persuaded not to go into the theater.

The Holy Ghost does not usually warn of danger. He leads in the path of the Lord, and if persecution comes He gives strength to endure it. Here Paul was continually warned. His friends entreat him not to go up. He will not be persuaded. They hold their peace, little satisfied, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." And, I doubt not, it was His will, but for the accomplishment of purposes that Paul knew not by the intelligence given of the Holy Ghost. Only, he felt pressed in spirit to go, and ready to suffer all things for the Lord.

He departs therefore to Jerusalem; and when there, he goes to the house of James, and all the elders assemble. Paul relates to them the work of God among the Gentiles. They turn to their Judaism, of which the multitude were full, and, while rejoicing in the good that was wrought of God by the Spirit, they wish Paul to show himself obedient to the law. The believers in Jerusalem must needs come together on the arrival of Paul, and their prejudices with regard to the law must be satisfied. Paul has brought himself into the presence of man's exigences-to refuse compliance with them would be to say that their thoughts about him were true-to act according to their desire was to make a rule, not of the guidance of the Spirit in all liberty of love, but of the ignorant and prejudiced condition of these Jewish believers. It is that Paul was there not according to the Spirit as an apostle, but according to his attachment to these former things. One must be above the prejudices of others and free from their influence, to be able to condescend to them in love.

Being there, Paul can hardly do other than satisfy their demands. But the hand of God is in it. This act throws him into the power of his enemies. Seeking to please the believing Jews, he finds himself in the lion's mouth, in the hands of the Jews who were adversaries to the Gospel. It may be added, that we hear nothing more of the Christians of Jerusalem. They had done their work. I have no doubt that they accepted the alms of the Gentiles.

The whole city being moved and the temple shut, the commander of the band comes to rescue Paul from the Jews who wished to kill him, taking him however into custody himself, for the Romans were used to these tumults and heartily despised this nation, beloved of God but proud and degraded in their own condition. Nevertheless Paul commands the respect of the captain of the band, by his manner of addressing him, and he permits him to speak to the people. To the chief captain Paul had spoken in Greek; but, always ready to win by the attentions of love, and especially when the loved though rebellious people were in question, he speaks to them in Hebrew e., in their ordinary language called Hebrew). He does not enlarge upon what the Lord said in revealing Himself to him, but he gives them a particular account of his subsequent interview with Ananias, a faithful Jew and esteemed of all. He then enters on the point which necessarily characterized his position and his defense. Christ had appeared to him, saying: "They will not receive thy testimony at Jerusalem, I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Blessed be God! it is the truth; but why tell it to those very persons who, according to his own words, would not

receive his testimony? The only thing which gave authority to such a mission was the person of Jesus, and they did not believe in it.

In his testimony to the people the apostle laid stress in vain upon the Jewish piety of Ananias; genuine as it might be, it was but a broken reed. Nevertheless, it was all, except his own. His discourse had but one effect, to bring out the violent and incorrigible hatred of this unhappy nation to every thought of grace in God, and the unbounded pride which indeed went before the fall that crushed them. The chief captain, seeing the violence of the people, and not at all understanding what was going on, with the haughty contempt of a Roman,, orders Paul to be bound and scourged, to make him confess what it meant. Now Paul was himself a Roman citizen, and born such, while the chief captain had purchased that freedom. Paul quietly makes this fact' known, and they who were about to scourge him with-draw. The chief captain was afraid because he had bound him; but, as his authority was concerned in it, he leaves him bound. The next day he looses him and brings him before the council, or Sanhedrim, of the Jews. The people, not merely their rulers, had rejected grace.

Paul addresses the council with the gravity and dignity of an upright man accustomed to walk with God. It is not a testimony borne them for their good; but the appeal of a good conscience to their consciences, if they had any. The immediate answer is an outrage on the part of the judge or chief of the council. Paul, roused by this procedure, denounces judgment on him from God; but, warned that he was the high priest (who was not so clothed as to be recognized), he excuses himself by his ignorance of the fact, quoting the formal prohibition of the law to speak evil of the ruler of the people. All this was right and in place with regard to men; but the Holy Ghost could not say, " I wist not." It is not the activity of the Spirit performing the work of grace and of testimony. But it is the means of the final judgment of God upon the people. It is in this character, as regards the Jews, that Paul appears here. Paul makes a much better appearance than his judges, who thoroughly disgrace themselves, and manifest their dreadful condition; but he does not appear for God before them. After-wards, he avails himself of the different parties of which the council was composed, to throw complete disorder into it, by declaring himself to be a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, and called in question for a dogma of that sect. This was true, but it was below the height of his own word, "that which was gain I counted loss for Christ's sake." The Jews, however, fully manifest themselves. That which Paul said raises a tumult, and the chief captain takes him from among them. God has all things at His disposal-a nephew of Paul's, never mentioned elsewhere, hears of an ambush laid for him and warns him of it. Paul sends him to the chief captain, who expedites the departure of Paul under a guard to Caesarea. God watched over him, but all is on the level of human and providential ways. There is not the angel as in Peter s case, nor the earthquake as at Philippi. We are sensibly on different ground.

Paul appears before the governors in succession. The Sanhedrim Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and afterward Caesar..And here, when occasion offers, we have striking appeals to conscience. "When his defense is in question, the manly and honest declarations of a good conscience, that rose above the passions and interests that surrounded him. I pass over in silence the worldly egotism which betrays itself in Lysias and Festus, by their assumption of all sorts of good qualities and good conduct-the mixture of awakened conscience and absence of principle in the governors, the desire to please the Jews for their own importance or to facilitate their government of a rebellious people; and the contempt felt by those who were not as responsible as Lysias for the

public tranquility. The position of Agrippa and all the details of the history have a remarkable stamp of truth, and present the various characters in so living a style that we seem to be in the scene described, we see the persons moving in it. This moreover, strikingly characterizes the writings of Luke.

Other circumstances claim our attention. Festus, in order to please the Jews, proposed to take Paul to Jerusalem. But Rome was to have its share in the rejection of the Gospel of grace, of the testimony to the Church; and Paul appeals to Caesar. Festus must therefore send him thither, although embarrassed to know what crime he is to charge him with in sending him. Sad picture of man's injustice! But everything accomplishes the purposes of God. In the use of this means, Paul succeeds no better than in his attempt to satisfy the Jews. It was perhaps, to the eye of man, his only resource under the circumstances; but the Holy Ghost is careful to inform us that he might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Caesar.

In Agrippa, we see a sense of need, and an awakened conscience. He was not far from being convinced that Christianity was true: perhaps he would have been so if his passions had not stood in the way. He would have been glad for Paul to be set free. He expresses his conviction that it might have been done, if he had not appealed to Caesar. He gives his opinion to Festus as a wise and reasonable man, but his words were in reality dictated by his conscience-words that he could venture to utter when Festus and all the rest were agreed that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. God would have the innocence of His beloved servant proved in the face of the world. His discourse tends to this. He goes farther, but his object is to give account of his conduct. His miraculous conversion is related in order to justify his subsequent career; but it is so related as to act upon the conscience of Agrippa, who was acquainted with Jewish things, and evidently desired to hear something of Christianity, which he suspected to be the truth. Accordingly, he lays hold with eagerness of the opportunity that presents itself to hear the apostle explain it. But he remains much where he was. His condition of soul opens, however, the mouth of Paul, and he addresses himself directly and particularly to the king; who, moreover, evidently engrossed by the subject, had called on him to speak. To Festus, it was all a rhapsody.

The dignity of Paul's manner before all these governors is perfect. He addresses himself to the conscience with a forgetfulness of self that showed a man in whom communion with God, and the sense of his relations with God, carried the mind above all effect of circumstances. He was acting for God; and, with a perfect deference for the position of those he addressed, we see that which morally was altogether superior to them. The more humiliating his circumstances, the more beauty in this superiority. Before the Gentiles he is a missionary from God. He is again, blessed be God! in his right place. All that he said to the Jews was right and deserved-but why was he who had been delivered from the people, subjected to their total want of conscience and their blind passions, which gave no place for testimony? Nevertheless, as we have seen, it was to be so in order that the Jews might in every way fill up the measure of their iniquity.

Paul's address to King Agrippa furnishes us with the most complete picture of the entire position of the apostle, as he himself looked at it when his long service and the light of the Holy Ghost illuminated his backward glance.

He does not speak of the Church-that was a doctrine for instruction, and not a part of his history; but everything that related to his personal history, in connection with his ministry, he gives in detail.

He had been a strict Pharisee; and here he connects the doctrine of Christ with the hopes of the Jews. He was in bonds "for the hope of the promise made unto the fathers." No doubt resurrection entered into it. Why should the king think resurrection impossible, that God was not able to raise the dead? This brings him to another point. He had verily thought with himself, that he ought to do many things against Jesus of Nazareth, and had carried them out with all the energy of his character, and with the bigotry of a devout Jew. His present condition as a witness among the Gentiles, depended on the change wrought in him by the revelation of the Lord when he was engaged in seeking to destroy His name. Near Damascus, a light brighter than the sun struck them all to the earth, and he alone heard the voice of the Righteous One, so that he knew from His own mouth that it was Jesus, and that He looked upon those who believed in Him as Himself. He could not resist such a testimony. But-as this was the great grievance to the Jews-he shows that his own position was formally marked out by the Lord Himself. He was called to give ocular evidence of the glory which he had seen, i.e., of Jesus in that glory; and of other things also, for the manifestation of which Jesus would again appear to him. A glorious Christ known (personally) only in Heaven, was the subject of the testimony committed to him. For this purpose He had set Paul apart from the Jews as much as from the Gentiles, his mission belonging immediately to Heaven, having its origin there: and he was sent formally by the Lord of glory to the Gentiles, to change their position with respect to God, through faith in this glorious Jesus; opening their eyes, bringing them out of darkness into light, from the power of Satan to God, and giving them an inheritance among the sanctified. This was a definite work. The apostle was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, and he had taught the Gentiles to turn to God, and to act as those who had done so. For this cause the Jews sought to kill him. Nothing more simple more truthful than this history. It put the case of Paul and the conduct of the Jews in the clearest light. When called to order by Festus, who naturally thought it nothing more than irrational enthusiasm, he appeals with perfect dignity and quick discernment, to Agrippa's knowledge of the facts upon which all this was based; for the thing had not been done in a corner.

In truth, Agrippa was not far from being convinced. The wish that Paul expresses, brings the matter back to its moral reality. The meeting is dissolved. The king resumes his kingly place in courtesy and condescension, and the Lord's disciple, that of prisoner: but, whatever might be the apostle's position, we see in him a heart thoroughly happy, and filled with the Spirit of God. Two years of prison had brought him no depression of heart or faith, but had only set him free from his harassing connection with the Jews, to give him moments spent with God.

Agrippa-surprised and carried away by Paul's clear and straightforward narrative- declares that he is almost persuaded to be a Christian. Charity might have said, "Would to God that thou wert I" But there is a spring in the heart of Paul that does not stop there; "Would to God," saith he, "that not only thou, but all those that hear me, were altogether such as I am, except these bonds." What happiness and what love (and in God these two things go together) are expressed in these words. A poor prisoner, aged, and rejected, at the end of his career he is rich in God. Blessed years that he had spent in prison! He could give himself as a model of happiness, for it filled his heart. There are conditions of soul which unmistakably declare themselves. And why should he not be happy? His fatigues ended, his work, in a certain sense, finished, he possessed Christ, and in Him, all things. The glorious Jesus who had brought him into the pains and labor of the testimony, was now his possession and his crown. Such. is ever the case. The cross in service-by virtue of what



Christ is -is the enjoyment of all that He is, when the service is ended; and, in some sort, the measure of that enjoyment. This was the case with Christ Himself, in all its fullness, it is ours, in our measure, according to the sovereign grace of God. Only, Paul's expression supposes the Holy Ghost acting fully in the heart, in order that it may be free to enjoy; and that the Spirit is not grieved.

A glorious Jesus, a Jesus who loved him, a Jesus who put the seal of his approbation and love upon his service, a Jesus who would take him to Himself in glory, and with whom he was one,-and known according to the abundant power of the Holy Ghost, according to divine righteousness,-a Jesus who revealed the Father, and through whom he had the place of adoption, was the in-finite source of joy to Paul, the glorious object of his heart and of his faith; and, being known in love, filled his heart with that love, overflowing towards all men. What could he wish them better than to be as he was except his bonds? How, filled with this love, could he not wish it, or not be full of this large affection-Jesus was its measure.

His innocence fully established, and acknowledged by his judges, the purposes of God must still be accomplished. His appeal to Caesar must carry him to Rome, that he may bear testimony there also. In his position here, he again resembles Jesus. But at the same time, if we compare them, the servant blessed as he is, grows dim and is eclipsed before Christ, so that we could no longer think of him. Jesus offered Himself up in grace, He appealed to God only, He answered but to bear testimony to the truth,- that truth was the glory of His person, His own rights, humbled as He was. His person shines out through all the dark clouds of human violence which could have had no power over Him had it not been the moment for thus fulfilling the will of God. For that purpose, power was given them from above. Paul appeals to Caesar. He is a Roman-a human dignity conferred by man, and available before men; he uses it for himself, God thus accomplishing His purposes. The one is blessed, and his services. The other is perfect -the perfect subject of the testimony itself.

Nevertheless, if there is no longer the free service of the Holy Ghost for Paul, and if he is a prisoner in the hands of the Romans, his soul at least is filled with the Spirit. Between him and God all is liberty and joy. All this shall turn to his salvation, i.e., to his definitive victory in his contest with Satan-how blessed-through the communications of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the word of God shall not be bound. Others shall gain more strength and liberty, by virtue of his bonds, even although, in the low state of the Church, some take advantage of them. But Christ will be preached and magnified, and with that Paul is content. Oh how true this is, and the perfect joy of the heart, come what may. We are the subjects of grace, God be praised, as well as instruments of grace in service. Christ alone is its object, and God secures His glory-nothing more is needed-this itself is our portion and our perfect joy.

It will be remarked in this interesting history, that at the moment when Paul might have been the most troubled, when his course was perhaps the least evidently according to the power of the Spirit, when he brought disorder into the council by using arguments which afterward he hesitates himself entirely to justify,-it is then that the Lord, full of grace, appears to him, to encourage and strengthen him. The Lord, who formerly had told him at Jerusalem to go away because they would not receive his testimony, who had sent him warnings not to go thither, but who accomplished His own purposes of grace in the infirmity and through the human affections of His servant, by their

means even; exercising at the same time His wholesome discipline in His divine wisdom by these same means. Jesus appears to him to tell him that as he had testified of Him at Jerusalem, so should he bear witness at Rome also. This is the way that the Lord interprets in grace the whole history, at the moment when His servant might have felt all that was painful in his position, perhaps have been overwhelmed by it, remembering that the Spirit had forbidden him to go up; for when in trial, a doubt is torment. The faithful and gracious Savior intervenes, therefore, to encourage Paul, and to put His own interpretation on the position of His poor servant, and to mark the character of His love for him. If it was necessary to exercise discipline for his good, on account of his condition, and to perfect him, Jesus was with him in the discipline. Nothing more touching than the tenderness, the opportuneness, of this grace. Moreover, as we have said, it all accomplished the purposes of God with regard to the Jews, to the Gentiles, to the world. For God can unite in one dispensation the most various ends.

And now, restored, reanimated by grace, Paul shows himself in his journey to be master of the position. It is he who counsels, according to the communication he receives from God, he who encourages, he who acts, in every way, on God's part, in the midst of the scene around him. The description, full of life and reality, which Luke his companion gives of this voyage, needs no comment. It is admirable, as a living picture of the whole scene. Our concern is to see what Paul was amid the false confidence or the distress of the whole company. At Melita, we find him again exercising his accustomed power among that barbarous people-one sees that God is with him. Evangelization does not, however, appear in the account of his sojourn there, or of his journey.

Landed in Italy, we see him depressed-the love of the brethren encourages and re-animates him, and he goes on to Rome, where he dwells two years in a house that he hires: a soldier being with him as a guard. Probably those who carried him to Rome had been given to understand that it was only a matter of Jewish jealousy, for all through the journey they treated him with all possible respect.

Arrived at Rome, he sends for the Jews, and here, for the last time, their condition is set before us, and the judgment which had been hanging over their heads ever since the utterance of the prophecy; which was especially connected with the house of David and with Judah - the judgment pronounced by Esaias, which the Lord Jesus declared should come upon them because of His rejection; the execution of which was suspended by the long-suffering of God, until the testimony of \_the Holy Ghost was also rejected. This judgment is here brought to mind by Paul, at the end of the historical part of the New Testament. It is their definitive condition solemnly declared by the minister of sovereign grace, and which should continue until God interposed in power to give them repentance, and to deliver them, and to glorify Himself in them by grace.

We have already marked this characteristic of the Acts, which comes out here in a clear and striking manner - the setting aside of the Jews; that is to say, they set themselves aside by their rejection of the testimony of God, of the work of God. They put themselves outside that which God was setting up. They will not follow Him in His progress of grace. And thus they are altogether left behind, without God, and without present communication with Him. His word abides forever, and His mercy - but others take the place of positive and present relationship with Him. Individuals enter into another sphere, on other grounds but Israel disappears, and is blotted out for a time 'from the sight of God.

It is this which is presented in the book of Acts. The patience of God is exercised towards the Jews themselves in the preaching of the Gospel and the apostolic mission at the beginning. Their hostility develops itself by degrees, and reaches its height in the case of Stephen. Paul is raised up, a witness of grace towards them, as an elect remnant, for he was himself of Israel; but introducing, in connection with a heavenly Christ, something entirely new as doctrine - the Church, the body of Christ in heaven, and the setting aside of all distinction between Jew and Gentile, as sinners, and in the oneness of that body. This is linked, historically, with that which had been established at Jerusalem, in order to maintain unity and the connection of the promises: but in itself, as a doctrine, it was a thing hidden in God in all the ages; having been in His purposes of grace before the world was. The enmity of the Jews to this truth never abated. They used every means to excite the Gentiles against those who taught the doctrine, and to prevent the formation of the Church itself. God, having acted with perfect patience and grace unto the end, puts the Church into the place of the Jews, as His house, and the vessel of His promises on earth; by making it His habitation by the Spirit. The Jews were set aside (alas their spirit soon took possession of the Church itself), and the Church and the clear and positive doctrine of no difference between Jew and Gentile, by nature alike the children of wrath, and of their common and equal privileges as members of one only body, has been fully declared and made the basis of all relationship between God and every soul possessed of faith. This is the doctrine of the apostle in the Epistle to the Romans and Ephesians. At the same time, the gift of eternal life, as promised before the world was, has been made manifest by regeneration, the commencement of a new existence with a divine character, and partaking of divine righteousness; these two things being united in our resurrection with Christ, by which we are placed before God as Christ, who is at once our life and our righteousness. This life manifests itself by conformity to the life of Christ on earth, who left us an example that we should follow His steps. It is the divine life manifested in man, in Christ as the object, in us as testimony.

The cross of Christ is the basis, the fundamental center of all these truths,- the relations between God and man as he was, his responsibility, grace, expiation; the end of life, as to sin, the law, and the world; the abolition of sin through the death of Christ, and its consequences in us. Everything is established there, and gives place to the power of life that was in Christ, who there perfectly glorified God- to that new existence into which He entered as man in the presence of the Father; by whose glory, as well as by His own divine power, and the energy of the Holy Ghost, He was raised from the dead.

This does not prevent God's resuming His ways in government with the Jews on earth, when the Church is complete and manifested on high; and which He will do according to His promises and the declarations of prophecy. The apostle explains this also in the Epistle to the Romans; but it belongs to the study of that Epistle. The ways of God in judgment with regard to the Gentiles also at the same period, will be shown us in the apocalypse (as well as in other passages of the Epistles, in connection with the coming of Christ), and even of His government of the world in general from the beginning to the end; together with the warnings necessary for the Church when the days of deception begin to dawn, and to be developed, morally, in the ruin of the Church, viewed as God's witness in the world.

Our apostle, when brought to Rome, declares, upon the manifestation of unbelief among the Jews, which we have pointed out, that the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles; and he dwells two

whole years in the house he had hired, receiving those who came to him,-for he had not liberty to go to them, -preaching the kingdom of God, and those things which concerned the Lord Jesus, with all boldness, no man forbidding him. And here the history is ended of this precious servant of God, beloved and honored by His Master, a prisoner in that Rome which-as head of the fourth empire-was to be the seat of opposition among the Gentiles, as Jerusalem of opposition among the Jews, to the kingdom and to the glory of Christ. The time for the full manifestation of that opposition was not yet come; but the minister of the Church and of the Gospel of glory, is a prisoner there. It is thus that Rome begins its history in connection with the Gospel that the apostle preached. Nevertheless, God was with him.

## The Child of the Bridechamber

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AT 9:9-9:17{The conversion of Matthew, the publican, will not, I believe, be fully enjoyed, if we do not continue with it in our view to the end of ver. 17. For I regard Matthew as being at that moment in the thoughts of the Lord, a new bottle with the new wine in it.

The Lord met him in the place where the world had put him. He was a publican, and was sitting at the receipt of custom. But He passed by, and it was "a day of power," and Matthew was "made willing." He "hearkened diligently" to Christ, and his soul at once "delighted itself in fatness." For he arose and followed the Lord, and then spread a feast for Him.

This was joy and liberty. And Jesus sanctioned it. He sat at Matthew's table. This was done suddenly, it is true. But though sudden it was not premature--though unbidden it did not remain unsanctioned. Theft Eunuch, in his day, went on his way rejoicing, and that rejoicing, like this of Matthew, was early and sudden, but it was not premature.

And in Matthew there was light, and the mind of Christ, as well as liberty and the joy of Christ. He seated at the same table the publicans and sinners who had been following Jesus--the very people who had brought the Lord of Glory from heaven, and the very people whom the Lord Himself will have at His own table in the day of the marriage-supper; a company of sinners redeemed and washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Matthew thus justly and beautifully understood the mind of Christ. He knew Him, though he had but just then been introduced to Him. Like the dying thief. For a short moment is time enough to carry the light and liberty of Christ into the dark and distant heart of either a thief or a publican.

Matthew was in Christ's presence in joy. He was a child of the bridechamber. He feasted the Lord. The King was sitting at his table--because, in spirit, Jesus had already brought Matthew to His banqueting-house. This was the time of "the kindness of his youth," or, "the love of his espousals"; and in that joy, he had risen up, left all, and followed Christ. The world might, therefore be to him, "a wilderness, a land not sown" (Jer. 2:2); but with Jesus he feasted. The word of power, the invitation of grace, he had listened to, and to his soul it had been "a feast of fat things," wine and milk of the King's providing. It was as a bridegroom, as a lover of his soul, Matthew had apprehended Christ, and was now entertaining Him at his table; and because of this new-found liberty and joy, Matthew is among the children of the bridechamber, a new bottle with the new wine in it.

Neither Moses, nor John the Baptist, could have made such a bottle as this. The word of Christ, heard in the light and energy of the Holy Ghost, could alone have provided it. On Him only, all the vessels of the Lord's house hang, the "flagons" and the "cups." The Pharisees and the disciples of John do not even understand this. The one object to the feast with sinners--the other, that the feast is not a fast. The legalist and the religionist, neither of them, can brook the publican's that is the sinner's feast. The elder brother complains of the fatted calf. The music and the dancing, as the cheerful sound reaches him in his outside place, vex him--as the sight of the table and the

company in the house of our Levi, irritates the Pharisees as they look on and will not sit.

The good Lord, however, vindicates both the feast and the guests. He lets be heard, there on the spot and at the moment, that He had come to gather such a scene. And He thereby vindicates the host as having done the part of a child of the bridechamber, and as having done it well.

A simple sweet story of grace! Would that one's heart realized the joy that the mind is tracing! Jesus found a publican, a sinner, just at his place in this wretched self-seeking world; he took him up at once, made him a new bottle, and filled him with new wine, like the Samaritan at Jacob's well. She was taken up just as she was, and where she was; and as another child of the bridechamber, she was sent on her way rejoicing. The world will "fret itself," and "be driven to darkness," as the prophet speaks. The heart of the Pharisees is rent by vexation at such a sight. The publican's feast is lost upon them, the new wine is spilled; as the Lord adds, "No man putteth a piece of new cloth upon an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse: neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish."

But then, days of absence, and therefore days of sorrow of heart, were to come, after these feast-days of His presence; but they had not come then. That day in Matthew's house was "one of the days of the Son of Man." But the heart that can feast a present Jesus will mourn an absent Jesus. "The days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast." The children of the bridechamber will fast during the Bridegroom's absence, because He is dear to them. It is not the Pharisee's fast of religious service and merit, but the fast of a heart that has been weaned away from other objects, and for the present has lost the presence of its own.

The Wise Virgins are as children of the bridechamber, fasting while the Bridegroom has not as yet returned. The oil in their vessels tells us that they are waiting and watching for Him, with hearts separated to the desire of his return; and the Matthew who, upon the revelation of the Lord to His soul and in His presence, could spread a table, would be the Wise Virgin that would wait and watch, in separation and desire, during His absence. The oil in the vessel would well suit the soul that in other circumstances had spread the table.

It is not from experience, but from desire only, one's heart traces the path of a child of the bridechamber. Of such a soul some of us will say, "I see from far the beautiful light." There are occasions and seasons when the state of the affections to Christ are sorrowfully discovered; and sure I am, we need a more earnest eye for Him. Our look at Him has need to be a nearer one, more fixed and personal. Our sight of Him is too commonly conducted as by the light of others. We are prone to have Him in company, in the reflections and by the help of the scene and circumstances in which we place ourselves. I covet a more earnest look at Him; a look that can reach Him very closely and personally, without aid, or countenance, or company. The single eye knows Him only, the earnest eye enjoys Him deeply.

Mary at the sepulcher had it, when she could pass by the shining ones, while looking, for Him. The sinner of the city had it, when she could let the scorn of the Pharisee pass over her without moving her. The Samaritan had it, when she could forget her water-pot; and the Eunuch, when he went on heedless of the loss of Philip. Our Matthew had it. And it is this which not only realizes Christ, but

puts Him in His due supreme place, and chief room both of attraction and authority.

## The Christian Position As to Life and the Spirit

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AL 2:19-3:14{There are two things presented here, which distinguish the Christian. The first is an entirely new life in the presence of the Lord Jesus (Gal. 2:19, etc.) The second is the possession of the Holy Ghost (chap. 3.), in contrast with the law, and also the promises; for the accomplishment is quite distinct from the hope. The difference is immense; for, in order to enjoy the effect of the promise, it is needful that faith come in and that righteousness be accomplished. The perfect righteousness of Christ in God's presence must be put on. One cannot have the accomplishment of the promise save in Christ.

The Galatians had, to a certain point, succeeded in introducing some measure of works of the law in order to salvation. Not that the name of Christ was set aside, but his work was despised. Now God, in His grace, has set us before Him without questions. They have been all solved in Christ and God. We are not clear till we have recognized ourselves under the efficacy of all that Christ has done for our salvation, and we cannot enjoy it, as long as there are questions to be solved.

To enjoy the efficacy of Christ's work is the foundation of all. It is the joy of the full revelation of God. Abraham had precious promises (Gen. 15;17) But it is one thing to have promises, like those made to Abraham, precious as this is without doubt, a totally different thing to have a full entire revelation of God in respect of us such as we have in the epistles. The work which has been fully and clearly revealed has put me where Jesus is in the presence of. God, happy and without a cloud. -What Christ has done, the law could not do, and did not pretend to it; for the law, having a shadow of things to come, showed, after all, that God could not be revealed therein. Why? Because righteousness was not accomplished: it would have been judgment, for the law demanded its fulfillment. The Holy Ghost tells us that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest. God kept Himself in the thick darkness.

Now, they were seeking to add things in order to be saved, when the believer was without questions in the presence of God. Therefore, says the apostle, " If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. I have done wrong, then, in overthrowing them, I am a transgressor and Christ a minister of sin (Gal. 2) "But," he adds, " I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

What, then, is the effect of the law, and wherefore serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, but it is not a thing which I could accomplish. The apostle has not even the idea of such a thing, for the law was given to show man that he was a sinner. The righteousness which is by faith is quite another thing from abiding under the law. I know all the power of the law; it can only condemn me. But now I am dead to the law. How happy to know the thing by grace, for grace is of little moment to me if I am under law. The knowledge of grace makes me understand that the more God is good, the more guilty am I if I offend him. The revelation of this grace of God, if the law enters, and I must render an account, makes one more culpable in every respect. When



Moses came down from the mountain, he brought a ministry of condemnation and death (compare Ex. 34 and 2 Cor. 3) God had proclaimed himself as the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and sin, and that would, by no means, clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. This was not a ministry of pure grace, as some suppose; for God had said, Whosoever hath sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book (Ex. 32:33). But under grace, he who sins against such a God is more guilty than a sinner under the ministry of condemnation and death. Nor is this a piece of reasoning; for the word says, that Moses put a vail on his face, that the children of Israel could not look to the end of that which is abolished. If God impute my sin to me, all this goodness does but aggravate my case. What is it that I want? The manifestation of righteousness. For whatever was the goodness of God displayed, it rendered man more blamable, and promise could not take that away. The people were guilty, and the ministry with which Moses was invested was a ministry of condemnation and death. But the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all, and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference! for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:22,23). God knowing that which should be manifested, bore with sins. That has only displayed His righteousness which He has declared at this time. We are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness (Rom. 3:24, 26).

The important thing for our souls is, that God's righteousness has been fully revealed. It is not that faith denies the authority of the law: "yea, we establish the law." Faith owns that the law demands perfect righteousness; but it also says, "If I seek my salvation by the works of the law, I am condemned and lost." But now faith says, "I, through the law, am dead to the law." This is what Christ has accomplished for us personally. Christ has put Himself under the sentence of the cross, and by His death I am crucified with Him. The life, in which I was responsible and I had sinned, exists no longer. This, it is, which makes such a total difference. The life in which God saw me a sinner, the life to which sin is attached, and consequently condemnation and death, no more exists. "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." This is not yet all. It is no more a question for me, if I can find the favor of God by keeping the law; for I live no longer according to this life, but in the life of Christ who loved me. My responsibility as to this life is gone; Christ has loved me, and loved me as I am. Such is the sole relation that I know; and I am sure of His love. It is the action of Christ for me which has set me thus, and not mine for Him.

It is true that I have failed; but I am dead, and my responsibility, as a saved person, flows from this, that Christ has loved and saved me, and from the relations which exist between Him and me. If my soul has not understood its responsibility before God as saved, I have not understood the gospel; nevertheless, I cannot deny it, God being revealed to me. It is not any more a question of what I ought to be, but of what Christ has done, and done for me. What I find is, that He has loved me as I was. I find in Jesus the manifestation of the God who loved me. I have the full assurance before God, that I have no longer anything to do with this first life, the life of the first Adam; but that I live now in another life, communicated by the second Adam, even. Christ, of whose love, to me, I am assured.

There is a great difference between the enjoyment of lost child introduced into a family, and that of him who is adopted there. The child may find the father to be kind, but he has not yet the child's heart, nor position, as long as he feels himself a mere foundling. As soon, however, as his position is changed, because he understands that the head of the family is become his father by adoption, he enjoys those intimate relations which exist between a parent and his child.

Everything depends on the relations which exist. One cannot enjoy the affections of God without being His child; all depends on the knowledge and enjoyment of this relationship. Then the heart is happy, and such is the place of the Christian. The effect of Christ's work is to set us thus in the relation in which Jesus stands with the Father.

The apostle presents us with a second position in Gal. 3:2:-" Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith." To this he replies:-" As many [persons] as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."... " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ: that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Now we have the contrast, not only with the law, but also with the promises; for Christ is far above the promises, seeing that He is Himself their accomplishment. Those who are of the works of the law-on that ground and principle-are cursed; those who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham (Gal. 3:9). Impossible to have joy in God's presence without the question of sin's being settled. Can we stand before God without that? No; righteousness is necessary. If I have the least thing upon my conscience, how can I be happy in the light? For one must be there without spot. But Christ has done more than answer to righteousness; and herein we find a glorious manifestation in Christ, for He has accomplished, in perfection, all that was demanded of man, and He is now glorified. We enjoy not merely the righteousness which was required, but this-that God has been glorified; and that is much more. Had God merely shown Himself just, He would. have cut off all men as sinners: without the work of Christ, God's majesty would have been compromised; but Christ gave Himself up to be the vessel for displaying on the cross all that God is for us. God Himself has been so glorified, that Christ could say, " Therefore doth my Father love me." The God-man has not only satisfied the righteousness of God, but, besides, the consequence of His perfect work, is that we can rejoice in His presence without questions and without trouble of conscience. We have received not life only, but the Holy Ghost, as the seal of our justification, and in order that we may understand all the effect of this righteousness to enjoy it without a cloud in the Father's presence.

Another thing besides flows thence the base on which the church is founded. For this is not on what man was not, but on what he is in Christ; and in this manifestation Christ has unfolded all that was in God for us. The Church of the living God is the pillar and around of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). There is the truth, &cause God has been manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory. That had not been all promised. For the Church to receive her existence, it was needful that God should be manifested in flesh. Christ having accomplished the work of redemption, God has introduced man in His presence, and set him in glory. Having proved man to be a sinner, He was not contented to take away sin, but he would see him His own, and make him enjoy all His grace in perfect peace,

giving him to understand that His righteousness was accomplished in Christ. Such is the Church. Souls convinced of sin enjoy all the fullness of the sovereign grace of God, because there is no more question of sins for them. By the gift of the Holy Ghost, there are two effects. There is first the consciousness of the perfect righteousness of God Him-self without conscience of sin. Can you say that there is no more question of sins for you? Is this question entirely at rest, and your relation to God founded on that? Have you recognized that your responsibility, your relation, with God, is based upon the accomplished righteousness in Christ? If so, you are happy and blessed. Formerly you were sinners, but now you can say, God loves me. I do not speak of your thoughts; but you have made the discovery that you are God's children by faith in Christ Jesus, that your responsibility, as sinners, is closed. Are your hearts thus at large? to consider before Him that you are crucified with Christ, and that sin is gone for you? I cannot have the feelings of a bride towards one whom I dread as my judge:

I need the consciousness of being in the presence of my bridegroom, according to that loving-kindness which is better than life.

Is God your daily resource in your faults and sins, even when you have committed them? Do you believe that His love can do that? There is where the apostle regards the Christian as set; and when the contrary happens, the Jewish position is more or less taken by the heart. If I have not full confidence in God, I must seek something outside, instead of having recourse to God to find strength. and to restore my soul. If God is Your resource, you will not seek the law. The touch-stone for the child of God is, whether his resources are in God or in himself. Perhaps, like the Jews, he seeks to offer sacrifices. If Christians, we are under grace, and it is of moment for us to be clear as to the position. Christ has brought us into. There we are blessed in. His presence; there, also, we are in possession of the precious things which are promised us. For, I repeat, it is not the promises which constitute our joy but Christ, in whom we have them all, Yea, and Amen, in virtue of the work which has been wrought and accepted; and we can be strangers and pilgrims.

May God strengthen us more and more in the consciousness of His love, which has saved us, and brings us into His presence to enjoy all that He is for us. Then Christ will be the object of all our thoughts. May we have it simple and settled before us, that it is no more ourselves that live, but Christ that liveth in us, that nothing is wanting to the accomplishment of the requirements of God, and that our position is based upon His love.

If by the law God tested fallen man as to ability and willingness to do His will, by the Gospel, he has tested him as to his ability and willingness to suffer His will. Under the law, man was to give to God; under the Gospel, man was to receive from God But man, fallen, has neither heart, nor mind, nor will to have anything to do with God. He will not have Him as the end of his being, nor will he have Him as its source. "When Grace prevails to save a soul, it soon becomes evident t'hat the source precedes the end, and that " All my springs are in Thee" must precede " Lo, I come to do Thy will, Oh. God! "

## Corrections of the Translation of Some Passages in the New Testament

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John 5:24.|Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth nay word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life.|

John 5:29.|They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.|

Acts 3:19.|Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.|

Rom. 1:1.|Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle.|

Rom. 1:4.|Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead.|

Rom. 1:7.|To all that be in Rome beloved of God, saints by calling ("called saints" is ambiguous).|

Rom. 1:17.|Therein is the righteousness of God revealed in the way of faith to faith.|

Rom. 2:14.|These having no law, are a law to themselves.|

Rom. 2:23.|Thou that boastest thyself in law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God?|

Rom. 3:20.|Therefore by works of law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by law is the knowledge of sin.|

Rom. 3:21.|But now apart from law, the righteousness of God is manifested.|

Rom. 3:22.|The righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ, as to all (towards or for all) and upon all them that believe.|

Rom. 3:30.|Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision in the way of faith, and the uncircumcision by faith.|

Rom. 3:31.|Do we then make void law by faith? God forbid: yea, we establish law.|

Rom. 4:12.|And the father of circumcision, not only to those who are of the circumcision, but to those also who walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.|

Rom. 5:1.|Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.|

Rom. 5:11.|We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation.|

Rom. 5:18.|Therefore, as by one offense (or by [the] offense of one) towards all to condemnation; even so by one accomplished act of righteousness toward all unto justification of life.|

Rom. 5:20.|Moreover law entered, that the offense might abound.|

Rom. 6:7.|For he that is dead is justified (or cleared) from sin.|

Rom. 7:1.|I speak to them that know law.|

Rom. 7:6.|But now we are delivered from the law, being dead in that in which we were held.|

Rom. 7:20.|Now if I do that which I would not (I emphatic) it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.|

Rom. 7:24.|Who shall deliver me from this body of death.|

Rom. 8:11.|He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies because of his Spirit that dwelleth in you.|

Rom. 8:20-21.|For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected it, in hope that the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.|

Rom. 8:27.|He maketh intercession for the saints according to God.|

Rom. 8:28.|But we know that all things work together for good, etc.|

Rom. 8:33.|Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?|

Rom. 8:34.|It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?|

Rom. 8:35.|It is Christ that died...Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, etc.|

Rom. 9:9.|For this word is of promise, at this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.|

Rom. 9:32.|For they stumbled at the stumbling-stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone.|

Rom. 10:4.|For Christ is [the] end of law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.|

Rom. 11:31.|Even so have these now not believed in your mercy, that they might be objects of mercy.|

Rom. 14:22.|Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.|

Rom. 15:12.|In Him shall the Gentiles hope (to connect it with the God of hope, see ver. 13).|

Rom. 16:26.|According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by prophetic Scriptures...made known unto all nations.|

1 Cor. 2:13.|Which things also we speak, not in the words, which man's wisdom teacheth; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, communicating spiritual things by spiritual means.|

1 Cor. 3:9.|For we are co-laborers of God: ye are God's husbandry; ye are God's building.|

1 Cor. 4:4.|For I know nothing of myself ("by myself" is antiquated).|

1 Cor. 7:36.|But if any man think that he behaveth himself unseemly toward his virgin state, if he pass the flower of his age.|

1 Cor. 7:37.|That he will keep his virgin state.|

1 Cor. 7:38.|So then he that marrieth himself doeth well; but he that marrieth not himself doeth better.|

1 Cor. 9:21.|To them that are without law, as without law, being not without law to God, but subject to Christ, or under law to Christ.|

1 Cor. 10:6.|Now these things were figures of us.|

1 Cor. 11:25.|This cup is the new covenant in my blood.|

1 Cor. 11:29.|He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.|

1 Cor. 12:1.|Now concerning spiritual manifestations (or powers), brethren, I would not have you ignorant.|

1 Cor. 14:1.|Leave out, throughout the chapter, the word "unknown" before "tongue."|

1 Cor. 15:20-28.|Read in parenthesis.|

2 Cor. 2:5.|But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but, that I may not charge you, in a measure all of you.|

2 Cor. 3:7-16.|Read in parenthesis.|

2 Cor. 3:18.|But we all, contemplating (or looking at) the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are changed into the same image.|

2 Cor. 4:6.|For (it is) the God who spoke the light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts, for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. ("Spoke the light to shine," is not quite English; but "commanded" is weak. "God said let there be light, and there was light," is referred to. "He spake and it was done.")|

2 Cor. 5:10.|For we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ.|

2 Cor. 5:17.|Therefore if any man be in Christ there is a new creation.|

2 Cor. 5:20.|As though God did beseech by us, we pray in Christ's stead be reconciled to God.|

2 Cor. 6:8-9.|As deceivers and true, as unknown and well known.|

2 Cor. 6:10.|As sorrowful but always rejoicing, as poor but making many rich, as having nothing and possessing all things.|

2 Cor. 10:13.|But we will not boast of things without measure, but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has distributed to us to reach even unto you.|

2 Cor. 13:3-5.|Since ye seek a proof of Christ's speaking in me. (which...toward you) Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.|

Gal. 1:6-7.|I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ to a different gospel, which is not another.|

Gal. 2:2-4.|Read ver. 3, in parenthesis. In ver. 3, it is better to read "Neither was Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, compelled to be circumcised."|

Gal. 2:10.|Only they would that we should remember the poor, the same also which I have been diligent in.|

Gal. 2:17.|But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, then is Christ the minister of sin.|

Gal. 2:19.|For I, through law, am dead to law, that I might live unto God.|

Gal. 3:10.|For as many as are of works of law are under the curse.|

Gal. 3:11.|But that no man is justified, through law, in the sight of God, is evident.|

Gal. 3:16.|Now to Abraham were the promises made and to his seed.|

Gal. 3:17.|The covenant that was confirmed before of God to Christ.|

Gal. 3:18.|For if the inheritance be of law, it is no more of promise.|

Gal. 3:21.|If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by law.|

Gal. 3:23.|But before faith came we were kept under law.|

Gal. 4:21.|Tell me, ye that desire to be under law, do ye not hear the law?|

Gal. 4:26.|But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is our mother (a different reading).|

Gal. 5:18.|But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under law.|

Eph. 1:7-8.|According to the riches of his grace, which he has caused to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.|

Eph. 1:9-10.|According to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in Himself, for the administration of the fullness of times [namely] to head up all things in Christ.|

Eph. 1:12.|That we should be to the praise of His glory who pre-trusted in Christ.|

Eph. 2:14.|Hath broken down the middle wall of partition (strike out "between us").|

Eph. 2:15.|To make in himself of twain one new man making peace (strike out "so").|

Eph. 3:15.|Of whom every family in heaven and earth is named.|

Eph. 3:19.|And to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled [even] unto all the fullness of God.|

Eph. 4:12.|For the perfecting of the saints [with a view] to the work of ministry.|

Eph. 5:1.|Be ye therefore imitators of God as dear children.|

Eph. 5:13.|For that which makes all things manifest is light.|

Eph. 5:30.|For we are members of His body [we are] of His flesh, and of His bones.|

Eph. 6:12.|For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual [powers] of wickedness or of evil in the heavenlies (or heavenly places): and so 1:3; 2:6; 3:10.|

Phil. 1:7.|Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because you have me in your heart.|

Phil. 1:22.|But if I live in the flesh, this is worth the while.|

Phil. 2:6.|Who being in the form of God, did not count it an object of plunder (i.e. as Adam) to be equal with God.|

Phil. 2:17.|Yea, and if I be poured out as a libation on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.|

Phil. 3:11.|If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from among the dead.|

Phil. 3:14.|I press toward the mark for the prize of the calling of God in Christ Jesus on high; or calling (up) on high of God.|

Phil. 3:20.|From whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ [as] Savior.|

Phil. 3:21.|Who shall change the body of our humiliation that it may be fashioned like the body of his glory; or, our body of humiliation...like His body of glory.|

Col. 1:19.|For all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him; or, It pleased all the fullness to dwell in Him.|

Col. 2:20.|If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though alive in the world are ye subject to ordinances.|

1 Thess. 4:6.|That no man go beyond or defraud his brother in the matter - (a euphemism for what concerns carnal lusts).|

1 Thess. 4:14.|Them also which have fallen asleep through Jesus, will God bring with him. (At any rate "fallen asleep through Jesus," may be a question).|

1 Thess. 4:16.|The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with an assembling shout. (It was the cry to the scattered rowers, or hoop to gather to their ports and place).|

2 Thess. 1:8.|In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and on them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.|

2 Thess. 2:2.|That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ were present.|

2 Thess. 2:6.|And now ye know that which holds back (or restraints).|



2 Thess. 2:7.|For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only there is the holder back (or restrainer) till he be taken out of the way.|

2 Thess. 2:8.|Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the appearing of his coming (or presence).|

1 Tim. 1:17.|Now to the king of ages, the incorruptible, invisible only wise God.|

1 Tim. 2:3.|For this is good and acceptable in the sight of our Savior God.|

1 Tim. 4:10.|We trust in the living God who is the preserver of all men, especially of those that believe.|

2 Tim. 1:10.|Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel.|

2 Tim. 2:6.|The husbandman laboring first must be partaker of the fruits; i.e., he must first labor in order to partake.|

Titus 2:13.|Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.|

Titus 2:14.|And purify unto himself a people of [his] possession.|

Philemon 6.|That the fellowship of thy faith may become effectual etc.|

Heb. 1:2.|Hath in these last days spoken to us in [the person of] Son, or as Son.|

Heb. 2:5.|Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the habitable earth which is to be, or, the coming world.|

Heb. 2:14.|That through death he might annul him that had the power of death.|

Heb. 2:16.|He took not up [the cause of] angels; but he took up [that of] the seed of Abraham.|

Heb. 3:1-2.|Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, faithful to him that appointed him.|

Heb. 3:3.|For He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses.|

Heb. 3:16.|For who when they had heard provoked? Was it not all who came out of Egypt by Moses? (This is in part a question of an accent, and hence may be more than usually subject to the spiritual question of its import).|

Heb. 4:3.|For we which have believed [are those who] enter into rest.|

Heb. 5:10.|Addressed of God [as] high priest after the order of Melchizedek.|

Heb. 5:14.|But solid meat belongeth to them that are of full age.|

Heb. 7:3.|Without father, without mother, ungenealogied.|

Heb. 7:18.|For verily there is a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof (for the law perfected nothing) and the bringing in of a better hope, by

the which we draw nigh to God.]

Heb. 7:22.[By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant.]

Heb. 9:8.[The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while yet the first tabernacle had its standing.]

Heb. 9:15-17.[For this cause, He is the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant. (16-17. "Testament" remains), but the two verses are in parenthesis. In ver. 18, "testament" may either be simply left out, or be changed into covenant. Ver. 20. "This is the blood of the covenant."]

Heb. 9:26.[But now once in the consummation of the ages; or, the completion of the ages.]

Heb. 9:28.[Unto them who look for Him shall He appear the second time apart from sin unto salvation.]

Heb. 12:2.[Looking unto Jesus the leader [in] and finisher of faith.]

Heb. 12:22-23.[And to an innumerable company of angels, the universal assembly, and to the Church of the firstborn which are written in heaven.]

Heb. 13:7-8.[Remember them who have led you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.]

Heb. 13:8.[Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to day, and forever.]

Heb. 13:17.[Obey your leaders; or those who lead you.]

James 3:1.[My brethren be not many teachers.]

James 4:5.[The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth enviously.]

1 Pet. 1:2.[Unto the obedience and sprinkling of blood of Jesus Christ.]

1 Pet. 1:9.[Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of souls.]

1 Pet. 2:7.[Unto you, therefore, is the preciousness, who believe.]

1 Pet. 3:20.[Wherein few, that is eight souls, were preserved through [the] water.]

1 Pet. 4:1.[He that hath suffered in his flesh, is at rest from sin.]

1 Pet. 4:18.[And if the righteous are difficultly saved.]

1 Pet. 5:3.[Not as ruling over heritages, but as models of the flock.]

1 Pet. 5:13.[She that is at Babylon [your] fellow elect, saluteth you.]

2 Pet. 1:3.[This verse it is impossible to translate, there being no verb in it; but it gives the fuller sense, because the presence of divine power is the thing given, and which gives (according to) everything of his divine power, which is for life and piety [which power is] given to us through the knowledge of Him that hath called us by glory and virtue. It is not simply everything which is for life and piety, but it is everything of His divine power which relates to that; but it is not these things that

are given to us, but the divine power as that which begets them; which power we have by the heart-knowledge (ἐπιγνωσεως) of Him that has called us, etc. "Christ dwells in our hearts by faith;" but "divine power has given," is another thing from divine power livingly in us.|

2 Pet. 1:19.|We have also the word of prophecy more sure (confirmed).|

2 Pet. 1:20.|No prophecy of Scripture interprets itself by itself.|

2 Pet. 3:12. |Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.|

1 John 1:2.|And we have seen and bear witness and show to you that eternal life.|

1 John 2:2.|And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.|

1 John 2:13.|I write unto you young children, because ye have known the father.|

1 John 2:18.|Young children it is the last time.|

1 John 2:24.|If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall abide in you, you shall abide in the Son and in the Father.|

1 John 2:28.|And now little children abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be put to shame by him, at his coming.|

1 John 3:1.|Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the children of God.|

1 John 3:2.|Beloved, now are we children of God.|

1 John 3:3.|And every many that hath this hop in HIM purifieth himself even as he is pure.|

1 John 3:16.|Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us.|

1 John 3:24.|He that keepeth his commandments abideth in Him.|

1 John 4:2.|Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in flesh is of God.|

1 John 5:11.|This is the witness that God hath given to us eternal life.|

1 John 5:20.|In his son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.|

2 John 7.|Many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not Jesus Christ coming in flesh.|

Jude 8.|Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, etc.|

## Death

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Of all solemn realities, in the wide universe of God's creation, there is none more awful than that of Death. Looked at in the light which God's most holy word casts upon it, as to its origin, development and termination, the subject is one full of solemn import. And to a creature who is fallen it must be so; because it contains the thoughts and truth of the living, eternal, unchanging God-His explanation of the fallen state of a creature who has cast off its dependance upon Himself.

I desire to say a few words upon this subject, under the guidance, I trust, of God; and desiring that what I write should be received or rejected according to its agreement or non-agreement with the Scriptures of truth. For I write as one who has known Him through whose word, blessed be God, it is said-" Life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel."

Scripture, as a revelation of God, is a revelation given to man. This truth limits and checks many an inquiry which the human mind might like to entertain; and it would condemn many a flight which fallen human reason might like to take as to the bearing of certain subjects upon other parts of creation beside man. I have felt this as to Death--but I desire to check myself, and to keep within that field, the field of human responsibility, to which the Word directs me.

" In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17), is the first intimation on the subject which is met with in Scripture. 'It was the warning of the Lord God, in 'His wisdom and goodness, addressed to Adam, as to the sure consequences of disobedience; and the words were addressed to him as to a living soul. For "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul " (Gen. 2:7). What was the difference, the distinction, between Adam as thus made, and the cattle, the birds, and the fish? Both were expressions of creative power; but how different the modes in which this creative power wrought forth in the two! How different the intentions and objects of the Creator in the two cases! how different this last creature from all the rest! The essential difference, at least, is easily felt, when the peculiar deposit made to Adam in Eden (chap. 2) is weighed. None but Adam was counted competent to recognize the Giver of all goodness, and to know himself as a creature responsible to Him--- able to honor and able to dishonor Him, if it would. This power of recognizing God as the source and up-holder, and the alone proper end of one's being, man alone possessed. The Law, looked upon as a standard, and explanation of what man ought to be, throws light upon the subject, and gives us a development of no little importance. To love God with all the heart, mind, soul and strength, and to love one's fellow, as set by God near one, as oneself-this is what man should do and. should be. Not to be, not to be able to do, thus-in man-is the proof of his being, as a creature, not in dependance upon God-is morally, as to what he is inwardly, death. To be unable to have God in all his thoughts, proves a man to be dead in soul. True, there is the solemn realizing of what such a state is in other ways; but where, from a man's state, God cannot be in all his thoughts-when the energy is such as to put into action thoughts in which God is not, what but death is shown to be there. The creature, made to be dependent upon its Creator, if it

ceases to hold that place, may, nay must, be dependent upon another. And in that death " in trespasses and sins," which we read of in the New Testament, we find, as in passages innumerable, that Satan gets possession of man fallen from God, and fills him with all evil and wickedness. Or, again, the effects of this death within may be showed out in more ways than one; " the wages of sin is death," and "He that has the power of death" is the enemy-even " death" as to the body;-but while this is quite true, and while it is true that there is such a thing as the second death, still I judge that the creature (in the widest sense of the term) is dead when it naturally acts, or puts into action, a will, a thought independently of God. To a creature, separation from its Creator is death. The will of a serpent-beguiled Eve opened the door, when she took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and did eat. The doing so was a practical taking of a place of being without God. The effects of the knowledge of good and evil upon such an assumed place became soon evident, in the sense of nakedness,-of broken responsibility,-of suspicion of God, and a quiet self-complacent assumption of competency to guard against God. But alas I self-complacency which can delude man to think that he is competent, not only to settle matters with God, but competent also to protect himself against God, with whom he feels himself to be at issue, act as it may outside of His presence, has only to feel that he may be near to be forced to confess its own insufficiency. This we see in Adam after the fall-charging God foolishly; and charging his fellow quickly follows; and the stream of delusive lying soon brings in murder also. The likeness and image of Adam the first, as made after the likeness and image of God, soon disappear. And, in the progeny and exile of Adam, we find rather the traces of the hand of him who had been a murderer and a liar from the beginning, than of aught else. Surely moral death-death in trespass and sin-may be found in Gen. 3 although man never saw death in a human body until Cain murdered his brother Abel-and although (we may add) man will not see what all this really means, until, before the great white throne, the root of sin, in all its shoots and fruits, has been finally judged before the Son of Man. Then shall man, as man, know and see, the second death there fully discovered, what the contrast is of subjection to God, and of subjection to God's enemy.

It is wonderful, but so it is: man's will and man's plan for bettering himself in independency of God-beguiled to it as he was by Satan-opened the way for Satan's condemnation. And when all was ruined in Eden, it then came out that God's will and God's plans could not be escaped from. Who should anticipate God? Was any one before Him? Creation, ruined by man through the guile of Satan, was to become the turning point of Satan's condemnation, and of the display of redemption among men-the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent. The question is no longer about Adam, or about his state or his obedience or non-obedience; he is left clean out; Satan and the seed of the woman are the parties between whom the whole is made now to rest by the Divine mind. Creation was exhausted as to a remedy; there was none in creation. But if Satan had shaken creation, and man the center of the fair system here below, he had not, he could not shake God. Him he could not change; to him' he could not say: " In Thy wisdom, and power, and goodness there is no answer." Irremediable ruin he had brought, but only upon himself, and those who should cleave to his interests among men, and set themselves, and persevere to the end, in opposition to the interests of this seed of the poor beguiled Eve.

A state of severance from its Creator, would seem to me to be death in man as a creature. One may look at the state itself; at that to which it exposes man; morally or bodily, or as to his whole being; and one may look at it as not only what is true as to man, but as that which has become an

occasion for God to display Himself by, as to man, between the time of its entering and the time of His fully acting as to man, a sinner, upon the alone ground of this sin, namely, in the judgment; when banishment from the presence of God, banishment in God's own eternity, forever, of all those who have taken part with the old serpent against the seed of the woman, shall be finally executed; and they that are such shall then be driven to the place prepared for the devil and his angels. And O how justly driven shall every human tongue then confess; for not only is our sin against our Creator, but against a Creator who stooped from Divine glory to the cross, due to us, that He might win us for Himself and for God from Satan.

But if almighty wisdom and almighty power could not be outwitted by Satan or man, none but He who was wise and powerful to perfection could solve the enigma, or show how, without a compromise to His own government and character, yea to the very rendering of both more honorable, the difficulty could be met. His way we know, a way in which a trait in His character, which never had yet been displayed, but yet was not new in Him-mercy-could be unfolded; a way in which, while stooping down to that which was in its nature and doing the very opposite of all that He loved, He could yet say to it, "For my own name's sake, and by the power of what I am, be blessed!" and give to it a new life, incorruptible and, in its source, nature, and tendencies, altogether above all that the mere creature, as set in the garden of Eden, was or bad; and He could, and did give it, too, in such a way as to clear Himself in so dealing with the sinner, and to give to the new man-to the divine nature so communicated-perfect freedom from all the consequences of the fallen condition and state of the vessel in which it was put, and power also over that vessel. In the wonders of His own way, too, the blessing should be so given as to leave the receiver free, daily to renounce, not only Satan and the world, but its ownself for the sake of the Redeemer.

What an appeal to the heart of a sinner is found in the picture of the descent of the Son of God, as given us in the second chapter of Philippians! What true moral power! What superiority of self to circumstances! What expression of a just appreciation of the value of mercy as in the Father's bosom! What a dignity in the recognition that himself was indeed the only one (He the only begotten Son of the Father), who by His own down-stooping could take up the 'controversy, and, as the champion of God, by humiliation of Himself, turn all the chaos of confusion to a scene in which mercy should yet rejoice against judgment.

Himself he knew no sin; Satan had, not only, nothing in Him; but also He was holy, undefiled, separate from sinners, and there was in Him the full outflowing of that which showed that God was all in all to Him. "Lo, I come to do Thy will," was the very motto of the being of this faithful servant. Such He was, and such He was proved to be, when most fiercely tried. But what could the world, out of course and full of evil, lay hold of in Him, who, separate from all its evil, was in it to pour forth the streams of blessing to its present need, and was about to die for the sins of those who sought His life. What could Satan do; what hold could even he lay of Him whose heart and mind and soul and strength were all and alone for God? What could God Himself find amiss or short-coming in Him who was ready to be obedient unto death-the death of the cross, in all the full import of the contents of the cup which His Father had prepared for Him to drink there? He was light in the midst of darkness-light as to what man should be and should do-light as to what God was and is. But when all the active energy of His goodness had fully expressed God and His goodness, and been rejected, He was willing passively to be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and to die for the rejector.

Was ever perfectness like this? Was ever such a triumph in service, deep, self-renouncing service as this?

And when He came to the cross, He found there, not merely death, not merely a painful kind of death -one to which the Jewish law had attached a legal curse-but He found there that which He well knew He would find there, namely, the effects in full-in full as He alone could appreciate and bear them-of what, in all His perfectness it was to stand as one who had undertaken to be a substitute for the guilty in the presence of God. His very perfectness, His every apprehension of how His personal position, as forsaken of all below, appealed to God, must have enhanced to His righteous mind the sorrow of heart and soul, when He cried out, " My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

We are sinners; the root of sin bears daily fruit, to-wards God, of sins, but hitherto God has, in long-suffering patience, refused to act towards us as such. He, the Christ, was not a sinner; there was no root, no fruits of sins towards God in or from Him; but in the very hour when all His perfectness was most displayed, and most touchingly displayed-perfection toward God and toward us-then Jehovah was pleased to act towards Him as though all our sins and iniquities were laid upon Him. Such a forsaking never had been; never once had God so forsaken any, so effectually withdrawn the light of His countenance from any one.

No adequate measure of God's feelings about sin, no estimate of it can ever be found but this. He that tries to measure sin will find, for he is finite, no just measure. God presents to us here an infinite measure, a perfect estimate. And they that have to do with troubled consciences, will-find that nothing but an infinite measure will ever suit conscience when it is in God's presence. But there the Infinite God was perfectly expressing His thought about sin. His own beloved Son and faithful servant could not introduce it, when it was only vicariously laid upon Him, into God's presence, and into the light of God's countenance. God's delight was in His servant; His heart might yearn over Him, but He could not give the light of His countenance where sin was. That God and sin can never meet to be together, was better told in the cross of the Lord Jesus, even than it will be hereafter in the banishment of the wicked from the presence of God.

Worms found in rebellion, voluntary slaves of God's great enemy, in character and works hateful, in every respect the contrast of the beloved Son, to chase them from that presence where is fullness of joy for evermore, seems natural. They might be left to their own inward feelings without being hurried away by the blast of the wrath of God, to get as far off as possible from Him. His holiness, their position, character, work, the scene then present-all, all seems to make their sinking down in that day into the lake of fire and brimstone natural. How should they' not depart? How could they stay? But not so when we turn to the cross-to the cross of the faithful servant, of the beloved Son of God. Sin was but imputed to Him; He was in all His native beauty and perfectness as to. Himself; He did but stand as the just one in the place of the unjust to bear the consequences of sin. All the wonder here is on the other side; and the perfectness of God's holiness, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, stand fully manifested, because He, even He, could not have light then and there. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" was the true, deep experience of His righteous soul when thus He took the place of us to bear the judgment due to us.

And how wondrous an anticipation, too, is found in that cross! He who shall hereafter be Judge of quick and dead-who shall, when Judge, bruise the head of Satan, and lay all that has opposed

itself to God low- He on the cross tasted death for every man. The infinite and eternal Son of God, as the servant of God, took, as the just one, the place of the many unjust, and bare sin in His own body on the tree. Death was in His case the expression and the revelation of His perfectness and of who He was. It was not the mere letting of Him out of the body into a world to Him known and loved; or, as it is in fallen man's case, into a world unknown and dreaded. His death was, in a certain sense, too, an act of His own; for " He gave up the ghost," after committing His spirit unto His Father. He alone had power to lay down His life, and power to take it again; this commandment had He received of the Father. The wrath was past, the judgment had spent itself; that which 'would have sunk a world to hell, there through eternity to abide, without having exhausted the wrath which assigns to rebellion a lake of fire, where their worm dieth not, and where their fire is not quenched-that wrath against our sins, when laid upon Him, was exhausted, and while upon Him drew forth the most perfect expressions of what He was. Who can read the twenty-second Psalm without being struck with the moral perfectness of the sufferer? and with another thing, too, and that is, that the spring of His communion with, and faithfulness to God, was not merely that of a creature? A creature, in its dependance, can give back nothing but what it receives from God; it has in itself no springs; but when all inflowing of light from above was interrupted, light flowed out still from Him. If God forsook Him for our sins' sake, He did not forsake God. When most suffering under wrath, His faithfulness most shined out. He bore the full penalty of our guilt and sins.

Now this alone would change everything as to the article of death, the death of the body. The judgment of the great white throne has been anticipated, and is magnified. He to whom men shall give account then and there for deeds done in the body, which were expressions of their association with the old serpent--He Himself, in that day the Judge of all--He has borne the penalty of our sins, and won for Himself by this obedience unto death, the death of the cross, the glory of universal Lordship: " Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). This takes away to them that are His the bitterness of death; for they know Him who hath said, " Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5.24). They know Him who said of Himself, " I am the resurrection and the life: lie that believeth in me, though he -were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25,26); and they can say, "Thanks be to God -which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

Death of the body is a most humbling fruit of sin to man; and it has most justly been looked at by fallen man as the king of terrors. It is the debt which fallen human nature owes, and has a sting in it, as the grave has a terror in it, which the human mind can never evade. " All their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death," has been the experience of many; and well may it be, for he that has the power of death is the devil. As the tree falleth, so shall it lie; beyond the grave there is no repentance; " death, and after that the judgment," are all of them truths calculated to make it terrible.



Death is the challenger of men's thoughts. What answer can we render to ourselves about this? Is it only that, in fullness of selfishness, in a world that is godless, a man that is godless can make himself happy? Not caring for God, he cares not that he is morally dead as to God, so long as he can stay in a world which Satan has filled with follies to amuse the godless soul, and make it able to kill time as it flies with a light heart. But when death appears, or is thought of, then the end of the dream is seen too. Aye, death, into what abyss will it let man fall? And as surely as there is a God, then " after death the judgment." Death is in this way the detector of darkness within to many a godless sinner-the shadow cast before it, too, of judgment to come. In the field of fallen human nature, what a humbling fact is death; and what a center, too, is it to motives, causes, consequences and results, which might well humble the pride of man, if aught in nature could!

There is another thing to be remarked, and it is, the effect which the death of our Lord Jesus Christ had as to the effects of death upon the minds of the people of God on earth. First, until He came and had died, death -death of the body-had not a full answer given to it in revelation. It was not that the soul taught of God did not know His mercy and grace, or could not trust itself blindfold to Him; but the way was not yet made manifest: and, " How shall these things be?"-had not its answer until life and immortality were brought to light through the Gospel. Moreover, God was dealing with a people whose blessings and hopes were, as a people, " of the earth, earthy;" and the eternal blessedness at God's right hand was not the subject of testimony, as it has become since man rejected Christ, and God raised Him again from the dead. Now, in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ we have the full expression of God's judgment, and judgment past, too. God, in -wisdom and goodness, had not permitted men to live from the fall to the final judgment. Death had cut down those that were morally dead, and of those in whom moral death was, one individual after another; and as the tree fell, so should it lie. Yet this stroke of the ax was not the last or the worst of God's wrath against the morally dead; for the general resurrection, where the fullest expression which God can give of judgment against the serpent and his seed will take place, is yet future. But in Christ's death there was an anticipation by God of His full and final judgment against sinners.

But there is another thing to be remarked as a fruit of His death. Not only is there the negation of what is bitter, dreadful, dark, and gloomy in the grave found in His death, but there is a positive decking of the grave for us who believe-the lamp of His love has gilded its passage. To the thief upon the cross he said, " Verily, I say unto thee, This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. A garden of delights to the poor thief it was to be, and good the company in which he should find himself there. How blessedly has that path, unknown to us, of the soul separate from the body, been experimented by Him that has saved us. Not only as Son of God does He know the passage and the state right well, but has made his experience of both one and the other as Son of Man. It was needful, for death was the goal of his course here below. His body lay in the grave-His spirit, commended to His Father's keeping, was in Paradise-three days and three nights was there; and when He awoke and arose, He led captivity captive; for the grave was burst to faith, and He would mark it to be so. " And many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (Matt. 27:52, 53). Surely, if we knew no more than this, we could see and say that His death and resurrection have given to the grave a light-shown it to be, for His people, only a place of passing through to blessing. But, as to the blessing, these were but first-droppings of a cloud of fatness. For we have

nothing apart from Himself-our clearing from judgment was by His bearing the penalty for us-" our righteousness"-it is Himself; " as He is, so are we in this world."

What a blessed fullness is in that word, 1 Cor. 15:20: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." A Stephen's death is a practical commentary on the words, " O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55,56).... "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (ver. 59, 60).

So again, we find in Paul no shrinking from death. Taste it he knew he should not; Christ had tasted it for him; he, as a believer, should not taste it; his mind was not held by such a thought, but by quite others.

1st. He wanted his death, if he died, to taste to God of Christ, and he had boldness that it should do so. " According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" (Phil. 1:20). " Christ to be magnified" was the aim of his being; and he had no timid, pious feeling of half hope, half fear, about his own passing through the valley of the shadow of death, and not being lost or terrified by the way; that would have been to have lived for himself. Christ had settled all that for him. His eye was on another thing, that all he was should magnify Christ. And as to this, he had earnest expectation, hope, and boldness; and well he might: for, as it is added (and it was no private behest to him, but his as being of the body of Christ, and a consistent member of it), "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And hailing this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith" (Phil. 1:21-25).

Death is gain. That is settled to a believer. It is to be with Christ, which is far better. Paul, walking in the Spirit, could so act on this as to drop self entirely, and see what as to life or death in his own case would most serve the present interests of the saints, and as that was to live a little longer, he knew he should do so, and was willing to have it so.

How blessedly does the believer's assurance express itself in 2 Cor. 5:6-8: " Therefore 'we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight): we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

And the ground on which this assurance rests is most sure, namely, the desire of Christ, and the call to us of God to be confident, single-eyed, and full of Christ in dying or in living. " He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again."

In Stephen's case, dying was an act of his life: to the believer it is always an act of the new life and not of the old. " For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord.: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living " (Rom. 14:7-9).

AS sin has reigned to death, so did grace propose to reign through righteousness unto eternal life. And we know that He, who is the Resurrection and the Life, is He that liveth, though once He died, and He has the keys of hell and of death.

In Him life and death, all are ours (1 Cor. 3:22); and though in deaths oft (2 Cor. 11:23), Paul found that neither death nor life could separate from the love of God which was in Christ Jesus.

There has been, I fear, a displacing of the blessing of the truth that -the grave is not now a tasting of death, but absence from the body to be present with the Lord.

Perhaps, in our selfishness, with some of us, the desire to depart was too strong, and savored more of love of personal, individual blessing, than of fellowship with the Lord's thoughts. If so, one can well understand how the discovery that, not death, but resurrection glory is the hope of the individual heart (which came to many of us with the truth of Christ's hope being, to possess His church in the heavens, and to rule the earth for God), should have made one forget the blessedness of absence from the body and presence with the Lord. For selfish hope lives not in the light. But admitting and thankfully owning that Christ is the center and end of all God's dealings, can one not say: If God's will is for me to leave the wilderness and wait for the Lord's descent to the heavenlies, not here (amid sorrow and sin) but above in the presence of my blessed Lord, how blessed for me the change! Is not a Paul, a Stephen, a Timothy, etc., in more present enjoyment than I? And let me say another word: Can not brethren beloved, after reading 1 Thess. 4 understand a man's saying, " If it were revealed that 'Christ should come this night; still, if called to fall asleep ere He does come, I shall have experienced, as it were, extra displays of a guardian care on His part in the passage; and I shall be found at His coming in a position not the most unsuited to that faithful love, which ever thinks first and most of that which is weakest of all."

Time would fail me if I here attempted to enter, in detail, upon one part of the subject. I name it in closing, and a blessed topic it is, to one who is acting now upon God's principle of death and resurrection. I mean the way that "death" is presented as a spoil to adorn the seed of the woman, the Lord of all glory, in that glory heavenly and earthly, which is prepared for Him. It is the Lamb that was slain, alive forever more, who is, amid all the glories, connected with the Lord God Almighty-the Savior God.

## Deliverance From Under the Law

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In our relationship to God, there are two points of primary importance for us to remark: our responsibility as men, and the power of that life in which we live before Him. Both these were set forth to us by God in the garden of Eden, in the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and in the tree of life. First, as to our responsibility. Man has become a sinner; consequently he has in him no spiritual life at all (John 6:53). Sin brought in death and condemnation. After the fall, God gave the Law by Moses, in order to prove the state of man. The Law of God must exact righteousness, according to the nature of him to whom it is given; but the Law does not give life (Gal. 3:21). It is the very nature of the Law to exact and not to give. Since it is the question of righteousness in man, God cannot lower the requirements of the Law, and if we have the divine nature, we shall not desire its requirements to be lowered. The Law is the measure of responsibility of the natural man, but it does not give life, and (because man is a sinner) the Law, instead of being a resource, becomes the cause of death and condemnation. A mixture of law and grace, in so far as this last is found working in us, does not change this state. Grace does not destroy our responsibility, and that which the Law requires is not, fulfilled. Christ came to be our Savior and our Deliverer; He is the source of life to those who believe; He became subject to the death under which we were, and He bore, upon the cross, our sins and the wrath of God which they deserved. But this is not all; in the Person of this Savior, Man enters into a new position; He is the Man who is risen and glorified before God. The righteousness of God is accomplished in Him, and He has received that glory as a reward. Let us now see how we are made partakers of this amazing position before God.

God cannot endure sin. The responsibility of the creature cannot be destroyed. At the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle exposes the condition of sin under which both Jews and Gentiles are. Without law, man is without restraint (ungodly), debased by sin; has lost every right thought about God, being given up to things not even suitable to man in nature. Under the Law, he not only has corrupted himself, through his lusts, but he is disobedient by reason of his own will, a transgressor. The Law condemns not only sin, but also the sinner. The Savior appears, born of a woman, and placed under the Law; He shed His blood in order to purify us before God-to justify the sinner before God-the just Judge. Grace, rich and deep, is also presented to us in this work. It is the instruction of the epistle (to the Romans) down to the end of the third chapter.

In the 4th chapter he begins to examine another truth,-the effect and the result of the resurrection of Christ, In the 5th, 6th and 7th chapters, we have the effects of this truth; and in the 8th chapter the result in full.

The history of Abraham is introduced in the 4th chapter. If the Jew found himself condemned by the Law, he could fall back upon the relationship God had established between Himself and Abraham. It was to this end that the apostle set forth what were the foundations of this relationship, and showed it was built upon faith and the promise. Righteousness was by faith, and it was given to Abraham "before he was circumcised-" Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." There is yet another principle taught us in this chapter. Abraham was as

dead, as also was Sarah his wife. But God had promised to him a seed. Abraham did not doubt His word because of the impossibility to man of the thing, but he believed in the power of God, whose part it was to fulfill His own promise, and that was counted to him for righteousness.

And so it is with us; only with this most remarkable difference,-we do not believe that God is able to fulfill His promises, but that He has fulfilled them-" We believe in God who has raised up from the dead our Lord Jesus." Observe, the apostle does not say here: We believe in Him who is raised, but in Him who has raised. It is thus that he teaches us the meaning of this doctrine. In the resurrection God does not present Himself as the Just Judge, satisfied as such by the work of Christ; but He acts according to His own power in the sphere of Death's power, in bringing forth His beloved Son from under it, and bringing us now, in Christ, into a new position where death and sin are not. It is God who works for us, to save us perfectly, and to set us before Him in truth and in righteousness (man being dead as to that which concerns spiritual life, and living in sin as to natural life); but in Christ he has died and risen again, and finds his place before God in grace, where sin is taken away and righteousness is accomplished: " He was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification."

From the 5th to the 8th chapter, is the application of this truth to our own condition. In the 5th chapter, to our justification; in the 6th, to the new life of the believer in Jesus; in the 7th, to the Law, and the 8th describes a soul in perfect liberty.

In the 6th chapter, he shows that the believer enjoys peace with God; that he lives in the sense of God's favor, being heir of His glory, and rejoicing even in tribulations which work for his spiritual good. Much more, he rejoices in God Himself, who is his source of endless joy. As man, he was under the first Adam, and, as a necessary consequence, an inheritor of the consequences of his disobedience; the believer is in the second Adam, through whose obedience he is righteous; but because he is righteous through the obedience of another (that is even Christ's), the flesh says: No matter what I do; I can do what I like, but I say: Thou hast already done enough, all that thou hast done has been to destroy thyself; and thou acknowledgest, without being aware of it, that thy will, is to sin. But let us go on with our subject.

The apostle is not here speaking of the all-important motive which the believer finds in the blood of Christ to cause him to cease from sin, nor of the power which he finds in the love of God; but he shows that he cannot live in sin to which he is dead. The Christian becomes partaker of the fruits of the obedience of Christ, because He is dead and risen. How can he live in sin, being already dead to sin? A dead man does not live. He is not a partaker of the blessing which is in Christ, if he has not the life of Christ. Though, as to the natural life, he is still living in the world, he ought nevertheless to reckon himself as dead to sin, since he lives by the life of Christ who is dead and risen.

OM 7{In the 7th chapter, he considers the consequences of the same truth as to the Law. The Law, he says, has dominion over a man so long as he liveth; he then gives the tie of marriage as an explanation of it. As long as the first husband lives, the wife cannot be to another man, without guilt. The first husband then represents the Law, the second is Christ raised from the dead (Christ when living on this earth was Himself under the Law) and thus we cannot be at the same time under the Law and united to Christ raised from the dead. However, it is not the Law which dies, but Christ died under the Law; for as many as have sinned under the Law, shall be condemned by the

Law, and the Law is good if a man use it lawfully (Rom. 2:12; 1 Tim. 1:8, 9). If it was ourselves who were dead under the Law, we should be lost; but Christ died for us, and because He is risen from the dead, our souls are united to Him, the Law having no longer a hold over a dead man. Therefore, now, Christ, He who is raised from the dead, is our only husband. Thus the resurrection of Christ has delivered us from the Law, as well as from sin and condemnation.

OM 5{The 5th chapter of the Romans, then, shows us our position in Christ, the second Adam who is risen. The 6th, our new life in Him, a life of which the strength lies in reckoning ourselves dead to sin; the 7th is our complete deliverance from the Law, which hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth. As to us we are dead and risen in Him. It is the new man in Christ which bears fruit unto God, and not the old man under the Law. Yet the fault is not in the Law; but, because sin is in the flesh, the effect of the Law is to bring home guilt upon the conscience, and to become an occasion for exciting the desire to sin.

But to return to the leading subject of the chapter, we see that we cannot be at the same time under the Law and with Christ risen. This would be to have two husbands at once. In the second half of the chapter we are given the experience of one who wants to fulfill the righteousness of the Law, and to bring forth fruit to God as standing under the Law-the first husband. Awakened by God, and under the influence of the new life, he understands the spirituality of the Law; he understands its requirements; he desires to keep the Law, and his conscience cannot be satisfied unless he does so. The new nature loves the righteousness of the Law; but by reason of the opposition of the flesh, it does not fulfill it (7:14, 16, 22). Sad state of a soul, which, by reason of grace working in it, desires to do good; but because it is under the Law, knows not how to do it. Now, let it be observed, that while in this state the soul is in its relationship with the first husband, and, consequently, has nothing to do with the second. We have seen that no one can have two husbands at once, therefore in this passage there is no mention made either of Christ or of the Holy Spirit. It is the ordinary Christian experience of the spirituality of the Law which we meet with. The conscience of the individual, being renewed, knows that it cannot fulfill the requirements of that spiritual Law. The will renewed makes every possible effort to do so, but it cannot succeed. All the while it loves the spiritual nature of the Law; it does not desire that it should be less perfect. It knows that God cannot give up His authority, nor lower His holiness. It tries with all its might to attain the end; but it has no power. The Law demands perfect obedience; the conscience and the will assent; but the Law gives no power: the end will never be attained. The awakening of the conscience in one who is sincere never produces in him the accomplishment of righteousness, but, on the contrary, despair. It is much more difficult to know and acknowledge that we cannot do a single good thing, than to know and acknowledge that we have sinned. The experience which the soul passes through under the Law is a means of convincing it of its powerlessness; but Holiness can-not be a subject of indifference, either to God or to the new-born soul; and as we find that we cannot work out righteousness, we are obliged to seek deliverance elsewhere. Yet, though God will convince a soul that is sincere of its powerlessness, He takes no pleasure in leaving it in this wretched state; but as soon as it acknowledges its state, and that it is and knows itself to be without any hope in itself, so that it can never attain to the righteousness of the Law, then God reveals to it its perfect deliverance in Christ. Then at once the soul gilts thanks to God for what He has done for it; it sees where its new place is in Christ risen-its true husband, that it may bring forth fruit unto God (ver. 24,26). Hence-forth, it is not only a new position (in Christ risen) which is its

position, but also strength and liberty. The flesh is there still, its nature is not changed; but our position before God is in the Spirit, and not in the flesh. The power of the Spirit is present, livingly in us, so that we walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Christ in heaven is the expression of our true position before God. Christ living upon the earth is the representation and example of the heavenly man upon earth. Walking after the Spirit, we fulfill the Law (by loving God and our neighbor), because we are not under the Law.

The close of the 25th verse is brought in by the Holy Spirit, in order to show us that, though we are seen in perfect liberty, the nature of the flesh is not changed; but the Law (which means here a principle acting always in the same way) the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has completely set us free from the Law of Sin and Death, which reigns in the old man. In Christ we live in the new man: there the old man has no right; but the Holy Spirit is the power which works in it. As to the question of righteousness, the Christian is in perfect peace, because he knows that God, instead of condemning him, has done what the Law could not do, that is, "condemned sin in the flesh," by means of Christ come in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as the atoning sacrifice for sin. A soul who is in earnest will always mourn more over the sin which he finds working in him, than on account of the sins already committed; but he knows that Christ has died in his stead, not only for sins but for sin itself. So, then, in the 8th chapter we see Christ as the sacrifice upon the cross, then alive in resurrection, and then the blessed testimony, as the living power, of the Holy Spirit is fully unfolded to us.

From the 5th to the 11th verse of this chapter, the Holy Spirit is declared to be the character and the power of the life. From the 12th to the 27th, He is in us, the personal witness of our adoption and of our right of inheritance, and the helper of our infirmity. From the 28th verse to the end of the chapter, the Holy Spirit is proving that God is not only working in us, but, much more, He is for us, in His own power and faithfulness, so that the happy believer is assured that nothing can separate him from the love of God—a love which he knows by the Holy Spirit which dwells in him.

The height of the glory, the depth of humiliation in death, are in Christ the proof and the means of our being everlastingly blessed in the presence of God Himself; in the blessedness which grace has given us.

But there is still more instruction to be drawn out of the third verse of the 8th chapter. The three first verses are a summing up of the three preceding chapters, and three things are taught us in them. 1st. The position of the guilt of man when considered in the light of responsibility. The answer to this is His being justified by God. This is the subject of the 5th chapter. 2dly. The nature of the old man and that of the new is the subject of the 6th chapter. 3dly. God, in order to put to the proof the ability of man to work out righteousness for Himself, brought in the Law, and man, through the fall, being a sinner, could not fulfill righteousness. Even before he was a sinner, when his obedience was put to the proof by a law, it became the occasion of his fall. But when, by means of the new birth, he understands the spirituality of the Law, then he knows, not only that he has committed sins, but that the law of sin is in his members. This is the subject examined by the Holy Spirit in the 7th chapter.

The power and the nature of the new life in Christ, who has died and is risen from the dead, is the answer of God's grace to the wickedness of the flesh. This is taught us in the 6th chapter. The soul set free, through fully knowing the work of God in Christ, is the answer of Grace to the experiences

of the 7th chapter. By considering attentively the three first verses of the 8th chapter, it will be easily seen that the first verse corresponds to the 5th chapter, the second to the 6th, and the third to the 7th. The 5th and 7th chapters are closely connected, because the soul that is born again finds out the true character of the old man by means of the Law. 'We have, then, the summing up of these two chapters in the second and third verses of the 8th chapter. All hope of deliverance is shown in the 5th chapter to flow out of justification. But this is not man's thought. He would wish to deliver himself actually from the law of sin by his own effort, and thus be without fault before God; but God will not have it so, and it never could be according to His truth, because that, on one hand, the work of Christ would have been in vain, and, on the other, man would not have known what is the true nature and sinfulness of sin. If, by efforts in the conscience, we could find deliverance before God, the work of justification, though it might not be by strength of man, would, at least, be by the work of the Holy Spirit, and not by the work of Christ. But God will not, and for man it is impossible to have it so, because the work of the Spirit of God is to show him how intolerable sin is to God, and that the nature of man is not changed. Now his very nature is sin. Man must submit himself to the righteousness of God. Convinced of sin, condemned by the Law, he must find his righteousness in another-in Christ, who died for him, and is now risen and in the presence of God. This is the reason why the 3rd and the 5th chapters of the epistle come before the 6th and 7th, and the first verse of the 8th chapter before the second and third verses.

After the Holy Spirit has described the conflicts of the soul that is born again, and shown its helplessness, then the "there is no condemnation." (8:1), is the first want of the soul and the beginning of God's answer to it, in His Grace. But, because we have this privilege -"no condemnation"-in a risen Christ, this does not separate from life, and cannot be separated from it; so it is not simply a doctrine, upon a particular subject expressing the thoughts of God; but it is a change in what passes in the soul within, a change wrought through the knowledge of this subject, by means of faith. The soul has learned its own helplessness by means of the Law; the Law of God has discovered to it the Law of sin that is in the members; the man sees the sin that dwells in him; he hates it, but he cannot deliver himself from it.

Whilst we are upon this subject of the Law, it ought to be remarked before going further, that there are some who make a law of Christ Himself. They acknowledge His love; they see in His work on the cross, how great is His love. They find in it a reason why they should love Christ perfectly, with their whole hearts, but they cannot find this love in themselves. They ought to love Christ with their whole heart, but they do not love Him thus. Now it is precisely the Law which commands that we should love God with all our heart. We have found in Christ a new motive, we have, perhaps, given a new form to the Law, but we find ourselves still under the Law though we have clothed it with the name of Christ. The power of sin is still there; it prevents us from fulfilling the Law, which requires that we should love with the whole heart. Sin is in the flesh-it harasses me, and gets the better of me. Where can I look for deliverance from this terrible and skilful adversary? Our very helplessness is our resource. We find that God Himself must come in, because we can do nothing. No sooner have I understood the work of God (not the promises), than I find that God Himself has done the whole work. This is what is meant by the third verse; God Himself has met and conquered the evil which was always too much for me; Christ, who knew no sin, having been made sin for us, has taken away not only the sins which we have actually committed, but also sin in the flesh, in the presence of God, because He died not only for sins, but also for sin.



In this the love of God has been revealed to us, that Christ came into the world when we were nothing but sinners; but this revelation of His love does not purify the conscience. Moreover, so long as the conscience is not purified, the heart cannot rejoice in His love, because doubt in the conscience causes fear, and this prevents the heart from resting with confidence on His love. It is most true that love is in God, but the heart cannot make this love its own, because conscience tells us that God cannot bear sin.

The Holy Spirit who speaks of love in the Gospel, speaking by the same word is also light to convince of sin, and this convincing brings home to the heart not only sin committed but sin as in itself. A child may be convinced of his father's love, but he fears to meet him if his conscience tells him he has done anything wrong-"fear hath torment." But if we are risen with Christ, not only is it true that God has loved us in our state of sin, but He has also raised us up into quite a new position,-into the same position as Christ is in Himself before God, where we ourselves are the result of the mighty power of God, according to the power by which

He raised up Christ from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:9-23; 2 Cor. 5:5).

The manifestation of the love of God in Christ whilst we were yet sinners, is recalled to our attention in 1 John 4:9, but our perfect position in Christ, by being made partakers of His life is set forth in the 17th verse of the same chapter. Now Christ came into this position after having entirely finished His work, a work by which the conscience is purified, and thus love is shed abroad without hindrance in the heart. Because I am united to Christ who has died and is risen again for me sin can no more be imputed to me than it can be imputed to Christ; His position before God is quite the same as mine, and, let us remember it is a solemn thought; to have any other would be nothing short of damnation. There is no middle place between the first and second Adam; and we well know that Christ's position now before God is without sin-not only as to the perfection of His person (which was always perfect), but besides as it regards the imputation of sin. What then? Has God become indifferent to sin? Did Christ do nothing as to it? Did He shrink back on account of the difficulty of the work? Did He claim at His Father's hand twelve legions of angels to deliver Him, or did He follow the counsel of the chief priests by saving Himself as He had so often saved others? No! we know it well; He is the Head, without sin of those who believe on Him, because as the One who has stood in their stead, He has made an end with sin upon the cross, and, having finished this work, He has united them to Himself by a new life which flows from Him, and by the power of the Holy Spirit which has made them one with Him. And, now, what does this truth say as to believers? Not only did Christ bear our sins upon the cross, but He was there personally our substitute before God. For all that which the Holy Ghost now shows us as sin before God, in the light of His countenance, for all that, Christ died upon the cross and He has borne it for us. He is Himself in the presence of God, judged of according to the light of His glory; He is there who knew no sin, yet who was made sin for us. Now, thanks be to God, all is over-the work is accomplished.

The cloud whence the lightning of God's judgment came forth, the tempest of His wrath has passed away, taking out of the way our sin, and now the sunshine of God's love rests on us without a cloud, that perfect love which gave Jesus to finish the work. The conscience is purified according to the holiness of God, who has Himself judged the sin.

Before this, though God sent the Law among men, yet He Himself was hidden from them; but the same stroke which tore the veil, so that God was revealed in His holiness, has at the same moment taken away the sin which forbids our standing before His unveiled face. The full light (for the true light has now shined) which shines around us, and in which we are, shows that we are without sin before the face of God; and that our garments are washed in the blood of the Lamb. The nearer we are to the Light, the more clearly will our perfect purity before God be seen.

It is thus, then, that what the Law could not do, because it condemned the sinner without being able to change the flesh; God has done, because Christ has not only borne our sins, but has come in the likeness of sinful flesh, and become the sacrifice for sin. Thus God has condemned sin in the flesh. Let this be particularly noticed; it is not said: Sin shall be condemned, as a thing that is yet to be done, neither is it by the power of the Holy Spirit, but it is by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Christ has given Himself up as the atoning sacrifice for the sin of which the Holy Spirit has convinced thee, O believer. God has condemned the sin which has been thy constant sorrow; but He has condemned it on the cross of Christ; He has taken it away and thou art free. Thou hatest it-it cannot be otherwise, if the Holy Spirit is at work in thee. Now it is no more imputed to thee than are the other sad fruits borne by this corrupt tree. Thou art before God, in Christ, in Whom sin has been condemned on the cross.

Now, as regards holiness, what is the effect of this truth? What have we to say of the position of the believer? He is set in the light, even before the face of God. He has a life which rejoices in this light; he has the Holy Spirit to enjoy it. Holiness is measured by this light. Since we are in the presence of God, all things shall be judged according to the perfection of His presence. "We have communion with the Father and with the Son." Therefore, when the apostle speaks of sin (in Rom. 3:23), he does not say, "We have sinned, and we have come short of what men ought to do," but

we have come short of the glory of God." And because we are set on the ground of grace, it is not merely that holiness is expected from us, but we are made part-takers of His holiness; and not only so, but because God is for us, we find power to realize in our life this setting apart to Him; and because we know He is for us, we have the assurance that He will give us this power when we draw near to Him. Holiness is realized by communion with God; but with the conscience of sin, communion is impossible. Where shall we find strength for practical separation to God, unless in God Himself? How can we ourselves walk in this practical holiness if we have not His strength? How can I seek this strength from God if I have not the assurance that He is for me, and if my conscience prevents me from approaching Him. Efforts made after holiness may be sincere before the soul is set at liberty, because the tendencies of the new life are there; but such efforts are always mixed up with the felt need of justification, and thus the true nature of holiness is overthrown and lost, or, rather, it has never been known. As to our rule of life, in accordance with our position of being in Christ, it is His life on earth which is our model. "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk even as He walked." These two things were seen in Him. He was the righteous man before God, and before man He was the revelation of God's character. Such ought also to be our life upon earth; walking in the presence of God, we ought to manifest His character before men. And the reason for this is, because Christ Himself is already our Life, as the apostle says, "That the life of Jesus might be manifest in our mortal flesh." And herein is the important difference between the Law and the commands of Christ. The Law promises life if we fulfill its commands. The commands of Christ, as with all His words and works, are the expression

of the course of that life which we possess already in Him. And what were the principles of this life in Christ Himself? 1st. He could say, " the Son of man which is in heaven." It was love from which all His service flowed. Even as man, He was born of God; and He could say of Himself, that for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross and despised the shame. The same thing is true of us, with this necessary difference, which there must be, because of His glorious person, for He is God Himself. United to Him, our life is hid with Him in God..

Then as to our life on earth as believers, it begins with our being born of God. The love of God in our hearts is the spring of our walk; and the glory in Christ, which is set before us, strengthens us in all the sufferings of our pilgrimage on earth; and, moreover, there is the power of the Holy Spirit, by whose fullness we lived and acted whilst on earth, and which is our strength to follow, Him. Thus we have two rules by which to measure good and evil: on one hand, the Holy Spirit dwelling in us; and, on the other, the life and fullness of Christ Himself glorified. Concerning the Holy Spirit, by which we are sealed unto the day of redemption, we ought not to grieve it; rather ought we to be filled with it, that we may realize our communion with God with perfect joy. From our connection with Christ, we ought to put off the old man and put on the new, created in righteousness and true holiness; and in addition to all this, in sight of the fullness of His glory, we ought to grow up unto Him, in all things which is the Head, even Christ, unto a perfect man-unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

## 1. Elohim - God

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Remarks upon some of the occurrences thereof. (Continued from Vol. 2 p. 421)

This name occurs unconnected with any other name, in the portion of scripture, Gen. 1:1, to 2:3, which contains the recital of the creation. The diversity of the Divine action and glory, as there recorded, is very great; but all of it is expressive of that which is simply Elohim-glory.

In Eden, He calls Himself "Jehovah-Elohim," and never anything else; that is, as to the book of Genesis, from chap. 2:4 to 3:24, inclusive. But no sooner are we out of Eden, than the name of Elohim (God) is dropped; and we read, as to the Divine action which follows, neither of Elohim (God), nor of Jehovah-Elohim (Lord-God), but simply of Jehovah (or Lord). See chap. 4:4: "The Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering;" and ver. 6: "And the Lord said unto Cain;" so, also, ver. 9, 15, etc.: in connection with which we may remark, that (ver. 26) it was said in Seth's family, "Then began men to call upon (or call themselves by) the name of the Lord."

That the Spirit of God should have used "Elohim" as the designation, while describing creation - "Jehovah-Elohim" while describing the Eden scene - and "Jehovah," for the designation after man's expulsion from paradise, is remarkable, to say the least; and, certainly, it was intentional.

I have said, that in Eden He calls Himself Jehovah-Elohim, and never anything else.- In contrast with this, I notice, that in the temptation of man in Eden, the tempter drops the former title altogether-never uses it; so that he speaks only of God: "And he (the serpent) said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Gen. 3:5); and, "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day' ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be open; and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil" (ver. 4, 5). This, and the counterpart of it in Eve, whose answer to the tempter, in like manner, only records the name of "God," is to be observed: "The woman said unto the serpent.... God hath said," etc. (ver. 3).

To the rest of creation, as in Gen. 1, Elohim had not set Himself in Jehovah-Elohim relationship. On Adam and Eve alone, in Eden, that relationship had shined forth; and it was under the power of the additional blessing found under the compound title, that man was blessed and set upon responsibility. Part of Satan's guile was thus to throw the mind back, out of its present, full, distinctive portion, to another portion, which, though it flowed from the same Person, as Source, and was a blessing to Adam and Eve, was not the distinctive one, upon the ground of which He that had blessed them stood toward them, or held them toward Himself in blessing and in responsibility. It was on this ground, therefore, that the intelligence and affection of Adam and Eve were placed, fed, and sustained. To let this slip, and sink back to the lower ground, was injurious to themselves in the extreme. Here was woman's weakness found; and the stepping back, even if all that the adversary suggested that their Blessor had said had been correctly given, might have suggested a lie; and the admission of the suggestion might have been the acceptance of a lie. It might be true in itself, without being the whole of truth as to themselves.

Elohim and Jehovah-Elohim are one and the same Being; but the display of the manifestations of Elohim-glory is different from the display of the manifestation of Jehovah-Elohim-glory. The privileges capacities, and responsibilities of being under the two differ, though they may both be combined, as they were in Eden, in one and the same party-the human family; but then, and necessarily so, it is the distinctive part of the portion which becomes separative. I cannot doubt but that this, as a principle, is overlooked by the large mass of believers; and that their overlooking of it is to them a mischievous weakness, resulting from a malicious wile of Satan. For it is always true, that if we merge what is distinctive to ourselves in what is common to others, we not only lose our own places, but displace all that is above us, and misplace all that is around and below. Dispensational privilege constitutes dispensational responsibility always; and the first assailant of distinctive privilege, blessing, and responsibility-the first successful attempter of entanglement to the human mind, as to its present subjection and responsibility, by means of merging that which was distinctively peculiar in that which was general and in common-is here presented to us in the serpent.,

- Eternal power and Godhead manifested in the origination of a system; that is what I see in Gen. 1:1; 2:3. The human race set at the head and as the center of that system, in intelligent dependence and subjection to Jehovah-Elohim; that is what I see in Eden. Had Eve known in herself one proof of power to originate? No; not one. How came she to assume that it was in her then? I should say, " By forgetting her distinctive and peculiar place." She was made to be a help-meet for him into whose hand, to dress it and to keep it, the garden had been given-the honored creature of Jehovah-Elohim. Intelligence in that which is the Divine testimony to us, is power and blessing; the forgetfulness of it, or the corruption or the dilution of it by us has, on the other hand, its corresponding results of ruin and 'weakness.

As to that which is Divine: it had been well-pleasing that, in the midst of that which was to be an expression of Elohim-glory, there should yet bud and germinate something more bright, a fair expression of the Jehovah-Elohim glory. None could stay the blessing, or prevent it. Beguiled, Eve forgot her peculiar connection with and place in the latter, and blindly assumed to herself that she had merely the former.

Let me remark here, ere passing on, that as man's extremity is God's opportunity, so just in this betrayal to Satan, by man, of the charge entrusted to him (for it was man's sin which let Satan into the place of power over man, and, in a certain sense, over man's inheritance, namely, the earth), that the occasion arose for God to show forth the unsearchable depths of His own infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. He could originate that which would meet the needs of His own glory, even in such a case as this; and He could introduce that which would, without any compromise to His own character, eject the power of the adversary, and place man (and man able to stand, too) in fuller and more developed relationship with a heaven and an earth of this globe. And (worthy expression of that Elohim-glory) the seed of the woman, who was beguiled, should bruise the head of the serpent who beguiled her. Redemption by Christ will bring in a full, a perfect display of Elohim-glory; and present, too, a full, a perfect display of Jehovah-Elohim, in blessed relationship with man on the earth---yet in a new phase from what was at first, be-cause God manifest in the flesh will be the pillar of the tabernacle, the dispensing Sun of blessing in that day. And this will necessarily affect and modify everything. The very display of the Trinity will be modified; for the display will be of Jehovah-Elohim-Shaddai and of the Lamb (see Rev. 21;22). And that name,

Shaddai, as expressive of power (Almighty), will circle and close in the fruits of redemption-toil in everlasting blessing.

The first place in which we find the word used in a subordinate application, is in Gen. 5, when, in Eden, Satan suggested, "Ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil." It was true; for the Lord God said, when they had done as the serpent suggested (ver. 22), "The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." But it was truth apart from God as its giver or suggester; and a truth taken out of God's system and order, and misplaced, is not for blessing: The possession of the knowledge of good and evil might be in itself incompatible with man's blessedness, as standing in creation-blessedness; the mode in which it was obtained, certainly, ensured its being a curse, for it was gained by an act of practical independence of God-by positive disobedience. God could know good and evil, and hate the evil and love the good. Satan might know good and evil, to hate the good and to love the evil. Man has known it; and what to him has been the benefit of this knowledge in itself? It came with disobedience; and there in Eden, near to God, it taught first of nakedness, and then of God-a God of judgment.

Out of God's presence, the balance-beam of conscience may go up and down, up and down, quivering in judgment upon right and wrong; but the heart, far from God, loves its own way still, and will take it. But con-science, fruit of the fall, never had power to make a man love the good and refuse the evil. It is to be observed, that the effects of the acquisition of this knowledge were more than one. It did lead into a perception of man's nakedness, and of that nakedness exposing him to God's holiness. God's holiness and man, as he then was, could not meet, save to man's discomfort; but this discovery was attended also with a power of ingenious blending of circumstances around man, so as to meet, as best he might, the difficulties of his own sin-produced needs. The fig-leaf apron, the hiding in the bushes, if foolishness as remedies to the Divine mind, and if sure to pass before His presence more quickly than the dew before the sun, yet told of man at work for himself, blending his own circumstances to meet his own thoughts of his needs. The amelioration of the world, its steam-ships, its railroads, its electric telegraphs, etc., etc.-all that the pride of highly-cultivated civilization now boasts in -is fruit from this root. Just so is all the religion of fallen human nature. Fallen man at work for himself, to alleviate his own misery, or fallen man at work to fact that after chap. 9 the word Elohim does not occur again until chap. 17.

The use of the word occurs also in chap. 19:29: "When God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow " etc., etc.; so (in chap. 20, in the inter- course of God with Abimelech in the matter of Abraham's wife) we find the word largely used; also in chap. 21, the subject being Sarah's conception and Ishmael's rejection; and in chap. 22, which gives the trial of Abraham's faith.

These four chapters, viz., the nineteenth, twentieth, twenty-first, and twenty-second, deserve a special study.

The connection of this name with any particular person, people, place, etc., gives to that which is thus spoken of a peculiar and sometimes a distinctive honor. Thus He calls Himself constantly "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob;" but we read not of Him as the God of Lot, the God of Esau, of Ammon, or of Moab. So, again, we read of "the God of your fathers" (the address is to Israel). "The God of Israel" is faith's language. Again we hear of "the God of David;" "of Elijah;" "the God of heaven and of earth" (Gen. 24.3), etc.; and (2 Kings 19.16) of "the living

God."

In many places the word is used as an adjective, and the force is then vague; the more so, perhaps, because it is then rarely used by faith. Thus (Gen. 23:6), "Hear us, my lord," said the children of Heth; "thou art a prince of God among us: in the choice of our sepulchers bury thy dead." Again; Rachel said (chap. 30:8), "With wrestlings of God have I wrestled with my Sister, and I have prevailed." See, also, Ex. 9:28: "Intreat the Lord for us," said Pharaoh, "that there be no more thunderings of God."

There are a few passages to be at least noted by the Christian reader: "Thou [Moses] shalt be to him [Aaron] instead of God" (Ex. 2:16). "I have made thee a god to Pharaoh" (chap. 7:1).

In Exodus it is the word translated judges; see chap. 22:8(7), 9(8), 20 (19), 28 (27); so, also, in 1 Sam. 2:25: "The judges shall judge him."

In Psalms 8:5 it is translated angels: "made him a little lower than the angels."

These citations may throw light upon Psalm 82:6: "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High: but ye shall die like men." This passage is of peculiar interest from its citation in John 10:34,35.

The following terms I also notice:-

The mount of God (Ex. 3:1 and 4:27, etc.). The rod of God (Ex. 4:20).

The God of gods (Deut. 10:17).

The hill of God (1 Sam. 10:5).

The God of my rock (2 Sam. 22:3, etc.).

The temple-the footstool of our God (1 Chron. 28:2). The name does not occur in the books of Esther, the Song, Lamentations, Obadiah, Nahum.

The comparison is interesting of Psalm 78:56, "They [Israel] tempted and provoked the most high God;" and 1 Cor. 10:9, "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents."

For the most part, the scene and circumstances in which a name is first introduced give best of all the general ideas intended to be presented in that name. This I believe to be the case as to the name "God," as given in the first chapter of Genesis. Its connection with another name, as in the second chapter, may help the mind to apprehend the peculiarities distinctive either to the one taken alone, or to the two as combined. The student of Scripture will also find help by marking passages in which one name is contrasted with another name; or in which a portion of Scripture, which has one name in it in one place, is found in another place with another name substituted for it.

But to learn the force of any name, and really to profit from this study, the Christian must read for himself the whole Bible, and mark the scenes and occurrences in which each name occurs and is contrasted with others.

I pass on now to the names of "El" and "Eloah."



## 2. El

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The first occurrence of this name is in Gen. 14:18 - 22. When Abram heard that Lot was taken captive,

he led forth his servants against the victorious hosts of the four kings, and pursued unto Hobah, and brought back all the goods, and. Lot and his goods, etc. " And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh. And (ver. 18) Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high El. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high El, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high El, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he (Abram) gave him (Melchizedek) tithes of all. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram," etc. The scene was a remarkable one in the annals of faith, as much so as in the life of the father of the faithful.

The four victorious kings were-

1st, Amraphel, king of Shinar. The land of Shinar extends from the Persian Gulf, occupying thence upward, the whole land between the Tigris and the Euphrates. Faith's estimate of it is easily seen in these texts:-Gen. 10:10. The grandson of Ham (whose posterity were cursed by Noah), Nimrod, had " Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar," as the beginning of his kingdom. It was in the plain of Shinar (chap. 11:2) that the tower of Babel, which was man's defiance of God's power, was reared. Again, in Isa. 11:11, in the deliverance given to His people by the Branch out of the roots of the stem of Jesse, it is said, " The Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and.... from Elam, and from Shinar." Again, in Dan. 1:2, we read, that " the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god." And in Zech. 5:11, it is in the land of Shinar that wickedness has her house built, and is established and set upon her base. Mesopotamia, out of which Abram was called, was comparatively very small, yet formed part of the same territory, geographically, and was to the left furthest from the Persian Gulf.

2ndly, Arioch, king of Ellasar. Ellasar was in Arabia, extending along the Red Sea, or Arabian Gulf, at its mouth.

3rdly, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, in Persia. Elam was of Shem's branch (Gen. 10:22). But the captives of the beloved people, as we have just seen (1 Chron. 1:17), are delivered from "Elam," as much as from Shinar (Isa. 11:11); for " Go up, O Elam; besiege, O Media," had been the call (chap. 21:2) and (22:6) " Elam (in response) bare the quiver with chariots of men and horsemen." In the general desolation predicted, the kings of Elam have to drink of the wine-cup of the fury of the Lord God of Israel (Jer. 25:25). Its judgment was a most solemn one (chap. 49:34-39). The Shushan (of Dan. 8:2) was in the province of Elam. And Ezra tells us (chap. 4:6), that the Babylonians, the Susanchites.... the Elamites, counterworked God's people in the restoration from

captivity.

4thly, Tidal, king of nations; that is, Galilee of the nations. The king of the nations of Gilgal (or Galilee) is the thirtieth king smitten by Joshua and the children of Israel, on their taking possession of the land (Josh. 12:23); and it is remarkable for another prophecy concerning it: " Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isa. 9:1,2). Compare Matt. 4:12-16, as showing how it regulated the blessed Lord's movements at one time.

The first of these four kings was lord of the land out of which the father of the faithful had been called by the God of the whole earth, when Lot accompanied him. Neither his land nor that of the next two lay in the Land of Promise. Tidal's land was therein, and was, perhaps more likely to be in collision with the cities of the plain. But the immediate cause of this war, and the inroad of foreign armies, was rebellion against Chedorlaomer (ver. 4). These four kings' kingdoms were large, and all lay within the conquests of Nimrod. Distant as they were the one from the other, they show the power of the confederacy of that day.

The five kings against whom they came were kings of cities, which all lay within the territory possessed by David and Solomon, though the first (Sodom) was in the land of the Amalekites, and the last (Zoar) in that of the Edomites. All five cities are but too notorious in Scripture. 1st, Bera, king of Sodom; 2ndly, Birsha, king of Gomorrah; 3rdly, Shinab, king of Admah; 4thly, Shemeber, king of Zeboiim; and, 5thly, the king of Bela or Zoar.

"Lot had seen all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest to Zoar.... and he dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." So we read in Gen. 13:10-13; and again in chap. 18:20: "And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know."

The God of mercy had prepared an intercessor for His own sake (that His mercy might appear), and for the sake, too, of Abraham, and of Lot, and of the poor sinners; and Abraham was he. But what a state the city was in, when (ver. 26) we read, " And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes"; and then (ver. 28), " If I find there forty-and-five, I will not destroy"; and (ver. 29) "I will not do it for forty's sake"; and (ver. 30), " will not do it if I find thirty there"; and (ver. 31), " I will not do it for twenty's sake"; and then (ver. 32), " I will not destroy it for ten's sake." But there were not ten righteous persons in this city, chief in wickedness, towards which Lot pitched his tent. Lot entered into Zoar. " Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground" (chap. 19:22-25). And Abraham "looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace" (ver. 28).

This accounts for the prestige of these two places, and for such words as those used where the Lord is describing His plagues Deut. 29:23: "The whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the over-throw of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger, and in His wrath." And when utter destruction is intended, no phrase serves the turn better than, "As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbor cities thereof." See this, as to Babylon, in Isa. 13:19, Jer. 1:40; as to Edom, Jer. 49:18; as to Moab and Ammon, Zeph. 2:9.

Two other most striking passages on this subject are (Isa. 1:9), "Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah"; and (Rev. 11:8), the great city spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

As to the last three of the cities: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim?" (Hos. 11:8). Zoar was spared at Lot's intercession, when doomed: "See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken" (Gen. 19:21). And we find, as to Moab, it is written, in after-days, "His fugitives shall flee to Zoar" (Isa. 15:6); and, "They uttered their voice, from Zoar unto Horonaim" (Jer. 48:34). Mercy is a very self-consistent thing.

To sum up that which we have seen.

Abram, the father of the faithful, called by God out from his country and kindred, was dwelling as a pilgrim and a stranger in the land promised to him. He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; and God was not ashamed to be called his God. Lot had come out with him, but kept not up the wayfaring man's character, and settled down in the city of Sodom. The power of darkness brings in \_three kings from the lands external to that of promise, and one king in the land, to punish the five kings in the land who had rebelled against the king of Elam. So far as the kings were concerned, Lot was nobody in the position of the war. His residence, however, as being in Sodom became so, and so did his goods, and the women and the people. In God's moral government, and in Satan's wiles, Lot in Sodom might be a very leading item in all this history. Abraham no sooner hears of this, than he goes forth with his own servants, and with Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, pursues, and after a forced march overtakes the foe, and recovers the spoil, with Lot and all that was his. What a position was this friend of God in, when the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of the king of Elam, and of the kings that were with him! A Lot, a Jonah, is oft a cause of trouble to a city, a ship: an Abram is oft a deliverer even of the wicked and their goods!

If Abram's deed was but natural to such an one, still it was a deed of a mighty man-one of valor and of disinterestedness. The king of Sodom came out to own it; he "went out to meet Abram"-this is given us in the 17th verse; but ere he can speak (as in the 21st verse), there is found to be another person present, who takes the lead and precedence of him: "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the most high El. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high El, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the most high El, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all" (ver. 18-20).

The man who here wandered as a pilgrim and whose heart, formed to God, could content itself with no house, no city, no land, until he came to the house, city, and land prepared by God for Himself and for them that are His, wandered not from inward fickleness or weakness. That heart was bold enough to go forth and slay the four victorious oppressors of the strangers among whom he dwelt. The God of might was with him, and sends in His testimonial of approval in His own high priest-type, as we know, of another King of Righteousness, and Prince of Peace. Melchizedek meets him, on his return, with bread and wine; blesses him according to the name of Him the Mighty One of the most high places, Possessor of heaven and earth, whose servants they both were; praises the Mighty One for the honor put on Abram; and lets Abram show his might in tithing all unto himself as priest of God. Nothing could have been done to mark more distinctly God's thought of His own connection with the deed of might of His servant.

Now, the introducing, for the first time, this name to us here, is most sweetly significant. Abram had just been showing might in his own circumstances-might of no ordinary character. He who is the Mighty One, sends in one that can identify Himself with what His servant had just done, and His servant with Him in it. The king of Sodom is then allowed to speak, which gives to Abram an occasion of showing that his mastery was over himself, as much as over his circumstances. The spoil he had taken he would not keep, lest his God's faithfulness should be hidden among the children of men. This, as we know from the next chapter, had its immediate reward. For if Abram would be a Nazarite unto God, and so act that man should not say, even unjustly say, "I have made Abram rich," God would Himself be the shield and exceeding great reward of such a one. And what a string of blessings does He pour out! Alas! poor Jacob had no such zeal for God, and fared accordingly. It is a great thing for us if we can think of God's name, and of what, in our circumstances, our being of the number of His called ones, makes meet for us.

Gen. 31:29. "It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt," said Laban to Jacob.

Deut. 28:32. "There shall be no might in thine hand," said to Israel in warning of the effects of sinning against God.

Neh. 5:5. "Neither is it in the power of our hand." Compare Prov. 3:27; Mark 2:1.

Psa. 82:1. "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty."

89:7. "Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord!"

Ezek. 31:11. "The hand of the mighty one of the heathen."

32:21. "The strong among the mighty shall speak.")

Observe, as to the originating of this name, Melchizedek is the introducer of it. Man far from God may invent names, fashion titles for Him, misapply and misappropriate, to his own hurt and God's dishonor, names and titles of divine origin; but when the introducer of a name or a title is such an one as Melchizedek, that alone gives authority to the name.

The spring of the patriarch's strength was in another; his power to use that strength was in his own separation individually and as to circumstances, to that other.

The name is one of the most peculiar interest to us as Christians, because of that cry from the cross, "Eli! Eli! lama sabacthani!"

" There power itself and weakness meet;"

when He, who was the Power, as well as the Wisdom of God, was crucified through weakness.

A Nazarite in service was He, self-emptied, perfectly dependent, who alone could say, in the truthful sense of the words, " Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God!" and, " The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" He would not speak or seek for Himself, for how then could the work have been accomplished? The patriarch got his heart cleansed by the exercises of faith; Christ, by the circumstance of exercises, got the occasion of showing how pure and perfect he was, while doing the work given to Him to do. I conceive that the use of this name in the first and in the tenth verses (" Thou art my El from my mother's belly") is full of force; and the feeling of weakness, forsaking, and desertion, in contrast with might and power, which are present, is sorrow indeed. Such was His when He tasted death for us.

The needs-be of it was in His own self and name. If His will and heart led to His name being Immanuel (the Mighty One with us), how should He be that, and hide His face from human woe? Or how, if He hid Himself from the human woe (the very core of which was guilt on account of sin), how, I say, could He ever, holily and justly, be God-with-us, to bring man into circumstances fitting to Himself? (Matt. 1:21-25; Heb. 2:9-18). The name of Immanuel is, in its application, earthly; yet in the connections of the truth found in it (as may be seen in the passages referred to of Matthew's gospel and the epistle to the Hebrews), it is of much wider application. A crucified Jesus was a Jew-rejected Messiah, who might be found by whosoever should call upon His name. Immanuel, though the very One in whom and in whose work we trust, is, Himself, once rejected by the Jew, yet to bless the Jew in the land. And what though the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory, shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks, and shall pass through Judah, shall overflow and go over, shall reach to the neck? Is the blessing hindered? Can a deluge breaking up from below prevent it? No: as Isaiah (8:7-9) goes on to say, El-with-us is our banner in that day; " the stretching out of His wings shall fill the breadth of Thy land, O Immanuel!" and therefore, " Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for EL-with-us." That is, this very name Immanuel is the solution, in that day, of all the sorrows of the Jewish people (see, also, Isa. 9:5-7).

Thus we find this name of El at the cross, where God let man measure out his wickedness against Him who was crucified in weakness; so opening a door to the whosoever, etc.: and we find the same name of El when God takes up His controversy with the infidel faction of the last day, and by this name the Jew gets blessing upon earth.

There is another combination of this name of El, besides that of Immanuel, which is also one of peculiar interest. For if Immanuel be a personal name of the blessed Lord, El-Shaddah'y is a name in the which much of Divine grace is presented to us in the word.

The first occurrence is in Gen. 17:1: "The Lord appeared unto Abram, and said unto him, I am [El Shaddah'y] the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant

between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly," etc. Then, again, when Isaac is sending Jacob to Padan- Aram: " And El-Shaddah'y [God Almighty] bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham" (chap. xxviii. 3, 4). And accordingly, when God appears to Jacob again, after he had come out of Padan-Aram, and blessed him, He said (chap. 35:10), " Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and He called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am El-Shaddah'y [God Almighty]: be fruitful and multiply: a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land."

It is the name which Israel uses when he has to send Benjamin into Egypt (chap. 43:14): " And God Almighty give you mercy before the man," etc.; and uses, when, dying, he speaks to Joseph: " God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed, and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and I will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession" (chap. 48:3, 4); " and now Ephraim and Manasseh are mine," etc. Compare, also, his most beautiful blessing of Joseph, in chap. 49:25.

If God be for us, what is he, or what the circumstances, which may be set in opposition to us. El Shaddah'y was for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and was known, too, to each of them to be for him, for his posterity and circumstances, and all was felt to be right. Ruth, on the other hand (chap. 1:20, 21), felt bitterly, through unbelief, the sorrow of having "the Almighty" against her. Job's friends knew how to use the name of the Almighty against him and his own unbroken spirit lent itself to the same folly.

That there is something distinctive and characteristic in the name El-Shaddah'y is clear from Ex. 6:3: " I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of El-Shaddah'y; but by my name of Jehovah was I not known to them." A most important passage, as showing the force of the names used in Scripture. And in accordance with this -indeed, as confirmatory of it-I remark, that in the Song of Moses (Ex. 15), the name of LORD, or Jehovah, occurs twelve times; El, twice, viz., " He is my El" (ver. 2), and (ver. 11) "among the gods;" and the name of Elohim but once, " my father's God " (ver. 2).

Some of the passages in which this name of El occurs are of too much interest in themselves for me not to cite them; e.g.-

Ex. 34:5: " The Lord) descended in the cloud, and stood with him [Moses] there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, Jehovah, Jehovah-El, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear (the guilty); visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children, unto the third and fourth generation."

So, again (Num. 23.8), in Balaam's testimony: "How shall I curse whom El has not cursed?" Again (ver. 19), " El (is) not a man, that He should lie;" and (ver. 22), "El brought them out of Egypt;" and

(ver. 23), "What hath El wrought!" See, also, chap. 24:4, 8, 16, 23.

In the songs which record the triumphs of grace over all that was outside and inside of David-the way in which grace, mercy, and compassion express themselves in the circumstances and persons of the beloved of God-this word occurs, 2 Sam. 22 and 23.

Chapter 22 "As for El, his way is perfect" (ver. 31).

"Who is El, save the Lord?" (ver. 32). "El is my strength and power" (ver. 33). "It is El that avengeth me."

And chap. 23. "Although my house be not so with El, yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although He make it not to grow."

In Daniel we find the word in two remarkable places, namely, in chap. 9 "the great and dreadful El" (ver. 4), and (in chap. 11) "The king... shall magnify him-self above every El, and shall speak marvelous things against the El of Els, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished" (ver. 36).

Observe also these passages where the word is connected with the thought of sonship.

In Psa. 89:26, speaking of Solomon, the son promised to David, "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my El, and the Rock of my salvation." Also, "I will make Him my First-Born, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for Him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with Him."

Hos. 1:10: "It shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall it be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living El." A passage of peculiar interest to us, from its moral connection through the heavenlies with our-selves.

### 3. Eloah

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Is the singular number of the word Elohim.

The singular number is comparatively of rare occurrence. The plural form is that which is used in Genesis, and so generally throughout the Bible, as the name of Him who is Creator of heaven and earth, and Arranger and Disposer of all things-that the occurrences of the form in the singular number demand a special consideration. For instance, the singular form is found fifty-seven times, of which forty are in the Book of Job; the plural form about 2,700. In neither of these do I include the Chaldee, where singular and plural occurrences are altogether under ninety-six.

It strikes me, that in many of the occurrences of the singular form, there is a contrast presented more between the thought of One God and many gods, than between the who, of the true God (who is the One only God) and what the so-called many gods are. This is not a distinction without a difference; for in the one case the abstract notion of Deity (which certainly excludes plurality) is contrasted with the absurdity of having many "one firsts and one lasts," and in the other case the Eternal power and Godhead, the traces of whose power and beneficence are seen in creation and providence, are set in contrast with demons and demoniacal characteristics.

Having made this suggestion, I will now cite the passages which suggested the thought to my own mind.

Deut. 32:15 (This is the first occurrence of the word): " Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God [Eloah] which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they Him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils not to Eloah: to gods [Elohim] whom they knew not, to new, [gods] that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not."

Is there not here a contrast between the one God and the so-called gods many? The song is of the Lord's own inditing (2 Chron. 32.13-15). The language is the scurrilous blasphemy of Sennacherib: " Know ye not what I and my Fathers have done unto all the people of other lands? Were the gods [Elohim] of the nations... able to deliver... out of mine hand? Who among all the gods [Elohim] of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver out of my hand, that your God [Elohim] should be able to deliver you out of mine hand. Now therefore let not Hezekiah deceive you nor persuade you... for no god [Eloah] of any nation... how much less shall your god [Elohim] deliver you out of mine hand?"

Not one god of the many gods that Sennacherib could think of was a match for himself; so be thought, who saw not that himself was but a slave of Satan, and a scourge in the hand of the only true God.

Neh. 9:16-19: " Our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks... but thou art a God [Eloah] ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them



not. Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God [Elohim] that brought thee out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocation; yet Thou, in Thy manifold mercies, forsookest them not in the wilderness."

Psa. 18:30,31: " As for God [Elohim] His way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried; He is a buckler to all those that trust in Him. For who is God [Eloah] save the Lord [Jehovah]? Or who is a rock save our God [Elohim]?"

Psa. 50:21, 22: " Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, all ye that forget God [Eloah], lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

Isa. 44:8-10: " Ye [Israel] are even my witnesses. Is there a God [Eloah] beside me? Yea there is no Rock; I know not any. They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit: and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god [El], or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing." And see the vivid description of the making of the idol, and of the use of the residue of the materials out of which it is taken, in vers. 12-20.

Dan. 11:37-39: " Neither shall he regard the God [Elohim] of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any God [Eloah]: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honor the God [Eloah-a god] of forces [Mahuzzim]; and a god [Eloah] whom his fathers knew not... Thus shall he do in the most strongholds with a strange god [Eloah], whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory.

Hab. 1:11,12: " He shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god [Eloah]. Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God. Mine Holy One? we shall not die, O Jehovah, Thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O Mighty God [Rock], Thou hast established them for correction."

Hab. 3:2, 3: " In wrath remember mercy. God [Eloah] came from Tertian, and the Holy One from Mount Paran."

It is worthy of note that Eloah occurs in Job alone forty times; Elohim less than twenty.

Elah is the Chaldee form of the word Eloah. Of the occurrences which do not number ninety-six, there are not more than ten in the plural, the rest are in the singular form. It is worthy of notice, that here in Chaldee, the singular form is the common one for the Supreme Being, "the God of heaven," as He is here constantly called, and the plural form is used as connected with unbelief.

Jer. 10:11. The Spirit is speaking of idol-makers: " Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under the heavens."

"The gods, whose dwelling. is not with flesh" (Dan. 2:11), would not, could not aid the magicians. "Your God is a God of gods" Or. 47), was the king's tribute of homage to Daniel. Dan. 3:12: The Jews, "O king... serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image;" and (3:18) "We will not serve thy gods," is the confession of the three servants of God. " The fourth is like unto the Son of God" (3:25) [a son of the gods]. 'Twas the thought of the king when he saw Him who is God and Son of

God in the furnace: " and praised the gods of gold" (v. 4), " In whom [is] the spirit of the holy gods-the wisdom of the holy gods" (v. 11),

The spirit of the gods is in thee" (v. 14), " Thou hast praised the gods of silver" (v. 23).

Yet in the days of Daniel, Ezra, and Jeremiah, Elohim was a common title of God. Whether the non-use of the plural form, when speaking of Him, was connected with the idiom of the Chaldee language, or rather with the peculiarity of the circumstances and state of things and subjects, which the use of it by the servants of the living God supposed, I cannot say positively.

The three words, Elohim, El, Eloah, seem in common to present the idea of power as their meaning. They appear to me also evidently derived from the same root. Yet the abstract idea of power and might found in each, may be presented by them severally with a peculiarity distinctive to each particular form.

In re-perusing what I have written-and also the occurrences in full in the " Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance"-I think three shades of meaning are presented, namely, that He whom we adore alone has creatorial power, victorious power, and stands thus in His very being, in contrast with all that are called gods.

These remarks contain, I am aware, little positive instruction-they are those of an inquirer rather than of a teacher; if others have not observed the fact, that this name of El exists, as well as those of Elohim and Eloah, the paper may serve a turn for good in calling the attention of some to these facts: it may serve also the good turn of calling the attention of those who have more light than has the writer of these remarks, to the general need for information upon this subject.

## Enoch and Noah; or Israel and the Church

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"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death."

"By faith Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house." Heb. 11:5, 7.

Ere the flood's engulfing billows  
Desolation spread around,  
Enoch to his rest was taken,  
Enoch happy rest had found.  
Noah, brought through all its dangers,  
Found the ark his resting-place;  
Each secure, and each made happy,  
By the Lord's abounding grace.  
Enoch, of the church a figure,  
Taken ere the wrath was pour'd;  
Knowing ere his blest translation,  
He was pleasing to the Lord:  
Noah, representing Israel's  
Remnant of the latter day.  
Brought through all the tribulation,  
Happy 'neath Messiah's sway.  
Israel rests on earthly promise;  
Israel's heart is on "the Land,"  
There, for God Himself hath said it,  
Israel shall in triumph stand!  
But the Church, with eyes uplifted,  
Views her all in heaven above,  
Waits her blessed Bridegroom's coming,  
As the object of her love.

What a portion, loved of Jesus,  
What a portion blest have we?  
Christ Himself--- and all His glory; -  
Christ, who died to set us free;  
He, who now in heaven's preparing  
For His Church her proper home;  
Soon with shouts of triumph swelling,  
For that Church Himself will come.  
Earthly goods are not our portion;  
Heavenly things to us belong;  
Resurrection and translation,  
Are the burden of our song.  
O that all our hearts' affections  
Gathered round our Lord alone;  
And that naught on earth engaged us,  
But to make our Jesus known!  
A. M.

## The Fold and the Flock

---

The force and beauty of this chapter are often missed, through failing to notice the circumstances in our Lord's ministry, which impart to it its special character.

Much has been often advanced in illustration of the office of our Lord as " the Good Shepherd," and it may be with a measure of truth; but the parable before us which presents him in this character, applies itself to the condition of Israel, before God, as brought to light by the ministry of the blessed Son of God, in grace, amongst that people.

It is of Israel especially that the Lord says, " Ye, my flock, the flock of my pasture are men; and I am your God." Hence any application of the terms, " entering in by the door into the sheepfold," or " climbing up some other way," to a sinner's coming to Christ, or, which is more common to any supposed entrance into the church is, to say the least, a misapprehension and a misapplication of a most important and instructive pas-sage.

If, then, Israel be God's flock, Jerusalem, or, at any rate, that system of ordinances which separated Israel from the surrounding nations, and of which Jerusalem was the center, was tile fold. The fold into which Christ is here proving His right and title to enter; and in connection with which He presents, by way of parable, the effects of His personal ministry as the true, but disallowed, Shepherd of Israel.

" This parable spake Jesus unto them; but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them." The glass which so accurately reflected their condition and circumstances was held up to them, but they were too much blinded by their prejudices to discern in it God's moral judgment of their state, and of their own responsibility.

In seeking then to understand this parable, which it is said the Jews understood not, it should be remembered that there was a twofold effect resulting from our Lord's ministry; namely, the attaching to Himself, in grace, those who, as taught of God, received His claims; and also the testing of the moral condition of those who rejected His mission; which, indeed, were the great mass of the nation. For if God's manifestation of Himself in grace does not convert the heart, it nevertheless puts the consciences of men in the light; and thus leaves them under the responsibility of rejecting the light, and hating the light, because their deeds are evil.

This was pre-eminently true of our Lord's ministry; but in every dispensation it holds good, and, " wisdom is justified of all her children."

Of John the Baptist's ministry it is said, " all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him."

The light of God, in whatever vessel it shines, is recognized and rejoiced in where the heart and conscience are in exercise before Him; and it puts under responsibility those by whom it is rejected.

A little consideration of this will throw light upon the present chapter.

John the Baptist was intermediate between " the law and the prophets," and the coming of our Lord; and his mission was to disclose the moral condition of the people, and by the baptism of repentance to prepare them for the speedy advent of their expected Messiah. But, more than this; he was also set to preach a remnant in Israel, or a separation from the mass of the people, of those who received his testimony. Hence a distinct baptism was attached to his ministry, as the formal seal of that separation which was to be administered to all who obeyed his word. This was a circumstance which marked him off from all preceding prophets, who, whatever might be the force of their ministry, had no commission to effect an outward and formal separation of those who received their testimony. A moral separation there must, of course, always have been between those that feared the Lord, and those that rejected His word. But the ministry of John marks an epoch in the dealings of the Lord with the nation. Hence the language of Matt. 3:7-12, " When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance [a baptism which separated by the confession of sins to the hope of coming mercy and salvation]: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost [a baptism which separates to God by the power and presence of God; making those who receive it the vessels of his power and presence], and with fire [a baptism of judgment which Christ when He returns will assuredly bring upon those who have rejected His claims as witnessed by the Holy Ghost]: Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Now, it is exactly at this point that in the Gospel of Matthew, our Lord's ministry is said to commence. He associates Himself with this remnant in Israel, separated by John's baptism; and He Himself is baptized with John's baptism. Not, indeed, as if He needed repentance, as the reason He gives for submitting to it sufficiently shows. "He said, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." It was as fulfilling all righteousness that Jesus was baptized. But in thus owning this ordinance of God in the hand of John, our Lord at the same time associates Himself with this movement of God's Spirit on the hearts of a remnant in Israel, and fulfilled the gracious words of the sixteenth Psalm; " Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight."

Stooping thus low in love and grace, and in self-emptying obedience, he is in a position to declare God's name to his brethren. For the Apostle applies the first words of this Psalm to Christ, in connection with the declaration (Heb. 2:11), that " both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in Him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

But being what He was, as Son of God, as well as the humbled Son of man, He is found receiving this remnant, who were the sheep, whom He " calls by name and leads them out;" or " the poor of the flock,"- " of the flock of slaughter"-of the eleventh of Zechariah; where Christ is prophetically presented as the Shepherd of God's appointment to Israel; on which this chapter in part, and His personal ministry as detailed in Matthew, especially, forms a striking comment.

The first thing, then, which the Lord marks is, that He had entered by the door into the sheepfold, thus proving his authority from the owner of the flock, to take charge of the sheep, in opposition to any surreptitious entrance, which of itself convicts of a sinister design. As He says, " He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But He that entereth in by the door the same is the Shepherd of the sheep."

Christ is here, then, Jehovah's divinely sanctioned Shepherd of Israel, who were the " people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand; "for He had submitted to every requisition of the owner of the flock:-but at this time, alas! proved to be " the lost sheep of the house of Israel." For the mass of the nation, and especially the rulers of the people, blinded by a false estimate of their condition before God, and entrenched in religious ordinances, knew not the person of Him who came in grace to meet their need; nor heeded the divinely-sanctioned claims of Him who, " when He saw the multitudes, was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd." " Their own shepherds pity them not!"

Hence, having stated, as another mark of His proved title to be the Shepherd of the sheep that, " to Him the porter openeth," and the "sheep hear His voice," He adds, "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth, them out. And when He putteth forth his own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him; for they know His voice." And here we may be reminded of the beautiful keeping of the figure; and be referred to the customs of oriental countries as verifying this description of the Shepherd's preceding His flock, when leading them from the fold to their pasture, or when conducting them from pasture to pasture. But it is not the correspondence of a description with physical facts or with a known usage that is here in question. It is the application of this peculiar action of the shepherd, by way of parable, to show, as in a glass, what was then taking place under the action of our Lord's ministry, as necessarily modified by the moral condition of Israel, which was being tested and proved by His presence amongst them.

In a word, it expresses the moral effect of our Lord's ministry, when received in grace, as in the example of the poor blind man in the preceding chapter, and also the effect of the disallowance of His claims on the part of the leaders and the mass of the nation.

In the one case, it was the Lord " calling his own sheep by name, and leading them out"-for the result of their attachment, in grace, to him was their being virtually, if not actually, excommunicated like " the blind man" referred to, and thus outside (led outside by the Good Shepherd) of all Israel's ordinances, and clean apart from every ground of connection with God, but that which was found in the person of Christ. While, on the other hand, it was virtually the Lord's saying, as in the prophet, " I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land-but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor's hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them." And again, " Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another."

Thus, through the rejection of the claims of our Lord to be the Shepherd of Jehovah's flock, the fold is deserted by Him who alone could lead into green pastures, or give security to the sheep. But leading- outside the fold His own sheep, He in effect says to them, " I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock." And how blessed to be under the care of such a Shepherd! though it be outside all man's religion, and apart from the whole array of Israel's divinely appointed ordinances. For it was in the maintenance of these, in opposition to a living faith, as the grounds of connection with God, that the claims of this blessed Shepherd were disallowed.

One might turn with deepest interest to the descriptions of the thirty-fourth of Ezekiel, in illustration of Israel's happiness, when, in a future day, the Lord will set aside, in power, the claims of every false shepherd that has neglected or preyed upon the flock, and will Himself take charge of His beautiful flock. As He says, " For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment." Or it might be thought an omission not to refer to the twenty-third Psalm, as an illustration of the present experience of a believer under the exercise of Christ's shepherd-care. And surely no-thing can exceed the beauty and comfort of that Psalm, nor the richness of the portion of the soul which can say, " Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters." The certainty that want will never be the condition of the soul that reposes in such a Shepherd as Jehovah, and is owned of Him, may, in its largest, widest, application, be affirmed; and that quietness and refreshment are the natural blessings to the soul that flow from being under his hand. But this is not all that our souls require; alas! as it is not all in the natural application of the figure. The silly sheep may stray from the rich and quiet pastures, and need the Shepherd's care to follow it in its wanderings, and re-store it again to where the flock abides, under His gentle eye. Hence the touching expressions, " He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake." This is a different exercise of the Shepherd's care from that of making to lie down in green pastures and leading beside still waters. It is recovery, in gracious love, when these have been departed from; and it affords the most affecting acquaintance with the grace of the heart of the Lord. When thus restored; the soul may add, " Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Nothing so strengthens the confidence of the soul in the Lord as the experience of the exercise of his gentle restoring grace. It so introduces the heart to the interior resources of God's goodness, and so establishes it in his unfailing mercy, that confidence in all imaginable trials, and an assurance of receiving nothing but good at his hand, are the natural result. The darkest paths of difficulty and of danger -" The valley of death's shade" may be tracked in perfect security now,



because the soul has been shown the only proper spring of confidence. " THOU art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." And more than this-the sense of surrounding enemies can now be used not as an occasion of dread, but as only giving. character to the efficiency of that goodness which prepares a table before us, in the presence of enemies. " Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over." This is not the result of an increase of outward good, nor the mere effusion of thank: fullness at the contemplation of the increase of corn and wine-this may not exist-but it is the renewing of holy joy from the experience of what GOD is; and the overrunning-cup is the sense of the heart's portion in the presence of a God of infinite goodness. The conclusion, therefore, from such an association with God, and such experience of what God is in goodness and love, is, " Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." All this, and much more than this, readily presents itself to the mind, while contemplating this lovely Psalm; but the chapter before us is not so much intended to teach generally the shepherd-care of Christ, as to disclose the present principles of his action resulting from Israel's rejection of His claims. For it is in Israel, and amongst an earthly people, that His proper shepherd-character will be displayed. As a proof (see Isa. 40:10,11), " Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." And (Psa. 78:70-72) " 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 skillfulness of his hands." Hence, when he has given the remnant, whom His personal ministry was now separating to Himself, the necessary authority and guidance to leave the fold, which was His having called them by name (the mark of individual dealing in grace), and having Himself gone out before them, He takes an entirely new place and position.

He now says, " I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9). This is no mere reiteration of the previous parable, which it is said the Jews did not understand; but it is the unfolding of the true position in which He now stood to all who were taught of God to acknowledge His claims. He does not present Him-self as the door into a fold; but as the door of salvation. " By me if any man enter in he shall be saved!" "And he shall go in and out and find pasture." It is the acknowledgment of His personal claims, in faith; and the result is, not security in a fold, but salvation and liberty, and sustenance. Neither does He now address Himself as before, to His own sheep within the fold, in order to lead them out; but it is, " If any man enter in he shall be saved," etc., which took up the outcasts of Israel and opened the door of grace to all.

It is indeed a tacit indication, that another principle of God's dealing must be known, and another position taken by those who were owned of Him.

It is not now enclosing in a fold of ordinances in separation from those without; but it is salvation through the Shepherd who gives the life for the sheep, and security and pasturage in following Him. It is the presence of the Shepherd, and not the walls of a fold, that we must seek.

It is not, as is generally known, when speaking of the gathering of the Gentiles, as the other sheep who were not of the Jewish fold, the gathering them to a fold:- for the word is changed, and it is, "

There shall be one flock and one shepherd."

" The Good Shepherd," and the " True Vine," present the Lord in contrast with all that existed in Israel's vine of ordinances, and every pretender to the care of the flock as having a right to them before He came. United to Him as the True Vine, they become fruitful branches; and as the Good Shepherd, He not only gives His life for the sheep, but He gives eternal life and eternal security to those whom He thus owns as His flock.

The difference between the door into the fold, by which Christ entered, and Himself as the door of the sheep should be noticed, in order to have the line of instruction clear before the mind. In the one case, it was the appointed way of Christ's entrance amongst the Jews as the Shepherd of Israel, and living Messiah, in His earthly ministrations to that ancient flock of God; and in the other, it was the place which He took in grace as the rejected One of the nation-the door of salvation to all who entered by Him. Not the door into any fold of exclusive ordinances, as in Israel, which He was now leaving Himself, and thus leading out His own sheep; but the door of entrance to salvation, to liberty and sustenance; and where security would be found alone in being near and following the Good Shepherd.

Nothing can be more touching or instructive than the contrast presented between the conduct and feelings of the " hireling," and Himself as " the Good Shepherd." With Christ there is no fleeing like the hireling when danger appears, but in love and self-devotion to His sheep meeting all the danger, saying to the enemy, " If ye seek me, let these go their way."

" The Good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep"- Israel as His sheep-those lost sheep of the house of Israel-and for the " other sheep" also which are not of Israel's fold-which are gathered and brought by His death from amongst the Gentiles, that thus there should be " one flock, one shepherd " (μία ποιμνὴ εἰς ποιμνὴν). But this is spoken of as consequent upon His death-for, indeed, whether of Jew or Gentile there could be no association with God or enjoyment of salvation apart from his death.

The reciprocation of the knowledge subsisting between the Good Shepherd and His sheep is also marked. He knows His sheep and they know Him; even as the Father knew Him, and He knew the Father. It is not a mere abstract statement of a reciprocation of knowledge, but an illustration of the character of that knowledge. He, the blessed Son, who had given His life and was in heaven, ere this gathering of His other sheep took place, or even the remnant of Israel was gathered by virtue of His death, knew His own, even as the Father knew Him, when He was upon earth. Nothing can be more precious to the soul than such a principle as this! And how simply, yet how wonderfully, is the link of connection between Christ and His sheep presented, and their eternal security declared! " My sheep hear my voice - and I know them - and they follow me - and I give unto them eternal life!" But this is not all. He adds, " They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them me is greater than all; none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." What a link of connection is this! The poor sheep, precious to Christ as the Father's gift to Him! What a ground also of security! The sheep not only have eternal life from Christ, but they are in His hand! Nay more, the thought of their security must be knit up with the eternal power of God-for the sheep are in the Father's hand! And then the contrasted points brought together of the lowly Shepherd stooping to enter by the door into the fold - and the statement, " I and my Father are one!" Nothing can be more touching, nothing more

precious or wonderful! The grace is infinite, the love knows no bounds, and the power by which all is secured is the Almighty power of the Eternal God! The depth of instruction in the chapter is but just touched upon in this brief paper, but it may guide the meditations of some to the chapter itself, there to find the infinitude of divine love thus brought home to us as the portion of the sheep of Christ.

## Fragment: Association With Christ

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Association with Christ-how blessed a subject! And who but God Himself has the ability to connect anything, or anybody, -with the Christ who is His Son. Hear however, what He says: "He that spared not His own Son, kit gave Him up for us all, how shall He not with, Him freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8:32).

1. Have you Christ? Then all things are yours (see also 1 Cor. 3:21-23). But if you cannot say, Christ is mine, as I am, His," then can you not correctly say that anything is yours.

2. But " How came I to be His?" says the Christian. "He that stablishes us with you in the Anointed One, and hath anointed us is God" (2 Cor. 1:18-22).

3. See now some of the results of this:-

1. By baptism we have confessed that we are dead together with Christ from all guilt, through His death (Rom. 6:8).

Therefore, also,-

2. We have been quickened together with Him (Col. 3:13); that is, we have been made partakers of the life in which He rose from the grave [not had our old man set to rights and made orderly and soft, but a new nature communicated to us].

3. This death with Christ sets us entirely free from legality (Col. 2:20), and is-

4. Connected with a Life which is hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). This leads-

5. To a life according to the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:4), and-

6. To a death, practically, as to the flesh with its affections and lusts (Col. 3:9; Gal. 5:24). Its natural instinct, as well as a fruit of its possessing us is that we know that-

7. To leave the body is to depart and be with, Christ (Phil. 1:23), for, to us, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord: and

8. God gives us thus the hope, as a certainty of association with Christ in the glory (Col. 3:4; comp. 1 Thess. 4:17, and 5:10, and 2 Cor. 4:14).

## **Fragment: Bearing the Name of Christ**

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As Christians, we are thrown together bearing the name of Christ, as being part of His bride; and it is sin to take any other name than His. The wife surrenders her own name in taking that of her husband. But, alas! how careless Christians are, if we look around us; how readily do they take up other names than the alone name of Jesus Christ; and thus, so to say, disown their allegiance to Him alone. E. F.

## Fragment: Glory to God

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"Those who fight the Lord's battles must be contented to be in no respect accounted of; they must expect to be in no respect encouraged by the prospect of human praise. And if you make an exception, 'that the children of God will praise you, whatever the world may say,' beware of this, for you may turn them into a world, and find in them a world, and may sow to the flesh in sowing to their approbation; and you will neither be benefited by them nor they by you, so long as respect for them is your motive. All such motives are a poison and a taking away from you the strength in which you are to give glory to God. It is not the fact, that all that see the face of the Lord do see each other. It is not the fact, that the misapprehension of the world is the only misapprehension the Christian must be contented to labor under. He must expect even his brethren to see him through a mist, and to be disappointed of their sympathy and their cheers of approbation; the man of God must walk alone with God, he must be contented that the Lord knoweth. And it is such a relief, yea, it is such a relief to the natural man within us, to fall back upon human countenances, and human thoughts and sympathy, that we often deceive ourselves, and think it 'brotherly love,' when we are just resting in the earthly sympathy of some fellow worm. You are to be followers of Him who was left alone and you are, like Him, to rejoice you are not alone, because the Father is with you, that you may give glory to God. Oh! I cannot but speak of it. It is such a glory to God to see a soul that has been accessible to the praise of men, surrounded by hundreds and thousands of his fellow-creatures, every one of whom He knows how to please, and yet that he should be contented, yea, pleased and happy, in doing, with a single reference to God, that which he knows they will all misunderstand. Here was the victory of Jesus-there was not a single heart that beat in sympathy with his heart, or entered into his bitter sorrow, or bore his grief in the hour of his bitter grief; but His way was with the Lord-His judgment was with his God -his Father - who said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was the perfect glory given to the Father by the Son, that in flesh and blood such a trust in God was manifested; and this is what you are called to, and you are not called to it as He was, but you are called to see God in Him. God has come near to you in Christ, and here you have a human heart-a perfect sympathy-the heart of God in your nature, and to this you are ever carried. And if there be any other sympathy with you in the wide universe, whether on the sea of glass, or still on this earth, it is only as the pulsation of the blood that flows from Christ to His members that it is to you of any account. Feed upon it, and remember you are thus to walk in the world not hanging upon one another."

## Fragment: Longing to Be Home

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I have sometimes, latterly, been so longing to be away, home, that I have feared it might be somewhat a kind of unwillingness to work, but yet it was accompanied with the wish to finish whatever the Lord had given me to do. Everything marks the near approach of the end; what an amazing source of joy. It will be indeed rest. This feeling is often suppressed, by being absorbed in work, but in a moment's leisure (which sickness or other like causes give) bursts out afresh. If one cannot live for Christ, what has one to do but to live with him. Happy alternative of Grace!

## Fragment: No Confidence in the Flesh

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The history of Saul shows how far one can go on with God and in favor of His people by an energy which after all is fleshly. The history shows 'how Saul was put to the test, how God was with him, in a certain sense: for He gave him another heart-not conversion, of course--but so that he be-came another man; and yet all that is brought out in result is, how far flesh can go in pursuing the objects of God, and where it all ends! It is a very solemn account; but it is what is presented in the history of Saul. It shows how far the flesh can act even under the direction of God; which Saul did, until his own will began to act, and then he could despise even Samuel himself.



## Fragment: Service for the Lord

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"If jealous over my own heart, and counting it, in the Spirit, to be better to depart and be with Christ, I can still feel willing to abide while the Lord will vouchsafe any little service, in connection with the testimony He is rendering, or the Saints beloved of Him; and with unfeigned feeling I do count that there is many a servant around me, to whom a green old age, full of service, would be an honor. Humbling, doubtless, to be left to wander when natural energy and vigor is all gone; but blessed, if it be for the honor and service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the comfort of His saints."

## Fragment: the Year of Jubilee

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Lev. 25-In the fourteenth to the sixteenth verse of this chapter, we learn that in all the dealings and trafficking of an Israelite he was to have respect to the year of jubilee, When the hand of God would restore in righteousness what the hand of man had disordered in His people's portion. The only way to conduct his traffic righteously was to have respect to the year of jubilee, measuring the bargain and the value of things according to that. In principle this holds now. For all our commerce in the affairs of this world should be ordered with our eyes resting on the return of the Lord Jesus; and our hearts acquainting themselves with this, that man's world is soon to end, and all present interests to cease.

In Israel, God watched over the worldly dealings of His people in such a way as to provide for the restoration of everything every fifty years:-He then resettled the family estates, and put all in order again. In the church, also, He watches the worldly dealings of His saints; but it is not in order to restore earthly arrangements again but with respect to the maintaining of spiritual communion with Himself. In all their callings He tells His saints, now, "therein to abide with God." This is the rule, this is the only limitation now. The soul, amidst all around that is discordant and disordered, is to be preserved for heavenly citizenship, and exercised in relation to a heavenly life, where the flesh and man's world will be gone, and gone forever.

## Fragment: Waiting on God in Dependence

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Saul lost the kingdom of Israel through independence-through want of waiting upon God. He saw his people scattered from him, and his enemies pressing hard upon him; and these proofs of his weakness were too much for his heart unsustained by trust in God. He could not in such a trial wait for God. David gained the kingdom by taking the place of dependence; and by taking as his motto: " My soul, wait thou. only upon God."-" My help cometh from the Lord who made heaven and earth."

## Fragment: Wills Vs. Judgments

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There is such a thing as "a moral cannot," as well as "a physical cannot." In the former, our wills, tastes, affections, thoughts, and he who rules us by these, are often stronger than our judgments. Awful state! if our being subject to God is in question. "I have married a wife, and cannot come" told a tale about the want of heart and will, not of external ability. H. P.

## Hardening the Heart

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There are Scriptures which contemplate a succession of eras or times all along the course of the earth's history, from the time of the Flood, I may say, to the days of Antichrist, when there has been, or is to be, a judicial visitation, under the hand of God, upon the hearts, understandings, and consciences of men.

I might present the following instances:

The old Gentile World... Rom. 1:28.

Pharaoh or Egypt... Ex. 4:21.

The Kings of Canaan... Josh. 11:20.

Israel... Isa. 6

Christendom ... 2 Thess.

These scriptures show us this judicial dementation, of which I am speaking; and they further show us, that the fruit or character of this dementation may be very startling, such as we could not easily have believed or feared.

Under it, men of refinement and intelligence may adopt all kinds of religious vanity; rulers and statesmen may be blinded to the plainest maxims of government. Did not Pharaoh persist in a course which, in the mouth of witness after witness, was sure to be the ruin of his kingdom? Did not the nations of Canaan tremble at the report of the conquests of Israel, and of what God had done for Israel; and yet, in spite of all that, did they not madly resist Israel? (See Josh.) And will not whole communities of intelligent, refined, advanced people, by and bye, bow to the claims of one who shows himself to be God, setting himself up above all that is worshipped?

This has been thus, and will be thus- still, under this judicial dementation; worldly men violate the clearest and most sensible means of their own interests, and religious men depart from the simplest instructions of the truth. We are not to wonder at anything. The very idols which men have taken as spoils of war, they have afterward bowed down to as their gods (2 Chron. 25:14). For what folly, what incredible blindness of understanding, will not the infatuated heart of man betray. But this dementation is never sent forth to visit man until he has righteously exposed himself to judgment. All the cases show this. Pharaoh, for instance, had, in deepest ingratitude, forgotten Joseph. The Amorites of Canaan had filled up the measure of their sins. The old Gentiles had brought this reprobate mind on themselves (Rom. 1:28). Israel "had not," Jerusalem "would not" (Matt. 13:12; 23:37). And the strong delusion is to be sent, by and bye, abroad upon Christendom, only because "they loved not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

This hardening precedes destruction; but it comes after man has ripened his iniquity. God endures with all long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, as He fashions by His Spirit His own elect vessels of mercy ere He glorifies them. "Whom He will He hardens," is surely true; but

He wills to show His wrath in this way of hardening, or of judicial dementation, only in the case of those whom He has in much long-suffering endured (Rom. 9:18-22).

Thus, then, we see there is such a process in the judgments of God as the hardening of the heart-that this is never executed till man has ripened himself in evil-and that the fruit of this may appear in such human folly and blindness as we should never have apprehended, or perhaps conceived.

Let this prepare us for things which not only may shortly come to pass, but which have already appeared. Men of learning and of taste, men of morals and religion, men of skill in the science of government, and whole nations famed for dignity and greatness, each in their generation may be turned to fables and to follies enough to shake the commonest understandings in ordinary times.

I do not say the "strong delusion" has gone forth; but there are symptoms and admonitions of its not being far off. What a voice has' this for us, to keep near to the Lord in the assurance of His love, to love His truth, to walk immediately with Himself, and to promise ourselves that His tarrying is not long.

## Heaven: Thy Dwelling-Place

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(As Known in the Old Testament.)

Few of us know the extent to which prejudice acts, at the present moment, upon our own minds, to hinder us in our progress in truth. There is the prejudice of the old nature against the truth, which nothing but divine power and grace can subdue; but, besides this, there is the prejudice of "our present views," which may be the furniture of education, or the results of the opinion common to the day we live in. In this last case, much might be done by us toward obtaining liberty. Let a man, for instance, just take for granted that he is master of a subject, and he will judge all he reads upon it according to his own thoughts of it; but let him grant that he has to study the subject anew, and he will then search the scriptures to see, not only whether the things he has heard or received upon a given subject are so or not, but he will search the blessed book in hopes to have his own views, however correct they may be, enlarged, according to the measure of the Divine standard of truth. And O how poor, and how feeble, is the measure which the best taught of us has yet received, when that measure is seen in the light and presence of the eternal fullness which is at the fountain-source!

To present one prejudice, which is common and hurtfully injurious, I might name notions current about heaven.

We have heard of heaven (blessed, blessed place!) from the cradle; but what do we know of it as taught by the word of the Lord? Men talk of heaven as though any one, every one, could go there, and without a passport too-as though man had originally been created for heaven, and not for earth-as though it were not written, "the heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath He given to the children of men" (Psa. 115:16). Again, it is quietly assumed that heaven was the subject of revelation, from Gen. 1:1; and that every one knows all about it. And what, really, has been the result, but that many a Christian now-a-days knows as little of heaven, as it was possible for a godly patriarch or a godly Jew to have known about it.

Aaron-what could he have told us about the temple of Solomon? Naught; but he knew all about the tabernacle, for that was revealed to him, and stood before him; his privilege and his responsibility were therein. Solomon-what could he have told about the true tabernacle, which the Lord has pitched, and not man (He-breeds)? Naught; but about the temple, much every way. Could Saul, the persecutor-could the Hebrews, as such-have written the Epistle to the Hebrews? No. It and such truth was new truth, not given till Paul's day -truth in which our privileges and responsibilities are hidden. Do we know these things as taught by Paul, etc.?

To what extent was "heaven" written about in the Old Testament? To what extent did Old Testament saints participate in the light which New Testament scripture gives to us upon heaven, and that which pertains to heaven?

Such is the subject which I would place before my reader, as being at present before my own mind, to inquire upon from scripture.

I turn at once to the book and its testimony.

In Gen. 1 we read, that "in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth; and called the firmament (in the which the lights of the sun and moon were set) heaven; and that the fowl of the heaven (or air) were part of His creation." These passages precede our being introduced into the paradise of Eden-a scene in which the first Adam, a living soul, was placed in a garden, with everything in it calculated to minister to his delight and joy-a scene where the Lord God was not always manifestly revealed, but an occasional visitant. It was not the place of His residence, nor the place of residence of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, the paradise of God.

I turn now to places which point to heaven in a higher sense.

1. Gen. 14:19,20: "Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God, said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God."

In the expression, "possessor of heaven and earth," we get nothing more than was known, perhaps before, or might be supposed to have been known. If the rendering of "the most high God" is to be changed to "El of the (place) above," we do get an intimation, certainly, that God is "of the heavens." I do not say that it is so, but it may be so; and then the intimation of a place more connected with God than the heavens and earth of this world, was made sooner than it has been generally supposed was the case. But even then there is here no opening of the place, heaven, as the residence of God, any more than in other passages to which we shall shortly come; no call thence or there-unto; no title to us to enter it; no communication to us of its hopes, blessings, and powers.

2. Chapter 21:17: "The angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is."

Chapter 22:11,12: "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him."

And ver. 15: He "called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore," etc.

I notice these passages as being cases in which a call came out of heaven, in some sense or other. The first was to Hagar, about her apparently dying boy, Ishmael; the second and the third were to Abraham, about Isaac, and about the reward for his own surrender of him up to God. Neither of them open to us (so far as I see) that which is above the clouds; both bring before us the character of Him, in one way or the other, who always acts worthily of Himself, whether He be carrying out a plan for earth, or a plan for heaven itself.

3. Chapter 24:2,3,7: "And Abraham said to his eldest servant of his house... I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell. The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house. He shall send His angel before thee."



This citation is important. Abraham binds his servant by an oath before the God of the heaven and of the earth; but he speaks of Him only as " the Lord God of heaven," when his own call was in question. Abraham had a double blessing, as father of the faithful: First, his personal call was from idolatry unto God, the living God; Secondly, he became a sort of head of the channel of testimony, God's testimony, upon earth. The first recognized father, " of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever, Amen" (Rom. 9:5), the adoption and the glory and the covenants were his. The first clearly tangible argument in proof of resurrection, the resurrection of the body, that is on record, is found in Abraham's history (compare Gen. 15:13,15,6-8, and Acts 7:3,5). Abraham's faith refers to God as the God of heaven; and in the New Testament, where the Spirit of Christ is reviewing Abraham's course (called to go out into a place which he should afterward receive for an inheritance, he obeyed--went out, not knowing whither -- sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country; dwelling in tabernacles, as heir of the promise), He adds (light which is not found in the Old Testament), that the city which he looked for is one which hath foundations, whose " builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

And again, He speaks of a class thus: " These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth." And then adds His explanation of their conduct --not necessarily what they understood in their own minds, but that which He saw to be in the spirit and faith which governed them" They that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.... But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city."

There are things of which, if we would be well taught in scripture, we must discern the difference; e. g. faith in an individual believer laying hold of a promise of God, and God's estimate of the value of that faith; again, faith and the object on which faith acts are distinguishable; so again, while there is a connection between the least promise God has given, and the fullness of the glory of His Christ before Him, there is also a gradual development of light, from the beginning of man's history after the fall, down to the time of life and immortality being brought to light by the gospel, which must not be forgotten (compare, also, Deut. 3:24; 4:36, 39). In John 17 all that the Lord said to His Father about the disciples, was truth itself; but it was truth according to the estimate of them made by Him, who saw them in the light of His Father's love, and not according to their feelings, thoughts, and experience. There is a great principle involved in his.

4. Gen. 28:12: " And he (Jacob) dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac," etc.

This was a dream: it presented heaven opened; the Lord God of the patriarchs in heaven, and His messengers ascending and descending by the ladder. The ladder descended to El Bethel, in the land. There the heavens will meet the earth during the millennial glory, the new Jerusalem being let down from heaven toward Jerusalem upon the earth (Isa. 4:5,6); and El Bethel falls within " the holy oblation" of that day's division of the land, and not far from the new site of the temple (Ezek. 48.8-20). The God who had planned such a glory to come (John 1:51), would surely care for all the needs of the pilgrims to whom He revealed it--needs, alas! oft, like Jacob's, the fruit of evil, and of

walking carelessly at a distance from God-needs, alas! too, which absorbed a larger place in his mind than the glory he had seen-needs about which he was for driving a bargain with the God of glory, instead of receiving the glory of God, the manifestation of which to him clearly proved that all his needs would be cared for.

5. Deut. 10:14: " Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also."

This introduces to us plainly a new thought. There are not only the earth and the heaven, but also " the heaven of heavens."

The expression is remarkable, and recurs, as in 1 Kings 8:27, where Solomon says, in his prayer: " But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded" (and 2 Chron. 6:18). See also the same expression, 2 Chron. 11:6 (5), in Solomon's message to Hiram.

Nehemiah also uses the same expression (9:6): " Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens."

David also (Psa. 68:33,34) praises " Him that rideth upon the heaven of heavens, which were of old."

And again (Psa. 148:4) he says: " Praise Him, ye heaven of heavens."

I only remark here, 1st, that this is a truth distinct from the truth of the heavens; and, 2ndly, that the place spoken of is not explained, or any details of it given to us. To see the outside of the palace of the King of kings, and to know the inside or the glory which pertains to Him as such, are very different things.

6. Deut. 11:21: " The land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth."

This doubtless will lead the mind back to Jacob's dream, and the fulfillment which is yet to come, according to John 1:51. Other passages also come to the mind, such as: " But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21; comp. Psa. 72:19. See also Isa. 4:2-5; the last eight chapters of Ezekiel; Hab. 2:14, etc.).

7. Deut. 26:15: " Look down from Thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people."

This is part of the appeal to be made by Israel when come in unto the land which the Lord his God should give him, with the offering of the basket of first-fruits. It is the more to be remarked upon as being found in the book of Deuteronomy, which book contains the ex-position of the divine principles by the which Israel could and shall inherit the land; viz., the principles connected with the obedience of faith, when they could not inherit it upon the principle of their own obedience, energy, and doings.

8. Deut. 30:11, 12: The obedience of faith.

" This commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us,

that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

Honey shut up in the hive was here, but honey shut up in the dark. One of the dark sayings, full as a mine of crystals, all ready to sparkle and reflect the light when it should be brought in, but unintelligible by the human mind till the light was brought. Read the citation again, and set it in contrast with that version of it which Paul gave (Rom. 10). He (Paul) takes it as the precious setting of gold prepared for three most brilliant gems he had to fix. These were the three brilliants: "to bring Christ down from above;" "to bring Christ again from the dead;" and "the word of faith which we preach."

9. "The Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Josh. 2:11; comp. 2 Chron. 20:6). A strong strength-giving thought and truth to oppose to all and to every difficulty!

In Josh. 2:11 it is found in the mouth of Rahab, the poor harlot of Jericho, and is part of her confession to the spies she was hiding. O what an energetic thing is faith! and how intelligent a one, too. A poor harlot in the doomed city of Jericho, spite of the fog resting on it, could see by faith whereabouts the living God was, and what He was about to do; yea, weigh up, try it, the chances of the day, and see how to give up all, and to throw herself upon her country's enemy, that she might save all.

The second reference is from the prayer of Jehoshaphat to the Lord against Ammon and Moab; and the Lord hearkened and heard, and gave a great victory, without any battle, to Judah, Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat.

There are Divine names which are above failure; blessed to know them, and to find that the waters flow forth when we use them, wherever we may be, and however fallen from our proper place and standing: such is that title-The God of Heaven.

10. In the dedication of the temple (1 Kings 8), we find Solomon spreading forth his hands towards heaven (ver. 22), and repeatedly referring to God as the God of heaven. This is much to be noticed, because it shows that faith did not limit God to His then manifestation of His testimony; but, if it could not pierce the clouds to see what lay inside, it knew WHO was there, even He whose glory the heaven and heaven of heavens could not contain; and knew how, also, to set the present blessing down here in the presence of that higher glory, and how to use that higher glory as an aid for man failing in his portion down here. Let us see this:-

Ver. 27: "Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded. Yet have respect unto the prayer of Thy servant, and to his supplication... that Thine eyes may be open towards this house night and day, even toward the place of which Thou hast said, My name shall be there; that Thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which Thy servant shall make toward this place... and to the supplication of Thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place; and when thou hearest, forgive."

Thus does Solomon place the house he had built in the presence of heaven. What lay inside of heaven he knew not; who was there he did know, even He who was Creator and Upholder of all

things, and the God of Israel, Judge and Governor of the whole earth. And then, "Hear Thou in heaven" is reiterated in various connections as to the Israelite honoring the house built: as ver. 32, for confirming an oath; ver. 34, for the rendering confession and prayer efficacious in a day of judgment; so ver. 35, 36, 39; so ver. 43, for the rendering acceptable the prayer of a stranger not an Israelite; for Israel. in the day of battle, ver. 45, and for the day of captivity, ver. 49. Compare 2 Chron. 6:13, 21, 23, 25-27, 30, 33, 35, 39.

These passages are deeply interesting, but they show only, as has been said, that heaven was recognized as the dwelling-place of Him who had set up a testimony upon earth, and could uphold it. They do not show heaven opened, nor the glory of the Heavenly One displayed as such. Comp. 2 Chron. 30:27; 32:20.

11. In the next passage one saw a man going up into heaven.

"And it came to pass as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more" (2 Kings 2:11).

What a different thing is Christ seen ascending (in Acts 1) till a cloud received Him out of their sight, from Christ looking down from heaven upon Stephen, showing to him, and sustaining him by, His glory and sympathy.

These wheels, the last glimpse of which was caught as they entered heaven, carried off from the prophet his head; and he himself had to turn back to service upon earth and amid trial.

12. The next passage I will cite is 2 Chron. 36:23: "Thus saith Cyrus, King of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up" (see, also Ezra 1:2). Darius, likewise (Ezra, 6:9,10), and so, also, Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:12,21,23,23). And faith in Ezra recognized, and avowed before all, that God Was the God of heaven, and that they were His servants, though cast in judgment for sin out of His heritage upon earth (chap. 5:11, 12). And it was blessed indeed, when all that could be broken up down here was indeed broken up, yet to find that they could look to the gate of heaven, calling upon Him they knew who was known to be inside it; and though they saw Him not, yet could they be assured of His help. Very blessed! though how short of that which we are called to enjoy, according to the epistle of Paul to the Hebrews; for we have heaven opened upon us, and the blessings of Him who in His own home is more than Creator, Up-holder Judge of all, and Head of government for the earth, 'for to us He is revealed as Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

13. Neh. 1:4: "I prayed before the God of heaven... O Lord God of heaven," etc.

Such was Nehemiah's conduct when seeking help from God. And (chap. when alarmed at the king's rebuke to him, he says, "So I prayed to the God of heaven, and I said to the king; and so (ver. 20) he refuses the help of the strangers of the God of heaven, whose servant He was, to aid in building, etc.

Surely the God-of-Israel's faithful servants ought not, then, to have had to speak of him as the God of heaven. Nothing but sin and its judgments hindered their being able to say, " God that dwelleth between the Cherubim. But if man's sin had driven Him thence from among them to the distance, if He had retired to His place to consider and see the end, there He was in heaven, and there He would in grace hear the cry of the needy.

14. Job says (chap. 16:19), " My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high."

Eliphaz, also (chap. 22:12, 14), recognizes God as being in heaven, and walking in the circuit of heaven.

I note these passages the rather because they point out a time preceding Israel's Exodus, and therefore preceding the existence of the tabernacle. They come, too, from a quarter in which man is seen, not only without a written standard of truth, but apparently little possessed of the promises, such as even a Noah, an Abraham, etc., had.

15. Nowhere do we find a recognition of faith more distinct, that however man down here may have failed, and that God may not be displayed here on earth, yet that He may be found in heaven, than in the Psalms. But observe, it is only the outside of heaven that met faith's vision as God's hiding-place when retired from among man on account of man's sin. And the titles by which He is hailed throughout the book are limited to the revelations made of God to the earth-" Elohim," "Jehovah," "my King," etc.; but never once is there the curtain drawn aside, so as to show either that which is in heaven, or the titles of glory, relationship, affection, and office proper to that place.

2:4: " He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them [the infidel faction] in derision" (compare Acts 4:25, 26, and Rev. 11).

8:1: " Thou hast set Thy glory above the heavens."

11:4: " The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in the heavens." 14:2: " He looked down from heaven" (compare 33:13).

20:6: " He will hear from His holy heaven."

36:5: " Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens."

50:6: " The heavens shall declare His righteousness" (a most deeply-interesting Psalm).

53:2: " God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did under-stand, that did seek God."

57:3: " He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up."

" Be Thou exalted above the heavens;... let Thy glory be above all the earth" (ver. 5,11).

73:25: " Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."

Such is the remnant's feeling when weaned, and taught to hang on God, the God of Israel.

76:8, 9: Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth."

So shall it be sung in Judah and in Israel, when God's tabernacle is again in Salem, and His dwelling-place once more in Zion.

80:14 "Return, we beseech Thee, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine."

Such a prayer will yet arise from the land of promise, when its inhabitants shall seek the Lord under the pressure of sorrow, given in Psa. 79; and it will be followed by praise, as in Psa. 85.

85:10, 11: " 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."

89:2, 5: " I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever; with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations. For I have said, Mercy shall be built up forever: Thy faithfulness shalt Thou establish in the very heavens (ver. 2). " The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord" (ver. 5).

This Psalm, which closes one of the chapters into which, in Hebrew, the book of Psalms is divided, gives a wondrous explanation of Israel's hope, its springs of blessing.

102:19: " From heaven did the Lord behold the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner," etc.

The verses 25-27, as applied, in Heb. 1.10, 12, to Christ, are the key to this most blessed portion of divine writ.

103:19: " The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; His kingdom ruleth over all."

Poor David found it for himself, as we see in his hour of awful failure, in which he learned the substance of this Psalm-how that mercy could triumph over David's self (2 Sam. 23.1-7), as well as it had previously enabled him to triumph over all his circumstances (2 Sam. 22).

115:3: " Our God is in the heavens."

This is Israel's answer to the heathen challenge, " Where is now your God?" Mark, also, especially, ver. 6 of this Psalm: " The heaven, the heavens for the Lord: but the earth hath He given to the children of men," as it might be well rendered.

119:89: " Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in the heavens."

A principle of immense moment at all times, because it involves much that is connected with Him who is the Word; and to the Jew, amid infidelity and scorning, it will be found to be all his strength.

123:1: " O Thou that dwellest in the heavens!"

When the soul is exceedingly filled with contempt, scorning, and pride, how blessed so to look up!

136:6: "O give thanks unto the God of heaven; for His mercy endureth forever!"

This is the last verse of that most remarkable Psalm, every verse of which ends with " His mercy endureth forever!" It is a song of Israel restored, telling all its mercies, and that in the day, too, in

which it will be its joy and glory to know that earthly glory is subordinate to heavenly; and that Christ, the Messiah, has, as Son of Man, a church, His bride, in heaven, even when, as King of Israel, the land shall be called Beulah, married to Jehovah.

139:8: " If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there."

This Psalm contains a mystery; but Jehovah everywhere, and knowing all things, is part of its blessed burden.

Let my reader quietly read over each of the Psalms quoted; the light thrown by the contexts on the citations will repay the trouble well.

16. Prov. 8:27: "When He prepared the heavens, I [Wisdom] was there."

The personal individuality of the Wisdom spoken of here utterly forbids intelligence to explain it by wisdom as an attribute. It is evidently, from John 1.1-5, the Son, who was in the beginning with God-the Maker of the heavens and earth Himself.

Prov. 30:4: " Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind 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?"

This ascending up into heaven, and this descending, must lead our minds, if taught in Rom. 10 and Eph. 4:8-10, to something more than the heavens and earth which now are, and shall be destroyed by fire; and so, I think, must that query, to a Jewish mind so puzzling, " What is His name, and what is His son's name, if thou canst tell?"

Eccl. 5:2: " Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."

This book gives very much instruction as to the insufficiency of earth to afford satisfaction to the human heart. It points on (I cannot doubt it) to the time yet to come, when, if Israel will have all blessing on the earth that nature can enjoy, the earth will yet be directly under the government of Heaven itself. The Heavenly Man, and His heavenly human associates, are to have the habitable world to come in subjection, and to rule it under God.

Life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel-OUR gospel. Till it came, while creation and providence spake plainly of the Eternal Power and Godhead, and the government of God upon earth showed His holiness and righteousness, and in types, sundry and various-from Abel's accepted lamb, down to all the types and shadows given in the tabernacle and temple-grace was presented; still, life and immortality were not presented in a way that men could understand them. Neither could man understand the grace and mercy which were needed and supposed in God making to Himself sons and daughters for the Father's house in heaven, communicating to them at the same time the divine nature, and making them to be heirs of God, and coheirs with Christ-as a body, the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost; and every member in particular, a member of the body of the Lord Jesus, a member of that body of which He now in glory is the avowed Head. Yet there, in Old Testament times, the heaven, the dwelling-place of God, was; and it was an eternal truth that He was Judge of man's actions here below, though man might not like it, or understand God's hidden plans, or the reality of his own fall and destiny.

We turn now briefly to the testimony of the prophets.

Isa. 14:12-14: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!... Thou hast said in thine 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."

As the prophet and the man of God oft spake words the import of which was beyond the reach of their own ken (1 Peter 1.10-12), led thereunto and therein by the Spirit of God, who knew things to come; so, on the other hand, we oft find the children of wrath, the servants of Satan, saying things altogether beyond the measure of human intelligence. This may explain this portion in measure, and the correspondence between it and the portions found in Dan. 11:45, and 2 Thess. 2. Satan knows his own mind and objects well enough to express them through a rebel prince's actions, and God knows enough of the heart and of Satan to read aloud those thoughts according to the real drift and tendency of them.

Isa. 63:15: "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of Thy holiness and of Thy glory."

Such is the pleading of a remnant in the latter day, amid inconsistencies which oblige it to add, "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer: Thy name is from everlasting."

In the same context we find the reply: blessings immeasurable fill chap. 65; and then chap. 66:1: "The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" After which follows the arraignment of wickedness on the earth.

19. In Jeremiah, one expression is very remarkable among the idolatrous of his day, who "would make cakes and burn incense unto the queen of heaven" (see 7:18; 44:17, 18, 19).

In chap. 3:41, of his Lamentations, he says: "Let us lift up our heart... unto God in the heavens;" and (ver. 50) till the Lord... behold from heaven." Poor fellow, he had that refuge like us, if all around was dark: yet he could not see the details as we do of what is inside of heaven.

20. In Ezekiel, we find once, and it is the only place, I think, which occurs in the Old Testament, the expression-"The heavens were opened" (chap. 1:1). It is connected with the departure of the glory from the temple.

21. Daniel, when with his companions (chap. 2:18), when alone (ver. 19); and when before Nebuchadnezzar (vers. 28, 37, 44), recognizes God as the "God of heaven."

Blessed comfort to him, who was a living witness, in his own experience, that Israel was become the tail, and had ceased to be the head by reason of unfaithfulness! Yet how blessedly does this Nazarite-soul walk with God as the unseen yet, by him, honored God of heaven; and he reaped honor from God as he yielded honor to Him.

He speaks also of a "Holy One coming down from heaven" (chap. 4:13, 23), as having been seen by Nebuchadnezzar. "Of the heavens reigning," being a truth that Nebuchadnezzar must learn



(chap. 4:26).

It may be remarked, that it was a voice from heaven that pronounced Nebuchadnezzar's sentence (ver. 31), and not till he (Nebuchadnezzar) lifted up his eyes unto heaven did his understanding return to him (ver. 35), and he sought to honor the God of heaven (ver. 37).

Daniel charges Belshazzar with having lifted himself up against the Lord of heaven (chap. v. 23), and speaks of the vessels brought from Jerusalem as the vessels of the house of the Lord of Heaven.

Still heaven is not seen opened, nor the blessings and glories of it revealed.

Yet afterward (in chap. vii.) we do get, in the visions of Daniel, something more definitely connected with a scene in heaven, we get " the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him " (ver. 13).

Let the passage be read carefully:-

" I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

Observe the evil is put down by the Ancient of Days, and then the Son of Man receives from Him, is invested by Him, the Ancient of Days, with a kingdom. He, the Son of Man, is seen upon the cloud; He is not seen before the Ancient of Days; all that is said is, " they brought Him near before Him."

In Matt. 24:3, we read: " And then [after the tribulation] shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and the tribes of the earth shall mourn and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," etc. Compare also chap. 25:31, and part of the Lord's testimony to the high priest (26:64): " Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Jonah 1:9: " And he [Jonah] said unto them [the shipmaster and mariners], I am an Hebrew: and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, which has made the sea and the dry land."

How humbling the sequel: " Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this?" They feared the Lord apparently more than His unfaithful servant and messenger.

It would have been easy to have classified the passages just given, according to a system more or less correct. But as I write upon the principle of "inquiry," and not of "teaching," I prefer to leave the testimony, just as it is; and to allow it to produce its own, or God's own, effect upon the conscience of each reader.

In conclusion, I would only add a few words by way of contrast between what was in olden time revealed, and what is revealed now unto us.

There is but one God, and He is the God of heaven; that is clear: but in Old Testament times He stood in certain positions in which He revealed a limited measure of His glory-that which pertained to the position in which for the time being He was working. It might be a creating, or in providence, or as setting Himself to govern a people who were upon earth. While He always acted worthily of Himself, it was, alas! in proportion as man in his subordinate position failed, that, the manifested glory of God being hidden, man was forced to look to the heavens to which God had retired.

There is not found, then, in the Old Testament, the God of heaven in all the fullness of His moral glory, yet, as a Man, come to see whether earth would welcome Him; there is not there found this same blessed Heavenly Man gone back into heaven-and when made Lord of all, calling from the heavens, by the preached word, and sending down the Spirit, and setting the door of heaven open upon His people that they might see by faith, and know that all heaven was theirs, and all the details of its blessedness, whether as to worship or government, position or inheritance. The sympathies of the heart of the Eternal God of heaven pouring out, through and from the heart of the Son of Man, the Lord of Glory in heaven, down to a suffering people in this world, is not presented in the Old Testament. The truth, amazing truth! that God, the God of heaven, with all that He is, and all that He has is ours, who believe in the Lord Jesus,- perfect Divine affection in a perfectly human heart,-all this, and more is found now in the heavenly calling, and in the mystery of which we are partakers. For God is now revealing Himself according to what He is and has as the God of heaven, the Father of the only Begotten Son, and heaven is opened upon us, as also the Father's heart is opened to us.

At some future time I may attempt to enter upon these things as taught in the heavenly calling and the mystery; at present I prefer commending to my readers the perusal of a paper entitled "Heaven, Vol. V., art. v. p. 58, of the Present Testimony, and commending them and it to God and the word of His grace. May they prove all things, and hold fast that which is truth!

## The Honor That Cometh From God Only

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There are various lights in which redemption is presented to us in the Scriptures. To follow out any one of these exclusively is never profitable for our souls, and tends to obscure the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, in whatever light redemption is presented to us, it is always intended to illustrate "the riches of God's grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Redemption is presented to us as an escape, a deliverance, a rescue by the interposition of almighty saving grace. Sinners are "warned to flee from the wrath to come." Those who have been turned to God, through faith in Jesus, are delivered "from the wrath to come." We give thanks to the Father, "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness." Or again, "Christ gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father (Gal. 1:4). In these and similar expressions, the prominent thought is the danger, misery, and condemnation, out of which we have been brought by Jesus, and would place us analogously to Israel at the Red Sea (their enemies being destroyed), and on the edge of the wilderness, but short of entering into Canaan. But whilst redemption is escape, deliverance, and rescue, it is much more. It is entrance into Canaan as well as deliverance out of Egypt, and yet withal the experience of the wilderness. If God has delivered out of the power of darkness, He has translated now into the kingdom of His dear Son." God presents to us the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, in all the blessedness of its results as counseled and known by Him. We are "called out of darkness into his marvelous light"; yea "called into His own kingdom and glory."

Whilst, therefore, experience of deliverance, and relief from the burden of a guilty conscience, may raise many a grateful emotion in the heart, and call forth praise and thanksgiving; it will be found to fail in practically emancipating from the principles, spirit, and power, of the world. This will hardly be effected where the relation of the Holy Ghost to the believer as the seal of God set on the perfect work of Christ, and as the earnest of the inheritance, is not prominently maintained. It is the doctrine of the "other Comforter," the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, come down in consequence of Jesus being glorified, which gives its true dignity to the present standing of the believer; and explains that enigma how we "see Jesus" when the world seeth Him no more-how Jesus is "manifested" to His disciples without being manifested to the world. The object of the Holy Ghost is to glorify Jesus; and He presents Jesus to the soul as the object of admiration and desire as well as of salvation. It is thus that the Holy Ghost enables the believer to weigh every object of human ambition, however high and noble in itself, with 44 the honor which cometh from God only," and to see how poor and mean it is. A man may weigh things morally, and estimate justly enough the great variety of human character; but a believer in Christ is able to weigh objects, and to see how infinitely short the highest object of human ambition falls when compared with that which is before him. The apostle Paul contrasts men in their objects-those who by "patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honor, and immortality," with those who are "contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness." Rivalry and contention are the great principles of human ambition. It is hardly possible to attain human distinction without them. Of Jesus it is said, "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit

upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles; He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street" (Isa. 42:1,2; Matt. 12:18,19). Jesus humbled Himself, even to the death of the cross, and therefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and made the name of His humiliation to be the very name which, in due time, shall be universally acknowledged either in judgment or in salvation. Jesus "endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." This path of Jesus from the lowest humiliation to the highest honor, sets forth to us a great principle, "the truth;" and this principle is embodied by Jesus Himself in His memorable axiom: "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." According to this principle, rivalry and contention are disobedience to the truth. And if any one asserts the human principle of strife and vain-glory in order to obtain the favor of God, he is judged before God as one who is obeying unrighteousness; for in the estimate of God every human plea arising from human distinction is the highest act of unrighteousness, as setting aside, or superseding the work of Christ in His humiliation and obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. But not only so, but the object of rivalry and contention is one which, if attained, has only the praise of men, and seeks no higher praise. Contrasted with contention and rivalry is patience to "them who by patient continuance in well-doing." Patience, or endurance, is necessarily associated with faith. It is the great practical word of the New Testament, corresponding to "waiting" in the Old Testament. "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord" (Psa. 27:14). "Hope maketh not ashamed." God never disappoints those who propose to themselves the object He presents to them, and who pursue it according to His way. The objects which God presents to us in Christ Jesus are "glory, and honor, and incorruptibility." The objects which man pursues are honor and glory from men, "one of another;" very fleeting and uncertain here and they have no incorruptibility in them. Hence the principle on which they are sought is utterly inapplicable to such lofty objects as God presents to us. The moment such objects are before the soul, the impossibility of attaining them by any effort becomes apparent, and they can be entertained on one principle alone, and that is, the riches of God's grace as displayed to us in the cross of Christ.

"How can ye believe who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only." The existence of faith is morally incompatible with the way of attaining honor from men. That honor can only be accorded on the ground of personal superiority over others; this may be so or not; but if it be so, how can that man, whose object is superiority over others, recognize the humbling truth, that before God "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God?" How can he recognize that the essential difference before God is, that which God makes by His own grace, and not that which man can attain by his own effort? How can he realize that everything which is worth having, or seeking, is to be found in Christ and in Him alone? Is there any moral compatibility between confessing Christ and denying self, and seeking honor one of another?

If it be difficult to realize in any measure approximating the truth, "the vanity of man in his best estate," and his real degradation as being at "enmity with God," "hateful, and hating one another;" it is far more difficult to realize the grace of God in Christ Jesus reaching down to where man actually is dead in trespasses and sins, and exalting him at once before Himself to where Christ is. Such exaltation never entered into man's heart to conceive; it is "an honor that cometh from God only." The highest thought of man, if he thinks of salvation at all, is the thought of escape; heaven

itself, in his thoughts, is hardly more than negative, that is, not to be in misery-the thought of association with Christ, and witnessing as the joy of his soul the absolute supremacy of Jesus, never enters into his heart. This honor comes from God only.

One remarkably distinguishing character of the honor which cometh from God only; is, that "such honor have all His saints." The very honor, itself, excludes all thoughts of rivalry, because the highest honor is the common honor. It is the answer of God to the humiliation of Christ-if Christ be the common righteousness of His church, the glory in which they will be manifested is the glory to which that righteousness is entitled. "We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness through faith." Boasting, then, is excluded in glory as well as in justification. To sit even at the right hand and left hand of Christ in His kingdom, is not so high an honor as oneness with Him, as His bride, as being of that body of which He is animating and sustaining Head. Let this place, or that place, be assigned to one or another of the Father, such place is still secondary to the common honor which cometh to all saints from God only. No one can take a place more officially distinct than an apostle; yet when the apostle Paul is writing most especially concerning his ministry, although he might have regarded his converts as "his crown and joy" in the day of the revelation of Jesus, yet he loses that object for the moment in the common but higher honor of all saints. "So then death worketh in us, but life in you. We have the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believe, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe and therefore speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (2 Cor. 4:12-14). How unselfish as an object is the honor that cometh from God only.

If we descend to particulars, there is hardly any honor of which men are more tenacious than nobility of descent; so to be able to link themselves, through a long line of ancestry, with some illustrious personage as their parents stock. But what is this honor compared to the honor of being born of God. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power (right or privilege, marg.) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Viewed in the light of a divine lineage, the apostle Paul could well afford to forego all the advantages of such purity of descent as he could legitimately boast of as a Hebrew of Hebrews. He considered this, among other advantages, as "loss for Christ;" after the knowledge of Christ, any resting in his hereditary purity of descent would take him away from his real nobility as born of God. In the same strain, he deprecates "endless genealogies" as puerile for one born of God to be occupied about. In the wide-spread corrupt Christianity by which we are surrounded, the withering influence of false doctrine is especially seen. Men are taught that they, are born of God, with all its connected blessings of being sons and heirs of God, without ever having had the conscience brought into contact with God, without any acquaintance with the real evil of sin, or any appreciation of the sacrifice of Christ. Such blessings, so cheap in their estimation, are never for a moment considered as realities, and the nominal Christian plainly shows, whenever the alternative is presented to him, that in his heart and judgment he prefers the smallest temporal advantage to all the high-sounding privileges he has been taught to belong to him from his infancy. This, in the language of Scripture, is profaneness. This is characterized as "trampling under foot the Son of God." In the early days of declension in the Church, "they cast their pearls before swine, and gave that which was holy unto dogs" - all the privileges of the redeemed were cast indiscriminately to those who were not born of God; and they were either trampled under foot, or used as a weapon to undermine the truth of

God. On this principle it is alone to be explained, that the wonderful honor of being born of God, sons of God, and heirs of God, has been considered a mere conventional figment, instead of an everlasting reality on which even angels themselves gaze with reverence.

There is another aspect of the honor, which cometh from God only, and that is, divine righteousness-the conscious possession of which alone delivers from anxiety as to personal qualification to commend us to God, or from comparative righteousness between man and man. This honor also have all his saints. "The righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference" (Rom. 3:22). In the conscious possession of such a righteousness, the apostle Paul regarded the highest supposable righteousness attainable by man as loss-"And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:9).

That the Lord himself should be the righteousness of all who believe in his name, must be an honor that cometh from God only; for the highest imaginable human attainment must necessarily fall infinitely below divine righteousness. "Of Him, are ye in Christ Jesus, who of (or from) God is made unto us wisdom, even righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. That, according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31).

This great honor is so intimately connected with the honor that cometh from God only in being born of God, that no one, save he that is born of God, "sees," as a present reality, "the kingdom of God," in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Another honor that cometh from God only, and which is an honor given to all believers, is the gift of the Holy Ghost, as the seal and earnest of the inheritance. This is a gift as unpurchaseable as Christ Himself. It can come from God only, and is His seal to the divine righteousness in which believers stand before God. "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:2). No legal attainment had ever such a seal set on it by God; it is that which faith attains unto in Christ, even the reception of Him, as our righteousness, which receives this seal from God, even the gift of the Holy Ghost, the present witness to us of this peculiar glory of Christ. The Son of God himself was sealed by God, as the only righteous and holy one at his baptism by John. And Jesus himself says, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man will give unto you; for Him hath God the Father sealed" (John 6:27). But this honor in virtue of Christ's presenting before God all believers "holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable in the body of his flesh through death" (Col. 1:22), is given by God to all believers here. "Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. 1:21). It is an honor that came from God only to the meanest Corinthian believer as well as the apostle Paul--"us with you." The high official honor which the apostle had as an apostle, was not to be compared with that which he had in common with all believers.

But if the Holy Ghost be the seal set by God himself on all believers, He is also-the earnest given of God in our-hearts. Good society is a very allowable ambition to man; but if he gets the best human society, moral and intellectual, it is infinitely below that into which the believer in Christ is introduced. "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). How few, comparatively speaking, have the privilege of introduction to earthly royalty; and thus it

must almost necessarily be in all the distance of state. But the Spirit leads through Christ to the Father, and discovers the Father in the Son, thus giving the greatest possible nearness and intimacy with God, in His revealed relation by the Son as the Father. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." These are high and holy intimacies, in which Jesus confides in us as "friends," instead of commanding us as servants (John 15:14,16). God hath "made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself" (Ephes. 9). "The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God." And thus, by the honor of intimacy with God in His thoughts, as written in the Scripture and taught by the Holy Ghost, the believer in Christ is not left to the hazard of conjecture, and is relieved from judging by the sight of his eyes, or the hearing of his ears, because, knowing the mystery of God's will respecting the heading-up of all things in Christ, he forms his judgment as to the bearing of all things on that mystery.

Not to go into further detail, there is one remarkably comprehensive statement to our point in the First Epistle of Peter: "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious." ... "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." The marginal reading is, He is an honor. All the preciousness that Christ is to God, it has pleased God to set upon all that believe in His name. This is an all-comprehensive honor indeed. Hence believers are precious to God by reason of the honor He himself has set on them. Worthless in themselves, who can estimate at a just rate the price of believers in the sight of God, "bought with a price," and all the preciousness of Christ set upon them by God.

It is this that we need to know. Believers in Christ ought to occupy their vantage ground, and show to a world overrun with corrupt Christianity that they cannot help on its course. They have their own riches and their own honor; their thoughts and interests are in things above, where Christ their life is, and they cannot come down to lower interests and pursuits without damage to the instincts of that life which is hid in Christ with God.

If we were but true to our own objects - glory, honor and incorruptibility - how should we rebuke the infidelity around us, which thinks of adapting Christianity to the exigencies of the age, to help on the course of this world. We are loudly called upon practically to assert, that the glory and dignity of our calling has become all the more conspicuous by reason of the very progress the world has made, and is making the present glory of the world fade away before our own excelling glory "that remaineth."

## How to Know the Will of the Father

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Translated from the French.

If a child habitually neglected its father, and did not take the trouble of knowing his mind and will, it is, easy to foresee that, when a difficulty presented itself, this child would not be in circumstances to understand what would please its parent. There are certain things which God leaves in generalities, in order that the state of the individual's soul may be proved. If, instead of the case I have supposed of a child, it were a question of a wife towards her husband, it is probable that, if she has the feelings and mind of a wife, she will not hesitate a moment as to knowing what would be agreeable to him; and that where he had expressed no positive will about the matter. Now you cannot escape this trial: God will not allow His children to escape it. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

People would like a convenient and comfortable means, of knowing God's will, as one might get a receipt for anything; but there exists no means of ascertaining it without reference to the state of our own soul.

Moreover, we are often of too much importance in our own eyes; and we deceive ourselves in supposing some will of God in such or such a case. God, perhaps, has nothing to tell us thereon, the evil being altogether in the stir we give ourselves. The will of God is, perhaps, that we should take quietly an insignificant place.

Further, we sometimes seek God's will, desiring to know how to act in circumstances in which it is not His will that we should: be found at all: if conscience were in real healthful activity, its first effect would be: to make us quit them. It is our own will which sets us there, and we would like, nevertheless, to enjoy the consolation of God's direction in a path which ourselves have chosen. Such is a very common case.

Be assured that, if we are near enough to God, we shall have no trouble to know His will. In a long and active life it may happen, that God, in His love, may not always at once reveal His will to us, that we may feel our dependence, particularly where the individual has a tendency to act according to his own will. How-ever, "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be, full of light?" whence it is certain that if the whole body is not full of light, the eye is not single. You will say: That is poor consolation. I answer: It is a rich consolation for those whose sole desire is to have the eye single and to walk with God-not, so to speak, for those who would avoid trouble in learning His will objectively, but whose desire is to walk with God. "If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." It is always the same principle. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." You cannot withdraw yourself from this moral law of Christianity. "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good



work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." The mutual connection of these things is of immense importance for the soul. The Lord must be known intimately if one would walk in a way worthy of Him; and it is thus that we grow in the knowledge of God's will. " And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ.' Finally, it is written that the spiritual man " judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

It is, then, the will of God, and a precious will, that we should be able to discern it only according to our own spiritual state. In general, when we think that we are judging circumstances, it is God who is judging us-who is judging our state. Our business is to keep close to Him. God would not be good to us if He permitted us to discover His will without that. It might be convenient just to have a director of consciences; and we should. thus be spared the discovery and the chastisement of our moral condition. Thus, if you seek how you may discover the will of God without that, you are seeking evil; and it is what we see every day.

One Christian is in doubt, in perplexity; another, more spiritual, sees as clear as the day: he is surprised, and sees no difficulty, and ends by understanding that it lies only in the other's state of soul. "He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off."

As regards circumstances, I believe that a person may be guided by them: Scripture has decided that. It is what is meant by being "held in with bit and bridle;" whereas the promise and privilege of him who has faith is " I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. God who is faithful, has given the promise of directing us thus-near enough to God to understand by a single glance from Him. He warns us not to be as the horse and the mule which have no understanding of the will, thoughts, desires of their master. It is needful to hold them in with bit and bridle. Doubtless that is better than to stumble, fall, and strike against Him who reins us in; but it is a sad state, and such is it to be guided by circumstances. Undoubtedly, too, it is merciful on God's part so to act, but very sad on ours.

Here, however, there must be a distinction drawn between judging what one has to do in certain circumstances, and being guided by them. He who allows himself to be guided by them, always acts in the dark as to knowing the will of God. There is absolutely nothing moral in it, but an exterior force drags along. Now it is very possible that I may have no judgment beforehand of what I shall do: I know not what circumstances may arise, and consequently I can take no side. But the instant the circumstances are there, I judge with a full and divine conviction what is the path of God's will, and of the Spirit's intention and power. That demands the highest degree of spirituality. It is not to be directed by circumstances, but to be directed by God in them, being near enough to God to be able to judge immediately what one ought to do, as soon as the circumstances arrive.

As to impressions, God can suggest them, and it is certain that in fact He does suggest a thing to the mind; but in that case, the propriety of the thing and its moral character will be clear as the sun at noon-day. In prayer God can remove from our heart certain carnal influences, which being destroyed, leave room to certain other spiritual influences to take their place in the soul. Thus He makes us feel the importance of some duty, which had been perhaps entirely obscured by the preoccupation caused by an object one had desired. This may be even between two individuals. One person may not have enough spiritual discernment to discover what is good; but the moment another shows it to him, he understands that it is the truth. All are not engineers, but a simple

wagoner knows a good road when it is made. Thus, the impressions which come from God, do not always remain simple impressions. But they are ordinarily clear when God produces them. I do not doubt, however, that He often makes them on our minds, when we walk with Him and hear His voice.

When obstacles raised up of Satan are spoken of, it is not said that God Himself may not have allowed these obstacles to some good desire-obstacles caused by an accumulation of evil in the circumstances which surround us.

Again, the case should never exist of a person acting without knowing the will of God. The only rule that can be given is, never to act when we do not know what is the Lord's will. If you act in this ignorance, you are at the mercy of circumstances; however God may turn all to the good of His children. But why act when we are ignorant of His will? Is the necessity of acting always so extremely pressing'?

If I do something with the full certainty that I am doing the will of God, it is clear that an obstacle is no more than a trial of my faith, and it ought not to stop me. It stops us, perhaps, through our lack of faith; because, if we do not walk sufficiently near to God in the feeling of our nothingness, we shall want faith to accomplish what we have faith enough to discern. When we are doing our own will, or are negligent in our walk, God in His mercy may warn us by a hindrance which stops us if we pay attention to it, whilst "the simple pass on and are punished." God may permit, where there is much activity and labor, that Satan should raise up hindrances, in order that we may be kept in dependence on the Lord; but God never permits Satan to act otherwise than on the flesh. If we leave the door open, if we get away from God, Satan does us harm; but otherwise it is a mere trial of faith to warn us of a danger or snare-of something that would tend to exalt us in our own eyes. It is an instrument for our correction. That is, God allows Satan to trouble the mind, and bring the flesh into exterior sufferings, in order that the inner man may be kept from evil. If it is a question of anything else, probably it is only our "buts" and "ifs" that stop us, or the effects of our carelessness, which have opened a door to Satan to trouble us by doubts and apparent difficulties between God and us, because we do not see more clearly. For he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. In a word, the question is wholly moral. If any particular question is raised which at the first blush we cannot solve, we shall find that often the question would not lie there at all, if our position were not false-if we had previously been in a good state of soul, and a true spirituality had guarded and kept us. In that case, all we have to do is to humble ourselves for the whole affair. Afterward, let us examine whether Scripture does not present some principle suitable to direct us. Here, evidently, spirituality is the essential thing-is everything.

The rule that we should do what Jesus would have done in such or such a circumstance, is excellent, where and when it can be applied. But are we often' in the circumstances wherein the Lord was found?

It is often useful to ask myself whence comes such a desire of mine, or such a thought of doing this or that. I have found that this alone decides more than a half of the embarrassments that Christians meet with. The two-thirds of those which remain are the result of our haste and of our former sins. If a thought come from God and not from the flesh, then we have only to address ourselves to God as to the manner and means of executing it, and we shall soon be directed.

There are cases where one has need of being guided, not always without motives; as suppose, when I hesitate about a visit to make, or some such other case. A life of more ardent love, or love exercised in a more intelligent way or set in activity in drawing near to God, will clear the motives on one side or another; and often, perhaps,. we shall see that our side of the thing was but egoism.

If you say, But if it is no question either of love or of obedience? then I answer, that you ought to show me a reason for acting. For if it is nothing but your own will, you cannot make the wisdom of God bend to your will. There also is the source of another numerous class of difficulties that God will never solve. In these cases, He -will in His grace teach obedience, and -Will show us how much time we have lost in our own activity. Finally, "the meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way."

I have communicated to you on this subject all that my mind can furnish you with at this moment. For the rest, remember only that the wisdom of God conducts us in the way of God's will: if our own will is in activity, God cannot bend to that. Such is the essential thing to discover. It is the secret of the life of Christ. I know no other principle that God can make use of, however He may pardon and cause all to work for our good. But if there still be a query as to His direction, He directs the new man which has no other will than Christ. He mortifies and destroys the old man, and in that way purifies us that we may bear fruit. " Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God... I delight to do Thy will." It is the place of a porter to wait at the gate; but in doing so, he does the will of his master. Be assured that God does more in us than we for Him; and that what we do for Him is only in proportion as it is Himself who works it in us.

## John

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THE Gospel of John has a peculiar character, as every Christian perceives. It does not present the birth of Christ in this world, looked at as the Son of David. It does not trace His genealogy back to Adam, in order to bring out His title of Son of Man. It does not exhibit the Prophet who, by His testimony, accomplished the service of his Father, in this respect, here below. It is neither His birth, nor the commencement of His Gospel, but His existence before the beginning of everything that had a beginning. "In the beginning was the Word." In short, it is the glory of the person of Jesus, the Son of God, above all dispensation - a glory developed in many ways in grace, but which is always itself. It is that which He is; but making us share in all the blessings that flow from it, when He is so manifested as to impart them.

The first chapter asserts what He was, before all things; and the different characters in which He is a blessing to man, being made flesh. He is, and He is the expression of, the whole mind that subsists in God, the *λογος*. In the beginning He was. If we go back as far as is possible to the mind of man, how far soever beyond all that has had a beginning, - He is. This is the most perfect idea we can form, historically, if I may use such an expression, of the existence of God. "In the beginning was the Word." Was there nothing beside? Impossible. Of what would He have been the Word? "The Word was with God." That is to say, a personal existence is ascribed to Him. But lest it might be thought that He was something which eternity implies, but which the Holy Ghost comes to reveal, it is said that He "was God." In His existence eternal; in His nature divine; in His person distinct; He might have been spoken of as an emanation in time, as though His personality was of time, although eternal in His nature, - the Spirit therefore adds, "In the beginning He was with God." It is the revelation of the eternal *Λογος* before all creation. This Gospel therefore really begins before Genesis. The Book of Genesis gives us the history of the world, in time; John gives us that of the Word, who existed in eternity before the world was; who - when man can speak of beginning - was; and, consequently, did not begin to exist. The language of the Gospel is as plain as possible; and, like the sword of paradise, turns every way, in opposition to the thoughts and reasonings of man, to defend the divinity of the Son of God.

By Him, also were all things created. There are things which had a beginning - they all had their origin from Him. "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Precise, positive, and absolute distinction between all that has been made and Jesus. If anything has been made, it is not the Word; for all that has been made, was made by that Word.

But there is another thing besides the supreme act of creating all things (an act that characterizes the Word), there is that which was in Him. All creation was made by Him; but it does not exist in Him, - but in Him was life. By this He was in relation with an especial part of creation, a part which was the object of the thoughts and intentions of God. This life shone among men, was the light of men, revealed itself as a testimony to the divine nature, in immediate connection with them, as it did not with respect to any others at all. But, in fact, this light shone in the midst of that which was in its own nature contrary to it, and which, therefore, neither comprehended nor received it. These

are the relations of the Word with creation, and with man, seen abstractly in His nature. The Spirit pursues this subject, giving us details, historically, of the latter part.

We may remark here-and the point is of importance -how the Spirit passes from the divine and eternal nature of the Word who was before all things, to the manifestation, in this world, of the Word made flesh, in the person of Jesus. All the ways of God, the dispensations, His government of the world, are passed over in silence. In beholding Jesus on the earth we are in immediate connection with Him, as existing before the world was. Only He is introduced by John, and that which is found in the world is recognized as created. John is come to bear witness of the Light. The true Light was that which, coming into the world, shone for all men and not for the Jews only. He is come into the world; and the world, in darkness and blind, has not known Him. He is come unto His own (the Jews), and His own have not received Him. But there were some who received Him. Of them two things are said. They have received authority to become the sons of God, to take their place as such, and, in fact, they are born of God. Natural descent, and the will of man went for nothing here. Thus we have seen the Word, in His nature, abstractly; and, as life, His manifestation among men, with the consequences of that manifestation. This general part, in regard to His nature, ends here. The Spirit carries on the history of what the Lord is, manifested as man on earth. So that, as it were, we begin again here with Jesus on the earth.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us in the fullness of grace and truth. 'This is the great fact, the source of all blessing to us. The glory in which Christ was seen, thus manifested (by those who had eyes to see), was that of an only Son with His Father.

These are the two parts of this great truth. The Word who was with God, and who was God, was made flesh; and He who was beheld on the earth, had the glory of an only Son with the Father.

Two things are the result. Grace (what greater grace? it is love itself that is revealed, and towards sinners) and truth are not declared, but come, in Jesus Christ. The true relation of all things with God is shown. This is the ground-work of truth. Everything has taken its true place, its true character, in every respect; and the center of all is God. Grace, then, and truth are come. The second thing is that the only Son, in the bosom of the Father, reveals God, and reveals Him, consequently, as known by Himself in that position.

But there are yet other important instructions in these verses. The person of Jesus, the Word made flesh, dwelling among us, was full of grace and truth. Of this fullness we have all received, not truth upon truth; truth is simple and puts everything exactly in its place morally and in its nature; but we have received that which we needed, grace upon grace, the favor of God abundantly, divine blessings (the fruit of His love), heaped one upon another. Truth shines, is perfectly manifested, grace is given.

The connection of this manifestation of the grace of God in the Word made flesh (in which perfect truth also displays itself), with other testimonies of God, is then taught us. John bore witness to Him; the service of Moses had quite another character. John preceded Him in his service on earth; but Jesus must be preferred before him, for, humble as He might be, God above all, blessed forever, He was before John, although coming after him. Moses gave the law, perfect in its place, requiring from man, on God's part, that which man ought to be. But it was neither the truth, full and entire, in every respect, as in Jesus, nor grace. These came by Jesus Christ, not by Moses.

We have thus the character and the position of the Word made flesh. That which Jesus was here below. The Word made flesh, His glory as seen by faith, that of an only Son with His Father. He was full of grace and truth. He revealed God as He knew Him, as the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father. It was not only the character of His glory here below-it is what He was (what He had been, what He ever is) in the Father's own bosom, in the Godhead, and it is thus that He declared Him. He was before John the Baptist, although coming after him; and He brought, in His own person, that which was in its nature entirely different from the law given by Moses.

Here, then, is the Lord manifested on earth. His relations with men follow; the positions He took, the characters he assumed, according to the purposes of God, and the testimony of His word among men. First of all John the Baptist gives place to Him. It will be remarked that he bears testimony in each of the parts into which this chapter is divided. Ver. 6, in the abstract revelation of the nature of the Word. Ver. 15, with regard to His manifestation in the flesh. Ver. 19, the glory of His person, although coming after John. Ver. 29, respecting His work and the result; and ver. 36, the testimony, for the time being, in order that He might be followed, as having come to seek the Jewish remnant.

After the abstract revelation of the nature of the Word, and that of His manifestation in the flesh, the testimony actually borne in the world is given. Verses 19-28, form a kind of introduction, in which, on the inquiry of the Scribes and Pharisees, John gives account of himself, and takes occasion to speak of the difference between himself and the Lord. So that, whatever the characters may be that Christ takes in connection with His work, the glory of His person is ever first in view. The witness is occupied naturally, so to speak, with this, before bearing his formal testimony to the office which he fulfilled. John is neither Elias nor that prophet (i.e. the one of whom Moses spoke), nor the Christ. He is the voice, mentioned by Isaiah, who was to prepare the way of the Lord before Him. It is not precisely before the Messiah, although he was that; neither is it Elias before the day of Jehovah, but the voice in the wilderness before the Lord (Jehovah) Himself. Jehovah was coming. It is this, consequently, of which he speaks. John baptized, indeed, unto repentance; but there was already One, unknown, among them, who, coming after him, was yet his superior, whose shoes'-latchet he was not worthy to unloose.

We have next the direct testimony of John, when he sees Jesus coming to him. He points Him out, not as the Messiah, but according to the whole extent of His work, as enjoyed by us in the everlasting salvation He has accomplished. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin (not the sins) of the world. That is to say, He restores, not all the wicked, but the foundations of the world's relations with God. Since the fall, it is indeed sin-whatever may be His dealings-that God had to consider in His relations with this world. The result of Christ's work shall be, that this will no longer be the case; His work shall be the eternal basis of these relations, sin being entirely put aside, as such.

Although a Lamb for the sacrifice, He is preferred before John the Baptist; for He was before him. The Lamb to be slain was Jehovah Himself.

In the administration of the ways of God, this testimony was to be borne in Israel, although its subject was the Lamb whose sacrifice reached to the sin of the world, and the Lord, Jehovah. John had not known Him personally; but He was the one and only subject of his mission.

But this was not all. He had made Himself man, and as man had received the fullness of the Holy Ghost, who had descended upon Him, and abode upon Him; and the man thus pointed out, and sealed on the part of the Father, was Himself to baptize with the Holy Ghost. At the same time He was pointed out, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, in another character, to which John, therefore, bears testimony. Thus subsisting, and seen, and sealed on the earth, He was the Son of God. John recognizes Him and proclaims Him as such.

Then comes what may be called the direct exercise and effect of His ministry at that time. But it is always the Lamb of whom he speaks; for that was the object-the design of God, and it is that which we have in this Gospel, although Israel is recognized in its place; for the nation held that place from God.

Upon this the disciples of John follow Christ. The effect of John's testimony is to attach the remnant to Jesus. Jesus does not refuse it, and they accompany Him. Nevertheless, this remnant-how far soever the testimony of John might extend-do not in fact go beyond the recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. This was the case, historically; but Jesus knew them thoroughly, and declares the character of Simon as soon as he comes to Him. This was an act of authority which proclaimed Him the head and center of the whole system. God can bestow names; He knows all things. He gave this right to Adam, who exercised it according to God with regard to all that was put under him as well as in the case of his wife. Great kings, who claim this power, have done the same. Eve sought to do it, but she was mistaken; although God can give an understanding heart which, under His influence, speaks aright in this respect. Now Christ does so here, with authority and with all knowledge, the moment the case presents itself.

Ver. 43. We have next the immediate testimony of Christ Himself, and of His followers. In the first place, on repairing to the scene of His earthly pilgrimage-according to the prophets-He calls others to follow Him. Nathanael, who begins by rejecting one who came from Nazareth, sets before us, I doubt not, the remnant of the last days (the testimony to which the Gospel of grace belongs, came first, 29-34). We see him at first rejecting the despised of the people, and under the fig-tree, which represents the nation of Israel; as the fig-tree which was to bear no more fruit, represents Israel under the old covenant. But Nathanael is the figure of a remnant, seen and known by the Lord, in connection with Israel. The Lord who thus manifested Himself to his heart and conscience, is confessed as Son of God and King of Israel; this is formally the faith of the spared remnant of Israel in the last days. But those who thus received Jesus when He was on earth, should see yet greater things than those which had convinced them. Moreover, thenceforth they should see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. He who by His birth had taken His place among the children of men, would, by that title, be the object of service to the most excellent of God's creatures. The angels of God Himself should be in the service of the Son of Man. So that the remnant without guile of Israel, acknowledges Him to be the Son of God and King of Israel; and the Lord declares Himself also to be the Son of Man; in humiliation indeed, but the object of service to the angels of God. Thus we have the person and the titles of Jesus, from His eternal and divine existence as the Word, to His millennial place as king of Israel and Son of Man; which He already was as born into this world, but which will be realized when He returns in His glory.

Before going farther, let us review some points in this chapter. The Lord is revealed as the Word-as God, and with God-as light-as life-as the Word made flesh, having the glory of an only

Son with His Father-the Lamb of God-the one on whom the Holy Ghost could descend, and who baptized with the Holy Ghost, the Son of God-the Messiah, or Christ-the Son of God and King of Israel-the Son of Man-we may say, all His personal titles. His relationship to the Church is not here, nor His function as Priest; but that which belongs to His person, and the connection of man with God in this world. Thus, besides His divine nature, it is all that He was, and will be in this world; His heavenly place and its consequences to faith are reserved for elsewhere.

Observe, that in preaching Christ, in a way to a certain degree complete, the heart of the hearer may truly believe, and attach itself to Him, though investing Him with a character which the condition of soul cannot yet go beyond, and while ignorant of the fullness in which He has been revealed. John says, "Behold the Lamb of God!" We have found the Messiah," say the disciples who followed Jesus on John's testimony.

The expression of what was in John's heart had greater effect than a. more formal, more doctrinal testimony. He beheld Jesus, and exclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The disciples heard him, and followed Jesus. It was, no doubt, his proper testimony on God's part, Jesus being there; but it was not doctrinal explanation, like that of the preceding verses.

OH 2{The two testimonies to Christ that were to be borne in this world, had been borne; that of John, and that of Jesus taking His place in Galilee with the remnant: the two days of God's dealings with Israel here below. The third day we find in chap. 2. A marriage takes place in Galilee. Jesus is there; and the water of purification is changed into the wine of joy for the marriage-feast. Afterward, at Jerusalem, He cleanses the temple of God with authority, executing judgment on all those who profaned it. In principle, these are the two things that characterize His millennial position. Doubtless these things took place historically; but as introduced here and in this manner, they have evidently a wider meaning. Besides, why the third day? After what? Two days of testimony had taken place-that of John, and that of Jesus; and now blessing and judgment are accomplished. In Galilee, the remnant had their place, and it is the scene of blessing, according to Isa. 9; Jerusalem, that of judgment. At the feast He did not know His mother; this was the link of His natural relation with Israel; which, looking at Him as born under the law, was His mother. He separates Himself from her, to accomplish blessing. It is only in testimony, therefore, in Galilee, for the moment. It is when He returns that the good wine will be for Israel; true blessing and joy at the end. Nevertheless, He still abides with this mother whom, as to His work, He did not acknowledge. And this also was the case with regard to His connection with Israel.

Afterward, in judging the Jews, and judicially cleansing the temple, He presents Himself as the Son of God. It is His Father's house. The proof of this which He gives is His resurrection; when the Jews should have rejected and crucified Him. Moreover, He was not only the Son-it was' God who was there. Not in the temple. It was empty; that house built by Herod. The body of Jesus was now the true temple. Sealed by His resurrection, the scriptures and the word of Jesus were of divine authority to the disciples, as speaking of Him, according to the intention of the Spirit of God'.

This sub-division of the book ends here.

The miracles which He wrought convinced many as to their natural understanding. No doubt it was sincerely; but another truth now opens. Man, in his natural state, was really incapable of receiving the things of God; not that the testimony was insufficient to convince him, nor that he was never



convinced. Many were so at this time; but Jesus did not commit Himself to them. He knew what man was. When convinced, his will, his nature were not altered. Let the time of trial come, and he would show himself as he was, alienated from God, and even his enemy. Sad, but too true testimony! The life, the death of Jesus prove it. He knew it when He began His work. This did not make His love grow cold; for the strength of that love was in itself.

Moreover, two things are presented in Him to reveal God. He knows man, and all men. What a knowledge in this world! A prophet knows that which is revealed to him. He has, in that case, divine knowledge. But Jesus knows all men in an absolute way. He is God. But when once He has introduced life in grace, He speaks of another thing; He speaks that which He knows, and testifies that which He has seen. Now He knows God His Father in Heaven. He is the Son of Man who is in Heaven. He knows man divinely; but He knows God and all His glory divinely also.

What a magnificent picture, or rather, should I say, revelation, of that which He is for us. For it is here as man that He tells us this. And also in order that we may enter into it and enjoy it, He becomes the sacrifice for sin, according to the eternal love of God His Father.)

But there was a man-and that a Pharisee-who was not satisfied with this inoperative conviction. His con-science was reached. Seeing Jesus, and hearing His testimony, had produced a sense of need in his heart. It is not the knowledge of grace, but with respect to man's condition a total change. He knows nothing of the truth, but he has seen that it is in Jesus, and he desires it. He has also at once an instinctive sense that the world will be against him; and he comes by night. The heart fears the world as soon as it has to do with God; for the world is opposed to Him. The friendship of the world is enmity against God. This sense of need made the difference in the case of Nicodemus. He had been convinced like the others. Accordingly he says "We know that thou art a teacher come from God." And the source of this conviction was the miracles. But Jesus stops him short; and that, on account of the true need felt in the heart of Nicodemus. The work of blessing was not to be wrought by teaching the old man. Man needed to be renewed in the source of his nature, without which he could not see the kingdom. The things of God are spiritually discerned, and man is carnal; he has not the Spirit. The Lord does not go beyond the kingdom (which, moreover, was not the law); for Nicodemus ought to have known something about the kingdom. But He does not begin to teach the Jews as a prophet under the law. He presents the kingdom itself; but to see it, according to His testimony, a man must be born again. Nicodemus Sees no farther than the flesh. The Lord explains Himself. Two things were necessary -to be born of water, and of the Spirit. Water cleanses. And, spiritually, in his affections, heart, con-science, thoughts, actions, etc., man lives, and in practice is morally purified through the application by the power of the Spirit, of the Word of God, which judges all things, and works in us livingly new thoughts and affections. This is the water; it is, withal, the death of the flesh. The true water which cleanses in a Christian way, came forth from the side of a dead Christ. He came by water and blood, in the power of cleansing and of expiation. He sanctifies the Church by cleansing it through the washing of water by the Word. "Ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you." It is therefore the mighty Word of God which since man must be born again in the principle and source of his moral being, judges, as being death, all that is of the flesh. But there is, in fact, the communication of a new life; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, is not flesh; has its nature from the Spirit. It is not the Spirit-that would be an incarnation; but this new life is spirit. It partakes of the nature of its origin. Without this, man cannot enter into the kingdom. But this is not all. If it

was a necessity for the Jew, who already was nominally a child of the kingdom, it was also a sovereign act of God, and consequently, it is accomplished wherever the Spirit acts in this power. "So is every one that is born of the Spirit." This, in principle, opens the door to the Gentiles. Nevertheless, Nicodemus, as a master of Israel, ought to have understood this.

The prophets had declared that Israel was to undergo this change, in order to enjoy the fulfillment of the promises, (see Ezek. 36,) which God had given them, with regard to their blessing in the holy land. But Jesus spoke of these things in an immediate way, and in connection with the nature and the glory of God himself. A master in Israel ought to have known that which the sure word of prophecy contained. The Son of God declared that which He knew, and that which He had seen with His Father. The defiled nature of man could not be in relationship with Him who revealed himself in heaven, whence Jesus came. The glory, from the bosom of which He came, and which formed, therefore, the subject of His testimony as having seen it, and from which the kingdom had its origin, could have nothing in it that was defiled. They must be born again, to possess it. He bore testimony, therefore, as having come from above, and knowing that which was suitable to God his Father. Man did not receive His testimony. Convinced outwardly, by miracles, he might be; but to receive that which was befitting the presence of God, was another thing. And if Nicodemus could not receive the truth in its connection with the earthly part of the kingdom, of which even the prophets had spoken, what would he and the other Jews do, if Jesus spoke of heavenly things. Nevertheless, no one could learn anything about them by any other means. Jesus only, in virtue of what He was, could reveal them. The Son of man, on earth, existing at the same time in heaven; the manifestation to men of that which was heavenly, of God himself in man; as God, being in heaven and everywhere; as the Son of man, being before the eyes of Nicodemus and of all. Nevertheless, He was to be crucified, and thus lifted up from the world, to which He had come, as the manifestation of the love of God in all His ways, and of God himself.

But this brought out another fundamental truth. If heaven was in question, something more was needed than being born again. Sin existed. It must be put away, for those who should have eternal life. And if Jesus, coming down from heaven, was come to impart this eternal life to others, He must—in undertaking this work—put sin away, be thus made sin, in order that the dishonor done to God should be washed away, and the truth of His character (without which there is nothing sure, or good, or righteous) maintained. The Son of man must be lifted up, even as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, that the curse, under which the people were dying, might be removed. His divine testimony rejected, man, as He was down here, showed himself to be incapable of receiving blessing from above. He must be redeemed, his sin expiated and put away; he must be treated according to the reality of his condition, and according to the character of God, who cannot deny himself. Jesus, in grace, undertook to do this. It was necessary that the Son of man should be lifted up, rejected from the earth by man, accomplishing the atonement before the God of righteousness. In a word, Christ comes, with the knowledge of what heaven is, and divine glory. In order that man might share it, the Son of man must die, must take the place of expiation, outside the earth. Observe here the deep and glorious character of that which Jesus brought with Him, of the revelation He made.

The cross, and the absolute separation between man on earth and God, this is the meeting-place of faith and God; for there is at once the truth of his condition, and the love that meets it. Thus, in approaching the holy place from the camp, the first thing they met on going through the gate of the

court, was the altar. It presented itself to every one that quitted the world without, and entered in. Christ, lifted up from the earth, draws all men to Him. But if (owing to man's state of alienation and guilt), it needed that the Son of man should be lifted up from the earth, in order that whosoever believes in Him should have everlasting life, there was another aspect of this same glorious fact: God had so loved the world that He had given His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should have everlasting life. On the cross, we see the necessity, morally, of the death of the Son of man; we see the ineffable gift of the Son of God. These two truths unite in the common object of the gift of eternal life to all believers. And if it was to all believers, it was a question of man, of God, and of heaven, and went outside the promises made to the Jews, and the limits of God's dealings with that people. For God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn it, but to save it. But salvation is by faith; and he who believes in the coming of the son putting all things now to the test, is not condemned, his state is decided thereby; he who believes not is condemned already. He has not believed in the only begotten Son of God-he has manifested his condition.

And this is the thing that God lays to their charge. Light is come into the world, and they have loved darkness, because their works were evil. Could there be a more just subject of condemnation? It was no question of their not finding pardon, but of their preferring darkness to light, that they might continue in sin.

The rest of the chapter presents the contrast between the positions of John and of Christ. They are both before the eye. The one is the faithful friend of the Bridegroom, living only for Him. The other is the Bridegroom, to whom all belongs. The one, in himself, an earthly man; great as might be the gift he had received from Heaven. The other, from Heaven himself, and above all. The Bride was His. The friend of the Bridegroom, hearing His voice, was full of joy. Nothing more beautiful than this expression of John the Baptist's heart, inspired by the Lord's presence. Near enough to Jesus to be glad and rejoice that Jesus was all. Thus it ever is.

With respect to the testimony, John bore witness in connection with earthly things. For that end he was sent. He who himself came from heaven was above all, and bore witness of heavenly things, of that which He had seen and heard; no one received His testimony. Man was not of heaven. Without grace, one believes according to one's own thoughts. But in speaking as a man on the earth, Jesus spoke the words of God; and he who received His testimony set to his seal that God was true. For the Spirit is not given by measure. As a witness, the testimony of Jesus was the testimony of God himself; His words, the words of God. Precious truth! Moreover, He was the Son, and the Father loved Him, and had given all things into His hand. This is another glorious title of Christ, another aspect of His glory. But the consequences of this for man were eternal. It was not almighty help to pilgrims, nor faithfulness to promises, so that. His people could trust in Him in spite of all. It was the quickening life-giving Son of the living Father. All was comprised in it. " He who believes in the Son hath everlasting life, he who believes not shall not see life." He remains in his guilt. The wrath of God abides on him. All this is a kind of introduction. The ministry of the Lord, properly so called, comes after. John (ver. 24) was not yet cast into prison. It was not till after that event, that the Lord began His public testimony. The chapter we have been considering, explains what His ministry was, the character in which He came, His position, the glory of His person, the character of the testimony He bore, the position of man in connection with the things of which He spoke, beginning with the Jews, and going on, by regeneration, the cross, and the love of God, to His rights as come into the world, and the supreme dignity of His own person, to His properly

divine testimony, to His relationship with the Father, the object of whose love He was, and who had given all things into His hand. Everything for man rested on faith in Him. The Lord comes out from Judaism, while presenting the testimony of the prophets, and brings from heaven the direct testimony of God and of glory. John gives place to Him, bringing out-not in public testimony to Israel, but to His disciples,-the true glory of His person and of His work in this world. The thought of the Bride and Bridegroom is, I believe, general. John says, indeed, that Jesus is the Christ, and that the earthly Bride is His; but He has never taken her, and John speaks of His rights, which for us are realized in a better land and another clime than this world. It is, I repeat, the general idea. And now (chap. 4), Jesus, being driven away by the jealousy of the Jews, begins His ministry outside that people, while still acknowledging their true position in the dealings of God. He goes away into Galilee; but His road led Him by Samaria, in which dwelt a mingled race of strangers and of Israel-a race who had forsaken the idolatry of the strangers; but who while, following the law of Moses, and calling themselves by the name of Jacob, had set up a worship of their own at Gerizim. Jesus does not enter the town. Being weary, He sits down,-for He must needs go that Way; but this necessity was an occasion for the acting of that divine grace, which was in the fullness of His person, and which over- flowed the narrow limits of Judaism.

There are some preliminary details to remark, before entering on the subjects of this chapter. Jesus did not himself baptize, for He knew the whole extent of the counsels of God in grace, the true object of His coming. He could not bind souls by baptism to a living Christ. The disciples were right in so doing. They had so to receive Christ. It was faith on their part.

When rejected by the Jews, the Lord does not contend: He leaves them; and, coming to Sychar, He found Himself in the most interesting associations as regards the history of Israel; but in Samaria sad testimony of Israel's ruin. Jacob's well was in the hands of people who called themselves of Israel; but the greater part of whom were not so, and who worshipped they knew not what, although pretending to be of the stock of Israel. Those who were really Jews had driven away the Messiah by their jealousy. He-a man despised by the people-had gone away from among them. We see Him sharing the sufferings of humanity, and, weary with His journey, finding only the side of a well on which to rest at noon. He contents Himself with it. He seeks nothing but the will of His God. It had brought Him thither. The disciples were away; and God brought thither, at that unusual hour, a woman by herself. It was not the hour at which women went out to draw water; but, in the ordering of God, a poor sinful woman and the Judge of quick and dead thus met together. The Lord, weary and thirsty, had no means even to quench His thirst. He is dependent, as man, on this poor woman to have a little water for His thirst. He asks it of her. The woman, seeing that He is a Jew, is surprised; and now the Divine scene unfolds, in which the heart of the Savior, rejected by men and oppressed by the unbelief of His people, opens to let that fullness of grace flow out which finds its occasion in the necessities and not in the righteousness of men. Now this grace did not limit itself to the rights of Israel, nor lend itself to national jealousy. It was a question of the gift of God, of God Himself who was there in grace, and of God come down so low, that, being born among His people, He was dependent, as to His human position, on a Samaritan woman for a drop of water to quench His thirst. " If thou knewest the gift of God, and (not, who I am, but) who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink;" that is to say, " If thou hadst known that God gives freely, and the glory of His person who was there, and how deeply He had humbled Himself, His love would have been revealed to thy heart, and would have filled it with perfect

confidence, in regard even to the wants which a grace like this would have awakened in thy heart." "Thou wouldst have asked," said the divine Savior, and He would have given thee that living water that springs up into everlasting life. Such is the heavenly fruit of the mission of Christ, wherever He is received. His heart lays it open (it was revealing Himself,) pours it out into the heart of one who was its object; consoling itself for the unbelief of the Jews rejecting the end of promise, by presenting the true consolation of grace to the misery that needed it. This is the true comfort of love, which is pained when unable to act. The flood-gates of grace are lifted up by the misery which that grace waters. He makes manifest that which God is, in grace; and the God of grace was there. Alas! the heart of man, withered up and selfish, and pre-occupied with its own miseries (the fruits of sin), cannot at all understand this. The woman sees something extraordinary in Jesus; she is curious to know what it means; is struck with His manner, so that she has a measure of faith in His words; but her desires are limited to the relief of the toils of her sorrowful life, in which an ardent heart found no answer to the misery it had acquired for its portion through sin.

A few words on the character of this woman. I believe the Lord would show, that there was need, that the fields were ready for the harvest; and that if the wretched self-righteousness of the Jews rejected Him, the stream of grace would find its channel elsewhere, God having pre-paring hearts to hail it with joy and thanksgiving, because it answered their misery and need-not the righteous. The channel of grace was dug by the need and the misery which the grace itself caused to be felt.

The life of this woman was shameful; but she was ashamed of it: at the least, her position had isolated her, by separating her from the crowd that forgets itself in the tumult of social life. She came alone to the well; she was not with the, other women. Alone, she met with the Lord, by the wonderful guidance of God who brought her there; the disciples even must go away to make room for her. They knew nothing of this grace. They baptized, indeed, in the name of a Messiah in whom they believed. It was well. But God was there in grace, He who would judge the quick and the dead-and with Him a sinner in her sins. What a meeting! And God who had stooped so low as to be dependent on her for a little water to quench His thirst.

She had an ardent nature; she had sought for happiness, she had found misery. She lived in sin, and was weary of life. She was, indeed, in the lowest depths of misery. The ardor of her nature found sin no obstacle. She went on, alas! to the uttermost. The will engaged in evil, feeds on sinful desires and wastes itself without fruit. Nevertheless, her soul was not without a sense of need-she thought of Jerusalem, she thought of Gerizim, she waited for the Messiah who would tell them all things. Did this change her life? In no wise. Her life was shocking. When the Lord speaks of spiritual things in language well suited to awaken the heart, directing her attention to heavenly things in a way that one would have thought it impossible to misunderstand, she cannot comprehend it. The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit; they are spiritually discerned.

The novelty of the Lord's address excited her attention, but did not lead her thoughts beyond her water-pot, the symbol of her daily toil; although she saw that Jesus took the place of one greater than Jacob. What was to be done? God wrought: He wrought in grace, and in this poor woman. Whatever the occasion might be as regards herself, it was He had brought her thither. But she was unable to comprehend spiritual things though expressed in the plainest manner; for the Lord spoke

of the water that springs up in the soul unto everlasting life. But as the human heart is ever revolving in its own circum-stances and cares, her religious need was limited practically to the traditions by which her life as regarded its religious thoughts and habits was formed, leaving still a void that nothing could fill. What then was to be done? In what way can this grace act, when the heart does not understand the spiritual grace which the Lord brings? This is the second part of the marvelous instruction here. The Lord deals with her conscience. A word spoken by Him who searches the heart, searches her conscience; she is in the presence of a man who tells her all that ever she did. For, her conscience awakened by the word, and finding itself laid open to the eye of God, her whole life is before her.

And who is He that thus searches the heart? She feels that His word is the word of God. "Thou art a prophet." The soul and God are together, if we may so speak, whatever instrument is employed. She has everything to learn, no doubt; but she is in the presence of Him who teaches everything. What a step! What a change! What a new position! This soul which saw no farther than her water-pot, and felt her toil more than her sin, is there alone with the Judge of quick and dead--with God Himself. And in what manner? She knows not. She only felt that it was Himself in the power of His own word. But at least He did not despise her as others did, although she was alone. She was alone with Him. He had spoken to her of life, of the gift of God, had told her that she had only to ask and have. She had understood nothing of his meaning, but it was not condemnation, it was grace-grace that stooped to her, that knew her sin and was not repelled by it, that asked her for water, that was above Jewish prejudice with regard to her, as well as the contempt of the humanly righteous; grace which did not conceal her sin from her-which made her feel that God knew it; nevertheless, He who knew it was there without alarming her. Her sin was before God, but not in judgment. Marvelous meeting of a soul with God, which the grace of God accomplishes by Christ. Not that she reasoned about all these things; but she was under the effect of their truth, without accounting for it to herself; for the word of God had reached her conscience, and she was in the presence of Him who had accomplished it, and He was meek and lowly, and glad to receive a little water at her hands. Her defilement did not defile Him. She could, in fact, trust in Him, without knowing why. It is thus that God acts. Grace inspires confidence, brings back the soul to God in peace, before it has any intelligent knowledge, or can explain it to itself. In this way, full of trust, she begins (it was natural consequence) with the questions that filled her own heart; thus giving the Lord an opportunity of fully explaining the ways of God in grace. God had so ordered it; for the question was far from the sentiments to which grace afterward led her for herself. The Lord replies according to her condition-Salvation was of the Jews. They were the people of God. Truth was with them, and not with the Samaritans, who worshipped they knew not what. But God put all that aside-it was now neither at Gerizim, nor at Jerusalem, that they should worship the Father, who manifested Himself in the Son. God was a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Moreover, the Father sought such worshippers. That is to say, the worship of their hearts must answer to the nature of God, to the grace of the Father who had sought them. Thus, true worshippers should worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Jerusalem and Samaria disappear entirely, have no place before such a revelation of the Father in grace. God no longer hid Himself. He was revealed perfectly in light. The perfect grace of the Father wrought, in order to make Him known, by the very grace that brought souls to Him.

Now, the woman was not yet brought to Him; but, as we have seen, in the case of the disciples, and of John the Baptist, a glorious revelation of Christ acts upon the soul where it is and brings the person of Jesus into connection with the need already felt. "The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messiah cometh; and when He is come, He will tell us all things." Small as her intelligence might be, and unable as she was to understand what Jesus had told her, His love meets her where she can receive blessing and life; and He replies, "I, that speak unto thee, am He." The work was done, the Lord was received. A poor Samaritan sinner receives the Messiah of Israel, whom the priests and the Pharisees had rejected from among the people. The moral effect upon the woman is evident. She forgets her water-pot, her toil, her circumstances. She is engrossed by this new object that is revealed to her soul-by Christ; so engrossed, that, without thinking, she becomes a preacher i.e., she proclaims the Lord in the fullness of her heart, and with perfect simplicity. He had told her all that she had ever done. She does not think at that moment of what it was. Jesus had told it her; and the thought of Jesus takes away the bitterness of the sin. The sense of His goodness removes the guile of heart that seeks to conceal its sin. In a word, her heart is entirely filled with Christ Himself. Many believed in Him through her declaration-"He has told me all that ever I did." Many more, when they had heard Him. His own word carried with it a stronger conviction, as more immediately connected with His person.

Meanwhile, the disciples come, and-naturally-marvel at His talking with the woman. Their Master, the Messiah-they understood this; but the grace of God manifested in the flesh was still beyond their thoughts. The work of this grace was the meat of Jesus. He was taken up with it, and, in the perfect humility of obedience, it was His joy and His food to do His Father's will, and to finish His work. And the case of this poor woman had a voice that filled His heart with deep joy, wounded as it was in this world, because He was Love. If the Jews rejected Him, still the fields in which grace sought its fruits for the everlasting granary, were white already to harvest. He, therefore, who labored should not fail of his wages, nor of the joy of having such fruit unto life eternal. Nevertheless, even the apostles were but reapers where others had sown. The poor woman was a proof of this. Christ, present and revealed, met the need which the testimony of the prophets had awakened. Thus, while exhibiting a grace which revealed the love of the Father, of God the Savior, and coming out, consequently, from the pale of the Jewish system, He fully recognized the faithful service of His laborers in former days, the prophets who, by the Spirit of Christ from the beginning of the world, had spoken of the Redeemer, of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow. The sowers and the reapers should rejoice together in the fruit of their labors.

But what a picture is all this of the purpose of grace, and of its mighty and living fullness in, the person of Christ, of the free gift of God, and of the incapability of the spirit of man to apprehend it, pre-occupied and blinded as he is by present things, seeing nothing beyond the life of nature, although suffering from the consequences of his sin. At the same time, we see that it is in the humiliation, the deep abasement of the Messiah, of Jesus, that God himself is manifested in this grace. It is this that breaks down the barriers, and gives free course to the torrent of grace from on high. We see also that conscience is the door-way of understanding, in the things of God. We are brought truly into relationship with God when He searches the heart. This is always the case. We are then in the truth. Moreover, God thus manifests himself, and the grace and love of the Father. He seeks worshippers, and that, according to this double revelation of himself, however great His patience may be with those who do not see farther than the first step of the promises of God. If

Jesus is received, there is a thorough change. The work of conversion is wrought; there is faith. At the same time, what a divine picture of our Jesus-humbled, indeed, but even thereby the manifestation of God in love, the Son of the Father, He who knows the Father, and accomplishes His work. What a glorious and boundless scene opens before the soul that is admitted to see and to know Him!

The whole range of grace is open to us here, in His work and its divine extent, in that which regards its application to the individual, and the personal intelligence we may have respecting it. It is not precisely pardon, nor redemption, nor the Church. It is grace flowing in the person of Christ; and the conversion of the sinner, in order that he may enjoy it in himself, and be capable of knowing God and of worshipping the Father of grace.

Nevertheless, in His personal ministry, the Lord, always faithful, putting himself aside in order to glorify His Father by obeying Him, repairs to the sphere of labor appointed Him of God. He leaves the Jews, for no prophet is received in his own country, and goes into Galilee, among the despised of His people, the poor of the flock, where obedience, grace, and the counsels of God, alike placed Him. In that sense He did not forsake His people, perverse as they were. There He works a miracle which expresses the effect of His grace in connection with the believing remnant of Israel, feeble as their faith might be. He comes again to the place where He had turned the water of purification into the wine of joy ("which cheereth God and man"). By that miracle

He had in figure, displayed the power which should deliver the people, and which, being received, He would establish the fullness of joy in Israel, creating by that power the good wine of the nuptials of Israel with their God. Israel rejected it all. The Messiah was not received. He retires among the poor of the flock in Galilee, after having shown to Samaria, in passing, the grace of the Father, which went beyond all promises to and dealings with the Jew, and in the person, and in the humiliation of Christ, led converted souls to worship the Father (outside all Jewish system, true or false), in spirit and in truth. And there, in Galilee, He works a second miracle in the midst of Israel, where He still labors, according to His Father's will; that is to say, wherever there is faith; not yet perhaps in His power to raise the dead, but to heal and save the life of that which was ready to perish. He fulfilled the desire of that faith, and restored the life of one who was at the point of death. It was this, in fact, which He was doing in Israel, while here below. These two great truths were set forth-that which He was going to do, according to the purposes of God the Father, as being rejected; and that which He was doing at the time for Israel, according to the faith He found among them.

In the chapters that follow, we shall find the rights and the glory shown forth, that attach to His person; the rejection of His word and of His work; the sure salvation of the remnant, and of all His sheep wherever they may be. Afterward,-acknowledged by God, as manifested on earth, the Son of God, of David, and of man,-that which He will do when gone away, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, are unfolded; also the position in which He placed the disciples before the Father, and with regard to himself. And then, after the history of Gethsemane, the giving of His own life, His death as giving His life for us,-the whole result, in the ways of God, until His return, is briefly given in the chapter that closes the book.

We may go more rapidly through the chapters till the tenth, not as of little importance-far from it-but as containing some great principles which may be pointed out, each in its place, without requiring



much explanation.

OH 5{Chapter 5 contrasts the quickening power of Christ, the power and the right of giving life to the dead, with the powerlessness of legal ordinances; adding that all judgment is likewise committed to Him. The end of the chapter sets forth the testimonies that have been borne to Him, and the guilt therefore of those who rejected Him. To have life, His divine power was needed; but in rejecting Him, in refusing to come unto Him that they might have life, they did so in spite of the most positive proofs. Let us go a little into the details. The poor man who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years, was absolutely hindered, by the nature of his disease, from profiting by means that required strength to use them. This is the character of sin on the one hand, and of law on the other. Some remains of blessing still existed among the Jews. Angels, ministers of that dispensation, still wrought among the people. Jehovah did not leave himself without testimony. But strength was needed to profit by this instance of their ministry. That which the law could not do being weak through the flesh, God hath done through Jesus. The impotent man had desire, but not strength; to will was present with him, but no power to perform. The Lord's question brings this out. A single word from Christ does everything: "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." Strength is imparted. The man arises, and goes away, carrying his bed. It was the Sabbath: an important circumstance here, holding a prominent place in this interesting scene. The Sabbath was given as a token. of the Covenant between the Jews and the Lord. But it had been proved that the law did not give God's rest to man. The power of a new life was needed; grace was needed, that man might be in relation-ship with God. The healing of this poor man was an operation of this same grace, of this same power, but wrought in the midst of Israel. The pool of Bethesda supposed power-the act of Jesus employed it, in grace, on behalf of one of the Lord's people in distress. There-fore He says to the man, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." It was Jehovah acting by His grace and blessing among His people; but it was in temporal things, the tokens of His favor and lovingkindness, and in connection with His government in Israel. Still it was divine power and grace. Now, the man told the Jews that it was Jesus. They rise up against Him, under the pretense of a violation of the Sabbath. The Lord's answer is deeply affecting, and full of instruction -a whole revelation. It declares the relationship, now openly revealed by His coming, that existed between Himself (the Son) and His Father. It shows-and what depths of grace!-that neither the Father nor Himself could find their sabbath in the midst of misery, and of the sad fruits of sin. Jehovah in Israel might impose the Sabbath as an obligation by the law, and make it a token of the precious truth, that His people should enter into the rest of God. But, in fact, when God was truly known, there was no rest in existing things; nor was this all-He wrought in grace. He had instituted a rest in connection with the creation, when it was very good. Sin, corruption, and misery had entered into it. God, the Holy and the Just, no longer found a Sabbath in it, and man did not really enter into God's rest, (compare Heb. 4). Of two things, one: either God must, in justice, destroy the guilty race; or-and this is what He did, according to His eternal purposes-He must begin to work in grace, according to the redemption which the state of man required, a redemption in which all His glory is unfolded. In a word, He must begin to work again in love. Thus the Lord says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." God cannot be satisfied where there is sin. He cannot rest with misery in sight. He has no sabbath, but still works in grace. Another truth came out from that which the Lord said, He put himself on an equality with His Father. But the Jews, jealous for their ceremonies, for that which distinguished them from other nations, saw nothing of the glory of Christ, and seek to kill Him, treating Him as a blasphemer. This gives Jesus

occasion to lay open the whole truth on this point. He was not like an independent being, with equal rights, another God who acted on His own account: which, moreover, is impossible. There cannot be two supreme and omnipotent Beings. The Son is in full union with the Father, does nothing without the Father, but does whatsoever lie sees the Father do. There is nothing that the Father does which He does not in communion with the Son; and greater proofs of this should yet be seen, that they might marvel. This last sentence of the Lord's words, as well as the whole of this Gospel, shows that, while revealing absolutely that He and the Father are one, He reveals it, and speaks of it as in a position in which He could be seen of men. The thing of which He speaks is in God; the position in which He speaks of it, is a position taken, and, in a certain sense, inferior. We see every where that He is equal to, and one with the Father. We see that He receives all from the Father, and does all after the Father's mind. (This is shown very remarkably in the seventeenth chapter). it is the Son, but the Son manifested in the flesh, acting in the mission which the Father sent Him to fulfill.

Two things are spoken of in this chapter (ver. 21, 22) which demonstrate the glory of the Son. He quickens and He judges. It is not healing that is in question-a work which, at bottom, springs from the same source-but the giving of life, in a manner evidently divine. As the Father raises the dead and quickens them, so the Son quickens whom He will. First proof of His divine rights, He gives life, and He gives it to whom He will. But, being incarnate, He may be personally dishonored, disallowed, despised of men; consequently, all judgment is committed unto Him, the Father judging no man, in order that all, even those who have rejected Him, should honor Him, even as they honor the Father, whom they own as God. If they refuse when He acts in grace, they shall be compelled when He acts in judgment. In life, we have communion by the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son; in the judgment, unbelievers will have to do with the Son of man whom they have rejected. The two things are quite distinct. He whom Christ has quickened will not need to be compelled to honor him by undergoing judgment. Jesus will not call into judgment one whom He has saved by quickening him. How may we know to which of these two classes we belong? The Lord, praised be His name! replies-He that hears His word, and believes on him who sent Him (believes in the Father by hearing Christ) has everlasting life (such is the quickening power of His word), and shall not come into judgment. He is passed from death into life. Simple and wonderful testimony! The judgment will glorify the Lord, in the case of those who have despised him here. The possession of eternal life, that they may not come into judgment, is the portion of those who believe.

The Lord then points out two distinct periods, in which the power that the Father committed to Him, as having come down to the earth, is to be exercised. The hour was coming-was already come-in which the dead should hear the voice of the Son of God, and those that heard should live. This is the communication of spiritual life by Jesus, the Son of God, to man, who is dead by sin, and that by means of the word which he should hear. For the Father has given to the Son-to Jesus, thus manifested on earth-to have life in Himself (compare 1 John 1:1,2). He has also given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of man. For the kingdom and the judgment, according to the counsels of God, belong to Him as Son of man; in that character in which He was despised and rejected when He came in grace.

This passage also shows us, that although He was the eternal Son, one with the Father, He is always looked upon as manifested here in the flesh, and, therefore, as receiving all from the

Father. It is thus that we have seen him at the well of Samaria, the God who gave, but the One who asked the poor woman to give Him to drink.

Jesus, then, quickened souls at that time. He still quickens. They were not to marvel. A work, more wonderful in the eyes of men, should be accomplished. All those that were in the grave should come forth. This is the second period of which He speaks. In the one He quickens souls; in the other, He raises up bodies from death. The one has lasted during the ministry of Jesus and 1800 years since his death; the other is not yet come, but during its continuance two things will take place. There will be a resurrection of those who have done good-this will be a resurrection of life, the Lord will complete His quickening work-and there will be a resurrection of those who have done evil; this will be a resurrection for their judgment. This judgment will be according to the mind of God, and not according to any separate personal will of Christ.

The Lord goes on to point out to them four testimonies, rendered to His glory and to His person, which left men without excuse: John, His own works, His Father, and the Scriptures. Nevertheless, while pretending to receive the latter, as finding in them eternal life, they would not come to Him that they might have life. Poor Jews! The Son came in the name of the Father, and they would not receive Him; another shall come in his own name, and him they will receive. That better suits the heart of man. They sought honor from one another: how could they believe? Let us remember this. God does not accommodate Himself to the pride of man, does not arrange the truth so as to feed it. Jesus knew the Jews. Not that He would accuse them to the Father. Moses, in whom they trusted, would do that; for if they had believed Moses, they would have believed Christ. But if they did not credit the writings of Moses, how would they believe the words of a despised Savior?

In result. The Son of God gives life, and He executes judgment. In the judgment that He executes, the testimony, which had been rendered to His person, leaves man without excuse, on the ground of his own responsibility.

In chap. 6 it is the Lord humbled and put to death, not now as the Son of God, One with the Father, the source of life; but as He who, although He was Jehovah, and at the same time the Prophet and the King, would take the place of victim, and that of Priest in heaven. In His incarnation, the bread of life; dead, the true nourishment of believers; ascended again to heaven, the living object of their faith. But He only glances at this last feature; the doctrine of the chapter is that which goes before.

It was on the occasion of the Passover, a type which the Lord was to fulfill by the death of which He spoke. Observe, here, that all these chapters present the Lord, and the truth that reveals him, in contrast with Judaism, which He forsook and set aside. Chapter 5 was the impotence of the law and its ordinances. Here it is the blessings promised by the Lord to the Jews on earth, and the characters of Prophet and King, fulfilled by the Messiah on earth in connection with the Jews, that are seen in contrast with the new position and the doctrine of Jesus. That of which I here speak characterizes every distinct subject treated in this gospel.

First, Jesus blesses the people, according to the promise of that which Jehovah should do, given them in Psa. 132 On this, the people acknowledge Him to be "that Prophet," and desire by force to make Him their King. Jesus leaves them, and goes up by Himself into a mountain; this was, figuratively, His position as Priest on high. These are the three characters of the Messiah in Israel.

The disciples enter a ship, and, with-out Him, are tossed upon the waves. Darkness comes on (this will happen to the remnant down here), and Jesus is away. Nevertheless, He rejoins them, and they receive Him joyfully. Immediately the ship is at the place to which they were going. A striking picture of the remnant journeying on earth during the absence of Christ, and their every wish fully and immediately satisfied when He rejoins them.

This part of the chapter having shown us the Lord as already the Prophet here below, and refusing to be made King, and also that which will yet take place when He returns to the remnant on earth, the remainder of the chapter gives us that which He is, meanwhile, to faith, His true character, the purpose of God in sending Him, outside Israel, and in connection with sovereign grace. The people seek Him. The true work, which God owns, is to believe in Him whom He has sent. Thus is that meat received which endures unto everlasting life, which is given by the Son of man (it is in this character we find Jesus here, as in chap. 5 it was the Son of God), for He it is whom God the Father has sealed. Jesus had taken this place of Son of man in humiliation here below. He went to be baptized of John the Baptist, and there, in this character, the Father sealed Him, the Holy Ghost coming down upon Him.

The multitude ask Him for a proof, like the manna. He was Himself the proof-the true manna. Moses did not give the heavenly bread of life. Their fathers died in the very wilderness in which they had eaten the manna. The Father now gave them the true bread from heaven. Here, observe, it is not the Son of God who gives, and who is the sovereign Giver of life to whom He will. He is the object set before faith-He is to be fed upon. Life is found in Him; he that eateth Him shall live by Him, and shall never hunger. But the multitude did not believe in Him; in fact, the mass of Israel, as such, were not in question. Those that the Father gave Him should come unto Him. He was there the passive object, so to say, of faith. It is no longer to whom He will, but to receive those whom the Father brought Him. Therefore, be it whom it might, He would in no wise cast them out: enemy, scoffer, Gentile, they would not come if the Father had not sent them. The Messiah was there to do His Father's will, and whomsoever the Father brought him He would receive for life eternal (compare chap. 5 ver. 21). The Father's will had these two characters. Of all whom the Father should give Him He would lose none. Precious assurance! The Lord saves assuredly to the end those whom the Father has given Him, and then "Every one that should see the Son and believe on Him should have everlasting life." This is the gospel for every soul, as the other is that which infallibly assures the salvation of every believer. But this is not all. The subject of hope was not now the fulfillment on earth of the promises made to the Jew, but being raised from the dead, having part in everlasting life-in resurrection at the last day (i.e., of the age of the law in which they were). He did not crown the dispensation of the law, He was to bring in a new dispensation, and with it resurrection. The Jews murmur at His saying that He came down from heaven. Jesus replies by the testimony that their difficulty was easy to be understood: no one could come unto Him except the Father brought him. It was grace that produced that effect; whether they were Jews or not, made no difference. It was a question of eternal life, of being raised from the dead by Him; not of performing the promises as Messiah, but of bringing in the life of a widely different world, to be enjoyed by faith-the Father's grace having led the soul to find it in Jesus. Moreover, the prophets had said they should all be taught of God. Every one, therefore, who had learned of the Father came unto Him. No man, doubtless, had seen the Father excepting Him who was of God-Jesus-He had seen the Father. He that believed in Him was already in possession of eternal

life, for He was the bread come down from heaven, that a man might eat thereof and not die. Now, this was not only by the incarnation, but by the death of Him who came down from heaven. He would give His life, His blood should be taken from this body which He had assumed. They should eat His flesh, they should drink His blood. Death should be the believer's life. And, in fact, it is in a dead Savior that we see the sin taken away which He bore for us. There He made an end of sin-He who knew no sin. Death, which sin brought in, puts away the sin that attached to the life, which there came to its end. Not that Christ had any sin in His own person; but He took sin, He was made sin, on the cross, for us. And he who is dead is freed from sin. I feed, therefore, on the death of Christ. Death is mine. It is become life. It separates me from sin, from death, from the life in which I was separated from God. In it, sin and death have finished their course. They were attached to my life. Christ, in grace, has borne them; and He has given His flesh for the life of the world, and I am freed from them; and I feed on the infinite grace that is in Him who has accomplished this. The expiation is complete, and I live, being happily dead to all that separated me from God. It is as fulfilled in Him that I feed upon death, entering into it by faith. He needed to live as man, in order to die, and He has given His life, thus His death is efficacious, His love infinite, the expiation total, absolute, perfect. That which was between me and God exists no longer, for Christ died, and it all passed away with His life here on earth, life as He had it before expiring on the cross. Death could not hold him. To perform this work, He needed to possess a power of divine life which death could not touch; but this is not the truth expressly taught in the chapter before us, although it is implied. In speaking to the multitude, the Lord, while rebuking them for their unbelief, presents Himself, come in the flesh, as the object of their faith at that moment (ver. 32-35). To the Jews, in laying open the doctrine, He repeats that He is the living bread come down from heaven, of which if any man eat, he should live forever. But He makes them understand that they could not stop there-they must receive His death, He does not say here, "he that eateth me," but it was to eat His flesh and drink His blood, to enter fully into the thought, the reality, of His death; to receive a dead not a living Messiah, dead for men, dead before God. He does not exist as a dead Christ, but we must acknowledge, realize, feed upon, His death, identify our-selves with it before God, participating in it by faith; or we have no life in us.

Thus it was for the world. Thus they should live, not of their own life, but by Christ through feeding on Him. Here, He returns to His own person, faith in His death being established. Moreover, they should dwell in him (ver. 56), should be in Him before God, according to all His acceptance before God, all the efficacy of His work in dying, And Christ should dwell in them according to the power and grace of that life in which He had gained the victory over death, and in which, having gained it, He now lives.

Afterward, in reply to those who murmured at this fundamental truth, the Lord appeals to His ascension. He had come down from heaven-this was His doctrine-He would ascend thither again. Material flesh profited nothing. It was the Spirit who gave life, by realizing in the soul the mighty truth of that which Christ was, and of His death. But He returns to that which He had told them before-in order to come to Him thus revealed in truth, they must be led of the Father. There is such a thing as faith that is ignorant perhaps, although, through grace, real. Such was that of the disciples. They knew that He, and He only, had the words of eternal life. It was not only that He was the Messiah, which they indeed believed, but His words had laid hold of their hearts with the power of the divine life which they revealed, and, through grace, communicated. Thus they

acknowledged Him as the Son of God, not only officially, so to speak, but according to the power of divine life. He was the Son of the living God. Nevertheless, there was one among them who was of the devil.

Jesus, therefore, come down to earth, put to death, ascended again to Heaven, is the doctrine of this chapter. As come down and put to death, He is the food of faith during His absence on high. For it is on His death we must feed, in order to dwell spiritually in Him and He in us.

OH 7{In chap. 7, His brethren, after the flesh, still sunk in unbelief, would have Him show Himself to the world, if He did these great things; but the time for this was not yet come. At the fulfillment of the type of the Feast of Tabernacles, He will do so. The Passover had its antitype at the cross. Pentecost, at the descent of the Holy Ghost. The Feast of Tabernacles, as yet, has had no fulfillment. It was celebrated after the harvest and the vintage, and Israel joyfully commemorated in the land their pilgrimage, before entering on the rest which God had given them in Canaan. Thus, the fulfillment of this type will be when, after the execution of judgment (whether in discerning between the wicked and the good, or simply in vengeance), Israel, restored to their land, shall be in possession of all their promised blessings. At that time, Jesus will show Himself to the world, but at the time of which we are speaking, His hour was not yet come. Meanwhile, having gone away (ver. 33, 34), He gives the Holy Ghost to believers (ver. 38, 39).

But He presents the Holy Ghost in such a way as to make Him the hope of faith, at the time in which He spoke, if God created a sense of need in the soul. If any one thirsted, let him come to Jesus and drink. Not only should his thirst be quenched, but from the inner man of his soul should flow forth streams of living water. So that coming to Him by faith to satisfy the need of their soul, not only should the Holy Ghost be in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life, but living water should also flow forth from them in abundance, to refresh all those who thirsted. Observe here, that Israel drank water in the wilderness before they could keep the Feast of Tabernacles. But they only drank. The water flowed from the Rock. Under grace, every believer is not, doubtless, a spring in himself-but the full stream flows from Him. This, however, would only take place when Jesus was glorified, and in those who were already believers, previous to their receiving it. It is not a work that regenerates. It is a gift to those who believe. Moreover, at the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus will show Himself to the world; but this is not the subject of which the Holy Ghost is here especially the witness. He is given in connection with the glory of Jesus while He is hidden from the world. It was also on the eighth day of the feast, the sign of a portion beyond the sabbath rest of this world, and which began another period, a new scene of glory.

Observe also, that, practically, although the Holy Ghost is presented here as power acting in blessing, outside the one in whom He dwells, His presence is the fruit of a personal thirst, of need felt in the soul, need, for which the soul had sought an answer in Christ. He who thirsts, thirsts for Himself. The Holy Ghost in us, revealing Christ, becomes-by dwelling in us when we have believed-a river in us, and thus for others.

The spirit of the Jews plainly showed itself. They sought to kill the Lord; and He tells them that His relationship with them on earth would soon be ended (ver. 33); they need not hasten so much to get rid of Him; soon they would seek Him and not be able to find Him. He was going away to His Father.

We see clearly the difference here between the multitude and the Jews-two parties always distinguished from each other in this gospel. The former did not understand why He spoke of the desire to kill Him. Those of Judea were astonished at His boldness, knowing that at Jerusalem they were conspiring against His life. His time was not yet come. They send officers to take Him; and these return, struck with His discourse, without laying hands on Him. The Pharisees are angry, and express their contempt for the people. Nicodemus hazards a word of justice according to the law, and brings their contempt on himself. But each one goes away to his home. Jesus, who had no home until He went back- to heaven whence He came, goes to the Mount of Olives, the witness of His agony, His ascension, and His return; a place which He habitually frequented during the time of His ministry on earth.

The contrast of this chapter with Judaism, with even its best hopes in the future that God has prepared for His earthly people, is too evident to be dwelt upon. This gospel, throughout, reveals Jesus outside all that belonged to that earthly system. In chap. 6, it was death here below, on the cross. Here, it is glory in heaven, the Jews being rejected, and the Holy Ghost given to the believer. In chap. v., He gives life, as the Son of God; in chap. 6, He humbles Himself, and suffers on the cross, as Son of Man; chap. 7, He goes up into glory and sends the Holy Ghost; chap. v. displays His titles of personal glory; chaps. 6 and 7, His work and present glory in heaven, to which the presence of the Holy Ghost answers on earth. In chaps. 8 and 9, we shall find His testimony and His works rejected, and the question decided between Him and the Jews. It will be observed, also, that chaps. 5 and 6 treat of the life; in chap. 5, it is given sovereignly and divinely by Him who possesses it. In chap. 6, the soul, receiving and being occupied with Jesus by faith, finds life, and feeds upon it by the grace of the Father; two things distinct in their nature-God gives-man, by grace, feeds. On the other hand, chap. 7 is glory, and, meanwhile, the Holy Ghost, who unfolds it in us and by us, in its heavenly character. In chap. 5, Christ is the Son of God; in chap. 6 the Son of Man, coming down, dying, and returning again. In chap. 7, the Son of Man glorified in heaven.

In chap. 8, as we have said, the word of Jesus is rejected, and, in chap. 9, His works. But there is much more than that. The personal glories of chap. 1 are re-produced and developed in all these chapters separately; leaving out for the moment from ver. 36 to 51 of chap. 1, we have found again in chaps. 5, 6, 7 the verses 14-34. The Holy Ghost now returns to the subject of the first verses in the chapter. Christ is the Word. He is the life, and the life which is the light of men. The three chapters that I have now pointed out, speak of what He is, in grace, for men, while still declaring His right to judge. The Spirit here (in chap. 8) sets before us that which He is in Himself, and that which He is to men; thus putting them to the test, so that in rejecting Him, they reject themselves, and show themselves to be reprobate.

Let us now consider our chapter. The contrast with Judaism is evident. They bring a woman whose guilt is undeniable. The Jews, in their wickedness, bring her forward in the hope of confounding the Lord. If He condemned her, He was not a Savior-the law could do as much. If He let her go, He despised and disallowed the law. This was clever-but what avails cleverness in the presence of God who searches the heart. The Lord allows them to commit themselves thoroughly, by not answering them for awhile. Probably they thought He was entangled. At last, He says, " He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." Convicted by their conscience, without honesty and without faith, they quit the scene of their confusion, separating from each other, and

departing from Him who had convicted them. He who had the most reputation going out first. What a sorrowful picture! What a mighty word! Jesus and the woman are left together alone. Who can stand unconvicted in His presence. With regard to the woman whose guilt was known, He does not go beyond the Jewish position, except to preserve the rights of His own person in grace. This is not the same thing as in Luke 7, plenary pardon and salvation. The others could not condemn her-He would not. Let her go, and let her sin no more. It is not the grace of salvation that the Lord exhibits here. He does not judge, He was not come for that; but the efficacy of the pardon is not the subject of these chapters-it is the glory here of His person, in contrast with all that is of the law. He is the light, and by the power of His word He entered as light into the consciences of those who had brought the woman.

For this Word was Light; but that was not all. Coming into the world, He was (1:4-10.) the Light. Now it was the Life that was the light of men. It was not a law that made demands, and condemned; or that promised life on obedience to its precepts. It was the Life itself which was there in His person, and that life was the light of men; convincing them, and, perhaps, judging them; but it was as Light. Thus, Jesus says here-in contrast with the law, brought by those who could not stand before the Light-"I am the light of the world," (not merely of the Jews). Whoso followed Him should have the light of life. But it was in Him, in His person, that it was found. And He could bear record of Himself, because, although He was a man, there, in this world, He knew whence He came and whither He was going. It was the Son, who came from the Father, and was returning to Him again. He knew it, and was conscious of it. His testimony, therefore, was not that of an interested person which one might hesitate to believe. There was, in proof that this man was the one whom He represented Himself to be, the testimony of the Son (His own) and the testimony of the Father. If they had known Him, they would have known the Father. At that time-in spite of such testimony as this-no one laid hands on Him; His hour was not yet come. That only was wanting, for their opposition to God was certain, and known to Him. This opposition was plainly declared, vers. 19-24; consequently, if they believed not, they would die in their sins. Nevertheless, He tells them that they shall know who He is, when He shall have been rejected, and lifted up on the cross, having taken a very different position as the Savior, rejected by the people and by the world; when no longer presented to them as such, they should know that He was indeed the Messiah, and that He spoke to them from the Father. As He spake these words, many believed on Him. He declares to them the effect of faith, which gives occasion to the true position of the Jews being manifested with terrible precision. He declares that the truth would set them free, and that if the Son (who is the Truth) should set them free, they would be free indeed. The truth sets free, morally, before God. The Son, by virtue of the rights that were necessarily His, and by inheritance, in the house, would place them in it according to those rights. Piqued at the idea of bondage, which their pride could not bear, they declare themselves to be free, and never to have been in bondage to any one. In reply, the Lord shows that those who commit sin are the servants (slaves) of sin. Now, as being under the law, as being Jews, they were servants in the house, they should be sent away; but the Son had unalienable rights, He was of the house and would abide in it forever. Under sin, and under the law, was the same thing for a child of Adam, he was a servant. The apostle shows this in Rom. 6 (compare chaps. 7 and 8) and in Gal. 4 and 5. Moreover, they were neither really, nor morally, the children of Abraham before God, although they were so according to the flesh; for they sought to kill Jesus. They were not children of God; had they been, they would have loved Jesus who came from God. They were the children of the



devil and would do his works. Observe here, that to understand the meaning of the word, is the way to apprehend the force of the words. One does not learn the definitions of words and then the things; one learns the things, and then the meaning of the words is evident. They begin to resist the testimony, conscious that He was making Himself greater than all those whom they had leant upon. They rail upon Him because of His words; and by their opposition the Lord is induced to explain Himself more clearly: until, having declared that Abraham rejoiced to see His day, and the Jews applying this to His age as man, He announces positively that He is the One who calls Himself I am, the supreme name of God, that He is God Himself, He whom they pretended to know as having revealed Himself in the bush. Wondrous revelation! A despised, rejected man, despised and rejected by men, contradicted, attacked, ill-treated-yet it was God Himself who was there. What a fact! What a total change! What a revelation to those who acknowledged Him, or who know Him. What a condition. is theirs who have rejected Him, and that, because their hearts were opposed to all that He was, for He did not fail to manifest Him-self. What a thought that God Himself has been here, Goodness itself! How everything vanishes before Him! the law, man, his reasonings. Everything necessarily depends on this great fact. And, blessed be His name! this God is a Savior. We are indebted to the sufferings of Christ for knowing it. But here He presents-Himself as the witness, the Word, the Word made flesh, the Son of God, but still the Word, God Himself. In the narrative at the beginning of the chapter, He is a testimony to the conscience, the Word that searches and convicts. Ver. 18, He bears testimony with the Father; ver. 26, He declares in the world that which He has received of the Father, and as taught of God He has spoken. Moreover, the Father was with Him. Vers. 32, 33, the truth was known by His word, and the truth made them free. Ver. 47, He spoke the words of God. Ver. 51, His word, being kept, preserved from death. Ver. 58, It was God Himself, the Jehovah whom the fathers knew, that spoke.

Opposition arose from its being the word of truth, ver. 45. Opposers were of the adversary; he was a murderer from the beginning, and they would follow him; but as the truth was the source of life, that which characterized the adversary was, that he abode not in the truth; there is no truth in him. He is the father and the source of lies, so that if falsehood speaks, it is one belonging to him that speaks. Sin was bondage, and they were in bondage by the law. (Truth, the Son Him-self, made free.) But, more than that, the Jews were enemies, children of the enemy, and they would do his works, not believing the words of Christ because He spoke the truth. There is no miracle here; it is the power of the Word, and the living Word is God Him-self: rejected by men, He is, as it were, compelled to speak the truth, to reveal Himself; hidden at once and manifested, as He was in the flesh-hidden, as to His glory; manifested, as to all that He is in His person and in his grace.

In chap. 9 we come to the testimony of His works. In chap. 8, it is that which He is towards men; in chap. 9, it is that which He does in man, that man may see Him. Thus, we shall find Him presented hi His human character, and (the Word being received) acknowledged to be the Son of God; and in this way the remnant separated, the sheep restored to the Good Shepherd. He is the Light of the World while He is in it; but where, through grace received in His humiliation, He communicates the power to see the light, and to see all things by it.

Observe here, that when it is the Word, the manifestation in testimony of what Christ is, man is manifested as he is in himself, a child-in his nature-of the devil, who is a murderer and a liar from the beginning, the inveterate enemy of Him who can say "I am." But when the Lord works, He

produces something in man that he had not previously. He bestows sight on him, attaching him thus to the One who had enabled him to see. The Lord is not here understood or manifested in apparently as exalted a manner, because He comes down to the wants and circumstances of man, in order that He may be more closely known: but, in result, He brings the soul to the knowledge of His glorious person. Only, instead of being the Word and the testimony-the word of God -to show, as light, what man is; He is the Son, one with the Father, giving eternal life to His sheep, and preserving them in this grace forever. For, as to the blessing that flows from thence, and the full doctrine of His true position with regard to the sheep in blessing, the tenth chapter goes with the ninth. Chapter ten is the continuation of the discourse begun at the end of the ninth chapter.

OH 9{Chapter 9 opens with the case of a man that gives rise to a question from the disciples, in relation to the government of God in Israel. Was it his parent's sin that brought this visitation on their child, according to the principles God had given them in Exodus? Or was it his own sin, known to God though not manifested to men, that had procured him this judgment? The Lord replies, that the man's condition did not depend on the government of God with respect to the sin, either of himself or his parents. His case was but the misery which gave room for the mighty operation of God in grace. It is the contrast that we have continually seen; but here it is in order to set forth the works of God. God acts. It is not only that which He is, nor even simply an object of faith. The presence of Jesus on earth made it day. It was therefore the time to work, to do the works of Him that sent Him. But He who works here, works by means that teach us the union which exists between an object of faith and the power of God who works. He makes clay with His spittle and the earth, and puts it on the eyes of the man who was born blind. As a figure, it pointed to the humanity of Christ presented to the eyes of men, but with divine efficacy of life in Him. Did they see any the more? If possible, their eyes were the more completely closed. Still, the object was there, it touched their eyes, and they could not see it. The blind man then washes in the pool that was called "Sent," and is enabled to see clearly. The power of the Spirit and of the Word making Christ known as the one sent by the Father, restores his sight. It is the history of divine teaching in the heart of man. Christ, as man, touches us. We are absolutely blind, we see nothing. The Spirit of God acts-Christ being there before our eyes-and we see plainly. The people are astonished and know not what to think. The Pharisees oppose. Again the sabbath is in question. They find (it is always the story) good reasons for condemning Him who bestowed sight, in their pretended zeal for God's glory. There was positive proof that the man was born blind, that he now saw, that Jesus had done it. The parents testify to the only thing that was important. As to who it was that had given him sight, others knew more than they; but their fears bring out in evidence, that it was a settled thing to cast out not only Jesus but all who should confess Him. Thus, they brought the thing to a decisive point. They not only rejected Christ, but they cast out from the privileges of Israel, as to their ordinary worship, those who confessed Him. Their hostility distinguished the manifested remnant and put them apart; and that, by using confession of Christ as a touchstone. This was deciding their own fate, and judging their own condition. Observe, that proofs here went for nothing; the Jews, the parents, the Pharisees, had them before their eyes. Faith came, through being personally the subject of this mighty operation of God, who opened the eyes of men to the glory of the Lord Jesus. Not that the man understood it all. He perceives that he has to do with some one sent of God. To him Jesus is a prophet. But thus the power which He had manifested in giving sight to this man, enables him to trust the Lord's word as divine. Having gone

so far, the rest is easy-the poor man is led much farther, and finds himself on ground that sets him free from all his former prejudices, and that gives a value to the person of Jesus which overcomes all other considerations. The Lord develops this in the next chapter.

In truth, the Jews had made up their mind. They would have nothing to do with Jesus. They were all agreed to cast out those who believed in Him. Consequently, the poor man, having begun to reason with them on the proof that existed in his own person of the Savior's mission, they cast him out. Thus cast out, the Lord-rejected before him-finds and reveals Himself to him by His personal name of glory. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" The man refers to it to the word of Jesus; and He proclaims Himself to him as being Himself the Son of God, and the man worships Him.

Thus, the effect of His power was to blind those who saw, who were full of their own wisdom, whose light was darkness; and to give sight to those who were born blind.

OH 10{In chapter 10 He contrasts Himself with all those who pretended, or had pretended to be shepherds of Israel. He develops these three points: He comes in by the door; He is the door; and He is the Shepherd of the sheep-the Good Shepherd.

He comes in by the door. That is to say, He submits to all the conditions established by Him who built the house. Christ answers to all that is written of the Messiah. Consequently, He who watches over the sheep, Jehovah, acting in Israel by His Spirit, and arranging all things, gives Him access to the sheep, in spite of the Pharisees and priests, and so many others. The elect of Israel hear His voice. Now Israel was under condemnation, He therefore brings the sheep out, but He goes before them. He leaves that ancient fold under reproach, doubtless, but going before His sheep, in obedience, according to the power of God, a security to every one who believed in Him, that it was the right road, a warrant for their following Him, come what might, shielding them from danger, and showing them the way.

The sheep follow Him, for they know His voice. There are many other voices; but the sheep do not know them. Their safety consists, not in knowing them all, but in knowing that they are not the one voice which is life to them-the voice of Jesus. All the rest are the voices of strangers.

He is the Door for the sheep. He is their authority for going out, their means of entering in. By entering in, they are saved. They go in and out-it is no longer the yoke of ordinances, which in guarding them from those without, put them in prison, The sheep of Christ are free-their safety is in the personal care of the Shepherd-and in this liberty they feed in the good and fat pastures which His love supplies. In a word, it is no longer Judaism; it is salvation, and liberty, and food. The thief comes to make His profit on the sheep by killing them. Christ is come that they might have life, and that abundantly; i.e. according to the power of this life in Jesus, the son of God, who would soon have gained the victory over death.

The true Shepherd of Israel, at least of the remnant of true sheep,-the Door, to authorize their coming out of the Jewish fold, and to admit them into the privileges of God by giving them life according to the abundance in which He was able to bestow it,-He was also in special connection with the sheep thus set apart, the Good Shepherd who thus gave His life for the sheep. Others would think of themselves-He, of His sheep. He knew them, and they knew Him, even as the Father knew Him, and He knew the Father. Precious principle! They could have understood an earthly knowledge and interest on the part of the Messiah on earth, with regard to His sheep. But

the Son, although He had given His life and was in heaven, knew His own, even as the Father knew Him when He was on the earth.

Thus He laid down His life for the sheep;-and He had other sheep who were not of this fold, and His death intervened for the salvation of these poor Gentiles. He would call them. Doubtless, He had given His life for the Jews also, for all the sheep in general, as such (ver. 11). But He does not speak distinctly of the Gentiles until after He has spoken of His death. He would bring them also, and there should be but one flock and one Shepherd.

Now this doctrine teaches the rejection of Israel, and the calling out of the elect among that people, presents the death of Jesus as being the effect of His love for His own, tells of His divine knowledge of His sheep when He shall be away from them, and of the call of the Gentiles. The importance of such instruction at that moment is obvious. Its importance, thank God! is not lost by the lapse of time, and is not limited to the fact of a change of dispensation. It introduces us into the substantial realities of the grace connected with the person of Christ.

But the death of Christ was more than love for His sheep. It had an intrinsic value in the Father's eyes. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again." He does not say here for His sheep-it is the thing itself that is well-pleasing to the Father. We love because God has first loved us, but Jesus, the divine Son, can furnish motives for the Father's love. In laying down His life, He glorified the Father. Death was owned to be the just penalty for sin, being at the same time conquered, and eternal life brought in as the fruit of redemption, life from God. Here, also, the rights of the person of Christ are set forth: no man takes His life from Him, He lays it down Himself. He had this power (possessed by no other, true only of Him who had divine right) to lay it down, and power to take it again. Nevertheless, even in this, He did not depart from the path of obedience. He had received this commandment from His Father. But who would have been able to perform it save He who could say, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

They discuss what He had been saying. There were some who only saw in Him a man beside himself, and who insulted Him. Others, moved by the power of the miracle He had performed, felt that His words had a different character from that of madness. To a certain point, their consciences were reached. The Jews surround Him, and ask how long He would keep them in suspense. Jesus answers that He had already told them; and that His works bore Him testimony. He appeals to the two testimonies which we have seen brought forward in these chapters, viii-x. But He adds, they were not of His sheep. He then takes occasion, without noticing their prejudices, to add some precious truths respecting His sheep. They hear His voice, He knows them, they follow Him, He gives them eternal life, they shall never perish. On the one hand, there shall be no default of life; on the other, no one shall pluck them out of the Savior's hand. Force from without shall not overcome the power of Him who keeps them. But there is another and an infinitely precious truth which the Lord in His love reveals to us. The Father has given us to Jesus, and He is greater than all who would seek to pluck us out of His hand. And Jesus and the Father are one. Precious teaching! in which the glory of the person of the Son of God is identified with the safety of His sheep, with the height and depth of the love, of which they are the objects. Here it is not a testimony which-altogether divine-sets forth what man is. It is the work and the efficacious love of the son, and at the same time that of the Father. It is not, "I am;" but "I and the Father are one." If

the Son has accomplished the work, and takes care of the sheep, it was the Father who gave them to Him. The Christ may perform a divine work, and furnish a motive for the Father's love, but it was the Father who gave it Him to do. Their love to the sheep is one as those who bear it.

OH 8{Chapter 8, therefore, is the manifestation of God in testimony, and as light; 9 and 10, the efficacious grace which gathers the sheep under the care of the Son, and of the Father's love.

Observe, that the wolf may come and catch the sheep, if there are hirelings; but he cannot catch them out of the Savior's hands.

At the end of the chapter, the Jews having taken up stones to stone Him, because He made Himself equal with God, the Lord does not seek to prove to them the truth of what He is; but shows that, according to their own principles and the testimony of the Scriptures, they were wrong in this case. He appeals again to His own words and works, as proving that He was in the Father and the Father in him. Again, they take up stones, and Jesus definitively leaves them. It was all over with Israel.

OH 11{Chapter 11 We come now to the testimony which the Father renders to Jesus, in answer to His rejection. In this chapter, the power of resurrection and of life in His own person are presented to faith. But here, it is not simply that He is rejected: man is looked upon as dead, and Israel also. For it is man in the person of Lazarus. This family was blessed. It received the Lord into its bosom. Lazarus falls sick. All the Lord's human affections would be naturally concerned. Martha and

Mary feel this; and they send Him word that he whom He loved was sick. But Jesus stays where He is. He might have said the word, as in the case of the Centurion, and of the sick child at the beginning of this Gospel. But He did not. He had manifested His power and His goodness in healing man as he is found on earth, and delivering him from the enemy, and that in the midst of Israel. But this was not His object here, far from it, or the limits of what He was come to do. It was a question of bestowing life, of raising up again that which was dead before God. This was the real state of Israel, it was the state of man. Therefore he allows the condition of man under sin to go on and manifest itself in all the intensity of its effects down here, and permits the enemy to exercise his power to the end. Nothing remained but the judgment of God; and death, in itself, convicted of sin while conducting man to judgment. The sick may be healed-there is no remedy for death. All is over for man, as man here below. Nothing re-mains for him but-the judgment of God. It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. The Lord therefore does not heal in this instance. He allows the evil to go on to the end, to death. That was the true place of man. Lazarus once fallen asleep, He goes to waken Him. The disciples fear the Jews, and with reason. But the Lord having waited for His Father's will, does not fear to accomplish it. It was day to Him.

In fact, whatever might be His love for the nation, He must needs let it die (indeed it was dead), and wait for the time appointed by God to raise it up again. If He must die Himself to accomplish it, He commits Himself to His Father.

But let us follow out the depths of this doctrine. Death has come in-it must take effect. Man is really in death before God; but God comes in in grace. Two things are presented in our history. He might have healed. The faith and hope of neither Martha, Mary, nor the Jews, went any farther. Only Martha acknowledges that as the Messiah, favored of God, He would obtain from Him whatsoever He asked. But He had not prevented the death of Lazarus. He had done so many times, even for

strangers, for whosoever desired it. In the second place, Martha knew that her brother would rise again at the last day: but true as that was, this truth availed nothing. Who would answer for man, dead in judgment for sin? To rise again and appear before God, was not an answer to death come in by sin. The two things were true. Christ had often delivered mortal man from his sufferings in flesh, and there shall be a resurrection at the last day. But these things were of no value in the presence of death. Christ was, however, there; and He is, thanks be to God! the resurrection and the life. Man being dead, resurrection comes first. But Jesus is the resurrection and the life, in the present power of a divine life. And observe that life, coming by resurrection, delivers from all that death implies and leaves it behind; sin, death, all that belongs to the life that man had lost. Christ having died for our sins, has borne their punishment, has borne them. He has died. All the powers of the enemy, all its effect on mortal man, all the judgment of God:-He has borne it all, and has come up from it, by and in the power of a new life, which He imparts to us, so that we are, in spirit, alive from among the dead. It will be true of us, if we die (for we shall not all die) as to the body, or, being changed, if we do not die. But by the communication of His life who is risen from the dead, according to the power of the life that is in Him, God has quickened us with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.

Jesus, here, did but manifest that this power was in Him-for, we know He had not yet died for sin; but it was this same power in Him that was manifested. The believer, even if he were dead, shall rise again; and the living, who believe in Him, shall not die. Christ has overcome death-the power for this was in His person, and the Father bore Him witness of it. Are any alive when the Lord exercises this power? they will never die-death exists no more in His presence. Have any died before He exercises it? they shall live-death cannot subsist before Him. All the effect of sin upon man is completely destroyed by resurrection, viewed as the power of life in Christ. He exercised it in obedience and in dependence on His Father, because He was man, walking before God to do His will; but He is the resurrection and the life. He has brought the power of divine life into the midst of death; and death is annihilated by it, for in life, death is no more. Death was the end of natural life to sinful man. Resurrection is the end of death, which has thus no longer anything in us. It is our advantage that having done all it could do, it is finished. We live in the life that destroyed it. We come out from all that could be connected with a life that no longer exists. What a deliverance! Christ is this power. He became this for us in His resurrection.

Martha-while loving Him and believing in Him-does not understand this; and she calls Mary, feeling that her sister would better understand the Lord. We will speak a little of these two presently. Mary believing that the Lord had called her, goes to Him directly. She falls down at His feet weeping. On this point she understood no more than Martha; but her heart is melted under the sense of death in the presence of Him who had life. It is an expression of need rather than a complaint that she utters. The Jews also weep, the power of death was on their hearts. Jesus enters into it in sympathy. He was troubled in spirit. He sighs before God; He weeps with man; but His tears turn into a groan, which was, though inarticulate, the weight of death felt in sympathy, and presented to God by this groan of love which fully realized the truth; and that, in love to those who were suffering the ill that His groan expressed.

He bore death before God in His spirit as the misery of man, the yoke from which man could not deliver himself, and He is heard. The need brings His power into action. It was not His part now patiently to explain to Martha what He was. He feels, and acts upon, the need to which Mary had

given expression, her heart being opened by the grace that was in Him.

Man may sympathize -it is the expression of his powerlessness. Jesus enters into the affliction of mortal man, puts Himself under the burden of death that weighs upon man, (and that, more thoroughly than man himself can do), but He takes it away with its cause. He does more than take it away. He brings in the power that is able to take it away. This is the glory of God. When Christ is present, if we die, we do not die for death, but for life; we die that we may live in the life of God, instead of in the life of man. And wherefore? That the Son of God may be glorified. Death came in by sin; and man is under the power of death. But this has only given room for our possessing life according to the second Adam, the Son of God, and not according to the first Adam, the sinful man. This is grace. God is glorified in this work of grace, and it is the Son of God whose glory shines brightly forth in this divine work. And, observe, that this is not grace offered in testimony, it is the exercise of the power of life. Corruption itself is no hindrance to God. Why did Christ come? To bring the words of eternal life to dead man. Now Mary fed upon those words. Martha served, cumbered her heart with many things. She believed, she loved Jesus, received Him into her house; the Lord loved her. Mary listened to Him, this was what He came for; and He justified her in it. The good part which she had chosen should not be taken from her.

When the Lord arrives, Martha goes of her own accord to meet Him. She withdraws when Jesus speaks to her of the present power of life. We are ill at ease when, although Christians, we feel unable to apprehend the meaning of the Lord's words, or of what His people say to us. Martha felt, that this was rather Mary's part than hers. She goes, away and calls her sister, saying, that the Master (He who taught-observe this name that she gives Him) was come, and called for her. It was her own conscience that was to her the voice of Christ. Mary instantly arises, and comes to Him. She understood no more than Martha. Her heart pours out its need at the feet of Jesus, where she had heard His words and learned His love and grace; and Jesus asks the way to the grave. To Martha, ever occupied with circumstances, he stank already.

Afterward (Martha served, and Lazarus was present), Mary anoints the Lord, in the sense of what was going on-for they were consulting to put Him to death. Her heart, taught by love to the Lord, felt the enmity of the Jews, and her affection, stimulated by deep gratitude, expends on Him the most costly thing she had. Those present blame her. Jesus again takes her part. It might not be reasonable, but °she had apprehended His position. What a lesson!

What a blessed family was this at Bethany, in which the heart of Jesus found (as far as could be on earth) a relief that His love accepted. There is another point to be observed here. The Holy Ghost has recorded an incident, in which the momentary but guilty unbelief of Thomas was covered by the \_Lord's grace. It was needful to relate it; but the Holy Ghost has taken care to show us, that Thomas loved the Lord, and was ready, at heart, to die with Him. We have other instances of the same kind. Paul says, " Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry." Poor Mark! this was necessary, on account of what took place at Perga. Barnabas also has the same place in the apostle's affection and remembrance. We are weak, God does not hide it from us; but he throws the testimony of His grace over the feeblest of His servants. With what love have we to do! Alas! with what hatred; for we see in this Gospel the dreadful opposition between man and God.

Caiaphas, the chief of the Jews, as high priest, pro-poses the death of Jesus, because He had restored Lazarus to life. And from that day they conspire against Him.

Jesus yields to it. He came to give His life a ransom for many. He goes on to fulfill the work His love had undertaken, in accordance with His Father's will, whatever might be the devices and the malice of men. The work of life and of death, of Satan and of God, were face to face. But the counsels of God were being accomplished in grace, whatever the means might be. Jesus devotes Himself to the work by which they were to be fulfilled. Having shown the power of resurrection and of life in Himself, He is again, when the time comes, quietly in the place to which his service led Him; but He no longer goes, in the same manner as before, into the temple. He goes thither, indeed; but the question between God and man was, morally, already settled. His place now is with the remnant, where His heart found rest-the house of Bethany. We have, in this family, a sample of the true remnant of Israel, three different cases, with regard to their position before God. Martha had faith which, no doubt, attached her to Christ, but which did not go beyond that which was needed for the kingdom. Those who will be spared for the earth, in the last days, will have the same. Their faith will at length acknowledge Christ the Son of God. Lazarus was there, living by that power which could have also raised up all the dead saints in the same way, which, by grace, at the last day, will call up Israel, morally, from their state of death. In a word, we find the remnant, who will not die, spared through true faith (but faith in a living Savior, who should deliver Israel), and those who shall be brought back as from the dead, to enjoy the kingdom. Martha served; Jesus is in company with them; Lazarus sits at the table with Him. But there was also the representative of another class. Mary, who had drunk at the fountain of truth, and had received that living water into her heart, had understood that there was something more than the hope and the blessing of Israel-namely, Jesus Himself. She does that which is suitable to Jesus in His rejection, to Him who is the resurrection before He is our life. Her heart associates her with that act of His, and she anoints Him for His burial. To her, it is Jesus Himself who is in question, and Jesus rejected; and faith takes its place in that which was the seed of the Church, still hidden in the soil of Israel and of this world, but which, in the resurrection, would come forth in all the beauty of the life of God-of eternal life. It is a faith that expends itself on Him, on His body in which He was about to undergo the penalty of sin for our salvation. The selfishness of unbelief, betraying its sin in its contempt of Christ, and in its indifference, gives the Lord occasion to attach its true value to this action of His beloved disciple. Her anointing His feet is pointed out here as showing that all that was of Christ, that which was Christ, had to her a value which prevented her regarding anything else. This is a true appreciation of Christ. The faith that knows this love which passes knowledge, this kind of faith, is a sweet odor in the whole house. And God remembers it, according to His grace. Jesus understood her-that was all she wanted. He justifies her-who should rise up against her? This scene is over; and the course of events is resumed.

The enmity of the Jews-alas! that of man's heart, thus given up to itself, and, consequently, to the enemy, who is a murderer by nature and the enemy of God-an enmity that nothing can subdue, would fain kill Lazarus also. Man is indeed capable of this, but capable of what? Everything yields to hatred, to this kind of hatred of God who manifests Himself. But for this, it would, in fact, be inconceivable. They must now either believe in Jesus, or reject Him; for His power was so evident, that they must do the one or the other-a man publicly raised from the dead after four days, and alive among the people, left no longer any possibility of in-decision. Jesus knew it divinely. He



presents Himself as King of Israel, to assert His rights, and to offer salvation and the promised glory to the people and to Jerusalem. The people understand this. It must be a deliberate rejection, as the Pharisees are well aware. But- the hour was come; and although they could do nothing, for the world went after Him, Jesus is put to death; for " He gave Himself."

The testimony of God is now borne to Him, as the true Son of David. He had been witnessed to as the Son of God and Son of David; there was yet another title to be acknowledged. As Son of Man, He is to possess all the kingdoms of the earth. The Greeks come, for His fame had gone abroad, and desire to see Him. Jesus saith, " The hour is come for the Son of man to be glorified." But now He returns to the thoughts of which Mary's ointment was the expression to his heart. He should have been received as the Son of David; but, in taking His place as the Son of man, a very different thing necessarily opens before Him. How could He be seen as Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven to take possession of all things, according to the counsels of God, without dying? If His human service on earth was finished, and He had gone out free, calling, if need were, for twelve legions of angels, no one could have had any part with Him; He would have remained alone. Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. If Christ takes His heavenly glory, and is not alone in it, He dies to attain it, and to bring with Him the souls whom God has given Him. In fact, the hour was come; it could no longer tarry. Everything was now ready for the end of the trial of this world, of man, of Israel; and, above all, the counsels of God were being fulfilled.

Outwardly, all was testimony to His glory. He enters Jerusalem in triumph, the multitude proclaiming Him King. What were the Romans about? They were silent before God. The Greeks came to seek him. All is ready for the glory of the Son of man. But the heart of Jesus well knew that for this glory, for the, accomplishment of the work of God, for His having one human being with Him in the glory, for the granary of God to be filled according to the counsels of grace, He must die. No other way for guilty souls to come to God. That which Mary's affection foresaw, Jesus knows according to the truth, and according to the mind of God. He feels it, and submits to it. And the Father responds, at this solemn moment, by bearing testimony to the glorious effect which His sovereign majesty at this same time required. Majesty which Jesus fully glorified by His obedience: and who could do this, excepting Him who, by that obedience, brought in the love and the power of God which accomplished it.

In that which follows, the Lord introduces a great principle connected with the truth contained in His sacrifice. There was no link between the natural life of man and God. If in the man Christ Jesus there was a life in entire harmony with God, He must needs lay it down, on account of this condition of man. Being of God, He could not remain in connection with man. Man would not have it. Jesus would rather die than not fulfill His service by glorifying God, than not be obedient unto the end. But if any one loved his life of this world, he lost it, for it was not in connection with God. If any one, by grace, hated it, separated himself in heart from this principle of alienation from God, and devoted his life to Him, he would gain it. To serve Jesus, therefore, was to follow Him, and where He was going there should His servant be. If any one served Him, the Father would remember it, and would honor him. All this is said in view of His death, the thought of which comes over his mind; and His soul is troubled. And in the just dread of that hour which, in itself, is the judgment of God and the end of man as God created him here on earth, He asks God to deliver Him from that hour. But, in truth, he had come-not then to be (although

He was) the Messiah, not then (although it was His right) to take the kingdom, but He had come for this very hour; by dying to glorify His Father. This He desires, involve what it may. " Father, glorify Thy name," is His only prayer. He feels what death is; there would have been no sacrifice, if He had not felt it. But, while feeling it, His only desire was, to glorify His Father. If that cost Him everything, the work was perfect in proportion. Perfect in this desire, and that unto death, the Father could not but answer Him. In His answer-as it appears to me-He announces the resurrection. But what grace, what marvel to be admitted into such communications! The heart is astounded while filled with worship and with grace, in beholding the perfection of Jesus, the Son of God, unto death, that is to say, absolute; and in seeing Him, with the full sense of what death was, seeking the sole glory of the Father; and the Father answering-an answer morally needful to this sacrifice of the Son, and to His own glory. Thus He said, " I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again." I believe that He had glorified it in the resurrection of Lazarus, He would do so again in the resurrection of Christ, a glorious resurrection, which, in itself, implied ours; even as the Lord had said, without naming His own.

Let us now observe the connection of the truths spoken of in this remarkable passage. The hour was come for the glory of the Son of man. But, in order to this, it needed that this precious corn of wheat should fall into the ground and die. Else it would remain alone. This was the universal principle. The natural life of this world in us had no part with God. Jesus must be followed. We should thus be with Him this was serving Him. Thus, also, we should be honored by the Father. Christ, for Himself, looks death in the face, and feels all its import. Nevertheless, He gives Himself to one only thing-the glory of His Father. The Father answers Him in this. His desire should be fulfilled. He should not be without an answer to His perfection. The people hear it as the voice of the Lord God, as described in the Psalms. Christ (who, in all this, had put Himself entirely aside, had spoken only of the glory of His followers and of His Father), declares that this voice came for the people's sake, in order that they might understand what He was, for their salvation. Then there opens before Him who had thus put Himself aside and submitted to everything for His Father's sake, not the future glory, but the value, the import, the glory, of the work He was about to do. The principles, of which we have spoken, are here brought to the central point of their development. In His death, the world was judged; Satan was its prince, and he is cast out. In appearance, it is Christ who was so. By death, he morally and judicially destroyed him who had the power of death., It was the total and entire annihilation of all the rights of the enemy, over whomsoever and whatsoever it might be, when the Son of God and Son of man bore the judgment of God, as man in obedience unto death. All the rights that Satan possessed, through man's disobedience and the judgment of God upon it, were only rights in virtue of the claims of God upon man, and come back to Christ alone. And being lifted up between God and the world, in obedience, on the cross, bearing that which was due to sin, Christ became the point of attraction for all men living, that through Him they might draw nigh to God. While living, Jesus ought to have been owned as the Messiah: lifted up from the earth as a victim before God, being no longer of the earth as living upon it, He was the point of attraction towards God for all those who, living on earth, were alienated from God as we have seen, that they might come to Him there (by grace) and have life through the Savior's death. Jesus warns them also that it was only for a little while that He, the light of the world, would remain with them. They should believe, while it was yet time. Soon would the darkness come, and they would not know whither they went. We see that, whatever might be the thoughts that occupy His heart, the love of Jesus never grows cold; He thinks of those around

Him-of men, according to their need.

Nevertheless, they did not believe; according to the testimony of the prophet, given in view of His humiliation unto death, given in sight of the vision of His divine glory, which could but bring judgment on a rebellious people (Isa. 53 and 6).

Nevertheless, such is grace, His humiliation should be their salvation, and, in the glory that judged them, God would remember the counsels of His grace, as sure a fruit of that glory as was the judgment which the Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts must pronounce against evil -a judgment suspended, by His long-suffering, during centuries, but now fulfilled when these last efforts of His mercy were despised and rejected. They preferred the praise of men.

At last, Jesus declares that which His coming really was-that, in fact, they who believed in Him, in the Jesus whom they saw on the earth, believed in His Father, and saw His Father. He was come as the light, and they who believed should not walk in darkness. He did not judge, He was come to save; but the word which He had spoken should judge those who heard, for it was the Father's word, and it was life everlasting.

OH 13{Chapter 13 Now, then, the Lord has taken His place as going to the Father. He takes His place according to the counsels of God, and not in connection with the responsibility of a world that had already rejected Him; and He loves His own unto the end. Two things are present to Him; on the one hand sin taking the form most painful to His heart; and on the other, the sense of whence He came and whither He was going; (i.e., His personal and heavenly glory,) and the glory that was given Him. The Father had put all things into His hands.

But His entrance into glory (by means of that sin), does not take His heart away from His disciples, nor even from their wants. Only, He exercises His love to put them in connection with the new position He created for them by entering thus into it. He is still their servant in love, and even more so than ever. No doubt, He had been so in His perfect grace, but it was while among them. They were thus in a certain sense companions. They were all supping together here at the same table. But He quits this position as He did His personal association with His disciples, by ascending to heaven, by going to God. But if He does, He still girds Himself for their service, and takes water to wash their feet. Although in heaven, He is still serving us. The effect of this service is, that the Holy Ghost takes away, practically by the Word, all the defilement that we gather in walking through this world of sin. We come in contact, on our way, -with this world that rejected Christ. He cleanses us from its defilement by the Holy Ghost and the Word, He cleanses us in view of the relationships with God His Father, into which He has brought us by entering into them Himself. A purity -was needed that should befit the presence of God. Here, however it is only the feet that are in question. The priests who served God in the tabernacle were washed at their consecration. That washing was not repeated. So, when once regenerated by the Word, this is not repeated for us. The priests washed their hands and their feet every time they engaged in service-that they drew near to God. Our Jesus restores communion and power to serve God, when we have lost it. He does it, and with a view to communion and service, for before God we are entirely clean, personally. The service was the service of Christ, of His love. He wiped their feet with the towel wherewith. He was girded (a circumstance expressive of service). The means of purification was water-the Word, applied by the Holy Ghost. Peter shrinks from the idea of Christ thus humbling Himself; but we must submit to this thought, that our sin is such that nothing less than the humiliation of Christ can

in any sense cleanse us from it; nothing else will make us really know the perfect and dazzling purity of God, or the love and devotedness of Jesus: and in the realization of these consists the having a heart sanctified for the presence of God. Peter then would have the Lord to wash also his hands and his head. But that is already accomplished. If we are His, we are regenerated and cleansed by the Word which He has already applied to our souls: only we defile our feet in walking. It is after the pat-tern of this service of Christ in grace, that we are to act with regard to our brethren.

Judas was not clean: he had not been regenerated. Nevertheless, being sent of the Lord, they who had received him had received Christ. And this is true also of those whom He sends by His Spirit. This thought brings the treachery of Judas before the Lord's mind; His soul is troubled at the thought, and He unburdens His heart by declaring it to His disciples. What the heart is occupied with here is not His knowledge of the individual but of the fact that one of them should do it, one of those who had been His companions. Therefore it was because of His saying this, that the disciples looked upon one another. Now, there was one near Him, the disciple whom Jesus loved; for we have in all this part of the Gospel of John, the testimony in grace that answers to the diverse forms of malice and wickedness in man.

This love of Jesus had formed the heart of John, had given him confidingness and constancy of affection; and, consequently, without any other motive than this, he was near enough to Jesus to receive communications from Him. It was not in order to receive them that he placed himself close to Jesus; he was there because he loved the Lord, whose own love had thus attached him to Himself; but, being there, he was able to receive them. It is thus that we may still learn of Him.

Peter loved Him, but there was too much of Peter, not for service, if God called him to it-and He did in grace-but for intimacy. Who, among the twelve, bore testimony like Peter, in whom God was mighty towards the circumcision? but we do not find in his Epistles that which is found in John's.\* Moreover, each one has his place, given in the sovereignty of God. Peter loved Christ; and we see, that linked also with John by this common affection, they are constantly together; as also, at the end of this Gospel, he is anxious to know the fate of John. He uses John, therefore, to ask the Lord, which it was among them that should betray Him as He had said. Jesus points out Judas by the sop, which would have checked any other, but which to him was only the seal of his ruin. It is indeed thus, in degree, with every favor of God that falls upon a heart that rejects it. After the sop Satan enters into Judas. Wicked already through covetousness, and yielding habitually to ordinary temptations; although he was with Jesus, hardening his heart against the effect of that grace which was ever before his eyes and at his side, and which, in a certain way, was exercised towards him; he had yielded to the suggestion of the enemy, and made himself the tool of the high-priest to betray the Lord. He knew what they desired, and goes and offers himself. And when, by his long familiarity with the grace and presence of Jesus while addicting himself to sin, that grace and the thought of the person of Christ had entirely lost their influence, he was in a state to feel nothing at betraying Him. The know-ledge he had of the Lord's power helped him to give himself up to evil, and strengthened the temptation of Satan, for evidently he made sure that Jesus would always succeed in delivering Himself from His enemies; and, as far as power was concerned, Judas was right in thinking that the Lord could have done so. But what knew he of the thoughts of God? All was darkness, morally, in his soul. And now, after this last testimony, which was both a token of grace and a witness to the true state of his heart that was insensible to it (as ex-pressed in the

Psalm here fulfilled), Satan enters into him, takes possession of him so as to harden him against all that might have made him feel, even as a man, the horrid nature of what he was doing, and thus enfeeble him in accomplishing the evil, so that neither his conscience nor his heart should be awakened in committing it. Dreadful condition! Satan possesses him, until forced to leave him to the judgment from which he cannot shelter him, and which will be his own at the time appointed of God. Judgment that manifests itself to the conscience of Judas when the evil is done, when too late; and the sense of which is shown by a despair that his links with Satan did but augment; but which is forced to bear testimony to Jesus before those who had profited by his sin and who mocked at his distress. For despair speaks the truth, the veil is torn away, there is

no longer self-deception, the conscience is laid bare before God, but it is before His judgment. Satan does not deceive there-and, not the grace, but the perfection of Christ is known. Judas bore witness to the innocence of Jesus, as did the thief on the cross. It is thus that death and destruction heard the fame of His wisdom: only God knows it (Job 28:22,23).

Jesus knew his condition. It was but the accomplish-ing that which He was going to do, by means of one for whom there was no longer any hope. " That which thou doest," said Jesus, " do quickly." But what words when we hear them from the lips of Him who was love itself! Nevertheless the eyes of Jesus were now fixed upon His own death. He is alone. No one, not even His disciples, had any part -with Him. These could no more follow Him, whither He was now going, than the Jews themselves. Solemn but glorious hour! A man, He was going to meet that which separated man from God-to meet it in judgment. This, in fact, is what He says, as soon as Judas is gone out. The door which closed on Judas separated Christ from this world. " Now," He says, " the Son of man is glorified." He had said this, when the Greeks arrived; but then it was the glory to come, His glory as the head of all men, and, in fact, of all things. But this could not yet be; and He said, " Father, glorify Thy name." Jesus must die. It was that which glorified the name of God, in a world where sin was. It was the glory of the Son of Man to accomplish it there, where all the power of the enemy, the effect of sin, and the judgment of God upon sin, were displayed; where the question was morally settled; where Satan (in his power over sinful man, man under sin,) and God came together, not as in the case of Job, for discipline, but for justice. That which God was, against sin, that in which all His attributes should be in exercise, and be glorified (and by which, in fact, through that which took place, all the perfections which the malice of Satan could not reach have been glorified), being manifested in Jesus, or by means of that which Jesus did and suffered. These perfections being either directly unfolded in Him, or the opportunity of their exercise, afforded by

His taking a place which put Him to the proof according to the attributes of God: so that divine perfection was displayed in man, in Jesus, there even where He stood in the place of man, and with regard to sin, and, thank God, with regard to the sinner. God was glorified in Him. But this requires some less abstract words; for the cross is the center of the universe, according to God, the basis of our salvation and our glory, and the brightest manifestation of God's own glory.

The Lord had said, when the Greeks desired to see Him, that the hour was come for the Son of man to be glorified. He spoke, then, of His glory as Son of man, the glory which He should take under that title. He felt, indeed, that in order to bring men into that glory, He must needs pass through death Himself. But He was engrossed by one thing which detached His thoughts from the glory and from the suffering-the desire which possessed His heart that His Father should be

glorified. All was now come to the point at which this was to be accomplished; and the moment had arrived when Judas (overstepping the limits of God's just and perfect patience) was gone out, giving the reins to his iniquity, to consummate the crime which would lead to the wonderful fulfillment of the counsels of God.

Now, in Jesus on the cross, the Son of man has been glorified in a much more admirable way than He will be even by the positive glory that belongs to Him under that title. He will, we know, be clothed with that glory; but, on the cross, the Son of man bore all that was necessary for the perfect display of all the glory of God. The whole weight of that glory was brought to bear upon Him, to put Him to the proof, that it might be seen whether He could sustain it, and verify it; and that, by setting it forth in the place where, but for this, sin concealed that glory, and (so to speak) gave it impiously the lie. Was the Son of man able to enter into such a place, to undertake such a task, and to accomplish the task, and maintain His place without failure to the end? This Jesus did. The majesty of God was to be vindicated against the insolent rebellion of His creatures; His truth, which had threatened Him with death, maintained; His justice established against sin; (who could withstand it?) and, at the same time, His love fully demonstrated. Satan having here all the sorrowful rights that he had acquired through our sin. Christ-perfect as a man, alone, apart from all men, in obedience, and having as man but one object, i.e. the glory of God, thus divinely perfect, sacrificing Himself for this purposefully glorified God. God was glorified in Him. His justice, His majesty, His truth, His love-all was verified on the cross; and that with regard to sin. And God can now act freely, according to that which He is in Himself, without any one attribute hiding or obscuring or contradicting another. Truth condemned man to death, justice forever condemned the sinner, majesty demanded the execution of the sentence. Where, then, was love? If love were to prevail over all, where would be His majesty and His justice? Moreover, that could not be; nor would it really then be love, but indifference to evil. By means of the cross, He is just, and He justifies in grace; He is love, and in that love He bestows His righteousness on man. The righteousness of God takes the place of man's sin to the believer. The righteousness (as well as the sin) of man vanishes before the bright light of grace, and does not becloud the sovereign glory of a grace like this towards man, who was really alienated from God.

And who had accomplished this? Who had thus established (as to its manifestation) the whole glory of God? It was the Son of man. Therefore God glorifies Him with His own glory; for it was indeed that glory which He had established and made honorable, when (for others) it was effaced by sin-it cannot be so in itself. And not only was it established, but it was thus realized as it could have been by no other means. Never was love like the gift of the Son of God for sinners; never justice (to which sin is insupportable) like that which did not spare even the Son Himself, when He bore sin upon Him; never majesty like that which held the Son of God Himself responsible for the full extent of its exigencies (compare Heb. 2); never truth like that which did not yield before the necessity of the death of Jesus. We now know God. God being glorified in the Son of man, glorifies Him in Himself. But, consequently, He does not wait for the day of His glory with man, according to the thought of chap. 12. God calls Him to His own right hand, and sets Him there at once, and alone. Who could be there (save in spirit) excepting He? Here, His glory is connected with that which He alone could do-with that which He must have done alone; and of which He must have the fruit alone with God-for He was God.

Other glories shall come in their time. He will share them with us, although in all things He has the preeminence. Here He is, and must ever be, alone; i.e. in that which is personal to Himself. Who shared the cross with Him, as suffering for sin, and fulfilling righteousness? We, indeed, share it with Him so far as suffering for righteousness' sake, and for the love of Him and His people, even unto death; and thus we shall share His glory also. But it is evident that we could not glorify God for sin. He who knew no sin, could alone be made sin. The Son of God alone could bear this burden.

In this sense, the Lord-when His heart found relief in pouring out these glorious thoughts, these marvelous counsels-addressed His disciples with affection, telling them that their connection with Him here below would soon be ended-that He was going where they could not follow Him, any more than could the unbelieving Jews. Brotherly love was, in a certain sense, to take His place. They were to love one another as He had loved them, with a love superior to the faults of the flesh in their brethren, brotherly love, gracious in these respects. If the main pillar were taken away against which many around it were leaning, they would support each other, although not by their strength. And thus should the disciples of Christ be known.

Now, Simon Peter desires to penetrate into that which no man, save Jesus, could enter. This is fleshly confidence. The Lord tells him, in grace, that it could not be so now. He must dry up that sea-fathomless to man-death, that overflowing Jordan. And then, when it was no longer the judgment of God, nor wielded by the power of Satan (for in both these characters Christ has entirely destroyed its power, for the believer), then His poor disciple might pass through it for the sake of righteousness and of Christ. But Peter would follow Him in his own strength, declaring himself able to do exactly that which Jesus was going to do for him. Yet, in fact, terrified at the first movement of the enemy, he draws back before the voice of a girl, and denies the Master whom he loved. In the things of God, fleshly confidence does but lead us into a position in which it cannot stand. Sincerity alone can do nothing against the enemy. We must have the strength of God.

The Lord now begins to discourse with them in view of His departure. He was going where they could not come. To human sight, they would be left alone upon the earth. It is to the sense of this apparently desolate condition that the Lord addresses Himself, showing them that He was an object for faith, even as God was. In doing this, He opens to them the whole truth with respect to their condition. His work is not the subject treated of; but their position by virtue of that work. His person should have been for them the key to that position, and would be so now; the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who should come, would be the power by which they should enjoy it.

To Peter's question, " Whither goest Thou?" the Lord replies. Only when the desire of the flesh seeks to enter into the path on which Jesus was then entering, the Lord could but say that the strength of the flesh was unavailing there; for, in fact, he proposed to follow Christ in death. Poor Peter! But when the Lord has written the sentence of death upon the flesh for us, by revealing its impotency, He can then reveal that which is beyond it for faith; and that which belongs to us through His death, throws its light back, and teaches us who He was, even when on earth, and always, before the world was. He did but return to the place from which He came. But He begins with His disciples where they were, and meets the need of their hearts by explaining to them in what manner-better, in a certain sense, than by following Him-they should be with Him where He would be. They did not see God corporeally present with them: to enjoy His presence, they

believed in Him. It was to be the same thing with regard to Jesus. They were to believe in Him. He did not forsake them in going away, as though there were only room for Himself in His Father's house. (He alludes to the figure of the temple.) There was room for them all. The going thither, observe, was still His thought--He is not here as the Messiah. We see Him in the relationships in which He stood according to the eternal truths of God. He had always His departure in view: had there been no room for them, He would have told them so. Their place was with Him. But He was going to prepare a place for them. Without presenting redemption there, and presenting Himself as the new man, according to the power of that redemption, there was no place prepared in heaven. He enters it in the power of that life which should bring them in also. But they should not go alone to rejoin Him, nor would He rejoin them down here. Heaven, not earth, was in question. Nor would He simply send others for them; but as those He dearly valued, He would come for them Himself, and receive them unto Himself, that where He was, there should they be also. He will come from the Father's throne; but He will receive them there, where He shall be in glory before the Father. They should be with Him--a far more excellent position than His remaining with them here below, even as Messiah in glory on the earth.

Now, also, having said where He was going, i.e. to His Father (and speaking according to the effect of His death for them), He tells them that they knew whither He was going, and the way. For He was going to the Father, and they had seen the Father in seeing Him; and thus, having seen the Father in Him, they knew the way; for in coming to Him, they came to the Father, who was in Him as He was in the Father. He was, then, Himself the way. Therefore He reproaches Philip with not having known Him. He had been long with them, as the revelation in His own person of the

Father; and they ought to have known Him, and to have seen that He was in the Father, and the Father in Him, and thus have known where He was going, for it was to the Father. He had declared the name of the Father; and if they were unable to see the Father in Him, or to be convinced of it by His words, they ought to have known it by His works: for the Father who dwelt in Him, He it was who did the works. This depended on His own person, being still in the world; but a striking proof was connected with His departure. After He was gone, they should do even greater works than He did, because they should act in connection with His greater nearness to the Father. This was requisite to His glory. It was even unlimited. He placed them in immediate connection with the Father, by the power of His work and of His name; and whatsoever they should ask the Father in His name, Christ Himself would do it for them. Their request should be heard and granted by the Father--showing what nearness He had acquired for them--and He (Christ) would do all they should ask; for the power of the Son was not and could not be wanting to the Father's will: there was no limit to His power.

But this led to another subject. They were to walk in obedience. This characterizes discipleship. Up to the present time, love desires to be with Him, but shows itself by obeying His commands; for Christ also has a right to command.

In this position of obedience to Christ, another blessing should be granted them; namely, the Holy Ghost Himself, who should never leave them, as Christ was about to do. The world could not receive Him. Christ, the Son, had been shown to the eyes of the world--the Holy Ghost would act, being invisible; for by the rejection of Christ, it was all over with the world in its natural and creature relationships with God. But He should be known by the disciples; for He should not only remain



with them, but be in themselves. Until now, in His discourse, He had led His disciples to follow Him (in spirit) on high, through the knowledge which acquaintance with His person, in which the Father was

revealed, gave them of whither He was going, and of the way. He was Himself the Way, as we have seen. He was the Truth itself, in the revelation (and the perfect revelation) of God and of the soul's relationship to Him; and, indeed, of the real condition and character of all things, by bringing out the perfect light of God in His own person, who revealed Him. He was the Life, in which God and the truth could thus be known. Men came by Him, and they found the Father revealed in Him; and they possessed in Him that which enabled them to enjoy, and in the reception of which they came in fact to, the Father.

But now, it was not the objective which He presents. It is not the Father in Him-which they ought to have known-and He in the Father, when here below. He does not, therefore, raise their thoughts to the Father through Himself and in Himself, and He in the Father in heaven. He sets before them that which should be given them down here-the stream of blessing that should flow for them in this world, by virtue of that which Jesus was, and was for them, in heaven. The Holy Ghost once introduced as sent, the Lord says: "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you." His presence, in Spirit, here below, is the consolation of His people. They should see Him; and this is much more true than seeing Him with the eyes of flesh. Yes, more true; it is knowing Him in a much more real way, even though by grace they had believed in Him as the Christ, the Son of God. And, moreover, this spiritual sight of Christ by the heart, through the presence of the Holy Ghost, is connected with life. "Because I live, ye shall live also." We see Him, because we have life, and this life is in Him, and He is this life. "This life is in the Son." It is as sure as His duration. It is derived from Him. Because He lives, we shall live. Our life is, in everything, the manifestation of Himself who is our life. Even as the apostle expresses it, "That the life of Christ may be manifested in our mortal bodies." Alas! the flesh resists, but this is our life in Christ. But that is not all. The Holy Ghost dwelling in us, we know our union with Christ. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." It is not, "The Father in me [which, however, was always true] and I in Him"-words, the first of which here omitted, expressed the reality of His manifestation of the Father here on earth. The Lord only expresses that which belongs to His being really and divinely one with the Father. "I am in my Father." It is this last part of the truth (implied, doubtless in the other when rightly understood), of which the Lord here speaks. It could not really be so, but men might imagine such a thing as a manifestation of God in man, without this man being really such, so truly God (that is to say, in Himself), that it must also be said, He is the Father. People dream of such things-they speak of the manifestation of God in flesh, we speak of God manifest in the flesh. But here all ambiguity is obviated-He was in the Father, and it is this part of the truth which is repeated here-adding to it, in virtue of the presence of the Holy Ghost, that while the disciples should indeed fully know the divine person of Jesus, they should moreover know that they were themselves in Him. He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Jesus did not say that they ought to have known this, while He was with them on earth. They ought to have known that the Father was in Him and He in the Father. But, in that, He was alone. The disciples, however, having received the Holy Ghost, should know their own union with Him; a union of which the Holy Ghost is the strength and the bond; the life of Christ flows from Him in us. He is in the Father, we in Him, and He also in us, according to the power of the presence of the Holy Ghost.

This is the subject of the common faith, true of all. But there is continual guardianship and government, and Jesus manifests Himself to us in connection with, and in a manner dependent on, our walk. He who is mindful of the Lord's will, possesses it, and observes it. A good child not only obeys when he knows his father's will, but he acquires the knowledge of that will by giving heed to it. This is the spirit of obedience in love. If we act thus with regard to Jesus, the Father, who takes account of all that relates to His Son, will love us; Jesus also will love us, and will come to us. Judas (not Iscariot) did not understand this, because he saw no farther than a bodily manifestation of Christ, such as the world also could perceive. Jesus, therefore, adds, that the truly obedient disciple (and here He speaks more spiritually and generally of His word, not merely of His commandments), should be loved of the Father, and that the Father and Himself would come and make their abode with him. So that, if there be obedience, while waiting for the time when we shall go and dwell with Jesus in the Father's presence, He and the Father dwell in us. The Father and the Son manifest themselves in us, in whom the Holy Ghost is dwelling, even as the Father and the Holy Ghost were present, when the Son was here below. Doubtless, in another way, for He was the Son, and we only live by Him-the Holy Ghost only dwelling in us. But, with respect to those glorious Persons, they are not disunited. The Father did the works in Christ, and Jesus cast out devils by the Holy Ghost; nevertheless, the Son wrought. If the Holy Ghost is in us, the Father and the Son come and make their abode in us. Only, it will be observed here, that there is government. We are, according to the new life, sanctified unto obedience. It is not here a question of the love of God in sovereign grace to a sinner, but of the Father's dealings with His children. Therefore it is in the path of obedience that the manifestations of the Father's love and the love of Christ, are found. We love but do not caress our naughty children. If we grieve the Spirit, He will not be in us the power of the manifestation to our souls of the Father and the Son. God may restore us by His love, and by testifying when we have wandered: but communion is in obedience. Finally, Jesus was to be obeyed; but it was the Father's word to Jesus, observe, as He was here below. His words were the words of the Father.

The Holy Ghost bears testimony to that which Christ was, as well as to His glory. It is the manifestation of the perfect life of man, of God in man, of the Father in the Son; the manifestation of the Father by the Son who is in the bosom of the Father. Such were the words of the Son here below; and when we speak of His commandments, it is not only the manifestation of His glory by the Holy Ghost, when He is on high, and its results; but His commandments when He spoke here below, and spoke the words of God; for He had not the Holy Ghost by measure, so that His words would have been mingled, and partly imperfect, or at least not divine. He was truly man, and ever man; but it was God manifest in the flesh (comp. 1 John 2). The old commandment from the beginning is new, inasmuch as this same life which expressed itself in His commandments now moves in and animates us-true in Him and in us. The commandments are those of the man Christ, yet they are the commandments of God and the words of the Father, according to the life that has been manifested in this world in the person of Christ. They express in Him, and form and direct in us, that eternal life which was with the Father, and which has been manifested to us in man, in Him whom the apostles could see, hear, and touch; and which life we possess in Him. Nevertheless, the Holy Ghost has been given us to lead us into all truth; according to this same chapter of John's Epistle-"Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

To direct life, is different from knowing all things. The two are connected, because in walking according to that life, we do not grieve the Holy Spirit, and we are in the light. To direct life, where it exists, is not the same thing as to give a law imposed on man in the flesh (righteously, no doubt), promising him life if he keeps these commandments. This is the difference between the commandments of Christ and the law-not as to authority, divine authority is always the same in itself-but that the law offers life, and is addressed to man responsible in flesh, offering him life as the result; while the commandments of Christ express and direct the life of one who lives through the Spirit, in connection with his union to Christ. The Holy Ghost -who, besides this, teaches all things-brought to remembrance the commandments of Christ. It is the same thing in detail, by His grace, with Christians individually.

Finally, the Lord, in the midst of this world, left His peace to His disciples. It is when going away, and in the full revelation of God, that He could say this to them, so that He possessed it, in spite of the world. He had gone through wrath, put away sin for them, destroyed the power of the enemy in death, made reconciliation by fully glorifying God; peace was made, and made for them before God, as He was; so that this peace was perfect in the light: and it was perfect in the world, because it brought them so into connection with God that the world could not even touch or reach their source of joy. Moreover, Jesus, had so accomplished this for them, and He bestowed it on them in such a way, that He gave them the peace which He Himself had with the Father, and in which, consequently, He walked in this world. The world gives a part of its goods while not relinquishing them. Christ introduces into the enjoyment of that which is His own-of His own position before the Father. The world does not and cannot give in this manner. How perfect must that peace have been which He enjoyed with the Father -that peace He gives to us-His own.

There remains yet one precious thought, a proof of grace in Jesus. He so reckons upon our affection, and that as personal to Himself, that He says to them-" If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said, I am going away." He gives us to be interested in His own glory, in His happiness, and, in it, to find our own. Good and precious Savior, we do indeed rejoice that Thou who hast suffered so much for us, hast now fulfilled all things, and art at rest with Thy Father, whatever may be Thine active love for us. Oh that we knew and loved Thee better. But still we can say in fullness of heart, Come quickly, Lord I Leave once more the throne of Thy rest and of Thy personal glory, to come and take us to Thyself, that all may be fulfilled for us also, and that we may be with Thee and in the light of Thy Father's countenance and in His house. Thy grace is infinite, but

Thy presence and the joy of the Father shall be the rest of our hearts, and our eternal joy.

Here the Lord closes this part of His discourse. He had shown them, as a whole, all that flowed from His departure and from His death. The glory of His person, observe, is always here the subject; for, even with regard to His death, it is said-" Now is the Son of Man glorified." Nevertheless, He had fore-warned them of it, that it might strengthen, and not weaken, their faith. For He would not talk much more with them. The world was under the power of the enemy, and he was coming. Not because he had anything in Christ-he had nothing-therefore he had not even the power of death over Him. His death was not the effect of the power of Satan over Him, but thereby He showed the world that He loved the Father; and He was obedient to the Father, cost what it would. If Satan was the prince of this world, Jesus did not seek to maintain His Messiah glory in it. But He showed to the world, there where Satan's power was, the fullness of grace and of

perfection in His own person; in order that the world might come out from itself (if I may use such an expression), those, at least, who had ears to hear. The Lord then ceases to speak, and goes forth. He is no longer seated with His own, as of this world. He arises and quits it.

That which we have said of the Lord's commandments, given during His sojourn here below (a thought to which the succeeding chapters will give interesting development), helps us much in understanding the Lord's whole discourse here, to the end of chap. 16. The subject is divided into two principal parts. The action of the Holy Ghost when the Lord should be away, and the relationship of the disciples to Him during His stay upon the earth. On the one hand, that which flowed from His exaltation to the right hand of God (which raised Him above the question of Jew and Gentile); and, on the other, that which depended on His presence upon earth, as necessarily centering all the promises in His own person, and the relations of His own with Himself, viewed as in connection with the earth and themselves in it, even when He should be absent. There were, in consequence, two kinds of testimony: that of the Holy Ghost, strictly speaking, i.e., what He revealed in reference to Jesus ascended on high; and that of the disciples themselves, as eye-witnesses to all that they had seen of Jesus on the earth (chap. 15:26, 27). Not that for this purpose they were without the help of the Holy Ghost, but the latter was not the new testimony of the heavenly glory by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. He brought to their remembrance that which Jesus had been, and that which He had spoken, while on earth. Therefore, in the passage we have been reading, His work is thus described (14:26): "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you" (compare ver. 25). The two works of the Holy Ghost are here presented. Jesus had spoken many things unto them-the Holy Ghost would teach them all things; moreover, He would bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had said. In chap. 16:12, 13, Jesus tells them that He had many things to say, but that they could not bear them then. Afterward, the Spirit of truth should lead them into all truth. He should not speak from Himself; but whatsoever He should hear, that should He speak. He was not like an individual spirit, who speaks on his own account. One with the Father and the Son, and come down to reveal the glory and the counsels of God, all His communications would be in connection with them, revealing the glory of Christ ascended on high-of Christ, to whom belonged all that the Father had. Here, it is no question of recalling all that Jesus had said upon earth; all is heavenly, in connection with that which is on high, and with the full glory of Jesus, or else relates to the future purposes of God. We shall return to this subject by and bye. I have said these few words, to mark the distinctions which I have pointed out.

OH 15{Chapter 15 The beginning of this chapter, and that which relates to the Vine, belongs to the earthly portion -to that which Jesus was on earth -to His relationship with His disciples as on the earth, and does not go beyond that position.

"I am the true Vine." Jehovah had planted a vine brought out of Egypt (Psa. 80:8). This is Israel after the flesh; but it was not the true Vine. The true Vine was His Son, whom He brought up out of Egypt-. Jesus. He presents Himself thus to His disciples. Here it is not that which He will be after His departure; He was this upon earth, and distinctively upon earth. We do not speak of planting vines in heaven.

The disciples would have considered Him as the most excellent branch of the Vine; but thus He would have been only a member of Israel, whereas He was Himself the vessel, the source of

blessing, according to the promises of God. The true Vine, therefore, is not Israel; quite the contrary, it is Christ in contrast with Israel, but Christ planted on earth, taking Israel's place, as the true Vine. The Father cultivates this plant, evidently on the earth. There is no need of a husbandman in heaven. Those who are attached to Christ, as the remnant of Israel, the disciples, need this culture. It is on the earth that fruit-bearing is looked for. The Lord, therefore, says to them: "Ye are clean already, through the word which I have spoken unto you"; "Ye are the branches." Judas, perhaps, it may be said, was taken away. The others should be proved and cleansed, that they might bear more fruit.

I do not doubt that this relationship, in principle, still subsists. Those who make a profession, who attach themselves to Christ in order to follow Him, will, if there is life, be cleansed; if not, that which they have will be taken away. Observe, therefore, here, that the Lord speaks only of His word-that of the true prophet-and of judgment, whether in discipline or in cutting off. Consequently, He speaks not of the power of God, but of the responsibility of man-a responsibility which man will certainly not be able to meet, without grace; but which has, nevertheless, that character of personal responsibility here.

Jesus was the source of all their strength. They were to abide in Him; therefore-for this is the order-He would abide in them. We have seen in chap. 14, that He does not speak here of the sovereign exercise of love in salvation, but of the government of children by their Father; so that blessing depends on walk (vers. 21, 23). Here the husbandman seeks for fruit; but the instruction given presents entire dependence on the Vine as the means of producing it. And He shows the disciples that, walking on earth, they should be pruned by the Father, and be cut off if they bore no fruit; for the subject here is not that relationship with Christ in heaven by the Holy Ghost, which cannot be broken, but of that link which even then was formed here below, which might be vital and eternal, or which might not. Fruit should be the proof.

In the former Vine this was not necessary; they were Jews by birth-they were circumcised-they kept the ordinances, and abode in the vine as good branches, with-out bearing any fruit at all. They were only cut off from Israel for willful violation of the law. Here it is not a relationship with Jehovah founded on the circumstance of being born of a certain family. That which is looked for is the glorifying the Father by fruit-bearing. It is this which will show that they are the disciples of Him who has borne so much.

Christ, then, was the true Vine-the Father, the Husbandman-the eleven were the branches. They were to abide in Him; which is realized by not thinking to produce any fruit except as in Him, looking to Him first. Christ precedes fruit. It is dependence, practical habitual nearness of heart to Him, and trust in Him. In this way, Christ in them would be a constant source of strength. and of fruit. He would be in them. Out of Him they could do nothing. If, by abiding in Him, they had the strength of His presence, they should bear much fruit. Moreover, if they did not abide in Him, they should be cast forth to be burnt. Again, if they abode in Him (that is, if there was the constant dependence that draws from the source`, and if the words of Christ abode in them, directing their hearts and thoughts, they should command the resources of divine power. They should ask what they would, and it should be done. But, further, the Father had loved the Son divinely while He dwelt on earth. Jesus did the same with regard to them. They were to abide in His love. In the former verses it was in Him, here it is in His love. By keeping His Father's commandments, He had

abode in His love; by keeping the commandments of Jesus, they should abide in His. Dependence (which implies confidence) and obedience are the two great principles of practical life here below. Thus Jesus walked as man: He knew by experience the true path for His disciples. The commandments of His Father were the expression of what the Father was; by keeping them, the communion of His love was maintained, communion with Himself. The commandments of Jesus when on earth were the expression of what He was, divinely perfect in the path of man. By walking in them, His disciples should be in the communion of His love. The Lord spoke these things to His disciples, in order that His joy should abide in them, and that their joy should be full.

We see that it is not the salvation of a sinner that is the subject treated of here, but the path of a disciple, in order that he may fully enjoy the love of Christ, and that his heart may be unclouded in the place where joy is found.

Neither is the question entered on here, whether a real believer can be separated from God, because the Lord makes obedience the means of abiding in His love. Assuredly, He could not lose the favor of His Father, or cease to be the object of His love. That was out of the question; and yet He says, "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love." It is the walk and the strength of a disciple that is spoken of, and not the means of salvation.

At ver. 12, another part of the subject begins. He wills, this is His commandment, that they should love one another, as He had loved them. Before, He had spoken of the Father's love for Him, which flowed from heaven into His heart here below. He had loved them in this same way; but He had also been a companion, a servant, in this love. Thus the disciples were to love one another with a love that rose above all the weaknesses of others, and which was, at the same time, brotherly, and caused the one who felt it to be the servant of his brother. It went so far as to lay down life itself for one's friends. Now, to Jesus, he who obeyed Him was His friend. Observe, He does not say that He would be their friend. He was our friend, when He gave His life for sinners: we are His friends when we enjoy His confidence, as He here expresses it-"I have told you all things that I have heard of my Father." Men speak of their affairs according to the necessity of doing so, which may arise to those who are concerned in them. I impart all my own thoughts to one who is my friend. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I will do?" and Abraham was called the "Friend of God." Now it was not things concerning Abraham himself that God then told Abraham (He had done so as God), but things concerning the world-Sodom. God does the same with respect to the Church, practically with respect to the obedient disciple; such a one should be the depositary of His thoughts. Moreover, He had chosen them for this. It was not they who had chosen Him by the exercise of their own will. He had chosen them, and ordained them to go and bring forth fruit, and fruit that should remain; so that being thus chosen of Christ for the work, they should receive from the Father, who could not fail them in this case, whatsoever they should ask. Here the Lord comes to the source and certainty of grace, in order that the practical responsibility, under which He puts them, should not cloud the divine grace, which acted towards them and placed them there.

They were, therefore, to love one another. That the world should hate them was but the natural consequence of its hatred to Christ; it sealed their association with Him. The world loves that which is of the world: this is quite natural. The disciples were not of it; and, besides, the Jesus whom it had rejected had chosen them and separated them from the world, therefore it would hate

them. There was the moral reason, namely, that they were not of it; but that demonstrated their relationship to Christ, and His sovereign rights, by which He had taken them to Himself out of a rebellious world. They should have the same portion as their Master, it should be for His name's sake, because the world--and here He speaks especially of the Jews, among whom He had labored--knew not the Father, who had sent Him in love. To make their boast of Jehovah, as their God, suited them very well. They would have received the Messiah on that footing. To know the Father, revealed in His true character by the Son, was quite a different thing. Nevertheless, the Son had revealed Him; and, both by His words and His works, had manifested the Father and His perfections. If Christ had not come and spoken unto them, God would not have to reproach them with sin. They might still drag on in an unpurged state. Their real condition would not have been thoroughly tested, God would have had still a means to use; He loved Israel too much to condemn them while there was one left untried. If the Lord had not done among them the works which no other man had done, they might have remained as they were, refused to believe in Him, and not have been guilty before God. They would have been still the object of Jehovah's long-suffering; but, in fact, they had seen and hated both the Son and the Father. The Father had been fully manifested in the Son, in Jesus; and if when God was fully manifested and in grace, they rejected Him, what could be done except to leave them in sin, afar from God. If He had been manifested only in part, they would have had an excuse; they might have said--"Ah! if He had shown grace, if we had known Him as He is, we would not have rejected Him." They could not now say this. They had seen the Father and the Son in Jesus. Alas! they had seen and hated.

But this was only the fulfillment of that which was foretold of them in their law. As to the testimony borne to God by the people, and of a Messiah received by them, all was over. They had hated him without a cause.

The Lord now turns to the Holy Ghost, who should come to maintain His glory, which the people had cast down to the ground. The Jews had not known the Father manifested in the Son; the Holy Ghost should now come from the Father to bear witness of the Son. The Son should send Him from the Father. This was the new testimony, and was to be rendered unto Jesus, the Son of God, ascended up to heaven. The disciples also should bear witness of Him, because they had been with Him from the beginning. They were to testify, with the help of the Holy Ghost, as eye-witnesses of His life on earth, of the manifestation of the Father in Him. The Holy Ghost, sent by Him was the witness to His glory with the Father, whence He Himself had come. Thus, in Christ, the true Vine, we have the disciples, the branches clean already, Christ being still present on the earth. After His departure, they were to maintain this practical relationship. They should be in relationship with Him, as He, here below, had been with the Father. And they were to be with one another as he had been with them. Their position was outside the world. Now the Jews had hated both the Son and the Father,--the Holy Ghost should bear witness to the Son with the Father, and in the Father; and the disciples should testify also of that which He had been on earth.

The Holy Ghost and, in a certain sense, the disciples take the place of Jesus and of the old vine, on the earth. The presence and the testimony of the Holy Ghost on earth are now developed.

It is well to notice the connection of the subjects in the passages we are considering. That of which the disciples were to bear witness by walking according to the commandment of chap. 15 is the manifestation of Christ, of which He speaks in the commencement of 14.

It was also precisely this which the Jews had seen and hated, for the Father had been manifested in the Son on earth. Moreover, the testimony of the Holy Ghost (15:26) was the result of Christ's prayer to the Father, a prayer which was connected with their obedience, of which He speaks (14:15-17, 26). The consequence of this being that they knew that He was in the Father, and they in Him, and He in them; i.e., their true position in connection with Himself in heaven according to the glory of His person, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Nevertheless, there is development as well as connection. In chap. 14 the Lord, although quitting the earth, speaks in connection with that which He was upon earth. It is (not Christ Himself) the Father who sends the Holy Ghost at His request. He goes from earth to heaven on their part as Mediator. He would pray the Father, and the Father would give them another comforter who should continue with them, not leaving them as He was doing. Their relationship to the Father depending on Him, it should be to them as believing in Him, that He should be sent; not to the world; not upon Jews, as such. It should be in His name. More-over, the Holy Ghost would Himself teach them, and He would recall to their mind the commandments of Jesus-all that He had said unto them. For chap. 14 gives the whole position that resulted from the manifestation of the Son and that of the Father in Him, and from His departure. That is to say, its result with regard to the disciples.

Now, in chap. 15, He had exhausted the subject of commandments in connection with the life manifested in Himself here below; and at the close of this chapter, He considers Himself as ascended, and He adds, " But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father." He comes, indeed, from the Father-for our relationship is, and ought to be, immediate to Him. It is there that Christ has placed us. But in this verse it is not the Father who sends Him at the request of Jesus and in His name. Christ has taken His place, in the glory of His person, and according to the glorious fruits of His work, and He sends Him. Consequently, He bears witness to that which Christ is in heaven. No doubt He makes us perceive what Jesus was here below, where in infinite grace He manifested the Father, and perceive it much better than they did, who were with Him during His sojourn on earth. Nevertheless, the Holy Ghost is sent by Christ from heaven, and He reveals to us the Son, whom now we know as having perfectly and divinely (albeit as man and amid sinful men) manifested the Father. We know, I repeat, the Son, as with the Father, and in the Father. From thence it is He has sent us the Holy Ghost.

OH 16{In chap. 16 a farther step is taken in the revelation of this grace. The Holy Ghost is looked upon as already here below.

In this chapter, the Lord declares that He has set forth all His instruction with regard to His departure, to their sufferings in the world as holding His place; to their joy, as being in the same relationship to Him as that in which He had been while on earth to His Father; to their knowledge of the fact that He was in the Father and they in Him, and He Himself in them; to the gift of the Holy Ghost, in order to prepare them for all that would happen when He was gone, that they might not be offended. For they should be cast out of the synagogues, and he who should kill them would think that he was serving God. This would be the case with those who, resting in their old doctrines as a form, and rejecting the light, would only use the form of truth by which they accredited the flesh as orthodox, to resist the light which, according to the Spirit, would judge the flesh. This would they do, because they knew neither the Father nor Jesus the Son of the Father.



Nature is occupied with that which it loses. Faith looks at the future into which God leads. Precious thought!

Nature acted in the disciples; they loved Jesus; they grieved at His going away. We can understand this; but faith would not have stopped there. If they had apprehended the necessary glory of the person of Jesus; if their affection, animated by faith, had thought of Him and not of themselves, they would have asked "Whither guest Thou?" Nevertheless, He who thought of them assures them that it would be gain to them even to lose Him. Glorious fruit of the ways of God! Their gain would be in this, that the Comforter should be here on earth with them and in them. Here, observe, Jesus does not speak of the Father. It was the Comforter here below in His stead, to maintain the testimony of His love for the disciples, and His relationship to them. Christ was going away, for if He went not away, the Comforter would not come; but if He departed, He would send Him. When He was come, He would act with regard to the world that rejected Christ and persecuted His disciples; and He would act for blessing in the disciples themselves.

With regard to the world, the Comforter had one only subject of testimony, in order to demonstrate the sin of the world. It had not believed in Jesus, in the Son. Doubtless there was sin of every kind, and, to speak truth, nothing but sin, sin that deserved judgment. But the rejection of Christ put the whole world under one common judgment. No doubt every one shall answer for his sins, and the Holy Ghost makes us feel them. But as a system responsible to God, the world had rejected His Son-that was the ground on which God dealt with the world now, that it was which made manifest the heart of man. It was the demonstration that God being fully revealed in love, such as He was, man would not receive Him. He came, not imputing their trespasses unto them, but they rejected Him. The presence of Jesus was not the Son of God Himself manifested in His glory, from which man might shrink with fear, it was what He was morally, in His nature, in His character. Man hated Him; all testimony to bring man to God was unavailing. The plainer the testimony, the more he turned from it and opposed it. The demonstration of the sin of the world was its having rejected Christ. Terrible testimony, that God in goodness, should excite detestation because He was perfect, and perfectly good! Such is man. But this was God's path to some-thing altogether different-the demonstration of righteousness, in that Christ went to His Father, and the world saw Him no more. It was the result of His rejection. Human righteousness there was none. Man's sin was proved by the rejection of Christ. The Cross was, indeed, judgment executed upon sin, and in that sense it was righteousness; but in this world it was the only righteous One condemned by man and forsaken by God -it was not the manifestation of righteousness. If He had been delivered there, and had become the king of Israel, that would not have been an adequate consequence of His having glorified God. Having glorified God His Father He was going to sit at His right hand, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, to be glorified in God Himself, to sit on the Father's throne. To set Him there was divine righteousness. This same righteousness deprived the world, as it is, of Jesus forever.

Man saw Him no more. Moreover, Satan had been proved to be the prince of this world, by leading all men against the Lord Jesus. To accomplish the purposes of God in grace, Jesus does not resist. He gives Himself up to death. He who has the power of death committed himself thoroughly. In his desire to ruin man, he had to hazard everything in his enterprise against the Prince of Life. He was able to associate the whole world with himself in this, Jew and Gentile priest and people, governor, soldier, and subject. The world was there, headed by its prince, on that

solemn day. The enemy had everything at stake, and the world was with him. But Christ has risen, He has ascended to His Father, and has sent down the Holy Ghost. All the motives that govern the world, and the power by which Satan held men captive, are shown to be of him; he is judged. The power of the Holy Ghost is the testimony of this and surmounts all the powers of the enemy. The world is not yet judged-it will be in another manner, but its prince is judged. It is in that character that he has been judged, for he led the world against Him who is manifested to be the Son of God, by the presence of the Holy Ghost.

All this took place through the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, sent down by Christ. His presence in itself was the demonstration of these three things; for, if the Holy Ghost was here, the world had rejected the Son of God. Righteousness was evidenced by Jesus being at the right hand of God, of which the presence of the Holy Ghost was the proof, as well as in the fact that the world had lost Him. Now, the world which rejected Him was not judged, but Satan having led it to reject the Son, the presence of the Holy Ghost proved that Jesus had destroyed the power of death; that he who had possessed that power was thus judged; that he had shown himself to be the enemy of Him whom the Father had owned; that his power was gone, and victory belonged to the second Adam, when Satan's whole power had been arrayed against the human weakness of Him who in love had yielded to it.

The presence of the Holy Ghost should be the demonstration not of Christ's rights as Messiah, true as they were, but of those truths that related to man, to the world, in which Israel was now lost, having rejected the promises, although God would preserve the nation for Himself. But the Holy Ghost was doing something more than demonstrating the condition of the world: He would accomplish a work in the disciples: He would lead them into all truth, and He would show them things to come. For Jesus had many things to tell them which they were not yet able to bear. When the Holy Ghost should be in them, He should be their strength in them as well as their teacher, and it would be a wholly different state of things for the disciples. Here He is considered as present on the earth in place of Jesus, and dwelling in the disciples, not as an individual spirit speaking from Himself, but even as Jesus said, "As I hear I judge," with a judgment perfectly divine and heavenly; so the Holy Ghost, acting in the disciples, would speak that which came from above, and of the future, according to divine knowledge. It should be heaven and the future of which He would speak-the one and the other being witnesses that it was a knowledge which belonged to God.

But farther. He takes here the place of Christ. Jesus had glorified the Father on earth. The Holy Ghost would glorify Jesus, with reference to the glory that belonged to His person and to His position. He does not here speak directly of the glory of the Father. The disciples had seen the glory of the life of Christ on earth; the Holy Ghost would unfold to them His glory in that which belonged to Him as glorified with the Father-that which was His own.

They would learn it in part: this is man's measure when the things of God are in question, but its extent is declared by the Lord Himself: "He shall glorify me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All that the Father has is mine: therefore, said I, He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

Thus we have the gift of the Holy Ghost variously presented in connection with Christ. In dependence on His Father, and representing His disciples as gone up from among them, on their

behalf He addresses Himself to the Father; He asks the Father to send the Holy Ghost (14:16). Afterward we find that His own name is all powerful. All blessing from the Father comes in His name. It is on His account, and according to the efficacy of His name, of all that in Him is acceptable to the Father, that good comes to us; thus the Father will send the Holy Ghost in His name (14:26). And Christ being glorified on high, and having taken His place with His Father, He Himself sends the Holy Ghost (15:26) from the Father, as proceeding from Him. Finally, the Holy Ghost is present here in this world (in and with the disciples,) and He glorifies Jesus, and takes of His, and reveals it to His own (16:13, 14, 15). Here all the glory of the person of Christ is set forth, as well as the rights belonging to the position He has taken. All things that the Father hath are His. He has taken His position according to the eternal counsels of God, in virtue of His work as Son of Man. But if He has entered into possession in this character, all that He possesses in it is His, as a Son, to whom (being one with the Father) all that the Father has belongs.

There He should be hidden for a while; the disciples should afterward see Him, for it was only the accomplishment of the ways of God; it was no question of being, as it were, lost by death. He was going to His Father. On this point the disciples understood nothing. The Lord develops the fact and its consequences, without yet showing them the whole import of what He said. He takes it up on the human and historical side. The world would rejoice at having got rid of Him. Miserable joy! The disciples would lament, although it was the true source of joy for them; but their sorrow should be turned into joy. As testimony, this took place when He showed Himself to them after His resurrection. It will be fully accomplished when He shall return to receive them unto Himself. But when they had seen Him again, they should understand the relationship in which He had placed them with His Father (they should enjoy it by the Holy Ghost). It should not be as though they could not themselves draw nigh to the Father, while Christ could do so; as Martha said, "I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, He will give it Thee." They might themselves go directly to the Father who loved them, because they had believed in Jesus, and had received Him when he had humbled Himself in this world of sin (in principle it is always thus), and asking what they would in His name they should receive it, so that their joy might be full in the consciousness of the blessed position of unfailing favor into which they were brought, and of the value of all that they possessed in Christ.

Nevertheless, the Lord already declares to them the basis of the truth-He came from the Father, He was going away to the Father. The disciples think they understand that which He had thus spoken without a parable. They felt that He had divined their thought, for they had not expressed it to Him. Yet they did not rise really to the height of what He said. He had told them that they had believed in His having come from God. This they understood; and that which had taken place had confirmed them in this faith, and they declare their conviction with regard to this truth. But they do not enter into the thought of coming from the Father, and going away to the Father. They fancied themselves quite in the light, but they had apprehended nothing that raised them above the effect of Christ's rejection, which the belief that he came from the Father and was going to the Father would have done. Jesus therefore declares to them, that His death would scatter them, and that they would forsake Him. His Father would be with Him; he should not be alone. Nevertheless He had explained all these things to them, in order that they should have peace in Him. In the world that rejected Him they should have tribulation; but He had overcome the world, they might be of good cheer.

This ends the conversations of Jesus with His disciples on earth. In the following chapter He addresses His Father as taking His own place in departing, and giving His disciples theirs with regard to the Father and to the world, after He had gone away to be glorified with the Father.

OH 17{Chapter 17 This chapter is divided thus: ver. 1-5 relate to Christ Himself, to His position in glory, to His work, and to that glory as belonging to His person and the result of His work; 1-3, present His position in two aspects; 4, 5, His work, and its result; 6-13, the relationship of His disciples to the Father, whose name He had revealed to them, and whose words-which He had Himself received-He had given them: He also prays for them; 14-21, their consequent relationship to the world; 20, 21, He introduces those who should believe through their means into the enjoyment of their blessing; 22-26, make known the result, both future and in this world, for them. The possession of the glory which Christ Himself had received from the Father-to be with Him, enjoying the sight of His glory-that the Father's love should be with them here below, even as Christ Himself had been its object-and that Christ Himself should be in them.

This is a brief summary of this marvelous chapter, in which we are admitted, not to the discourse of Christ with man, but to hear the desires of His heart, when He pours it out to His Father for the blessing of those that are His own. Wonderful grace, that permits us to hear these desires, and to understand all the privileges that flow from His thus caring for us, from our being the subject of intercourse between the Father and the Son, of their common love towards us, when Christ expresses His own desires, that which He has at heart, and which He presents to the Father as His own personal wishes.

Some explanations may assist in apprehending the meaning of certain passages in this marvelous and precious chapter. May the Spirit of God aid us!

The Lord, whose looks of love had until then been directed towards His disciples on the earth, now lifts His eyes to heaven as He addresses His Father. The hour was come to glorify the Son, in order that from the glory He might glorify the Father. This is, speaking generally, the new position. His career here was finished, and He had to ascend on high. Two things were connected with this-power over all flesh, and the gift of eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him. "The head of every man is Christ." Those whom the Father has given Him receive eternal life from Him who has gone up on high. Eternal life was the knowledge of the Father, the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom He had sent. The knowledge of the Almighty gave assurance to the pilgrim of faith; that of Jehovah, the certainty of the fulfillment of the promises of God to Israel; that of the Father, who sent the Son Jesus Christ, the Anointed Man and the Savior, was life eternal. Here it is not the divinity of His person that is in question as to Christ, but the place that He had taken in fulfilling the counsels of God. That which is said of Jesus in this chapter could only be said of one who is God; but the point treated is that of His place in the counsels of God, and not the revelation of His nature. He receives all from His Father; He is sent by Him. We see the same truth of the communication of eternal life in connection with His divine nature and His oneness with the Father in 1 John 5:20. Here He fulfills the Father's will, and is dependent on Him in the place that He has taken and that He is going to take, even in the glory, however glorious His nature may be. So, also, in the fifth chapter of our gospel, He quickens whom He will; here it is those whom the Father has given Him. And the life He gives is realized in the knowledge of the Father, and of Jesus Christ, whom He has sent.

He now declares the conditions under which He takes this place on high. He had perfectly glorified the Father on earth. Nothing that manifested God the Father, had been wanting, whatever might be the difficulty; the contradiction of sinners was but an occasion for so doing. But that very thing made the sorrow infinite. Nevertheless, Jesus had accomplished that glory on the earth, in the face of all that opposed itself. His glory with the Father in heaven was but the just consequence, the necessary consequence in mere justice. Moreover, Jesus had had this glory with His Father before the world was. His work and His person alike gave Him a right to it. The Father glorified on earth by the Son-the Son glorified with the Father on high; such is the revelation contained in these verses. A right, proceeding from His person as Son, but to a glory into which He entered as man, in consequence of having, as such, perfectly glorified His Father on earth. These are the verses that relate to Christ.

He now speaks of the disciples; how they entered into their peculiar place in-connection with this position of Jesus. He had manifested the Father's name to those whom the Father had given Him out of the world. They belonged to the Father, and the Father had given them to Jesus. They had kept the Father's word. It was faith in the revelation which the Son had made of the Father. The words of the prophets were true, the faithful enjoyed them, they sustained their faith. But the word of the Father, by Jesus, revealed the Father Himself, in Him whom the Father had sent; and to know the Father and the Son was life eternal. This was quite another thing from hopes connected with the Messiah or what Jehovah had given Him. It is, thus, also, that the disciples are presented to the Father; not as receiving Christ in the character of Messiah, and honoring Him as possessing His power by that title. They had known that all which Jesus had was of the Father. was then the Son, His relationship to the Father was acknowledged. Dull of comprehension as they were, the Lord recognizes them according to His appreciation of their faith, according to the object of that faith, as known to Himself; and not according to their intelligence. Precious truth! (Compare 14:7.)

They acknowledged Jesus, then, as receiving all from the Father; for Jesus had given them all the words that the Father had given Him. Thus He had brought them in their own souls, into the consciousness of the relationship between the Son and the Father, into full communion; according to the communications of the Father to the Son. He speaks of their position through faith-not of their realization of this position. Thus they had acknowledged that Jesus came forth from the Father, and that He came with the Father's authority-the Father had sent Him. It was from thence He came, and He came furnished with the authority of a mission from the Father. This was their position by faith.

And now-the disciples being this already-He places them, according to His thoughts and His desires, before the Father in prayer. He prays for them; distinguishing them completely from the world. The time would come when (according to Psa. 2) He would ask of the Father with reference to the world; He was not doing so now, but for those, out of the world, whom the Father had given Him. For they were the Father's.

The Lord presents to the Father two motives for His request: 1st. They were the Father's; so that the Father, for His own glory, and because of His affection for that which belonged to Him, should keep them: 2nd. Jesus was glorified in them, so that if Jesus was the object of the Father's affection, for that reason also the Father should keep them. Besides, the interests of the Father and the Son could not be separated. If they were the Father's they were, in fact, the Son's, and it

was but an example of that universal truth, all that was the Son's was the Father's, and all that was the Father's was the Son's. What a place for us! to be the object of this mutual affection, of these common and inseparable interests of the Father and the Son. This is the great principle-the great foundation of the prayer of Christ. He prayed the Father for His disciples, because they belonged to the Father; Jesus must needs, therefore, seek their blessing. The Father would be thoroughly interested for them, because in them Christ was to be glorified. He then presents the circumstances to which the prayer applied. He was no longer in this world Himself. They would be deprived of His personal care as present with them. But they would be in this world, while He was coming to the Father. This is the ground of His request with regard to their position. He puts them in connection, therefore, with the Holy Father. All the perfect love of such a Father-the Father of Jesus and their Father-maintaining (this was their 'blessing') the holiness that His nature required, if they were to be in relationship with Him. It was direct guardianship. The Father would keep in His own name those whom he had given to Jesus. The connection thus was direct. Jesus committed them to Him, and that, not only now, as belonging to the Father, but as

His own, invested with all the value which that would give them in the Father's eyes.

The object of His solicitude was to keep them in unity, even as the Father and the Son are one. One only divine Spirit was the bond of that oneness. In this sense, the bond was truly divine. So far as they were filled with the Holy Spirit, they had but one mind, one life one aim. The Father and the Son were their only object. They had only the thoughts of God; because God Himself, the Holy Ghost, was the source of their thoughts. It was one only divine power and nature that united them-the Holy Ghost. The mind, the aim, the life, the whole moral existence, were consequently one. The Lord speaks, necessarily, at the height of His own thoughts, when He expresses His desires for them. If it is a question of realization, we must then think of man; yet of a strength also that is perfected in weakness. This is the sum of the Lord's desires-sons, saints, under the Father's care; one, not by an effort or by agreement, but according to divine power. He, being here, had kept them in the Father's name, faithful to accomplish all that the Father had committed to Him, and to lose none of those that were His. As to Judas, it was only the fulfillment of the Word. The guardianship of Jesus present in the world, could now no longer exist. But He spoke these things, being still here, the disciples hearing them, in order that they might understand that they were placed before the Father in the same position that Christ had held, and that they might thus have fulfilled in themselves, in this same relationship, the joy which Christ had possessed. What unutterable grace! They had lost Him, visibly, to find themselves (by Him and in Him) in His own relationship with the Father, enjoying all that He enjoyed in that communion here below, as being in His place in their own relationship with the Father. Therefore He had imparted to them all the words that the Father had given Him - the material, so to speak, of that communion; and in the especial name of " Holy Father," by which the Son Himself addressed Him from the earth. The Father was to keep those whom the Son had left there. Thus should they have His joy fulfilled in themselves.

This was their relationship to the Father; Jesus being away. He turns now to their relationship with the world, in consequence of the former.

He gave them the Word of His Father; not the Words, to bring them into communion with Him, but His Word, the testimony of what He was; and the world had hated them as it had hated Jesus (the

living and personal testimony of the Father) and the Father Himself. Being thus in relationship with the Father who had taken them out from the men of the world, and having received the Father's Word, they were not of the world even as Jesus was not of the world; and, therefore the world hated them. Nevertheless, the Lord does not pray that they might be taken out of it; but that the Father should keep them from the evil. He enters into the detail of His desires in this respect, grounded on their not being of the world. He repeats this thought as the basis of their position here below. " They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." What then were they to be, by what rule, by what model, were they to be formed? By the truth; and the Father's word is truth. Christ was always the Word, but the living Word among men. In the Scriptures we possess it, written and steadfast. They reveal Him; bear witness to Him. It was thus that the disciples were to be set apart. " Sanctify them by Thy truth; Thy Word is the truth." It was this, personally, that they were to be -formed by the Father's word, as He was revealed in Jesus. Their mission follows. Jesus sends them into the world, as the Father had sent Him into the world. Into the world, in no wise of the world. They are sent into it on the part of Christ; were they of it, they could not be sent into it. But it was not only the Father's word which was the truth, nor the communication of the Father's word by Christ present with His disciples (points, of which from verse 14 till now, Jesus had been speaking, "I have given them Thy word"), He sanctified Himself; He set Himself apart as a heavenly man -above the heavens-a glorified man, in the glory, in order that all truth might shine forth in Him, in His person; raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father. All that the Father is, being thus displayed in Him; the testimony of divine righteousness, of divine love, of divine power, totally overturning the lie of Satan, by which man had been deceived, and falsity brought into the world, the perfect model of that which man was, according to the counsels of God, and as the expression of His power, morally, and in glory - the image of the invisible God. Jesus set Himself apart, in this place, in order that the disciples might be sanctified by the communication to them of what He was; for this communication was the truth, and created them in the image of that which it revealed. So that it was the Father's glory, revealed by Him on earth, and the glory into which He had ascended as man; for that is the complete result-the illustration in glory, of the way in which He had set Himself apart for God, but on behalf of His own. This ends the second part of that which related to the disciples, in communion and in testimony.

In verse 20, He declares that He prays also for those who should believe on Him through their means. Here the character of the unity differs a little from that in verse 11. There, in speaking of the disciples, He says, " as we are"; for the oneness of the Father and the Son showed itself in fixed purpose, Object, love, work, everything. Therefore the disciples were to have that kind of unity. Here, those who believed, inasmuch as receiving and taking part in that which was communicated, had their oneness in the power of the blessing into which they were brought. It was the communion of the Father and of the Son (compare 1 John 1:3; and how similar the language of the apostle is to that of Christ!). Thus, the Lord asks that they may be one in them-the Father and the Son. This was the means to make the world believe that the Father had sent the Son; for here were those that had believed it, who, however opposed their interests and habits might be-however strong their prejudices-yet were one (by this powerful revelation and by this work) in the Father and in the Son. Here His prayer ends, but not all His converse with His Father. He gives us (and here the witnesses and the believers are together) the glory which the Father has given Him. It is the basis of another mode of oneness. All partake, it is true, in glory, of this absolute oneness in thought, object, fixed purpose, which is found in the oneness of the Father and the

Son, Perfection being come, that which the Holy Ghost produced, in His absorbing energy shutting out every other, was natural to all in glory. But the principle of the existence of this unity, added yet another character to that truth-that of manifestation, or at least of an inward source which realized its manifestation in them: "I in them " said Jesus, " and Thou in me." This is not the simple, perfect oneness of verse 11, nor the mutuality and communion of verse 21. It is Christ in all believers, and the Father in Christ; a oneness in which all is perfectly connected with its source; and Christ, whom alone they were to manifest, is in them-and the Father, whom Christ had perfectly manifested, is in Him. The world (for this will be in the millennial glory, and manifested to the world) will then know (He does not say, that it may believe) that Jesus had been sent by the Father. How deny it, when He should be seen in glory? And, moreover, that the disciples had been loved by the Father, even as Jesus Himself was loved. The fact of their possessing the same glory as Christ, would be the proof.

But there was yet more. There is that which the world will not see, because it will not be in it. "Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am." There we are not only like Christ, con-formed to the Son, bearing the image of the heavenly man before the eyes of the world, but with Him. Jesus desires that we should see His glory. Solace and encouragement for us, after having partaken of His shame; but yet more precious, inasmuch as we see that He who has been dishonored as man, and because He became man, for our sake, shall, even on that account, be glorified with a glory above all other glory, save His who has put all things under Him. For He speaks here of given glory. It is this which is so precious to us, because

He has acquired it by His sufferings for us-the just reward for having, in them, perfectly glorified the Father. Now, this is a peculiar joy, entirely beyond the world. The world -will see the glory that we have in common with Christ, and will know that we have been loved as Christ was loved. But there is a secret for those who love Him, which belongs to His person and to our union with Him. God loved Him before the world was-a love in which there is no question of comparison, but of that which is infinite, perfect, and thus in itself satisfying. We shall share this in the sense of seeing our Beloved in it, and of being with Him, and of beholding the glory which the Father has given Him, according to the love wherewith He loved Him before the world had any part whatever in the dealings of God. Christ, then, was the Father's delight. We see Him in the eternal fruit of that love. We shall be in it with Him forever, to enjoy His being in it-that our Jesus, our Beloved, is in it, and is what He is.

Meantime, being such, there was justice in the dealings of God with regard to His rejection. He had fully, perfectly manifested the Father-the world had not known Him, but Jesus had known Him, and the disciples had known that the Father had sent Him. He appeals here, not to the holiness of the Father, that He might keep them according to that blessed name, but to the righteousness of the Father, that He might make a distinction between the world on one side, and Jesus with His own on the other; for there was the moral reason as well as the ineffable love of the Father for the Son. And Jesus would have us enjoy, while here below, before judgment makes the, distinction, that it has been made by the communications of grace.

He had declared unto them the Father's name, and would declare it, even when He had gone up on high, in order that the love wherewith the Father had loved Him might be in them, that their hearts might possess it in this world. What grace! And Jesus Himself in them, the Communicator



of that love, the Source of strength to enjoy it, conducting it, so to speak, in all the perfection in which He enjoyed it, into their hearts, in which He dwelt. Himself the strength, the life, the competency, the right, and the means of enjoying it thus, and as such, in the heart. For it is in the Son who declares it to us, that we know the name of the Father whom He reveals to us.

OH 18{Chapter 18-The history of our Lord's last moments begins after the words that He addressed to His Father. We shall find (even in this part of it) the general character of that which is related in this gospel (according to all that we have seen it), that the events bring out the personal glory of the Lord. We have, indeed, the malice of man strongly characterized; but, the principal object in the picture is the Son of God, not the Son of man, suffering under the weight of that which is come upon Him. We have not the agony in the garden. We have not the expression of His feeling Himself forsaken by God.

The iniquity of Judas is as strongly marked here as in the 13th chapter. He well knew the place-for Jesus was in the habit of resorting thither to commune with His disciples. What a thought, to choose such a place for His betrayal! What inconceivable hardness of heart! But, alas! he had, as it were, given himself up to Satan; the tool of the enemy, the manifestation of his power, and of his true character.

How many things had taken place in that garden! What communications from a heart filled with God's own love, and seeking to make it penetrate into the narrow and too insensible hearts of His beloved disciples! But all was lost upon Judas. He comes, with the agents employed by the malice of the priests and Pharisees, to seize the person of Jesus. But Jesus anticipates them. It is He who presents Himself to them. Knowing all things that should come upon Him, He goes forth, inquiring, "Whom seek ye?" It is the Savior, the Son of God, who offers Himself. They reply, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus saith unto them, "I am He." Judas, also, was there, who knew Him well, and knew that voice, so long familiar to his ears. No one laid hands on Him: but as soon as His word echoes in their hearts, as soon as that divine "I am" is heard within them, they go backward, and fall to the ground. Who will take Him?. He had but to go away and leave them there. But He came not for this; and the time to offer Himself up was come. He asks them again, therefore, "Whom seek ye?" They say, as before, "Jesus of Nazareth." The first time, the divine glory of the person of Christ must needs display itself; and now, His care for the redeemed ones. "If ye seek me," said the Lord, "let these go their way." That the word might be fulfilled, "Of those whom Thou hast given me, I have lost none." He presents Himself as the good shepherd, giving His life for the sheep. He puts Himself before them, that they may escape the danger that threatens them, and that all may come upon Himself. He yields Himself up.

Nevertheless, whatever might be the divine glory that He manifested, and the grace of a Savior who was faithful to His own, He acts in obedience, and in the perfect calmness of an obedience that had counted the whole cost with God, and that received it all from His hand, when the carnal and unintelligent energy of Peter employs force to defend Him who, if He would, had only needed to have gone away, when a word from His lips had cast down to the ground all those who came to take Him; the word that revealed to them the object of their search, depriving them of all power to seize it. When Peter smites the servant Malchus, Jesus takes the place of obedience. "The cup that my Father has given me shall I not drink it?" The divine person of Christ had been manifested; the voluntary offering of Himself had been made, and that, in order to protect His own; and now

His perfect obedience is at the same' time displayed.

The malice of a hardened heart, and the want of intelligence of a carnal, though sincere heart, have been brought to view. Jesus has His place alone and apart. He is the Savior. Submitting thus to man, in order to accomplish the counsels and the will of God, He allows them to take Him whither they would. Little of all that took place is related here. Jesus, although questioned, says scarcely anything of Himself. Every one had already heard that which He taught. He challenges the authority which pursues the inquiry, not officially, but peacefully and morally; and, when unjustly struck, He remonstrates with dignity and perfect calmness, while submitting to the insult. But He does not acknowledge the high-priest in any way; while, at the same time, He does not at all oppose him. He leaves him in his moral incapacity.

The carnal weakness of Peter is manifested; as, before, his carnal energy.

When brought before Pilate although, because of truth, confessing that He was king, the Lord acts with the same calmness and the same submission; but He questions Pilate, and instructs him in such a manner that Pilate can find no fault in Him. Morally incapable, however, of standing at the height of that which was before him, and embarrassed in presence of the divine prisoner, Pilate would have delivered Him by availing himself of a custom then practiced by the government, of releasing a culprit to the Jews at the Passover. But the uneasy indifference of a conscience which, hardened as it was, bowed before the presence of One who (even while thus humbled) could not but reach it, did not thus escape the active malice of those who were doing the enemy's work. The Jews exclaim against the proposal which the governor's disquietude suggested, and choose a robber instead of Jesus. Pilate gives way to his usual inhumanity. In the account, however, given in this gospel, the Jews are prominent, as the real authors (as far as man was concerned) of the Lord's death. Jealous for their ceremonial purity, but indifferent to justice, they are not content to judge Him according to their own law-they choose to have Him put to death by the Romans, for the whole counsel of God must needs be accomplished.

It is on the repeated demands of the Jews that Pilate delivers Christ into their hands-thoroughly guilty in so doing, for he had openly avowed His innocence; and had his conscience decidedly touched and alarmed by the evident proofs there were that he had some extraordinary person before him. He will not show that he is touched, but he is so. The divine glory that pierced through the humiliation of Christ acts upon him, and gives force to the declaration of the Jews that Jesus had made Himself the Son of God. Pilate had scourged Him and given Him up to the insults of the soldiers; and here he would have stopped. Perhaps he hoped that the Jews also would be satisfied with this, and he presents Jesus to them crowned with thorns. Perhaps he hoped that their jealousy with regard to these national insults would induce them to ask for His deliverance. But, ruthlessly pursuing their malicious purpose, they cry out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Pilate objects to this, for himself, while giving them liberty to do it; saying that he finds no fault in Him. Upon this they plead their Jewish law. They had a law of their own, say they, and by this law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. Pilate, already struck and exercised in mind, is the more alarmed; and, going back to the judgment-hall again, questions Jesus. He makes no reply. The pride of Pilate awakes, and he asks if Jesus does not know that he has power to condemn or to release Him. The Lord maintains, in replying, the full dignity of His person. Pilate had no power over Him were it not the will of God-to that He submitted. It heightened the sin of

those who had delivered Him up to suppose that man could do anything against Him, were it not that the will of God was thus to be accomplished. The knowledge of His person formed the measure of the sin committed against Him. The not perceiving it, caused everything to be falsely judged; and, in the case of Judas, showed the most absolute moral blindness. He knew his Master's power. What was the meaning of delivering Him up to man, if it were not that His hour was come? But, this being the case, what was the betrayer's position?

But Jesus always speaks according to the glory of His person, and as being thereby entirely above the circumstances through which He was passing in grace, and in obedience to His Father's will. Pilate is thoroughly disturbed by the Lord's reply, but his feeling is not strong enough to counteract the motive with which the Jews press him, but it has sufficient power to make him throw back upon the Jews all that there was of will in His condemnation, and to make them fully guilty of the Lord's rejection.

Pilate sought to withdraw Him from their fury. At, last, fearing to be accused of infidelity to Caesar, he turns with contempt to the Jews, saying, " Behold your King;" acting -although unconsciously-under the hand of God, to bring out that memorable word from their lips, their condemnation and their calamity even to this day, " We have no king but Caesar." They denied their Messiah. The fatal word which called down the judgment of God, was now pronounced, and Pilate delivers up Jesus to them.

Jesus humbled and bearing His cross, takes His place with the transgressors. Nevertheless, He who would that all should be fulfilled, ordained that a testimony should be rendered to His dignity; and Pilate, perhaps to vex the Jews, certainly to accomplish the purposes of God, affixes to the cross as the Lord's title " Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The twofold truth-the despised Nazarene is the true Messiah. Here then, as throughout this Gospel, the Jews take their place as cast off by God.

At the same time the apostle shows-here, as else-where, that Jesus was the true Messiah, by quoting the prophecies which speak of that which happened to Him in general, with regard to His rejection and His sufferings, so that He is proved to be the Messiah by the very circumstances in which He was rejected of the people.

After the history of His crucifixion, as the act of man, we have that which characterizes it in respect to what Jesus was upon the cross. The blood and water flow from His pierced side.

The devotedness of the women who followed Him, less important, perhaps, on the side of action, shines out in its own way nevertheless, in that perseverance of love which brought them nigh. to the cross. The more responsible position of the apostles, as men, scarcely allowed it to them circumstanced as they were; but this takes nothing from the privilege which grace attaches to woman when faithful to Jesus. But it was the occasion for Christ to give us fresh instruction, by showing Him-self such as He was, and by setting His work before us, above all mere circumstances, as the effect and the expression of a spiritual energy which consecrated Him, as man, entirely to God, offering Himself also to God by the eternal Spirit. His work was done. He had offered Himself up. He returns-so to speak-into His personal relationships. Nature, in His human feelings, is seen in its perfection; and, at the same time, His divine superiority, personally, to the circumstances through which He passed, in grace, as the obedient man. The expression of His

filial feeling shows, that the consecration to God which removed Him from all those affections that are alike the necessity and the duty of man, according to nature, was not the want of human feeling, but the power of the Spirit of God. Seeing the women, He speaks to them no longer as teacher and Savior, the resurrection and the life. It is Jesus, a man, individually, in His human relationships.

"Woman," He saith, "behold thy son;" committing His mother to the care of John, the disciple whom Jesus loved; and to the disciple, "Behold thy mother," and thenceforth that disciple took her to his own home. Sweet and precious commission! A confidence which spoke that which he who was thus loved could alone appreciate, as being its immediate object. This shows us also, that His love for John had a character of human affection and attachment; according to God but not essentially divine, although full of divine grace, a grace which gave it all its value, but which clothed itself with the reality of the human heart. It was this, evidently, which bound Peter and John together. Jesus was their only and common object. Of very different characters-and so much the more united on that account-they thought but of one thing. Absolute consecration to Jesus is the strongest bond between human hearts. It strips them of self, and they have but one soul in thought, intent, and settled purpose, because they have only one object. But in Jesus this was perfect, and it was grace. It is not said, "the disciple who loved Jesus": that would have been quite out of season. It would be to take Jesus entirely out of His place, and His dignity, His personal glory, and to destroy the value of His love to John. Nevertheless, John loved Christ, and consequently appreciated thus His Master's love; and, his heart attached to Him by grace, he devoted himself to the execution of this sweet commission, which he takes pleasure in relating here. It is, indeed, love that tells it, although it does not speak of itself.

I believe that we again see this feeling (used by the Spirit of God, not, evidently, as the foundation, but to give its color to the expression of that which he had seen and known) in the beginning of John's First Epistle.

We also see here that this Gospel does not show us Christ under the weight of His sufferings, but acting in accordance with the glory of His person, as above all things, and fulfilling all things in grace. In perfect calmness He provides for His mother: having done this He knows that all is finished. He has, according to human language, entire self-possession.

There is yet one prophecy to be fulfilled. He saith, "I thirst," and, as God had foretold, they give Him vinegar. He knows that now there is not one detail left of all that was to be accomplished. He bows His head, and Himself gives up His spirit.

Thus, when the whole divine work is accomplished, the divine man, giving -up the ghost, leaves the body which had been its organ and its vessel. The time was come for so doing, and, by doing it, He secured the accomplishment of another divine word-"Not one of His bones shall be broken." But everything bore its part in the fulfillment of those words, and the purposes of Him who had pronounced them beforehand.

A soldier pierces His side with a spear. It is from a dead Savior that flow forth the tokens of an eternal and perfect salvation-the water and the blood: the one, to cleanse the sinner; the other, to expiate his sins. The evangelist saw it: his love for the Lord makes him like to remember that he saw Him thus unto the end: he tells it in order that we may believe. But if we see in the beloved

disciple, the vessel that the Holy Ghost uses (and very sweet it is to see it, and according to the will of God), -we see plainly who it is that uses it. How many things John witnessed which he did not relate! The cry of grief and of abandonment - the earthquake-the centurion's confession-the history of the thief All these things took place before his eyes which were fixed upon his Master, yet he does not mention them. He speaks of that which his Beloved was in the midst of all this. The Holy Ghost causes him to relate that which belonged to the personal glory of Jesus. His affections made him find it a sweet and easy task. The Holy Ghost attached him to it, employed him in that which he was well suited to perform. Through grace, the instrument lent itself readily to the work for which the Holy Ghost set it apart, His memory and his heart were under the dominant and exclusive influence of the Spirit of God. That Spirit employed them in His work. One sympathizes with the instrument; one believes in that which the Holy Ghost relates by his means, for the words are those of the Holy Ghost.

But the rejected Savior was to be with the rich and the honorable in His death, however despised He may previously have been; and two, who dared not confess Him while He lived, awakened now by the greatness of the sin of their nation, and, by the event itself of His death-which the grace of God, who had reserved them for this work, made them feel-occupy themselves with the attentions due to His dead body. Joseph, himself a counselor, comes to ask Pilate for the body of Jesus, Nicodemus joining with him to render the last honors to Him whom they had never followed during His life. We can understand this. To follow Jesus constantly under reproach, and compromise oneself forever on His account, is a very different thing from acting when some great occasion happens in which there is no longer room for the former, and when the extent of the evil compels us to separate from it; and when the good, rejected because it is perfect in testimony, and perfected in its rejection, forces us to take a part, if, through grace, any moral sense exists in us. God thus fulfilled His words of truth. Joseph and Nicodemus place the Lord's body in a new sepulcher, in a garden near the cross; for, on account of its being the Jews' preparation, they would do no more at that moment.

Nothing can be more touching, more deeply interesting, than divine grace thus expressing itself in human tenderness, and taking its form. While possessing the entire reality of human affection, it had all the power and depth of divine grace.. It was divine grace that Jesus should have such affections. On the other hand, nothing could be farther from the appreciation of this sovereign source of divine love, flowing through the perfect channel which it made for itself by its own power, than the pretension to express our love as reciprocal: it would be, on the contrary, to fail entirely in that appreciation. True saints among the Moravians have called Jesus brother, and others have borrowed their hymns or the expression. The Word never says so. He is not ashamed to call us brethren, but it is quite another thing for us to call Him so. The personal dignity of Christ is never lost in the intensity and tenderness of His love.

In chap. 20 we have, in a summary of several of the leading facts among those which took place after the resurrection of Jesus, a picture of all the consequences of that great event, in immediate connection with the grace that produced them, and with the affections that ought to be seen in the faithful when again brought into relationship with the Lord.

Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils, appears first in the scene: a touching expression of the ways of God. She represents, I doubt not, the Jewish remnant of that day

personally attached to the Lord, but not knowing the power of His resurrection. She is alone in her love; the very strength of her affection isolates her. She was not the only one saved, but she comes alone to seek-wrongly to seek, if you will, but to seek Jesus, before the testimony of His glory shines forth in a world of darkness, because she loved Himself.

She comes before the other women, while it was yet dark. It is a loving heart (we have already seen it in the believing women), occupied with Jesus, when the public testimony of man is still entirely wanting. And it is to this that Jesus first manifests Himself when He has risen. Nevertheless, her heart knew where it would find a response. She goes away to Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, when she does not find the body of Christ. Peter and that other disciple go, and find the proofs of a resurrection accomplished (as to Jesus Himself), with all the composure that became the power of God, great as the alarm might be which it created in the mind of man. There had been no haste. Everything was in order, and Jesus was not there. The two disciples, however, are not moved by the same attachment as that which filled her heart who had been the object of so mighty a deliverance on the Lord's part. They see, and, on these visible proofs, they believe. It was not a spiritual understanding of the thoughts of God by means of His Word; they saw, and believed. There is nothing in this which gathers the Church together. Jesus was away. He had risen. They had satisfied themselves on this point, and they go away to their home. But Mary, led by affection rather than by intelligence, is not satisfied with coldly recognizing that Jesus was indeed risen. She thought Him still dead, because she did not possess Him. His death, the fact of not finding Him again, added to the intensity of her affection, because He Himself was its object. All the tokens of this affection are produced here in the most touching manner. She supposes that the gardener must know who was in question without her telling him, for she only thought of one; as if I inquired of a beloved object sick in a family, "How is he?" Bending over the sepulcher, she turns her head when He approaches; but then the Good Shepherd, risen from the dead, calls His sheep by her name; and the known and loved voice -mighty according to the grace which thus called her -instantly reveals Him to her who heard it. She turns to Him, and replies, "Rabboni-my Master."

1st. John and Peter, who see and believe, are really believers; but they do not see in Christ the only center of all the thoughts of God, for His glory, for the world, for souls. Neither is He so for their affections, although they are believers. Having found that He was risen, they do without Him. Mary, who did not know this, -who was even culpably ignorant, could nevertheless not do without Jesus. She must possess Himself. Peter and John go to their home: that is the center of their interests. They believe, indeed, but self and home suffice them.

2nd. Thomas believes, and acknowledges with true orthodox faith, on incontestable proofs, that Jesus is his Lord and his God. He truly believes for himself. He has not the communications of the efficacy of the Lord's work, and of the relationship with His Father into which Jesus brings His own, the Church. He has peace, perhaps, but he has missed all the revelation of the Church's position. How many souls-saved souls, even-are there in these two conditions!

3rd. Mary Magdalene is ignorant in the extreme. She does not know that Christ is risen. She has so little right sense of His being Lord and God, that she thinks some one might have taken away His body. But Christ is her all, the need of her soul, the only desire of her heart. Without him she has no home, no Lord, no anything. Now to this need Jesus answers; it indicates the work of the

Holy Ghost. He calls His sheep by her name-shows Himself to her first of all-teaches her that His presence was not now to be a Jewish bodily return to earth, that He must ascend to His Father, that the disciples were now His brethren, and that they were placed in the same position as Himself with His God and His Father-as Himself, the risen Man, ascended to His God and Father. All the glory of the new individual position is opened to her.

4th. This gathers the disciples together. Jesus then brings them the peace which He has made, and they have the full joy of a present Savior who brings it them. He makes this peace (possessed by them in virtue of His work and His victory) their starting-point, and sends them as the Father had sent Him, and imparts to them the Holy Ghost as the breath and power of life that they may be able to bear that peace to others.

These are the communications of the efficacy of His work; as He had given to Mary that of the relationship to the Father which resulted from it, the whole is the answer to Mary's attachment to Christ, or what resulted from it. If through grace there is affection, the answer will assuredly be granted. It is the truth which flows from the work of Christ. No other state than that which Christ here presents is in accordance with what He has done, and with the Father's love. He cannot, by His work, place us in any other.)

But while thus revealing Himself to the beloved remnant whom He had delivered, all is changed in their position and in His relationship with them. He was not going now to dwell bodily in the midst of His people on earth. He did not come back to re-establish the kingdom in Israel; "Touch me not," saith He to Mary. But by redemption He had wrought a far more important thing. He had placed them in the same position as Himself with His Father and His God; and He calls them, which He never had, and never could have done before-His brethren. Until His death, the corn of wheat remained alone. Pure and perfect, the Son of God, He could not stand in the same relationship to God as the sinner; but, in the glorious position which He was going to resume, as man, He could-through redemption, associate with Himself His redeemed ones, cleansed, regenerated, and adopted in Him.

He sends them word of the new position they were to have in common with Himself. He says to Mary, "Touch me not, but go to my brethren, and tell them that I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." The will of the Father-accomplished by means of the glorious work of the Son, who as man has taken His place, apart from sin, with His God and Father-and the work of the Son, the source of eternal life to them, have brought the disciples into the same position as Himself before the Father.

The testimony borne to this truth gathers the disciples together. They meet with closed doors, unprotected now by the care and power of Jesus, the Messiah, Jehovah on earth. But if they had no longer the shelter of the Messiah's presence, they have Jesus in their midst, bringing them that which they could not have before His death-"Peace."

But He did not bring them this blessing merely as their own portion. Having given them proofs of His resurrection, and that in His body He was the same Jesus, He sets them in this perfect peace as the starting point of their mission. The Father, eternal and infinite, fountain of love, had sent the Son, who abode in it, who was the witness of that love, and of the peace which He the Father shed around Him where sin had no existence. Rejected in His mission, Jesus had-on behalf of a world

where sin existed-made peace for all who should receive the testimony of the grace which had made it; and He now sends His disciples from the bosom of that peace into which He had brought them, by the remission of sins through His death, to bear testimony to it in the world.

He says again, "Peace be unto you," to send them forth into the world clothed and filled with that peace, even as the Father had sent Him. He gives them the Holy Ghost for this end, that according to His power they might bear the remission of sins to a world that was bowed down under the yoke of sin.

I do not doubt that-speaking historically-the Spirit here is distinguished from Acts 2, inasmuch as here it is a breath of inward life, as God breathed into the nostrils of Adam a breath of life. Thus Christ, who is a quickening Spirit, imparts spiritual life to them, according to the power of resurrection. As to the general picture figuratively presented in the passage, it is the Spirit bestowed on the Church, as the whole scene represents the Church in its present privileges. Thus we have the remnant attached to Christ by love; believers, individually recognized as children of God, and in the same position before Him as Christ; and then the Church, founded on this testimony, gathered together with Jesus in the midst, in the enjoyment of peace; and its members individually constituted, in connection with the peace which Christ has made, a witness to the world of the remission of sins-its administration being committed to them.

Thomas represents the Jews in the last days, who will believe when they see. Blessed are they who have believed without seeing. But the faith of Thomas is not connected with the position of sonship. He acknowledges-as the remnant will do-that Jesus is his Lord and his God.

The Lord here, by His actions, consecrates the first day of the week for His meeting together with His own, in spirit, here below. The evangelist is far from exhausting all that there was to relate of that which Jesus did. The object of that which He has related is linked with the communication of eternal life in Christ. 1st. That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and 2nd. That in believing we have life through His name. To this; the Gospel is consecrated.

The next chapter, while rendering a fresh testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, gives us-to verse 13-a picture of the millennial work of Christ. From thence to the end, the especial portions of Peter and John in connection with their service to Christ. The application is limited to the earth, for they had known Jesus on earth. It is Paul who will give us the heavenly position of Christ and the Church.

OH 21{Chapter 21. Led by Peter, several of the apostles go a fishing. The Lord meets them in the same circum-stances as those in which He found them at the beginning, and reveals Himself to them in the same manner. John at once understands that it is the Lord. Peter, with his usual energy, casts himself into the sea to reach Him.

Observe here, that we find ourselves again upon the ground of the historic gospels, that is to say, that the miracle of the draft of fishes, identifies itself with the work of Christ on earth. It has not the usual character of the doctrine of this gospel, which presents the divine person of Jesus, outside all question of dispensation here below; raising our thoughts above all such subjects. Here, at the end of the gospel, and of the sketch given in chap. 20 of the result of the manifestation of His divine person and of His work, the evangelist comes for the first time on the ground of Matthew, i.e., of the manifestation of Christ in connection with the earth. Thus the application of the passage



to this point is not merely an idea, which the narrative suggests to the mind, but it rests upon the general teaching. of the word.

Still there is a notable difference between that which took place at the beginning and here. In. the former scene the ships sank, the nets broke. Not so here, and the Holy Ghost marks this circumstance as distinctive. Christ's millennial work is not marred. He is there after His resurrection, and that which He performs does not rest, in itself, on man's responsibility as to its effect here below; the net does not break. Also, when the disciples bring the fish which they had caught, the Lord has some already there. So shall it be on earth at the end. Before His manifestation, He will have prepared a remnant for Himself on the earth; but after His manifestation, He will gather a multitude also from the sea of nations.

Another idea presents itself. Christ is again as in companionship with His disciples. " Come," saith He, " and dine." There is no question here of heavenly things, but of the renewing of His connection with His people in the kingdom. All this does not immediately belong to the subject of this gospel, which leads us higher; accordingly it is introduced in a mysterious and symbolical manner. This appearance of Christ's, is spoken of as His third manifestation. I doubt His manifestation on earth before His death being included in the number. I would rather apply it to that which after His resurrection gave rise to the assembling together of the Church, to a revelation of Himself to the Jews after the manner of that which is presented. in the Song of Songs, and afterward to the public display of His power, when He shall already have gathered the remnant together. His appearing like the lightning, is outside all these things. Historically the three appearances were, the day of His resurrection, the following first day of the week, and His appearance at the Sea of -Galilee.

Afterward, in a passage full of ineffable grace, He entrusts Peter with the care of His sheep (i.e., I doubt not of His Jewish sheep; he is the apostle of the circumcision), and leaves to John an indefinite period of sojourn upon earth. His words apply much more to their ministry than to their persons, with the exception of one verse referring to Peter. But this demands a little more development.

The Lord begins with the full restoration of Peter's soul. He does not reproach him with his fault, but judges the source of evil that produced it --self-confidence. Peter had declared, that if all should deny Jesus, yet he, at least, would not deny Him. The Lord therefore asks him, " Lovest thou me more than do these?" and Peter is reduced to acknowledge that it required the omniscience of God to know that he who had boasted of having more love than all others for Jesus, had really any affection for Him at all. And the question thrice repeated, must indeed have searched the depths of his heart. Nor was it till the third time that he says, " Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus did not let his conscience go, until he had come to that. Nevertheless, the grace which did this for Peter's good--the grace which had followed him in spite of everything, praying for him before he felt his need, or had committed the fault, is perfect here also. For at the moment when it might be thought, that at the utmost he would be re-admitted, through divine forbearance, the strongest testimony of grace is lavished upon him. When humbled by his and brought to entire dependence upon grace, all-abounding grace displays itself. The Lord commits that which He most loved to him; the sheep whom He had just redeemed. He commits them to Peter's care. This is the grace which surmounts all that man is which is above all that man

is; which, consequently, produces confidence not in self, but in God, as one whose grace can always be trusted in, as being full of grace and perfect in that grace which is above everything, and is always itself; grace which makes us able to accomplish the work of grace towards whom man who needs it. It creates confidence in proportion to the measure in which it acts.

I think that the Lord's words apply to the sheep already known to Peter; and with whom only, Jesus had been in daily connection; who would naturally be before His mind, and that in the scene which we see this chapter puts before us-the sheep of the house of Israel.

It appears to me, that there is progression in that which the Lord says to Peter. He asks, " Lovest thou me more than do these?" Peter says, " Thou knowest that I have affection for thee." Jesus replies, " Feed my lambs." The second time he says only, " Lovest thou me?" omitting the comparison between Peter and the rest, and his former pretensions. Peter repeats the declaration of his affection. Jesus says to him, " Shepherd my sheep." The third time He says, " Hast thou affection for me?" using Peter's own expression; and on Peter's replying as we have seen, seizing this use of his words by the Lord, He says, " Feed my sheep." The links between Peter and Christ known on earth, made him fit to pasture the flock of the Jewish remnant-to feed the lambs, by showing them the Messiah. as He had been, and to act as a shepherd, in guiding those that were more advanced, and in supplying them with food.

But the grace of the loving Savior did not stop here. Peter might still feel the sorrow of having missed such an opportunity of confessing the Lord at the critical moment. Jesus assures him, that if he had failed in doing so of his own will, he should be allowed to do it by the will of God; and as when young he girded himself, when old, others should gird him and carry him whither he would not. It should be given him by the will of God to die for the Lord, as he had formerly declared himself ready to do, in his own strength. Now also that Peter was humbled, and brought entirely under grace-that he knew he had no strength-that he felt his dependence on the Lord, his utter inefficiency if he trusted, to his own power-now, I repeat, the Lord calls Peter to follow Him; which he had pretended to do when the Lord had told him he could not. It was this that his heart desired. Feeding those whom Jesus had continued to feed until His death, he should see Israel reject everything, even as Christ had seen them do; and his own work end, even as Christ had seen His work end; the judgment ready to fall, and beginning at the house of God. Finally, what he had pretended to do and could not; he would. follow Christ to prison and to death.

Then comes the history of the disciple whom Jesus loved. John having, no doubt, heard the call addressed to Peter, follows also himself; and Peter, linked with him as we have seen, by their common love to the Lord, inquires what should happen to him likewise. The Lord's answer announces the portion and ministry of John, but, as it appears to me, in connection with the earth. But the Lord's enigmatical expression is, nevertheless, as remarkable as it is important. " If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" They thought, in consequence, that John would not die. The Lord did not say so-a warning not to ascribe a meaning to His words, instead of receiving one; and at the same time showing our need of the Holy Spirit's help; for the words, literally, might be so taken. Giving heed, myself; I trust to this warning, I will say what I think to be the meaning of the Lord's words, which I do not doubt to be so-a meaning which gives a key to many other expressions of the same kind. In the narrative of the Gospel, we are in connection with the earth-i.e., the connection of Jesus with the earth. As planted on earth at Jerusalem, the Church as

the house of God is formally recognized as taking the place of the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem. The history of the Church as thus formally established as a center on earth, ended with the destruction of Jerusalem. The remnant saved by the Messiah, was no longer to be in connection with Jerusalem, the center of the gathering of the Gentiles. In this sense, the destruction of Jerusalem put an end, judicially, to the new system of God upon earth - a system promulgated by Peter (Acts 3); with regard to which, Stephen declared to the Jews their resistance to the Holy Ghost; and was sent, as it were, as a messenger after Him who was gone to receive the kingdom and to return; while Paul-elected from among those enemies of the good news that were still addressed to the Jews by the Holy Ghost after the death of Christ; and separated from

Jews and Gentiles in order to be sent to the latter-performs a new work that was hidden from the prophets of old, namely, the gathering out of a heavenly Church without distinction of Jew or Gentile.

The destruction of Jerusalem put an end to one of these systems, and to the existence of Judaism according to the law and the promises, leaving only the heavenly church. John remained-the last of the twelve-until this period, and in order to watch over the Church looked at as established on that footing, i.e., as the organized and earthly frame-work (responsible, in that character) of the testimony of God, and the subject of His government on the earth. But this is not all. In his ministry, John went on to the end, to the coming of Christ in judgment to the earth; and has linked the judgment of the Church, as the responsible witness on earth, with the judgment of the world, when God shall resume His connection with the earth, in government; the testimony of the Church being finished, and herself having been caught up, according to her proper character, to be with the Lord in heaven.

Thus the Apocalypse presents the judgment of the Church on earth, as the formal witness for the truth; and then passes on to God's resumption of the government of the earth, in view of the establishment of the Lamb upon the throne, and the setting aside of the power of evil. The heavenly character of the Church is only found there, when its members are exhibited on thrones as kings and priests, and when the marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven. The earth-after the Seven Churches-has no longer the heavenly testimony. It is not the subject either in the Churches, or in the properly so-called prophetic part. Thus, taking the Churches, as such, in those days, the Church, according to Paul, is not seen there; taking the Churches as descriptions of the Church, the subject of God's government on earth, we have her until her final rejection; and the history is continuous, and the prophetic part immediately connected with the end of the Churches; only, in place of the Church, we have the world; and then, the Jews.

The coming of Christ, therefore, which is spoken of at the end of the Gospel, is His manifestation on earth: and John who lived, in person, until the close of all that was introduced by the Lord in connection with Jerusalem, continues here, in his ministry, until the manifestation of Christ to the world.

In John, then, we have two things. On the one hand, his ministry, so far as connected with dispensation and with the ways of God, does not go beyond that which is earthly; the coming of Christ, is His manifestation to complete those ways, and to establish the government of God. On the other hand, He links us with the person of Jesus, who is above and outside all dispensations, and all the dealings of God, save as being the manifestation of God Himself. John does not enter

upon the ground of the Church as Paul sets it forth. It is either Jesus personally, or, the relations of God with the earth. His Epistle presents the re-production of the life of Christ in ourselves, guarding us thus from all false pretensions of perverse teachers. But by these two parts of the truth, we have a precious sustainment of faith given to us, when all that belongs to the body of testimony may fail. Jesus, personally the object of faith, in whom we know God; the life itself of God, re-produced in us, as being quickened by Christ. This is forever true, and this is eternal life, if we were alone, without the Church, on earth; and it leads us over its ruins, in possession of that which is essential, and of that which will abide forever. The government of God will decide all the rest. Only it is our privilege and duty to maintain Paul's part of the testimony of God, as long as through grace we can.

Remark also that the work of Peter and Paul is that of gathering together, whether it be the circumcision or the Gentiles. John is conservative-maintaining that which is essential in eternal life. He relates the judgment of God in connection with the world, but as a subject that is outside his own relations with God, which are given as an introduction and exordium to the Apocalypse. He follows Christ when Peter is called, because although Peter was occupied, as Christ had been, with the call of the Jews, John-without being called to that work-followed Him on the same ground. The Lord explains it as we have seen.

Vers. 24 and 25 are a kind of inscription on the book. John has not related all that Jesus did, but that which revealed Him as everlasting Life. As to His works, they could not be numbered.

Here, thanks be to God, are these four precious books laid open, as far as God has enabled me to do so, in their great principles. Meditation on their contents in detail, I must leave to each individual heart, assisted by the mighty operation of the Holy Ghost. For if studied in detail, one might almost say with the Apostle, that the world would not contain the books that should be written. May God in His grace lead souls into the enjoyment of the inexhaustible streams of grace and truth in Jesus which they contain!

"Let there be light!" Jehovah said,  
The beam awoke, the light obey'd;  
Bursting on chaos dark and wild,  
Till the glad earth and ocean smiled.

Light broke upon my rayless tomb,  
The day-star rose upon my gloom;  
And, with its gentle newborn ray,  
Brighten'd my darkness into day.

Glory to THEE by all be given;  
Of light, the light in earth and heaven;  
Of joys, the joy; of suns, the sun;  
Jesus, the Father's Chosen One.

## The Living Grace of Christ

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OH 21{There are two great objects, in regard to man, for which Scripture has been written. In regard to- man, I say, because the display and accomplishment of His own glory in Christ, is surely God's highest object in His word, as well as in all His ways. But, as to man, Scripture has been written, first, for the communication to dead sinners of eternal life in the knowledge of the Son of God; and, secondly, the ministration to that life, where it has been received, of all the fullness of Christ Himself, He being the object on which that life is exercised, as well as the source whence it proceeds. We have the formal statement of the first object in John 20:30,31, " And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written, that y-e might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life through His name." How blessedly simple! So simple that even a child may, by the teaching of the Spirit, understand it-understand that to which the greatest human learning is a hindrance rather than a help. Numberless deeds and words of the Lord Jesus had not been recorded by the apostle, "but these are written"-for what end? "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." "Well," says the reader, "I do unfeignedly believe this-not because parents, or teachers, or ministers have said it, but because God has written it in His word, and all He says is true." You, then, dear reader, are a partaker of eternal life! The fact is, that the believing on the Son of God is the first pulsation of this life. The natural life received by an infant from its parent declares itself in various sounds and motions; and even if it be but the beating of the pulse, the life is thus surely manifested. Now, truly to believe in Christ is, so to speak, the pulse of the new life; so that, when any one believes on the testimony of God Himself, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, he has life through Christ's name. " This is the record," as we read elsewhere, " that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son," so that " He that hath the Son hath life."

Every one knows, however, that a new-born babe is the most helpless creature in the world; it can neither feed itself, nor defend itself, nor go by itself, nor care for itself in any way. It has to 'be fed, and tended, and cared for till, as the life is gradually developed, it grows up from infancy to childhood, and from childhood to man's estate. So does the new life through the name of Jesus need to be nourished and ministered unto. And what is its nutriment? " As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." Here we have the first pulsation of the new life somewhat differently expressed, "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." We cannot fail to know in natural things whether we have tasted any given flavor. We may not understand the composition of the substance in which the flavor is found; but if it be salt, or sweet, or bitter, there can be no question about our knowing its taste, supposing we have tasted it. So in the things of God: we have all heard that the Lord is gracious, but have you, dear reader-have I-tasted that He is so? Do we know the divine relish of the Lord's grace, which, to be known, must be spiritually tasted? If we have, then are we -born of God; for it is the 'new life alone which is possessed of this spiritual taste. It is through the Word that the Lord has made known to-us that He is gracious, and it is in the reception of 'the Word that



we have both received the new life, and become conscious of its tastes. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." And how else should the life thus received be nourished, but by the same Word? By the same Word, moreover, still further unfolding-"that the -Lord is,-gracious"? It is in our first tasting this that we receive, life; and it is as we taste it more and more that the new life is developed and grows.

The great subject of John 21 is the living grace of the risen Savior-grace, which having met our need as sinners in the blood shed upon the cross, now meets all our necessities as saints in the fullness here seen to reside in Jesus as risen from the dead. These records of the intercourse between the risen Christ and His disciples, have thus a peculiar interest and charm. Who can fail to be touched by the tenderness, the sympathy of Jesus in all His relations to His disciples till the hour of His death? But death and resurrection might have been supposed to change all this. How blessed, that when, as here, we find the risen Jesus in the midst of His disciples, it is the same Jesus-tender, compassionate, full of sympathy and love, which, if it wield the arm of omnipotence, can yet enter into the most minute circumstances of the disciples' condition and wants!

At the opening of the chapter, we find a cluster of the disciples gathered together. On the night of His betrayal they had all forsaken Him and fled; and they all needed the restorings of His living grace as risen from the dead. Peter had, it is true, by his rashness, placed himself in circumstances which made his fall more conspicuous than that of the rest; but all had forsaken their dying Lord and Master, and had proved, that though the spirit was willing the flesh was weak. And though Jesus had already appeared to them once, and again after His resurrection, we find them here, in ver. 2, in such a state of soul as readily to respond to the proposal of one always the most forward to act-"I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee." They go, and spend the whole night in fruitless toil.

Three years and a half before, they had been called from that very employment by the Lord Himself. Jesus called them to follow Him, and to such of them as forsook their nets He said, "I will make you fishers of men." From that time they had either accompanied Him, or gone at His bidding to preach the Gospel and cast out devils, He caring for all their wants, so that they lacked nothing. Now they supposed that His care over them was at an end, and that they had become dependent on their own resources and endeavors. They go a fishing: but to what purpose was their toil? "That night they caught nothing." In the morning, however, Jesus, who was cognizant of all their need, though they knew it not, stood on the shore, and said, "Children, have ye any meat?" They knew not that it was Jesus, for such was the manner of His intercourse with them after His resurrection; but there He was, with all the interest in their minutest cares which He had been wont to manifest in the days of His flesh. He bids them cast the net on the right side of the ship, and now they are not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

In all this there was, no doubt, instruction both for them and for us, beyond the circumstances of the moment. It is surely the happy privilege of all who know Jesus to testify of Him far and near; setting Him forth, according to the ability given to poor perishing sinners, as their only hope and refuge. But while it is happy, and of all importance, that the heart be ready for this service anywhere and at all times, let us never forget that success depends entirely on our being in the current of God's workings. The disciples might spread the net, and cast it in the sea, but if not in the current where the fishes were, what advantage in it all? It is only in proportion as we

individually walk with God, depending entirely upon Christ, and guided by Him, that blessing will attend our labors. It is not on the amount of labor that success depends, but on our being near enough to Christ to have His directions in casting the net on the right side of the ship.

Nor is the same service assigned to all. " There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of services, but the same Lord." The vessels, moreover, of the several gifts differ from each other, according to the wisdom of Him who doeth all things after the counsel of His own will. All have not the promptitude of Peter, or the tenderness of John. We, in the narrowness of our hearts, would often seek to have every vessel cast in the same mold, while, as has been said by another, " Unity in diversity is God's principle, both in creation and in the church." In the chapter before us, we find in John the tenderness and delicacy of spiritual affection which was the first to perceive that it was the Lord Himself who stood on the shore; while in Peter there is the promptitude in action, in which he no sooner understands that it is the Lord, than he girds his fisher's coat about him, and casts himself into the sea. What is recorded of each is beautifully characteristic. It was for the disciple who lay in Jesus' bosom to be the first to discern who He was, and cry, " it is the Lord!" while it was for Peter, forward, energetic, and impetuous, to plunge into the sea, and swim to shore. Neither the Johns nor the Peters can be spared; each has his place and service; and we do well to remember that "all things are ours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, all are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

It was not only that after they had spent their night in fruitless labor Jesus appeared to them, and directed them so to cast the net as to find a full supply, but when they reach the shore, what awaits them there? A repast ready prepared to their hands! "As soon, then, as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread." Who was it that had thus been caring for them while they were toiling hard and without result? True, indeed, we are not told who it was that had kindled the fire and dressed the food; but the silence of Scripture is often as impressive as its language, and the heart needs no testimony as to whose service of love this was! But how could so touching a proof have been afforded of the Savior's changeless, living love and care? To guide the unconscious tribes of the deep to the disciples' net was an act of almighty power, which might well impress them as it did; but for their risen Lord to be thus personally the servant of their humblest wants, was an answer to their unbelieving fears which none but He could give! And what a testimony to us that nothing which concerns us can be beneath His notice! " The very hairs of our heads are all numbered."

When, at their Lord's invitation, they had dined on what was prepared to their hand; and on some of the, fish they had caught, the Lord addressed Himself to Peter. But if we are to understand the bearings of the conversation which ensued, we must glance for a moment at what had previously occurred. Nothing can be more important than: the restoration of a soul which has fallen into sin; and in Peter's case this precious work may be traced from beginning to end. His restoration was provided for, indeed, before he fell. Else how could he have been restored? Jesus knew the danger which awaited all His disciples, and to which Peter, by his, impetuosity and self-confidence, was peculiarly exposed: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted (or restored) strengthen thy brethren." Peter knew not his danger; but the Lord knew it, and thus graciously interceded for him, even before his fall was consummated. What a comfort that we have One who ever lives to make intercession for us! One who intercedes in anticipation of

our failing; and not only when we have actually failed!

The circumstances of Peter's fall are well known, and need not be retraced. When self-confidence had betrayed him into rash zeal, distance from his Lord, and companionship with His enemies, warming himself at their fire, the last step, the outward fall, was but the natural result of all that had occurred. Alas! what poor nothings we are when left to our own strength. There may be life-divine life; but if we do not realize that we have no strength to follow out the impulses and tendencies of this life, and so lean entirely on the strength of Jesus; we may be left, like Peter, to learn by experience the bitter but wholesome and needed truth. But the Lord remembers His unfaithful disciple. "The cock crew, and the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." That look broke Peter's heart. He "went out, and wept bitterly." Such is the first stage in the restoration of a soul. To be heart-broken under the look of Jesus, recalling to the conscience of Peter the words by which he had been forewarned of the very sin which he thought it impossible he could commit; but in which the eye of Jesus now rests upon him-to taste the bitterness of sin in the presence of the very grace which had thus fore warned, and which now reminds-and penetrated with shame and grief, to go out and weep bitterly, such is the commencement in a lapsed soul of the work by which, in the grace of Christ; that soul is to be restored.

In John 20 we find Peter in company with the disciple whom Jesus, loved. Mary informs them that she has been to the sepulcher, and. that the body of Jesus has been removed. " Peter, therefore, went forth, and that other disciple, and. came to the sepulcher. So they ran both together; and the other disciple, did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher." How was this? In ordinary circumstances, Peter was not a. man to be outrun, and especially by one so gentle as the beloved disciple; and even in this instance he was as ready to set out towards the sepulcher. What thought had suddenly occurred to him to cause the slackening of his pace, and lead him to give back, and suffer John to outrun him? Ah! does not the question of itself suggest its only answer? Who can doubt that it must have been the remembrance of the last look he had from Jesus: that now occurred to him, producing results so unlike the general character of the man? But between this journey to the sepulcher and the events of our chapter, an interview-a personal interview-had taken place between Peter and his risen Lord. In Mark 16.7, the angel says to the women, while announcing the resurrection of Jesus, " But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee." Lest Peter in his despondency should deem himself excluded from a general message to the disciples, his name is thus specifically mentioned. But in Luke 24:34, the two, on their return from Emmaus, find the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them; "saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon:" In 1 Cor. 15:5; moreover, Paul, witnessing of Christ's resurrection, says, "He was seen of Cephas." Need it be asked what the object of this separate interview with Peter can have been? Ah! there are questions in the soul of a saint who has fallen as Peter did, which can only be settled between that soul and Christ. There can be no third party present at such a moment. The presence of a third party would be felt to be an intrusion. The soul needs to hear from Christ's own mouth the assurance of His unchanged and unchanging love, and to receive from Himself the seal of full forgiveness. This is needed, not because of any change in the blessed Savior, but to reassure the soul of His repentant disciple, restoring thus the confidence which sets the heart free and at ease in His presence. Such had evidently been the result of this interview of Peter with his risen Lord. At the sea of Tiberias there is none of the shrinking back which we have noticed on his way to the

sepulcher. No, as soon as John says, "It is the Lord," Peter plunges into the sea, that he may the more quickly be at His feet, or by His side.

Was, then, the restoration of his soul complete when he thus swam to shore on healing that it was the Lord? No, there needed a further process still. Bitterly had he mourned his sin in denying his Lord: fully was he now assured of his Lord's forgiveness and unchanged affection; but he had not yet been led to discern and judge in himself the secret root of the evil into which he had fallen. The process of restoration is not complete as long as this is unaccomplished; and it was to this, accordingly, that the Lord now addressed Himself Most tenderly, yet unsparingly, does Jesus go to work with His disciple. Not when they were hungry and faint, but "when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" He first refreshes his heart with all the manifested love and care we have been tracing in this narrative, and then He puts this searching inquiry. It is not, "Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these?" but "Lovest thou me more than these love me?" It is as though the Lord had said, "You did think, Peter, that you loved me more than any one besides loved me. You said, Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I. Are you still of the same mind? Lovest thou me more than these do?" But Peter understands Him not. His confidence, indeed, in the love of Him who was thus probing him was not at all disturbed, nor did Jesus wish that it should be. Nay, He does everything to encourage and strengthen it. He confides to his care the precious lambs of His flock as the most tender pledge of His confidence and love; but still the probing must be completed. A second time the question is proposed; then a third; and now, as though the number recalled the thrice-repeated denial of his Lord, and the warning which his self-confidence had previously received, all seems to flash upon his conscience. He is "grieved," not surely with his Lord, but with himself; while his third answer evinces that the probe had reached the bottom of the wound. The root of his sin was now laid bare to his conscience; and in appealing, as he does, to Christ's omniscience, he makes plain that he bows entirely to the warning called forth, not by his sin, but by the self-confidence which was sure to betray him into sin. Instead of protesting now that his love to Christ is greater than that of any one besides, he, in effect, acknowledges, that any one judging by his conduct would not suppose that he loved Christ at all; but, as the Lord knew his heart, he could appeal to Him. "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." He can be trusted now; for he has learned his own weakness, and the only secret of real strength; and so he is again commanded, "Feed my sheep."

Nor was this the whole. As has been remarked else-where by another, there might still have remained one sting-one subject of bitter self-reproach-in the review by Peter of this epoch in his history. One can well understand how he might have said, "Ah! I once had the opportunity of dying for my Master-of actually sharing His cross-but now that opportunity is gone. In my weakness and willfulness, I have thrown it away, and it can never be restored." "Yes," it is as though the Savior said, "it can and shall be restored." Grace can restore what sin has forfeited; and surely this is what was implied in the words of Jesus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thy-self, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God." Once the apostle had been within view of death, with and for his Master, and in the energy of his own will he had vowed to go through it. He girded himself, and walked whither he would-and, alas! as we all know, he failed. To will was

present; but to perform required a strength, the lack of which Peter had now fully proved. But still he was to have the honor and privilege of being crucified for Christ. Not, as before, through any energy of his own will, but in the complete renunciation of himself, and meek submission to the will of another, he should by death, and that, too, the death of the cross, glorify God! " And when He had spoken this, He said unto him, Follow me."

Is not this grace, beloved? What can compare with this living grace of our risen, living Lord? And it is He who says to us, as He said to Peter, "Follow me." Not in the restless endeavor to live up to a certain standard of attainment; but the heart drawn onward by the attraction of this perfect grace, this living love! A love which, while it reaches to the lowest depths of our saddest failures, pardoning, probing, restoring us, sets us again on our feet in the path. which He Himself has trod, and says, "Follow me." Shall we not follow Him indeed? Can we decline to follow if His grace, as thus made known, has really touched our hearts?

## A Man of the Pharisees

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OH 3:1{This expression is singular; it is not "a certain Pharisee," but "a man, of the, Pharisees," throwing the emphasis on man, and defining what kind of man Nicodemus was, by adding "of the Pharisees." This will more clearly appear from the context: "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the passover, on the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all and needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man. There was a man, of the Pharisees." The, prominent point is "man," and what is "in man." Man can appreciate miracles, and be forced by them, to acknowledge the power and superiority of 'Him by whom they are wrought, and to render him homage; and ill human estimation this would be accredited as faith. But He who knew what was in man, did not so accredit it. The faith which is an inference of the human mind, is not the faith in God which subjects man to God; but, on the contrary, it subjects God to human caprice; at one time acknowledging Him, at another questioning either His being, presence, or perfection. He who knew what was in man, was the same Jehovah who had been with Israel of old, as their Deliverer, Sustainer and Guide, proving Himself to be the only God by a constant succession of miracles. But this is His-complaint of Israel: " Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any, of them that provoke me see it" (Num. 14:22,23). Miracles so demonstrating to Israel the presence of God, left Israel indeed without excuse for not trusting in Him: But at, the same time, the history of this generation in the wilderness, who were witnesses of miracle upon miracle, serves to demonstrate to us, that however the understanding may be convinced, if the heart be not touched, there never is confidence in God. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." It is "an evil heart of unbelief" which leads "to departure from the living God." God can call heaven and earth to witness that He has left nothing undone to reclaim man; and of this Israel's, history is the convincing proof. "Hear ye O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with His people, and He will plead with Israel. O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me. For I have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses Aaron, and Miriam. O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know, the righteousness of the Lord" (Micah 6:2-5).

Commended as the Scriptures are by the most substantial and convincing proofs of their divine authority to the understanding, of men, it is very questionable whether an instance can be found of one who has been brought to peace with God by the evidences of Christianity. The mind may be satisfied with conviction arising from such evidences, but it is still culpably ignorant of God, as a Being to be loved and confided in. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not, as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the, life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the

blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:17; 18).

It needs that the heart be touched and the conscience-enlightened, as well as the understanding informed, ere &person will confide in God. When many, therefore, "believed in His name because they saw the miracles which He did, Jesus did not commit Himself to them." The conviction arising from miracles would be as transient as it had been in the days of old. "The waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. Then believed they His words; they sang His praise. They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel: but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert" (Psa. 106:11-14).

It was no confidence in Him, but confidence in their present convictions, which might speedily pass away, and therefore " Jesus did not commit Himself to them, for He knew all, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man." And knowing this, however promising the appearance, He knew that none would trust in Him, until convinced that He had not only surrendered His glory, but His very life to win their confidence. To such alone can Jesus commit Himself; and let those whose confidence He has won, by having borne their sins in His own body on the tree, see to it that they keep the sacred deposit of the honor of Jesus, entrusted to them by the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in them.

But Jesus not only did not commit Himself to those who professed faith in His name, on the present conviction produced by His miracles, but when one of/character and pretensions came to Him on this ground, He confounds him by proposing to him the fundamental doctrine which resulted from His knowledge of what was in man.

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews."

Nicodemus may be regarded by us as a specimen man. He was not an ordinary person, but a religious leader, for so we understand, "a ruler of the Jews." He was, moreover, of the orthodox sect of the Pharisees, holding many important truths in theory, which were denied by the Sadducees, or Free-thinkers, although the Pharisees practically denied the truths they held by overlaying them by tradition. He comes to Jesus at least with respect, and as an inquirer; although, from fear of his co-religionists, he came by night. "The same came to Jesus by night." He addressed Jesus, not in the contemptuous language used ordinarily by the Pharisees towards Him, but by the conventional title usually given to accredited religious teachers-" Rabbi."

All this was fair and promising; but he goes much beyond this, he acknowledges Jesus to be "a teacher come from God." This acknowledgment set Jesus above the ordinary teachers, and was in itself most emphatically true; for Jesus is the Prophet of whom Moses wrote, whose teaching had this solemn sanction-" And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which He shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18:19).

But Nicodemus did not at the moment recognize the spiritual glory of Jesus as the one who had "come forth from the Father, and had come into the world." He accredited the mission of Jesus as divine, because he saw the miracles He did. " No man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." But this acknowledgment would place Jesus no higher than Elijah or Elisha, whose mission was attested by extraordinary miracles. The Lord, therefore, tests this acknowledgment of Him as a teacher by propounding to Nicodemus an elementary doctrine, which, although at first received upon His authority as a teacher, would gather abundant proof

from those Scriptures of which Nicodemus himself was an accredited teacher. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus was stumbled at this authoritative announcement.

This is one feature of a man of the Pharisees, orthodox in theory, they practically deny the authority of God, and in this respect differ but little from those to whom they are most seemingly opposed the Sadducee, or Free-thinker. The "How" of Nicodemus differs very little from the wisdom of the Sadducee, in rejecting the doctrine of the resurrection of the body- "How are the dead raised up?" Both objections arise from want of acknowledging "the power of God." The modern orthodox Pharisee, as really renders the word of God of no effect, by overlaying it with 'traditional doctrines, as the modern Sadducee or Neologian undermines it by subjecting Scripture to the authority of his own inspiration. To both alike may it be said-"Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God." The Lord Jesus demands to be heard on His own authority-" Verily, verily, I say unto you." Such an authority a man of the Pharisees is not prepared to recognize, unless the doctrine propounded corroborates the doctrines which he has already received on the authority of tradition. But this is not to own the authority of the teacher come from God. Men readily recognize traditional doctrines, and support them, too, on the authority of Jesus, when they are capable of such support; but they equally insist on them to resist the authority of Jesus, when His word is brought against them, making the word of God of none: effect through their tradition. At this day many are the doctrines received on the authority of the so-called Church, which nullify the plainest teaching of the Lord and His apostles. So that the complaint of Jesus of the men of the Pharisees of His day is equally applicable to men of a like stamp of our own day- "And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not" (John 8:45).

The first step of emancipation from Pharisaism is the acknowledging the authority of Jesus as it teacher, however unsupported His teaching may be by traditional authority. Such authority was demanded of Jesus by the Pharisees-" By what authority doest thou these things?" And Jesus, by referring them for an answer to the authority of 'the baptism of John, plainly showed that He refused all human credentials, and demanded to be received on the authority of God alone. Nothing is more difficult than to act on the authority of God, unsupported by human credentials; such acting is the acting of faith. "Have faith in God." It appeals to the conscience of men; and wherever it is recognized, it carries with it far greater weight than the authority which is backed by every attestation which man can give to it. When the authority of Paul as an apostle was questioned by false teachers at Corinth, he lays more "stress on that which directly appealed to their consciences than the most unquestionable proofs which he gave of his divine commission as an apostle-"If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord" (1 Cor. 9:2). "A man of the Pharisees" not only teaches or receives for "doctrines the commandments of men," but divine truth itself, if it be acknowledged by him, is acknowledged, because it, is accredited by men, and not because it is the word of God. Jesus taught as one "having authority, and not as the Scribes" (Matt. 7:29); and it is a turning point when one acknowledges Jesus as the authoritative teacher, and receives His word on His own authority.

This prepares the way for the second great act of emancipation from Pharisaism. A man of the Pharisees sees not, with all his pretensions, a present power of deliverance and a present blessing. His religion has attainment in view, always sought but never possessed. This draws an essential distinction between a man of the Pharisees and a Christian. A Christian is and has what



the other is seeking to be and to have. A Christian receives every blessing in the way of gift; a Pharisee is seeking it under some form or other in the way of doing. A Christian by faith, enters into present salvation; a Pharisee can only eye salvation as a contingent future. It is thus the authoritative teacher announces His primary doctrine to "a man of the Pharisees"- "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and if he cannot see it, he cannot enter into it.

This primary truth was announced by the Lord to a candid and well-instructed teacher of Israel, whose study and occupation was, in, popular language, religion. But all his religion fell far short of bringing him to the very "threshold of that which Jesus taught and presented a present "kingdom"-a present power of blessing, even in Him whom Nicodemus acknowledged as a Teacher come from God. If a man of the Pharisees fail in acknowledging Jesus as the one authoritative Teacher, he necessarily stumbles at acknowledging Jesus as the one comprehensive doctrine of God. This is the great stumbling-block of ancient and modern Pharisees; for modern Pharisee will acknowledge probably, that Jesus is the authoritative Teacher, but he holds back from acknowledging Him as the essential doctrine of God. "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23,24). There is a point to which a man of the Pharisees may attain, and that point Nicodemus had reached, but he could not go beyond it. It is to the instructed candid Pharisee, and not to a depraved libertine, that our Lord propounds the doctrine of the new birth-the necessity of being put forth by God of a living power on the soul, as real as that which would raise a corpse from the grave. Where such a power is not put forth, whatever may be the religious attainments or pretensions of a man, "he sees not the kingdom of God." It is a present kingdom, not in word, but in power. It is "the kingdom of God in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is a kingdom so really entered into, that the apostle uses the strongest language to express the transition. "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" (Col. 1:12,13).

In pursuing His teaching to Nicodemus, the Lord, instead of satisfying "the how" of his inquirer, goes on to present Himself to Nicodemus as the only Teacher of heavenly realities, "the Son of Man which is in heaven"; and then confounds Nicodemus with the startling truth of the Son of Man lifted up as the grand object of faith, the present life-giving power of the kingdom, and that the Son of Man is no other than the only-begotten Son of God. All these announcements concerning Himself were so many stumbling-blocks in the way of Nicodemus; but they are all plain to him that understandeth. "It is, written in the prophets, They shall be all taught of God; whosoever therefore hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh to me," says Jesus. Believers are apt to regard as a test of their being born again, the manifest change they experience in themselves; but this is by no means either so healthy or so satisfactory a test, as for the soul to have before it a new object, in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ; in other words, seeing the kingdom of God. Whilst Jesus as the brazen serpent is the object of salvation, He is no less a new and absorbing object of interest, a new object to live for, because by His death He has made death itself to be ours (1 Cor. 3:22). We thus judge that if one died for all, then have all died; and He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again

(2 Cor. 5:14,15).

The line between a man of the Pharisees and a believer in Christ is one of essential separation. No progress in Pharisaism of the most promising kind ever traverses this line. No religion whatever which proceeds from man, or consists in ordinances, ever leads even to the threshold of the, entrance into the kingdom of God. The best specimen of Pharisaism is presented to us in proof that unless God, positively works by His own power, so as to communicate to man that which he never could attain, he must infallibly remain a stranger to the kingdom of God. A man must be born from above in order to see the kingdom of God. This is the elementary doctrine propounded by Jesus as an authoritative Teacher, easily corroborated by the ancient oracles of God, as Nicodemus, a teacher of Israel, ought to have known. But it is a doctrine of far more difficult reception by modern than by ancient Pharisees, because it has been the effort of the false church to set aside, supersede, or obliterate this doctrine by a system of ordinances, so that it has perhaps never been a question affecting the conscience of the vast majority of nominal Christians around us, whether they have or have not seen and entered into the kingdom of God; in a word, whether the kingdom of God is a reality. "To as many as received Jesus, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." No purity of descent, even from the father of the faithful himself, no personal effort of religion, no ordinance performed by another, can give the power and privilege of sonship. To be a child of God, a man "must be born again," "must be born of God." Great, indeed, are the privileges of the sons of God; if sons, then are they heirs of God, then are they priests and kings to God. Yet how often are these but meaningless titles! Few have ever asked themselves what is meant by being a son of God; and those who habitually use the language,--too plainly prove that the most trifling worldly advantage weighs more with them than any supposed privilege of sonship. On the other hand, to one born of God, these privileges appear so precious, that no honor is comparable with the honor of being a son of God, no advantages comparable with those which are eternally secured for him in Christ Jesus. One born of God is able to esteem even his present knowledge of Christ as of that surpassing excellency, that to gain any advantage the world could offer in the place of that knowledge would be poverty and loss.

God grant that the essential difference between flesh and spirit, divine and human righteousness, Pharisaism and faith in Christ, may be made known, not by words of human wisdom, but by the powerful demonstration of the Spirit. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

## No Man Becomes a Child of God by an Act of His Own Will

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My Dear Brother,

I have often thought of our last conversation, as we walked on the sands at S---, and as often felt the regret which I then expressed to you, that the subject of the eternal security of God's children should be so generally approached through the medium of texts and considerations, which are supposed to be attended with difficulty as to it, instead of the substantive testimony to it, with which the Word of God abounds, being fairly considered, and difficulties and objections viewed in the light which is thus afforded us. But in turning to the subject, with the thought of fulfilling your request, that I would present you in a condensed form, with what I regard as the positive testimony of Holy Write respecting it, I have been divided in my mind between these two modes of presenting it, namely, comes at them in reading the New Testament, or that of classifying the passages, arranging them under several heads. I had pretty nearly determined to confine myself to neither; but commencing in the former mode, to take any opportunity which might arise of acting on the latter also; an inquiry into one passage often naturally suggesting a reference to others of like import, even though they should not follow in exact order of occurrence; when it seemed to me, that, ere commencing either, it was almost indispensable to devote a little attention to the previous inquiry, of how a man becomes a child of God. If it be, as so many suppose, by an act of our own will, choosing to turn to God and believe in Christ, that we become Christians, then it is a doctrine feasible enough, that by another act, or by other acts, of our own will, we should finally cease to be such. But if the sentiment placed at the head of this page be the truth of God, and can be proved to be such, then it will be manifest, that in order to the utter and final defection of a Christian, it requireth not only a change in his will (which is indeed fickle and unsteady as the wind), but a change in the will of Him by whose will and power it is that he has become a Christian-a child of God. The Lord grant us true simplicity and subjection to His word, in looking into these matters!

Two passages would of themselves be sufficient to settle our souls as to the subject before us, if we really read them with unquestioning simplicity of faith" Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God " (John 1:13); and, " Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures " (James 1:18). In the former of these, the new birth is expressly declared to be, " not of blood," or natural descent; " not of the will of the flesh," or the natural will or choice of the person who is born again; " nor of the will of man," any agency which other men may choose, or will, to pretend to exercise upon him. In both passages, it is expressly declared to be " of the will of God." Here I might leave this subject; but, knowing how the thought haunts the minds of those who have had the kind of training both you and I had-" Well, but are not life and death set before us in Scripture? And are we not called on to choose life that we may live?"-I would not thus summarily dismiss the inquiry. There are passages such as these in the Old Testament; and there are some of a somewhat similar character in the New; and every word of God is sacred, and true acquaintance with its meaning important. But it does now appear to me, that

they who use such passages as those just referred to, to skew that the new birth is dependent upon an act of the human will, in the reception of Christ, or of the Gospel that sets Him forth, have entirely mistaken the scope and meaning of those passages, and betray their ignorance of the scope and design of a great part of the Word of God.

To you I need hardly say, that all doubtless who have been saved in all ages, have been saved by grace through faith; but there is a wide difference between the testimony and dealings of God before the crucifixion of Christ, and since that event. Until that event took place, God's dealings with mankind were one continued trial, so to speak, of whether there be in man anything whereby he can, under any circumstances, retrieve or save himself. Not that such trial was needed for God; He knew from the beginning, yea, from before the foundation of the world, what man's course would be, and how it would demonstrate the utter hopelessness of his condition, if left to his own will, with every possible inducement to act aright. But this was to be demonstrated to man himself; and hence the trial. I would not at present dwell upon man's trial in Eden. He was then tried as to whether he could maintain his innocence, by withstanding temptation from without. There was then no tendency to evil within. But when man had fallen-when the great deceiver had succeeded in poisoning all the springs of moral action in man's nature- God neither summarily cut off the offender, nor at once sent the Savior. Wrapping up a promise of the Savior in the curse pronounced upon the enemy, he left man, now driven out of Eden, to multiply and fill the earth, and make manifest, without the restraint of an express law such as Adam had been under, what the bent of his will was, the promise all the while affording a resting-place for faith, wherever there was a heart, such as Abel's, Enoch's or Noah's, opened to receive it.

What was the result of this trial? " And God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). " The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth ' (vers. 11, 12). The evil rose to such a height, that God could no longer tolerate its existence; so the flood was sent to destroy man from off the face of the earth.

Noah had found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and was, with his family, preserved to re-people the earth. Man was thus put on trial once more. After the flood, a new element was introduced, to restrain the violence which had before filled the earth. The ordinance, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," made man a check and a restraint upon the violence of his fellow-man. But how does man acquit himself under this new principle of human government, thus in its essence introduced? Alas! Noah, the one in whom the authority was naturally invested, debases himself with wine; and, when thus degraded, his own offspring take advantage of his state to degrade him further still! Babel, too, and the cities of the plain; Egypt, with its idolatries and oppressions; and the cities of the Amorites (see Deut. 18:9-12), all form specimens of what man proved himself to be in the interim between the flood and the giving of the law. Rom. 1:21-32, presents us with a gloomy picture of what man at this period proved the desires of his heart and the bent of his will to be; as well as of the consequences to which God gave up the Gentile world. But when He did thus give up the Gentiles, He made choice of Israel, that in His dealings with that nation, brought outwardly nigh to Himself, and favored with every possible advantage, further trial might be made, within a narrower sphere of what the heart and will of man would produce. It was to this people that the law was given. And Moses, in recapitulating the dealings of God with this

people in the wilderness, states that the object was "to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep His commandments or no" (Deut. 8:2).

It was to Israel that the words so often quoted to prove that life or death is at our own choice, were spoken: " See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, and His statutes, and His judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply," etc. (Deut. 30:15,16). Again, " I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live " (v. 19).

Was it, then, that any were saved by thus choosing life that they might live? This would be to affirm that life could come by keeping the law; and Paul says plainly, " If there had been a law given, which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law " (Gal. 3:21). But then he also says, " If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain " (Gal. 2:21). This would be a terrible conclusion to come to, indeed. And if you should inquire, as some did in the Apostle's days, " Wherefore then the law?" let the Apostle answer: " It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made " (Gal. 3:19). And if you should still say, Why added because of transgressions? take for answer the same Apostle's words in another place, "For by the law is the knowledge of sin " (Rom. 3:20). And again, " More-over, the law entered that the offense might abound " (Rom. 5:20). And again, " I had not known sin, but by the law" (Rom. 7:7). And again, " But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (ver. 13). Yet once more, " The law worketh wrath " (Rom. 4:15). Now, it seems to me a serious thing, in the face of all these inspired declarations of what ends the law was designed to answer, to affirm that any were saved by "choosing life" according to the tenor of the words of Moses, which have been quoted. Life was then offered them on condition of obedience to the law; and the Holy Ghost solemnly assures us, that " By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified " (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16, 21; 11); that is, in other words, they could not have life on the terms proposed by Moses.

Of this, Moses himself was quite aware. In the very next chapter to that from which his words are quoted, we find that the Lord appeared and said unto him, " Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them " (Deut. 31:16). They had already broken one covenant of works, in token of which Moses brake the two tables of the law, which were in his hands, when he came down from the mount (see Ex. 32:19). With an unchanged nature, and placed under a similar covenant of works, what could be expected now? What but the results which the Lord assures Moses, and Moses assures the people, would actually ensue? " Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them that this song shall testify against them as a witness; 'for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed; for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear" (Deut. 31:19-21). Can anything be more solemn or decisive than these last

words? God declared to Moses, that instead of choosing life that they might live, the people would turn to other gods, provoke Him, and break His covenant; and He speaks of these future acts of evil, as only the display of what he knew to be at the then present time working in their hearts. " I know their imagination," &c. Hence, Moses says to them, " Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the Ark of the covenant of the Lord your God." Why? That they might choose life, and live by keeping it? Nay, but " That it may be there for a witness against thee." "For I know thy rebellion," he proceeds, " and thy stiff neck; behold, whilst I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death " (ver. 26, 27)? " For I know," says he again to them, "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; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands" (ver. 29). Surely we need no further answer to those who use Moses' words to prove that salvation depends on human will. If it did, who could be saved?

Joshua's words are sometimes quoted for this purpose, as well as those of Moses; and with as little reason or force. After reminding Israel of the condition in which their fathers were, serving other gods, when the Lord took Abraham from the other side of the flood; after rehearsing to them the wonders which God had wrought, and many of which their eyes had beheld; he exhorts them to fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away other gods; and then he adds, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24.15). The fact is, he does not call upon them to choose between the Lord and idols. He says, "If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye," whether ye will serve this class of idols, or that. He, through grace, as we know, was resolved on serving the Lord. But when the people, with good intentions, perhaps, but in a spirit of self-sufficiency, declare that they too will serve the Lord, how does Joshua receive their protestations? " And Joshua said unto the people, ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good" (ver. 19). And when the people still vow and protest " Nay; but we will serve the Lord," Joshua says to them, " Ye are wit-nesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses" (ver. 21, 22). Ah, yes; to have our words witness against us, is the only result that can flow from our declaring that we choose the T\_ord and His service. And as though to show in what a poor condition they were for taking such vows upon them, Joshua immediately exhorts them: " Now, therefore, put away the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel" (ver. 23). There were, then, strange gods among them! Their hearts, too, needed inclining to serve the Lord! Plain proof that they were, as we know the human heart ever is, averse to His service.

Of this we have still further evidence in that part of their history which immediately succeeds. The Book of Judges is but the history of their sins, and of the calamities which these brought upon them, with the Lord's merciful interpositions for their deliverance. Into this I do not now enter. Nor shall I pursue the thread of their history throughout. It would lead me too far. One point, however, must not be omitted; I refer to the ministry of the prophets. It differed materially from the law simply

considered. The law left no room for repentance. It demanded obedience, but failing to obtain that, it had nothing to pronounce or bestow but condemnation and the curse. It was obedience, uniform, unvarying obedience, which the law required; not repentance and a return to obedience. But the prophets were sent to propose, as it were, new terms. " Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). " Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the Lord" (Jer. 1). " Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever, O house of Israel. Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them-for his iniquity that he hath done he shall die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live - he shall not die" (Ezek. 18:25-28). Such was the ministry of the prophets. But was this, to prove, any more than Moses' or Joshua's language respecting the law, that it was possible for man, of his own will, so to turn from his wickedness and do that which is lawful and right, as to live thereby? Surely not. It was a further test - a milder one - to prove whether it was in the heart or will of man to turn to God, and serve and obey him. It was as though God said, I will not rigorously enforce the claims of my law. It claims uninterrupted and universal obedience. That you have utterly failed to render, and the law knows nothing of repentance. But now I give you an opportunity to begin again. " If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done, he shall live." It was a fair offer to blot out all the past, and begin over again; and this offer was made, be it remembered, to those who were complaining that their destinies were not in their own hands. Could a fairer offer have been made? But need I ask you, my brother, whether it were possible for any fallen man to be saved thus? What! by keeping all God's statutes, and doing for the time to come, that which is lawful and right I Surely this would have been for the doer of these things to live by them, which Paul declares to be the righteousness which is of the law. It was simply affording to those who thought they would have done better than their fathers, an opportunity of showing what they could do!

And what was the issue of this trial of man by the new proposals of repentance and amendment of life! " And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and, sending; because he had compassion on His people and on His dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy" (2 Chron. 36:15,16). These patient dealings of God with Israel were resumed after the captivity; and John the Baptist was the last of the long line of those who were thus sent to Israel. " For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (Matt. 11:13). Did I say, the last in the line? Yes, he was the last in the line of servants who were thus employed; but there was One greater than all these servants of God, who came after them all, on the same errand. Will you turn, my brother, to Matt. 21:33-22:14, where you will find the summing up of all we have now been considering together and that from the lips of our blessed Lord Himself. You know the two parables which constitute this passage. A certain

householder plants a vineyard, and lets it out to husbandmen. When the time of the fruit draws near, he sends his servants to the husbandmen, that they may receive it. The husbandmen take the servants, beat one, kill another, and stone another. Again he sends other servants more than the first, and they do to them likewise. Last of all, he sends his son, saying, " They will reverence my son." So that one object for which the Son of God was sent, was to seek fruit of those to whom the vineyard had been entrusted. How was He received? "But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." The meaning of this cannot be mistaken. The Jewish nation were the husbandmen. All the privileges God had bestowed upon them were the vineyard. The obedience He required was the fruit, which they ought to have rendered. The law demanded it, but in vain. Prophet after prophet came seeking it; but maltreatment or death was all that they received. Last of all came Jesus, the Heir. Him, also, they put to death. What can be done more? What further test of man's heart and) will can be applied? There is a further test; and the application of this, with the result, is illustrated in the next parable, at the beginning of chap. 22.

Jesus came, not only as the last of those whom God sent, seeking fruit from man-He came as the messenger and minister of God's grace to man. " The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; AND THEY WOULD NOT COME." Here it is not the lord of the vineyard seeking fruit-God requiring of man the service, the obedience due to Him. No; it is a king inviting to a wedding-feast-God, in His grace, providing everything for man, and inviting him to partake. But he is no more inclined to receive God's bounty, than to satisfy God's claims. THEY WOULD NOT COME. But this is not all; the first refusal is not received as final. "Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my failings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage." Christ, as seeking fruit, is rejected and slain. He is equally rejected as inviting Israel, by means of His disciples, to partake of the feast which God had provided. But when they have thus rejected Him, grace still lingers over them, and His very death is made the occasion of renewed invitations. "All things are ready" (this could hardly have been said before): "come unto the marriage." "But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully and slew them." Such is the reception with which all God's overtures, as well as His claims, are met on the part of man. He claims obedience, seeks fruit-man will not render it. He publishes grace, providing a wedding-feast, and inviting guests-" they would not come." He repeats His invitations, descanting on the plenteousness of the provision, and declaring that all things are ready. It is all to no purpose. Some light-heartedly despise His bounty, preferring their merchandise or their farm; others, more cruel in their rejection of grace, spitefully entreat and slay the servants Who are sent to invite them. Such is man, and such man's will, with every possible advantage, short of that Almighty grace which subdues his opposition, and makes him willing to receive Christ, and the salvation He has brought. Such grace it is, and such grace alone, by which any become the children of God.

The marriage was made by the king for his son. The feast was provided to grace this marriage. Is the king's son to be despoiled of his marriage-feast, because of the perversity and obstinacy of those first invited as guests? These, or many of them, perish for their contempt of God's grace; but



other messengers still are sent out-not now to those who might have expected to be invited, but into the highways, to bid as many as they find. " So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests." In Luke 14, where we have a similar parable, the servants are told, " Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and BRING IN hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." They were to bring them in. It is not an appeal to their will, as to whether they will come; they are to be brought 'in. When this is done, the servant says, " Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and COMPEL them to come in, that my house may be filled." If we are really guests at Christ's table, it is not that we have of ourselves chosen to come when invited, nor even when urged; but because we have been brought in, or compelled to come. That is, the opposition of our natural will has been overcome by that Almighty grace, which, in thus overcoming our opposition, has made us willing, and brought us in. This is beautifully expressed in the well-known lines:-

"Nay, but I yield, I yield,

I can hold out no more;

I sink, by dying love compell'd,

And own Thee conqueror!"

No man becomes a child of God by an act of his own will!

"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

"God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ."

"And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him."

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

"But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus."

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Commending these scriptures to your most prayerful consideration,

I remain,

Dear brother,

Affectionately yours in Christ,

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## Revelations 21, 22

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We have here the description of " the heavenly city." It is called " the Bride, the Lamb's wife," that we may know how to identify it. " The Bride," however, as such, would awaken altogether a different train of thoughts. But it is important to identify the city and the Bride, and to give its true character to the heavenly city in contrast with Babylon. The state described here, is not the perfect and eternal state, as " the leaves or the tree for the healing of the nations" shows; though of course the heavenly saints themselves are perfect. It is God's great center-the heavenly one-of all He has brought together in power and government, the heavenly capital, so to speak, of His millennial empire; and therefore we find it in connection with Christ, and presented as a city. It is to be, after Christ, the manifestation and center of glory. And we have to thank God, that He not only gives us what satisfies personal affection by presenting to us the person of Jesus in the glory, but unfolds also to us, by means of figures-the Spirit enabling us to understand them-what the glory is prepared from everlasting, so that the heart thus becomes acquainted with it.

We have seen already in this book that, previous to the display of this heavenly city, the imperious One who said, " sit as a queen; and I shall see no sorrow," has been destroyed, and now we get " a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Of the other, we may say it was " earthly, sensual, devilish." It had all that Satan could produce to attract man, as man. Everything that ministered to the ease, comfort, and glory of man, was to be found there; the merchandize of gold, and of silver, and of precious stones, and all that was costly and desirable. Thus, taking it as a whole, it -was man s city and Satan's city. For whatever is now of man, as man on the earth, is looked at by God as in connection with Satan. Therefore, when Peter said, " This be far from Thee, Lord," the Lord replied, " Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art an offense unto Me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." Here the Lord stamps that which is " of men, as being according to Satan," and therefore an offense to Him. So to the Jews He said; " Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world"; thus stamping everything that is of the spirit of this world as " from beneath." Babylon had this in perfection, for she was the mother of harlots -the spring and source of corruption; but to every true tie to the things of God, or to God Himself, she was an utter stranger. But we have seen that this great Babylon was judged of God-that after that, and the marriage of the Lamb, the Lord came out in person and made war with the ad-verse power, accompanied by the saints; the first resurrection having taken place, and that then, the victory achieved, the kingdom was in the hands of Christ, and the saints, who live and reign with Him a thou-sand years; that during this period, Satan is bound, after which he is loosed again for a little season; and that when he is cast into the lake of fire, and the judgment of the white throne passed, and the new heavens and the new earth come in, then " God is all in all."

In the first eight verses of this twenty-first chapter, we have the time when God shall be all in all, closing the prophetic history of the book. Beyond that period it evidently cannot go; in what follows, the prophet turns back to the description of the New Jerusalem; to what the Bride, the Lamb's wife is, while Christ is reigning. The scene here displayed is the holy Jerusalem, descending out of

heaven, from God. The prophetic history entirely closes; the mediatorial kingdom passes away when all is perfectly brought into order -when God is all in all. But though the mediatorial kingdom is given up, of course Christ does not cease to be man. It is part of His perfection which remains forever. Instead of carrying on the mediatorial kingdom, when He has put down all rule and all authority, He delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father. The result does not pass away. The proper personal glory never passes away. The mediatorial glory will close, that which is personal never can.

It is well to notice, that when the angel comes to show Babylon in 17:1, he describes her wide-spread influence, " sitting by the many waters;" but when here he comes to show the New Jerusalem, there is nothing to be said of her; it is enough to say, that she is "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." The harlot could ride the beast, and spread corruption far and wide; she had immense power, but affection she had none. While the harlot is saying, " I sit as a queen, and shall see no sorrow," the Bride feels that she is not her own, but that she belongs to another. While the love of influence, the "sitting be-side many waters" is the spirit of Babylon, the character of dependence marks the Bride. Ah! beloved friends, if we are seeking power or worldly influence, the spirit of Babylon is in us. The only influence we should 'court, as to service or as to anything else, should be the result of attachment to Christ alone, and dependence upon Him. Affection for Him is the one thing. There will be plenty of trial and difficulty, where this exists: but there will be no thwarted affections when He is the object. We shall never find in Him what does not satisfy. This is happiness. There may be plenty in us needing to be subdued, and this will give us trouble, and 'tis labor, alas, often, to keep the heart up to a sense of His love; but that single word, " the Bride, the Lamb's wife" is quite enough for us; for was there ever an affection wanting in Christ toward us? Never. Never shall we find defect in the object of our affections, though we shall find defect in the affection in ourselves, lack of ability to enjoy the fullness of our portion. A true sense of the abiding love of Jesus to us is that which gives perfect peace to the love that is looking to Jesus. One source of our failure in realizing the love of Jesus is, that our hearts, though enlarged by the Holy Ghost, are too little to answer to it. Herein lies the marked difference as has been remarked between the Book of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. In Ecclesiastes it is said, "What can the man do that cometh after the king, who hath gathered to himself peculiar treasure of all the sons of men?" But the larger his heart was in its intelligence and in its de-sires, the less there was to fill it, so that everything issued in "vanity and vexation of spirit." But what was wanting in the Song of Solomon-primarily applicable no doubt to the Jewish remnant-was a heart large enough to take in the all-satisfying object of its love. And oh, what a thought it is, that Jesus and all the glory He has received is ours! as He says, " the glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them."

The heavenly city comes down front God out of heaven. It is of, and from God, where all is good. God is the infinite and eternal source of good, and in the per-son of Christ we get the form and fullness of it. If it is righteousness it is from God; if holiness it is from God; if love, it is God's nature. We being made partakers of grace all that is thus displayed in us comes directly from God. So that in a secondary sense, the Church even down here, is the manifestation of the glory of God; though here there will spring up that which is of man and is corrupt. But there, all that is of us disappears, and all that is displayed in us comes from God. And I would, here add, that there is not a single grace that, in the power of the Spirit of God, ought not to be manifested by us now, poor failing ones as we are. There was not one which Jesus did not manifest, for He was the Son of Man in

heaven -when walking here on earth; and we as the epistle of Christ ought to be known and read of all men.

The glory of this city is presented to us in detail; and although. it is divine, " the Glory of God," it is also human, as the number twelve shows. We see this in the Lord. If He took up a babe in His arms it was a gracious act of humanity; but the love that prompted it was divine. A Rabbi might despise a child, but Jesus did not, though " God over all, blessed forever." The city had " the glory of God." The Church is that in which

God will display Himself in glory. But this glory is not the essential glory of God, but the communicated glory; as it is written " the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." While this is wonderful, yet it is what ought to be. For ought there to be any other glory beside the glory of God? Certainly not. And, surely, that which is nearest to God, next to Christ, ought to have His glory. For there is no glory that is not God's glory. And how can we understand the showing out of the riches of God's glory if He does not display them? The creation does in one sense show the glory of His power, " the heavens declare the glory of God." But when it comes to be the fruit of redemption, the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul, it is for the display of the glory of God in. a yet higher way. It was done at His own cost, and could it be less than His glory at such a cost? There is not an attribute or part of the character of God that has not been perfectly glorified in the work of redemption. It is wonderful if we think of ourselves that it should be so, but if the Church is to be for the glory of God, it must be displayed in what is worthy of God. If Christ is to be "glorified in His saints, and admired in all them. that believe," the glory must be God's; it cannot be unworthy of Himself. And the way I measure it is-it is the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul. God commended His love toward me, in that while I was a sinner, and such a sinner as I was, Christ died for me. The very things about which Christ glorified God are the very things which I find to be in myself, and thus I find that God has been fully glorified about every one of my sins. So in apprehending myself to be a sinner, I just see the very thing that shows me all the glory to be of and from God. There is nothing in us, all is of grace. If anything of ours is mixed up with our hopes of glory it is utter folly. It would be madness to talk of what is of us and the glory of God at the same time. The vessel is nothing, save as it is owned and filled of God; and thus it comes simply and happily to the soul. The moment I see the whole of it to be the display of God's glory, my soul can rest in peace. He has taken me up a poor sinner that it might be fully known that nothing but His grace had done it: and I know His love passeth knowledge. And what is more still, I know I shall never get out of it, for the love of God is infinite; and if I am in that which is infinite, I can not, indeed, measure it, but I know I can never get out of it.

" Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." When speaking of the displayed glory of God, as man can see it, it is said to be like "a jasper and a sardine stone," 4:3. So the light of this city is "like a jasper stone clear as crystal." It is a divine glory which clothes it. Scripture give us an understanding of what these figures mean, if, taught of God's Spirit, we are at the pains to compare its statements. These precious stones give us not the simple brightness of colorless light, God is this; for if I look at God, at what He is essentially, He is light. " God is light." But if He shows Himself through the tears and sorrows of this life, then I get the rainbow. The light is broken into divers rays, as shining through a prism. So in these precious stones we get, not the essential glory of God as light, but the light broken up as it were, in various mediate beauties; we get the unfoldings of the various ways and dealings of God with His

creatures. We see these stones in creation, then in grace, and then in glory.

In creation, Ezek. 28; in grace on the breast-plate of the High-priest; in glory here as the foundation of the city. Whatever God has displayed of His moral glory in righteousness as well as in judgment is concentrated in the Church. Into this I will enter more fully when taking up the meaning of the stones, connected as they are with grace and with judgment.

"And the city had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates," showing perfect security. When men seek to protect a place, it is by building high walls of immense thickness. In this city, which is the royal seat, has a wall great and high displaying the majesty of God as builder. It is perfectly secure, in a dignity which isolated it, so to speak, so that it could not possibly be entered but by those who belong to it.

"At the gates were twelve angels." The angels wait at the gates as door-keepers; elevated above us in creation here, they are but keepers of the gates; they are porters to this city of God, showing that all providential power but ministers to this glory.

On the gates were written "the names of the twelve tribes of Israel," showing government in perfection. As God's. All His patient dealings in government and goodness with man are here displayed.

"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." The perfect immutable foundations of truth are all here. The character in which the truth is displayed is the unchangeable truth of the gospel; "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." What we get as the church as such is a special glory; but that which is the foundation on which she rests is truth from eternity, everlasting truth, a full and perfect revelation. As to light, we are "in the light as God is in the light;" and then as to love, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." But when we come to the foundation of the Church, it is the truth, the everlasting truth of God-redemption according to His work and power.

What we have in Christ, moreover, as to His person, cannot be less than the fullness of God, eternal truth being at the bottom. It is God revealed in Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives, says the Lord; but from the beginning it was not so. We cannot say so, for Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;" and again, "that which was from the beginning declare we unto you." So Paul, though stating the deep counsels of God, takes up the most elementary truths, which no counsels ever change, because our relationship is with God, who never can; for if we are brought into the relationship of children, it is with a God of eternal holiness and eternal love. And it is joy to our souls to know that we are not only brought into connection with certain dealings of God, as the Jews were, but with God Himself, as known in Jesus.

The city is a divine thing, but in human manifestation and perfection. The names here spew human administration, and the number twelve repeated that it is exceedingly perfect. The number seven in Scripture always denotes the perfection of spiritual agency whether for good or evil; but when the dealings of God are in or through man, the number twelve is used, to signify perfection in government in human administration.

" And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth." It is a square, not a circle. It has not the perfection of a circle-a figure used for eternity-but the perfection of that which is formed. It is the most perfect of created things.

" And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass." The measure and character of this city is not after the thoughts of man. Man said, " Let us build a city and a tower, and make us a name. And they had brick for stone, and slime for mortar." But God is the builder of this city, and it carries the divine glory. There is no slime or bitumen here: "the building of the wall of it was of jasper." " And the city was of pure gold, like unto clear glass," transparent in purity. Gold is an emblem of divine righteousness; and the " clear glass" reminds us of the brazen sea in Solomon's temple, set for the priests to wash their hands and feet in when they went in to serve. But there is no need for that here. There is nothing to defile here. Here it is solid purity, standing out in all its clearness. In the fifteenth chapter we get the sea of glass " mingled with fire," because connected with tribulation.

In the fourth of Ephesians Paul speaks, without symbol, of " the new man, created after God in righteousness and true holiness." So, likewise, this city is the display of this work of God in man; just what it was fitting it should be. It is not man's righteousness, nor man's innocence; neither will do: but it is divine righteousness and divine holiness. Holiness is separation from evil; innocence, ignorance of evil. We do not say that God is innocent, but that God is holy; because He hates all the evil He knows, and delights in the good. And God's new creation, perfected after His image, delights in what is good, and hates all that is evil. God has produced this by His own power. The city is pure as gold, transparent as glass. Well may we exclaim, O the depth and the wealth of the divine righteousness and holiness!

But let us now turn to the stones. In Ezek. 28 in the lamentation over the king of Tyrus, we find them denoting the perfection of created beauty. " Thou sealest the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." The sum of beauty was the creature display of this perfection; the light bringing out these bright colors in the creature. Every precious stone was his covering. He was the brightest in creation; but when he looked at it as his own, and not as created perfection put upon him, then his heart was lifted up because of his beauty, and his wisdom corrupted by reason of his brightness, and he fell. In Ex. 28 we see these stones brought out as the sum of beauty in the way of grace. They were in the breastplate of the High Priest, and joined to the ephod, so that when he went into the holy place he bore the names of the children of Israel. It was for a memorial before the Lord continually. So Christ bears our names in his heart, ever living to make intercession. Then in the 30th verse the Urim and the Thummim are placed in this breastplate of judgment-light and perfection. Aaron bore the names of the children of Israel on his heart as an accepted people before the Lord. " And Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually:" that is, he maintains them in communion in spite of failure. He first bore the names on his heart in the stones on the breastplate, so that when God looked out to bless He saw their names continually. And then there was the intercession to maintain the communion of a failing people with the unfailing light. Thus Israel is seen in perfectness in the presence of God in grace. So now when God looks out in divine favor, it is on Christ Himself. The children's names are all engraven on His heart, their judgment borne in the details of their ways, as regards the government of God, and displayed in their beauty, to get the answers of light and perfection; for such was the Urim and Thummim. Here again we see these precious stones in glory, all centered

in this glorious city, the brightness not maintained by effort or exercise of power, but settled, not a part of the glory merely, but " the foundations of the wall of the city garnished with all manner of precious stones," every grace shining out in unchanging beauty. The wall of jasper showing how divine, the gold how righteous, its transparence how holy and pure, and these stones the varied perfection of all communicated grace and beauty, and all is centered in " the Bride, the Lamb's wife."

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, every several gate was of one pearl." It was in Christ's heart to seek a goodly pearl. It was upon that His heart was set; and " when He had found one pearl of great price, He sold all that He had and bought it." He was not merely seeking a treasure, but He was seeking a goodly pearl; and He knew what was tasteful and comely. All the grace of the church was what the heart of Christ was set upon, as that which was perfectly fair and beautiful. Now every gate was this, " every several gate was of one pearl." On the very outside the comeliness and beauty of this city was to be seen. The character of Christ stood at the very entrance. Not only was there righteousness and true holiness within, but on the outside there was all that was lovely and comely; so that the very angels who entered not in, could stand at the gate, and even there see the loveliness which God had put upon it. So even here below the character of Christ ought to be manifested to every beholder. Even the stranger should be able to discern it, the saints being " the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men."

" And the street of the city was of pure gold, as it were transparent glass." This confirms us as to the import of the Lord's words to His disciples in John When speaking of His finished work for them, He says, " He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, 'but is clean every whit;" that is, he has been cleansed once for all. But his feet become defiled in walking through the world, and therefore need washing again and again for service. This is not an excuse for failure, although the Lord takes occasion from it to display, His rich provision for meeting our daily need. We have the same figure in the case of the priests who served in the tabernacle. Their bodies were washed once for all at their consecration, and this was never repeated; but every time they went into the tabernacle they washed their hands and their feet. " He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet." Mark His love. Not content with serving down here even unto death " to wash us from our sins in His own blood," He girds Himself to serve even in heaven, that we may continue in communion. " Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the -washing of water through the word." Thus we have the written word in its application to the daily details of life. So to Peter the Lord said, " If I wash thee thou hast no part with me." if we are to have part with Him, we are to be as clean as He can make us. And as we are to have part with Him, His grace now as then leads Him to gird Himself, and remove the defilement.

But in this golden city the very streets are righteousness and true holiness. There I shall walk without being defiled; I shall walk upon holiness there. Walking in purity is with labor here. Even if we do keep our-selves from defilement here, we are wearied with the effort, and if we do not we are weary of ourselves. But oh! what a thought! I shall walk on streets of pure gold there! What rest it gives to the heart and conscience, to think of walking and not needing to toil to keep myself from defilement, not needing to watch lest my garments become spotted with the world! Whilst here, because of the world, the flesh, and the devil, we have always to watch and pray. What! always? Yes, always. Whilst in this defiled place, we must have our loins well girded and our affections



tightly tucked up, for if we let them flow, they will certainly get into the mire. But when He comes, He will ungird us, and make us sit down at ease, and He will gird Himself and come forth and serve us. What a relief to the heart to think that I may let out all my affections and meet nothing but God! that the more I let them flow, the more I shall be enlarged to take in my fill of blessedness! This ought to be our aim now.

" And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Here the difference of worship is marked. How strange to a Jew, there is no temple needed here! God had said He would dwell in the thick darkness, and when the glory filled the house the priests could not minister. And, moreover, that which shut the glory in, shut man out. For in Jerusalem God had shut Himself up to be revered; therefore He must shut man out. The natural consequence of even a partial display of the glory is to add that which should keep aloof from familiarity. In the temple He surrounded Himself with majesty which made men feel how great He was, but this hid Himself. But there is no temple here, for "the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple of it." Here, it is not that which hides God, whilst surrounding Him with majesty, nor that which shuts us out, but God surrounds us with Himself, while He perfectly reveals Himself His own glory, and that revealed is His temple, and there " man speaks of His honor." Blessed thought it is, God and the Lamb are the temple, and there we worship.

The Lord give us, only to enter more fully into His wondrous Grace, and then it will be easy for us to under-stand how this wondrous glory can all be ours. When we know ourselves to be nothing, and yet are able to say He has loved me, we shall not wonder that God should do all this for us, seeing He has loved us so. The Holy Ghost always reasons downwards from what God is, to what He cannot but do, because He is God. Man, on the contrary, reasons from what man is, to what God may possibly do for him, according to what he is himself; and so argues all wrong. The Holy Ghost reasons thus, " He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him. up freely to the death for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things." I learn from this to expect great things, and I cannot expect too highly if God is to be glorified in it. For if Christ is to be glorified in His Saints, and admired in all them that believe, what will not God do to display the glory of His Son?

Shall I be thinking about the worshipper, although thus glorified and adorned, when I see Him who is worshipped? No, I shall be occupied with Him who has brought me there. The present practical result ought to be that our hearts should be adoring the riches and the wonders of His grace, as David (1 Chron. 17) when he sat before the Lord. " Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house that thou hest brought me hitherto!" Oh! to get our souls more filled with what He is, as David rested even in his knowledge of it, and argued from it (vers. 26 and 27). We have often spoken of the prodigal son who disappears, as it were, when he reached His Father's house. It is the Father then who fills the whole scene. And the Father's bosom will be the place of our worship in that scene of glory. Well, let Him have our hearts for His temple now, while yet our bodies are down here, until he takes us to be with Him forever. Amen.

## Chap. 21

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EV 21{In the former part of this chapter we saw the glory' of the heavenly Jerusalem, and her own intrinsic blessing; now we have before us her relative position, and the blessing of which she is the vessel also for others.

In vers. 22-24 we have two thoughts presented to us, worship and testimony. In the Golden City we get both, and the worship is direct and immediate, for there was "no temple therein." Before Christianity came in, there was no testimony to the world; but when grace had come in, and God had shown out what He was to sinners, then there was a testimony to carry the know-ledge of it to the world. It was not so in the Jewish. system. God had then a temple, but there was no testimony in the temple to call the Gentiles in. There was a temple for worship, a testimony among the people in whose midst he dwelt; hut there was no testimony sent out to the Gentiles. God never manifested Himself, He was hid among the people He had formed around Him; even the. High Priest went in with a cloud of incense " lest he die." But now that the Gospel has come in, it is the reverse of this. God, being known in love to those within, sends forth a testimony of His love to sinners without; whilst those within can worship in perfect peace. The moment Christ came, God was revealed to men; and the moment the veil was rent by the death of Christ, there was immediate and perfect access into the presence of God, and perfect love flowing out to the world. And, therefore, we find these two things here; no veil, and perfect access into the presence of God, and necessarily the testimony of the love that brought us there. There is no temple there, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And if those within would speak of the temple, it is of God Himself that they must speak.

" And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine on it; for the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof." There was no need of light from another medium, no need of sun or moon; for the glory of God did lighten it. There was the full display of His glory. It was not a mere testimony about God, but God Himself was there, filling it with light. " The glory of God did lighten it," but it is added, " the Lamb is the light thereof." The Lamb is the one in whom the glory is manifested, and by whom it is displayed. The glory is too brilliant, too absolute to lay hold of an affection, wonderful as it is, an object is still wanting for the heart, therefore I get an object which fixes me in the midst of it; just as I cannot fix my eye on the light which pervades a room, though I can on the candle from which it flows. If a blaze o glory fills a place, I shall be lost, as it were, in the midst of it; but here I get a known person who carries all the glory. Here, I find the Lamb, whom I had known down here in suffering love; and in the midst of all the brightness my heart is fixed and at rest.

The glory is divine that is needed for perfection, and that God may be everything; but God, in his nature, cannot be made an instrument of service-the Lamb is the light thereof. " And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it." Saved from terrible judgments, they no longer " sacrifice to their net, nor burn incense to their drag," nor yet " walk in the sparks that they kindled." They will see the light in us, and walk by it. We ought to shine in spirit practically now, the nations

ought to see the light of God and of the Lamb in us now; but in that day it will be perfectly accomplished. If there be any light now from God in this dark world, it is in the Church, though the candlestick burns but dimly; but in that day, when there will be nothing in us to dim the light, what a bright light it will be for the world! We shall be the light; the perfect manifestation of the light in which we shall walk; for we shall see God and the Lamb, and be the perfect manifestation of it to others. Even now, to the extent that I am enjoying God in my own soul, I shall have power to manifest Him to another; for my only desire will be that God and the Lamb may be glorified in me. But though, now I find so many hindrances to this, in that day, without anything between me and God, I shall worship God without a temple and without a cloud. We shall see the glory in Him, and the world shall see it in us. Thus we have the double joy of first knowing Him for ourselves, and then of communicating this to others. If I could be more faithful to give out Christ's light, what a joy it would be! Seeing Him first for myself, and then giving out the light that others might see Him in me as the epistle of Christ, for such we are declared to be. We should not be satisfied with our own individual joy in Him, but, as we learn to estimate Him, desire that He might be glorified in us, and by others through us. In that day of glory, everything in which God has dealt with man, or in which he has displayed His ways and thoughts, will be brought out to manifest the stability of God. All that has been put into man's hand to exercise him, and in man's hand has failed, will then be brought out in perfection; thus proving the failure to have been in man and not in the thing committed to him. Take man himself. How has he failed! In the second Adam God will be, and forever, fully glorified. Creation itself is witness to the same truth. The law was given to man, and he failed to keep it; but in that day it will be written on their hearts. Then take power, which God had given to man, to use for his glory, and how did he use it. To rise up in pride against God-enforced duty, and at last crucify His Son. We find all combining against Christ, both the Chief Priests, and Herod and Pontius Pilate. "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against His Christ." But in that day, "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." Then again, after His rejection, the only thing God had for a testimony, was the Church, failing though it be; as the only thing He can now own as witness, is that which owns His rejected Son. But in that day we shall be all that we ought to be now. In that day, "the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of the city," and the "Lamb is the light thereof." He will then attract every eye, and fill the heart of every worshipper within, and be admired in them by those without.

"And the gates shall not at all be shut by day." There is no fear there, no war or dread; all is perfect security. And night there is none! All that is ended, and there is no more darkness.

"And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it." There is not only the absence of evil, but the universal acknowledgment that "the heavens do rule." Both kings and people bring their glory and honor into it. Unto whom? To the poor despised Carpenter's Son, and to those who walked with Him. When He was in the world they could not see His glory; but they shall see it, and bow down to it, when He comes in glory. Those who saw it when it was hidden from the world, and were hidden too with Him, shall be with Him and share His glory when He shall be manifested. Love brought Him down in humiliation, but He could not clothe Himself in vanity; and so if God's glory is to be manifested, His person is to be the display of it. It is not the effort of man that makes much of a thing, but it is Christ alone that attracts; and those who will there be vessels of His glory, will be those who simply follow Christ in lowliness; making everything of Christ, and nothing of

themselves.

" And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." There is great relief in this. For if we speak now of our poor hearts, surely defilement gets in. And if we look at the Church while under responsibility-although God graciously keeps His saints-defilement creeps in, although it ought not. But there, blessed be God, nothing that defileth can enter! There holiness can rest. It has no rest here. Down here, in this sin-stricken world, these two things, holiness and rest, must, as regards what is without, be apart; because sin is down here, and Christ is not down here. Watching is not rest. It is faithfulness, and brings its joy, but it is toil and not rest, although, through grace, it is a blessing! But there holiness will rest, and that will be the highest happiness. Of course, God Himself will be the highest; but of that which flows from God, holiness will be the highest. It is that which characterizes our state; for God Himself is love.

" Neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Here we have something more than the new nature. That we have now; but there nothing can come in to disturb it, nothing can come in to soil the golden streets of that city, nothing can enter to distract the soul as to God and His truth. There will be no abomination nor anything that maketh a lie; in the idolatry of an ordinance coming in between the soul and God, turning it aside from the simple truth, that God is love. For whatever is not entirely and wholly of God, is an abomination and maketh a lie. Then there will be no ornament worn which tells of the idolatry of the heart, taking something apart from God. O, if any one is really interested in the welfare of the Church of God, his heart Must be ready to break when he sees the many thousand things that come in to distract the affections of the saints; the many thousand forms of idolatry, " the abomination and that which maketh a lie," coming in to separate between us and the One God and Father, and the One Risen Head. It may be worldliness, ordinances, circumcision; in short, whatever makes a lie. Paul's heart was in an agony when he saw these things coming in. Look at his epistle to the Galatians, when they were turning away from Christ to circumcision; or at that to the Colossians, who were slipping away from the Risen Head and turning to ordinances, which is idolatry and worldliness; thus departing from Christ as the only object before the soul, which is an abomination against the truth, and therefore " a lie." But, blessed be God, into this glorious city there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth. No abomination shall enter there, no idolatry, not one principle to turn aside from God, or to make a lie, disturbing and distracting the affections from their one object, Christ. Not only what is good is there, but what secures it from the introduction of evil and all that brings in corruption.

All this, however, is negative; but we get what is positive as well. And what is positive? Who shall enter into this heavenly Jerusalem? " They who are written in the Lamb's book of life." It is not said "they who are clean," it is not by the cold fact that they are clean. that they are characterized; but the affections are linked up with the Lamb's heart, while we know that clean they are. They who are written in His book are according to His heart. And they are all there. All that the Lamb had in His heart from eternity; all for whom He had girded His loins and made Himself a servant forever, saying, " I will not go out free"; all are there; for they were associated with Him, and they shall be associated with Him, and with His heart and thoughts forever.

There are, also, the relationships of the place; and if our minds are ever so vague as to the understanding of the things, though they may be as obscure as the symbols used, yet we shall get positive thoughts by the Spirit of God from them, when we take what Christ is, and has taught us

as the key to it all. The moment you get your heart and spirits into the tone of Christ's mind, and have your thoughts occupied with what He is, and with what has occupied His thoughts and His heart- with His house and His glory-then everything takes its proper place, and your heart and understanding become enlarged, to comprehend this blessed book. If I am living in a house, everything in it is natural to me, and there are every day details which fill up the mind; and if I have got the house, I know what I shall find there and what I shall not; and that is really spiritual understanding. If I know, in any little measure, what exercise of heart is, I know that Christ is the answer to every desire that He Himself has awakened in my soul; and it is only those who are spiritual who can understand.

EV 22{In chap. 22 we get what is relative, because the aspect of the city towards what is down here on the earth-in connection with Christ, of course-but its blessings are towards the earth. The tree of life grows in heaven, and belongs to heaven, yet its virtues flow out towards the earth. And though the Church is in glory, as long as there is a need to be met, love is to be exercised; and the Lord uses the Church for this. It is in this sense that is said, "His servants shall serve Him," which implies that there are those who need serving. The nations get healing, but there will be no need of healing in heaven. This service brings in new joy, for the members of the Church will not there have lost this honor of being the instrument to others; we shall have the privilege of being the channels through which the blessings will flow to the earth. And so now we ought to be the channels of love and grace to the world, as also more especially to the saints, while needing it here below.

" And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." And there was also " the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits," etc. The tree of life was there, but there is no mention of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The tree of life was the blessing; the tree of knowledge of good and evil the test of responsibility, of which Adam ate and was lost.

These two principles, Life and Responsibility, have run on from that moment up to this very hour, and will continue to run on until God has made all things anew. Some, having eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, while in the nature consequent on this, cannot eat of the fruit of the tree of life. But God, in the aboundings of His grace, has given us more than ever we lost; for the spring of grace has flowed out to us in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who undertook all our responsibilities, took upon Himself all the wrath due to our sins, died under it, and rose again in the power of an endless life; in which new life, being first in Him and afterward communicated to me, I can eat of the fruits of that tree of life, once barred from me by reason of sin. Now that sin is forever put away, and in that new nature which is incapable of sinning, I can freely eat the fruits of the tree of life; as Jesus says, in addressing the Church of Ephesus, " To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God," thus bringing us into the enjoyment of the full result of all-of the full ripe fruits that everlasting life in Jesus can produce; the outward manifestation of it shall heal the nations, as, indeed, it has healed us. But I would again remark, that all this blessing is the fruit of free and sovereign grace. For if there had been no responsibility on man's part, there would have been no need of a Savior. It is because we were totally lost that grace has its place. It was because I had totally failed, having followed my own will instead of doing God's will, that God has come in in grace and brought me nearer to Himself in redemption, than I had been set at the first in creation and innocence; for now I am created anew

in Christ Jesus.

" The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." The nations cannot eat of the ripe fruit of tree, because they need healing; but the Church, thus possessing the grace of life herself, will go forth in healing grace to those who need it. If you turn to Isa. 60, you will see the contrast between the earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem shown in a remarkable manner, although in some respects the heavenly one is drawn from the earthly. In Isaiah, we find nothing about healing in the earthly Jerusalem, but the reverse. We read there-" The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish yea these nations shall be utterly wasted." But in the heavenly Jerusalem -" the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." Thus we see that Israel will be a test of legal responsibility, as it ever was; but it will be the vessel of power and dominion. Israel of old had no ministry, because it had no love to carry forth to other people; but it had a priesthood within, because the veil not being rent by Christ's death, they could not get direct to God, and therefore needed a priest. But now with us we have no priest on earth, because by the death of Christ we are brought into the immediate presence of God, and therefore a ministry is committed to us; that is, we are called upon to testify of the grace that brought us there. And, therefore, when in the glory we shall be going forth to the healing of the nations, for whilst ourselves feeding on the ripe fruit of the Tree of Life up there, the outgoings of love will reach down here.

" And there shall be no more curse but the throne of God, and the Lamb shall be in it, and' His servants shall serve Him." God was saying to Israel under the Law, "If you defile yourselves you will bring the curse." But in the heavenly city, which will be a source of blessing, there will be "no more curse." It is not here, however, children with the Father, but the throne of God in majesty; not as Sinai, which brought a curse, but the throne of God and the Lamb-ministry and grace. That is, the throne of God and the Lamb is the spring and source of the blessing, whilst the channel through which this grace will flow will be the Church, and so it is said, " His servants shall serve Him," ministering to those who need it. It is not intrinsic joy, but service that is the characteristic here. And as there will be no flaw in the blessing within, so there will be no failure in the service without. If the light is perfect, so will the service be. I shall not have to canvass my conduct then as I now have to do, saying, " O if I had been faithful enough I should have said this or done that; or if there had been love enough in my heart I should have gone here or gone there;" but there it will be a perfect service flowing from a perfect source! What rest such service will be! For " they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads." Not only will they serve rightly, but men will see that they do so, the perfect witness to the name they bear, the full confession of it. " His name shall be in their foreheads." And here I would remark, that it is not that we should be doing so much service that should be before us, but that Christ should be glorified in what we do, and we not seen in it; God's mark being in our foreheads, that all may see whose we are and whom we serve.

" And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light," etc. The Lord God giveth them light, therefore they need no candle, no borrowed light, for they get immediate light from God Himself. He Himself giveth them light, so now, if at any time you have walked by the light of another's candle less spiritual than yourselves, you must have been led wrong, that other not having reached the same measure as yourselves; but when God Himself giveth us light, there is no uncertainty then as to what we have to do. If in any given case I have to say I do not know what to do, then immediately I say my eye is not single;

for if it were, my whole body would be full of light, and my obedience would be as perfect as the light. What, then, am I to do? I am to bring my difficulty to God, even my Father, who will guide me, for He is perfect grace.

" And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to spew unto His servants the things that must shortly be done." Here the scene closes.

Then in verses 7, 12, and 20, the Lord, three times over, speaks of His coming quickly. In the seventh verse it is connected with the prophecy, and addressed to those who are connected with the warnings given. In the twelfth verse it is universal. And in the twentieth verse it is connected with another subject; it is in answer to the desire of the Bride for His coming, that He says surely I come quickly."

The position of all the parties is given. In the seventh verse it is those " who keep the sayings of the prophecy," after " the things that are." The Church, as a witness for God on the earth, having failed, the many antichrists having come in, God in His great mercy gives directions down to the very points where all is destroyed, and then all is closed. The mystery of iniquity Both already work, and will to the end, so that the last time is come. He is ready to judge, though longsuffering in mercy. That has been the position of the Church ever since. Corrupt men have crept in unawares; they were in already in the apostles' days, whereby we know it is the last time. Paul, Peter, John and Jude, all testify to the germ of iniquity as already existing; so that in the prophetic part, He says, " he that is unjust, let him be unjust still," etc. Yet mercy delays the execution of the judgment; and it is blessing to those who keep the sayings of this book. And the sayings of this book is a prophecy given to the servants, when Laodicea is judged and spued out of Christ's mouth.

In the twelfth verse it is universal: " to give to every man," etc. Here he has done with the prophetic part of the book, and goes far beyond it, " to give to every man." Not to those under the beast, but to the general condition of man on the earth. It may be questionable how far it refers to Gog and Magog, because it is not told us; but His coming here has a reference to all, " according to their works."

In the sixteenth verse we get a kind of exordium to the whole book; those to whom the prophecy was given and the Church: we get Christ here in His double character, in respect of the divine government, as the Root of David, the source from which David sprung; and as the Offspring of David, David's heir to sit on David's throne. And then, besides that, He is " the Bright and Morning Star;" which is the character in which He presents Himself to the Church, before He arises as the Sun, to usher in the day of judgment to the world. He is connected with the Church before the day appears, so that we have our portion with Him before the day appears. And so, in the knowledge of this relationship, as soon as He says " I am the Bright and Morning Star ", " the Spirit and the Bride say come." He does not say to the Church " behold I come quickly." But, the Holy Ghost in the Church having given her the consciousness of this relationship to Him, the moment He presents Himself as the " Bright and Morning Star," she immediately replies " come!" There being nothing to be settled between Him and the Church, her whole thought is taken up with the revelation of Jesus Himself in this character. She has one simple thought, " He is coming," and she says " come 1" She knows very well that He is coming quickly to judge the world, but she is the Bride and not the world.

Then we get a lovely picture of the Church while waiting for Him. " The Spirit and the Bride say Come; and let him that heareth say Come." She calls on all who have heard the voice of the Good Shepherd to say " Come." She is not content that there should be any Christians who should not know this relationship in their own souls. " Let him that heareth say Come!" Is that all? No; " Let him that is athirst come." Her own affections are fixed on the Bridegroom, she is longing for His return; but meanwhile she would draw all to the fountain. She is thirsting for the Bridegroom; but she turns to the world and says " I have something for you to hear." For while down here, she has the Holy Ghost in her, and therefore can say to others, " I have something for you to hear; I have water of life for you who are thirsting." Her desire is for the Glorious One, and that all should be gathered in through grace to that water of life. The river being free and the Church knowing the power of grace, she says, " Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." The Church does not say " Come to me." Christ said " Come unto me." But the water of life flows there, and she can invite souls to come and drink, invite them to drink where she has drunk in Christ. And if any one is saying " Come to me," it is evident they have never had the water of life themselves; for if they had they would have such a sense of their emptiness that they would never say to any one, " Come to me." Then mark the three " Comes." He says, " Surely I come quickly." The Church does not say Come quickly, but " Come!" He is the One she wants, and He answers her desires, and says, " I come, surely I come quickly!" It is the Lord's own heart's answer to the desires He has kindled. And the book closes with " Amen, Even so come Lord Jesus."

How blessedly, when He has closed the testimony, does He thus bring the heart of the Church back from everything to Himself. So when you have done with your duties get back to Christ, or else your duties will get between you and Christ. It is no matter what occupies us. The judgments of God will surely come; but you cannot have your affections formed and fashioned by judgments. Conscience may be solemnized by them, but the heart can never be won. Therefore, whatever the duties, the service, or the trials, let the heart get back to Christ Himself, the one object for our affections. In the glory, though we have a part, it is put on, as it were, we are clothed in it, the one object Christ Himself. Let it be so here. The Lord give us, whatever we are occupied with, to get back, by the power of the Holy Ghost, in all our service to this sanctuary, even to Christ Himself, the once lowly but now exalted One, and to fix our hearts on Him! Amen.



## Self-Examination

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Precept is always addressed to a known relationship. I do not tell my servant to behave as my child, because he is not my child; nor do I tell my child to behave as my- servant. A Christian is never called upon to examine himself as to whether he is a child of God or not. He is called to examine himself as to whether he walks like one. Suppose my child begins to examine himself as to whether he is behaving as he ought-this is all right and proper. But suppose he sets about examining his behavior to find out whether he is my child or not?-the thing is monstrous.

## The Gentile

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There is something much to be observed in the opening of the book of Daniel.

It was the moment when the Gentile was receiving the sword of government from the band of the Lord: and this Scripture lets us know with what mind the Gentile did receive it; and we see that it was a very bad mind indeed.

The Gentile would never have had the sword in this way, if Israel had been true to Jehovah, and the house of David continued in their integrity. But at this moment, when the Chaldean is thus endowed, Jerusalem is a wilderness, and the glory has departed from the earth.

The Gentile, therefore, in taking the sword, should have taken it as with a burthened heart. He should, in spirit, have sorrowfully tracked the way by which power had now come into his hand, and have accepted it as with grief and trembling. This would have been the right mind in the Gentile when accepting power from God on the fall of Jerusalem and the departure of the glory.

In such a spirit David accepted power. It was Saul's apostasy that opened the passage to the throne for David. But Saul was God's anointed; and the fall of the anointed of the Lord was before David at that moment, rather than his own exaltation. He lamented with a sore lamentation over the mountains of Gilboa, where Saul and Jonathan had been slain (2 Sam. 1).

This was beautiful, and the very opposite or contradiction of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. 1. Instead of mourning, the king of Babylon triumphs; and the very first thing he does is to adorn his palace, the seat and witness of his power, with the best-favored children he could get from among the captives of Judah.

Nebuchadnezzar should not have looked on Jerusalem in the day of her calamity. He may have been the rod of the Lord's indignation against her, but he should have used his commission with a grieved heart. The glory itself, though it had to leave Zion (Ezek. 8-11), left it reluctantly and with reserve, and, as I may say, sorrowfully.

And this Gentile should have known, also, the holiness of Judah, and how near the Lord had been to Israel. If he never thought of this, it was because of the hardness of his heart, and he is answerable for such hardness that blinded him-as the world is answerable for not knowing Him who made it when He was in it. The Gentile should have known that God's house was at Jerusalem; a house, too, made to be a house of prayer for all nations. All this was the witness of God's presence in that city; and the Gentile's exultation in the day of her calamity is the Gentile's wickedness.

All this condemns the Gentile from the very beginning. And when we look around and abroad, we see him in the same spirit to this day. Nay, the Gentile has this' further sin attaching to him. He is now, in Christendom, exalting himself, advancing, enriching, and adorning himself in the world, though Christ, the King of glory, like the glory of old in Jerusalem, has been grieved and sent away. The present Gentile is careless about the sorrows and the blood of Jesus, just as

Nebuchadnezzar, in his day, was careless and thoughtless about the fall and the griefs of Jerusalem. The Gentile is the Gentile still; and God's indignation against Jerusalem shall end in his destruction.

## Twilight 'Ere Day Dawned

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To know that there is such a Being as God, and to know God Himself, are two things very distinguishable the one from the other. I might say more than this; for the revelation of the existence of God, and the revelation of the character of God, are, apart from a creature's knowledge of the one or of the other, separable.

In the abstract thought of Him as the First, as the alone I AM, God existed, in the full consciousness of His own being and of His own blessedness, when there were none to recognize His being or His blessedness save Himself alone. Revelation, in any sense in which the term may be used, seems to suppose, not only Divine existence, the evidence of itself; and an outshining of that which characterizes the Being so existing, but that there is an evidence or testimony communicable to and intelligible by other subordinate beings; that is, the existence of beings subordinate to God is supposed, directly I speak of revelation. His own being, attributes, and character existed in God before any revelation of them took place.

I need not speak now of other worlds-of angels fallen or unfallen: I would speak of this earth, and of man upon it.

The evidence to man, the testimony upon which man is held responsible to own the existence of a First Great Cause of himself and all around him, is various. He 1,5,-he has power to hold man to his responsibilities, whether man likes it or not, argues thus with man in the book which He has written: First, that creation itself, the works of creation, had at first, and-however they may have been marred-still have, a voice for God. They proclaim, and proclaim in a way that man can understand and has understood, though practically denying it all the while, the eternal power and Godhead. " That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:18-20). Man is a part of creation; he was the highest part of this earth's creation; and his existence, one's own very self, is a proof of the being of a God, as much as were man's first circumstances. And the character of his being and of his circumstances spake of goodness and beneficence, as well as of power being in the Creator. Providence, also, and the display which it makes of One who causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust, and gives fruitful seasons, is a second proof which scripture gives to the being- and character, in patience, of God (Acts 14:17; Matt. 5:45).

And God has power and the intention of forcing man to recognize and to know all this, if not before in grace, then at last in judgment (Acts 17:23-31).

That Eden was the proof of eternal power and goodness as to innocent man, is plain. That a creature made to be dependent by God must be so (if God be indeed able to accomplish His own will), is clear also. And if man has renounced that position of dependence upon God, he has not changed the essential law of his being, viz. dependence-nor has he taken from his Maker the

claim over him, or the intention to make that claim known; a bad conscience man has won by his revolt, and sorrow, too, in many a way.

Now, the display which God made of Himself in creation, was a display expressing itself in a creation which was all very good-all fit to be blessed by God as such. It had a voice of blessing for man made in the likeness and image of God, while he was innocent and obedient; but it had, it has, no answer to the conscience of man as a rebel-to conscience which thinks God is against man, because man has set himself against God.

Again, the patience of God in providence, and His goodness therein, have no answer to guilt in the conscience; for there is a judgment to follow, when patience has had its perfect work. And how shall I be then, when I have to give account of that which I have done? Neither creation nor providence can satisfy a sinner's conscience, can give it peace before God. And more than that-while there is but one true God (many as are the names and glories by which He displays Himself), no name, no glory of His which does not plainly show that He has stood up for me, undertaken my cause for me as a ruined sinner, ever can give my conscience peace.

Let us look at this in detail. His holiness, in driving out Cain from His presence upon earth, for the murder of Abel, and separating thus the children of Adam into two families-one in the presence of God, the other out-side of that presence-could that give Adam or Eve peace? No. Could, then, the judgment that swept the world with a deluge, saving but one small family, give to Noah peace for eternity? No: -wicked Ham was saved as well as Noah. The salvation was of a family in time, not of individuals for eternity. Could the sword of government, put into Noah's hand, give peace? No: the drunkenness in his own tent, and the rebellion of Babel's tower, proved how incompetent Noah was for the trust-how rebellious man was against the trust of government. And Abram's call out from among idolatries, to be a witness for God, while it showed that Abram had found grace before God, met not the need of his own conscience as to sin as an individual. Nor did Israel's call out of Egypt, or the Gentiles' investiture with power, as seen in the book of the prophet Daniel, or any other thing that God did, either reveal how He could be just while He would Himself justify the sinner, or that which could possibly enable a sinner, as a sinner, to get a conscience purged from guilt.

That God was saving sinners from the moment that man's history outside of Eden commenced; that He never saved but through His own estimate of the redemption by blood, the which He meant to manifest; that the blessing was communicated from God by the Spirit, who, from the beginning, wrought, if He wrought for eternity in any soul, by giving it faith in the word which God spoke-all this is clear, and not called in question. But (and this is an important thing to remark) God had, and was acting upon, plans for the earth, and His open testimony and action was for a present testimony for Himself, showing out what man was, and teaching man to know himself; the renewal of souls was a secret hidden thing, not spoken about though real; and faith had to do with the word of God and the action of God, as set forth at each succeeding period.

The more a man in Old-Testament times reasoned and thought upon the eternity connected with God-that He was from everlasting to everlasting, the more must he have felt that there was some deep enigma to be solved. "Creation is not for eternity," might Noah have said, "for the heavens and earth which were have been destroyed by a deluge; yet God is from everlasting to everlasting: providence will endure with its rain-bow while the earth lasts-but how long will that be?" "The Law,"

Moses might have said, "is perfect for a man upon earth,-if he can be what God describes,-but God is the God of eternity, and what lies beyond the grave?" The more all that man was, and that which characterized man's circumstances, was seen in the light of the Being of an eternal God, the more enigmatical must everything have appeared until life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel of a crucified and risen Savior.

God was not, in Old-Testament times, showing Himself forth as a Savior God, as doing those works and accomplishing that righteousness, which at once proclaimed Him as a Savior of sinners for heaven and for eternity; and at the same time, gave a full and perfect manifestation of His character as the God of mercy and of compassion. While His works and revelation of Himself might, through faith and by the Spirit, be blessed unto eternal salvation, the drift and tendency of the revelation was rather to show out what man was-to try him and to prove him, and to make him know himself-than to show out what God was and could be and do in answer to the ruin of a creature.

" The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," was God's first testimony. It was all that Adam brought with him out of Eden. His faith had no other object to rest upon. Did he, could he, understand all that God meant when He used this enigmatical sentence? Could he even understand all that we have understood and known as true about it? Certainly not. Take but the promise (which is already made good to us) of Christ: " In that day [of His ascension] ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me and I in you." Did Adam know this? No: Christ was not even come-had not died, much less was He risen from the dead and ascended up into heaven; that part of the enigma was not made good; it was not even revealed that such things were to be. Adam could not know it; and in such a vast plan as that little sentence-" the woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head " contains-how many parts were there! God presented them, as seemed Him good, piece by piece: and, let it be observed, faith could not ever go beyond that part of His plan which God had revealed, though, while faith in man was thus limited to the parts God had revealed, and the part God was revealing, that part derived its value from its being part of the whole plan of God, the part He was revealing, the part which more especially challenged man's faith. Faith's language is uniform: " Let God be true and every man a liar"; but then, be it remembered, faith had to do with a living God, whose testimony, while it all tended to one common salvation and end, varied as to the part of that end to which it was in successive time given (see Heb. 1). Let any one read through Heb. 11, and they will see this. Each individual, almost, who is well reported of for faith-as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc., etc.-had a different word to trust in.

The levity, carelessness and assumptions of which we are guilty in the things of God, are often frightful. One common instance of it has often struck me, in the way that many minds would reduce all to the same level of light and knowledge. Abraham, David, Peter, during the days of the blessed Lord's humiliation, and Paul, after the ascension of Christ, are all supposed to have been on one level as to truth and light. Now it is not much to assume that Peter, who had the light of many prophets, in addition to the light which existed in David's day, was not lower than any Jew in knowledge, and light, and power, for he was instructed, endowed for, and launched in service by the Lord Himself. But how utterly was Peter unable to enter into the most simple truths which we enjoy-the needs be of his Lord's death he could not see (Matt. 16:21-24); and if His death was not seen, then surely not His resurrection either. To forego Jewish hopes of the kingdom to Israel also, even after his Lord's resurrection, he was unable (Acts 1:6), though the teaching of his blessed

Master had been plain enough (John 14-16) about the Church which was to take Israel's place as a witness upon earth. Another thing of interest, in this connection, is the way that in John 17 the blessed Lord, in speaking to His Father about the disciples, speaks, not according to what their measure of intelligence was, but according to that which He and His Father saw to be involved in their faith, little as it might be, and feeble as it most certainly was. (Comp. John 13; 14; 15, with John 17).

I have passed by one point to which I would return, namely, the distinction between revelation in the more general sense in which I have used it above, and the more limited and popular sense connected with the Scriptures (or written standard) of truth. Properly speaking, whatever reveals God is revelation - whatever makes known, to intelligences around and below Him, what and who He is, I should call revelation. Psalm 19 thus refers to various witnesses to Him and His glory. Creation, providence, His own conduct and words, received by living men, and handed down from Father to son among men, all revealed God, was all revelation of God and from God, before any part of Scripture was written? Popularly speaking, the term revelation is more restricted in its meaning, and confined to that Written Word which has been given to form and sustain, and be the responsibility of those living witnesses, and that chain of them that God has had for Himself upon the earth, almost from the beginning. The word spoken by God, and the word written by God, were harmoniously one; yet the Word written had peculiarities connected with the gift of it of immense moment. It is important to distinguish and to see how creation and providence are used, throughout Scripture, to convict man wherever and whatever he may be, while it is only the word spoken or written which contains the doctrine of Government and mercy, of redemption and salvation, whether for the earth in time, or for the heavens in eternity. Not that the value of the Book of Revelation is restricted to the light of these things, though that be distinctive to it and to the living witnesses whom God has raised up as depositories of its truth: the value of the book goes much further, for it explains and unfolds, in man's own language, in an intelligible way, and in a way that never varies: -the claims of God as Creator and Upholder of man, and of the earth, in patience and government; -gives the account of man's original state and rebellion against God, so as to explain all that is around and within us, and to enable us to see what God thinks about it and us, and the Power which, through the fall, got the mastery of man;-and does all this in a way divinely perfect. Creation and Providence suffice to condemn man in the arena of God's presence, may suffice to bring man in as ruined in his own conscience. But the Bible gives the Divine analysis of all, of what has been, is, and is to be; of the world, of Providence, of man, of Satan, of angels-and shows how these things, having been created for God, cannot escape from Him: but it does infinitely more-it shows how through the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven, all these things sink into and arrange themselves in one vast plan for the glorifying of Himself by redemption through His Son, and affording thereby a perfect exhibition of who and what He is-an exhibition of it to and in the joy of poor sinners saved by grace. May the Lord enable us to know the unspeakable value of the Written Word - and may He show us, not only that there is such a thing as truth; but may the Holy Ghost, Spirit of the living God, bring to bear upon our hearts individually, the truth of the person and glory of Him, who being Son of God is now also Son of Man, and is in heaven at the right hand of the Majesty on Highest - in the glory too of the Father, glory which He had with Him before the world was.

The Son of Man glorified in heaven - as Son of God and Son of the Father - and God the Holy Ghost come down here - the Church being the participant of heavenly and Divine blessing, is not twilight portion, but is as the beauty and brightness of the brightening dawn of a morning without clouds - as the clear shining after rain - if I may use the expressions figuratively, and in connection with the revelation of truth.



## The Unequal Yoke

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No one who sincerely desires to attain, in his own person, or promote in others, a purer and more elevated discipleship, can possibly contemplate the Christianity of the present day without an indescribable feeling of sadness and heaviness. Its tone is so excessively low, its aspect so sickly, and its spirit so enfeebled, that one is, at times tempted to despair of anything like a true and faithful witness for an absent Lord. All this is the more truly deplorable when we remember the commanding motives by which it is our special privilege ever to be actuated. Whether we look at the Master whom we are called to follow-the path which we are called to tread-the end which we are called to keep in view-or the hopes by which we are to be animated, we cannot but own that, were all these entered into, and realized by a more simple faith, we should, assuredly, exhibit a more ardent discipleship. "The love of Christ," says the apostle, "constraineth us." This is the most powerful motive of all. The more the heart is filled with Christ's love, and the eye filled with His blessed person, the more closely shall we seek to follow in His heavenly track. His foot-marks can only be discovered by "a single eye"; and unless the will is broken, the flesh mortified, and the body kept under, we shall utterly fail in our discipleship, and make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

Let not my reader misunderstand me. It is not, here, by any means, a question of personal salvation. It is quite another thing. Nothing can be more basely selfish than, having received salvation as the fruit of Christ's agony and bloody sweat, His cross and passion, to keep at as great a distance from His sacred person as we can, without forfeiting our personal safety. This is, even in the judgment of nature, deemed a character of selfishness worthy of unmingled contempt; but when exhibited by one who 'professes to owe his present, and his everlasting all to a rejected, crucified, risen, and absent Master, no language can express its moral baseness. " Provided I escape hell-fire, it makes little matter as to discipleship." Reader, do you not, in your inmost soul, abhor this sentiment? If so, then, earnestly seek to flee from it to the very opposite point of the compass; and let your truthful language be: " Provided that blessed Master is glorified, it makes little matter, comparatively, about my personal safety." Would to God, that this were the sincere utterance of many hearts in this day, when, alas! it may be too truly said, that, "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." (Phil. 2:21.) Would, that the Holy Ghost would raise up, by His own resistless power, and send forth by His own heavenly energy, a band of separated and consecrated followers of the Lamb, each one bound by the cords of love, to the horns of the altar-a company, like Gideon's three hundred of old, able to confide in God, and deny the flesh. How the heart longs for this! How the spirit, bowed down, at times, beneath the chilling and withering influence of a cold and uninfluential profession, earnestly breathes after a more vigorous and whole-hearted testimony for that One, who emptied Himself, and laid aside His glory, in order that we, through His precious bloodshedding, might be raised to companionship with Him, in eternal blessedness.

Now, amongst the numerous hindrances to this thorough consecration of heart to Christ which I earnestly desire for myself, and my reader, "the unequal yoke" will be found to occupy a very

prominent place indeed. " Be ye not unequally yoked together (ετεροζυγουντες) with unbelievers: for what partnership (μετοχη) hath righteousness with unrighteousness? (or rather lawlessness-ανομια) and what communion (κοινωνια) hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath a believer with an unbeliever? (απιστου) And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will

be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:14-18) Under the Mosaic economy, we learn the same moral principle. "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled. Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts as of woolen and linen together: (Deut. 22:9-11; Lev. 19:19). These scriptures will suffice to set forth the moral evil of an unequal yoke. It may, with full confidence, be asserted that no one can be an unshackled follower of Christ who is, in any way, "unequally yoked." He may be a saved person - he may be a true child of God - a sincere believer; but he cannot be a thorough disciple; and not only so, but there is a positive hindrance to the full manifestation of that which he may really be, notwithstanding his unequal yoke. "Come out...and I will receive you ...and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The idea here is evidently different from that set forth in James: "Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth." And also in Peter, "Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." And again, in 1 John: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God." So also, in John's gospel, "But, as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God." In all these passages, the relationship of sons is founded upon the divine counsel and the divine operation, and is not set before us as the consequence of any acting of ours; whereas, in 2 Cor. 6 it is put as the result of our getting out of the unequal yoke. In other words, it is entirely a practical question. Thus, in Matthew 5 we read, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; in order that (■πως) ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven, because he causeth his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust." Here, too, it is the practical establishment and public declaration of the relationship, and its moral influence. It becomes the sons of such a Father to act in such a way. In short, we have the abstract position of relationship of sons founded upon God's sovereign will and operation; and we have the moral character consequent upon, and flowing out of, this relationship which affords just ground for God's public acknowledgment of the relationship. God cannot fully and publicly own those who are unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for, were He to do so, it would be an acknowledgment of the unequal yoke. He cannot acknowledge "darkness" - "unrighteousness" - "Belial" - "idols" - and "an infidel." How could He? Hence, if I yoke myself with any of these, I am morally, and publicly, identified with them, and not with God at all. I have put myself into a position which God cannot own, and, as a consequence, He cannot own me; but if I withdraw myself from that position - if I "come out and be separate" - if I take my neck out of the unequal yoke, then, but not until then, can I be publicly and fully received and owned as a "son or daughter of the Lord Almighty."

This is a solemn and searching principle for all who feel that they have unhappily gotten themselves into such a yoke. They are not walking as disciples, nor are they publicly or morally on the ground of sons. God cannot own them. Their secret relationship is not the point; but they have put themselves thoroughly off god's ground. They have foolishly thrust their neck into a yoke which, inasmuch as it is not Christ's yoke, must be Belial's yoke; and until they cast off that yoke, God cannot own them as His sons and daughters. God's grace, no doubt, is infinite; and can meet us in all our failure and weakness; but if our souls aspire after a high order of discipleship, we must, at once, cast off the unequal yoke, cost what it may, that is, if it can be cast off; but if it cannot, we must only bow our heads beneath the shame and sorrow thereof, looking to God for full deliverance.

Now, there are four distinct phases in which "the unequal yoke" may be contemplated, viz., the domestic, the commercial, the religious and the philanthropic. Some may be disposed to confine 2 Cor. 6:14, to the first of these; but the apostle does not so confine it. The words are, "be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." He does not specify the character or object of the yoke, and therefore we are warranted in giving the passage its widest application, by bringing its edge to bear directly upon every phase of the unequal yoke; and we shall see the importance of so doing, ere we close these remarks, if the Lord permit.

#### 1.

And, first, then, let us consider the domestic or marriage yoke. What pen can portray the mental anguish, the moral misery, together with the ruinous consequences, as to spiritual life and testimony, flowing from a Christian's marriage with an unconverted person? I suppose nothing can be more deplorable than the condition of one who discovers, when it is too late, that he has linked himself, for life, with one who cannot have a single thought or feeling in common with him. One desires to serve Christ; the other can only serve the devil; one breathes after the things of God; the other sighs for the things of this present world; the one earnestly seeks to mortify the flesh with all its affections and desires; the other only seeks to minister to and gratify these very things. Like a sheep and a goat, linked together, the sheep longs to feed on the green pasture in the field, while, on the other hand, the goat craves the brambles which grow on the ditch. The sad consequence is that both are starved. One will not feed on the pasture; and the other cannot feed upon the brambles, and thus neither gets what his nature craves, unless the goat, by superior strength, succeeds in forcing his unequally yoked companion to remain amongst the brambles, there to languish and die. The moral of this is plain enough; and, moreover, it is alas too common occurrence. The goat generally succeeds in gaining his end. The worldly partner carries his or her point, in almost every instance. It will be found, almost without exception, that, in cases of the unequal marriage yoke, the poor Christian is the sufferer, as is evidenced by the bitter fruits of a bad conscience, a depressed heart, a gloomy spirit, and a desponding mind. A heavy price, surely, to pay for the gratification of some natural affection, or the attainment, it may be, of some paltry worldly advantage. In fact, a marriage of this kind is the death knell of practical Christianity, and of progress in the divine life. It is morally impossible that any one can be an unfettered disciple of Christ with his neck in the marriage yoke with an unbeliever. As well might a racer in the Olympic or Isthmian games have expected to gain the crown of victory by attaching a heavy weight or a dead body to his person. It is enough, surely, to have one dead to sustain, without attaching another. There never was a true Christian yet, who did not find that he had abundant

work to do in endeavoring to grapple with the evils of one heart, without going to burden himself with the evils of two; and, without doubt, the man who, foolishly and disobediently, marries an unconverted woman; or the woman who marries an unconverted man, is burdened with the combined evils of two hearts; and who is sufficient for these things? One can most fully count upon the grace of Christ for the subjugation of his own evil nature; but he certainly cannot count, in the same way, upon that grace, in reference to the evil nature of his unequal yoke-fellow. If he have yoked himself ignorantly, the Lord will meet him personally, on the ground of full confession, with entire restoration of soul; but, in the matter of his discipleship, he will never recover it. Paul could say, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be disapproved of." (αδοκιμος) And he said this, too, in immediate connection with "striving for the mastery." "Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one obtaineth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every one that striveth for the mastery is temperate (self-controlled -εγκρατεύεται) in all things; now, they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air," etc. (1 Cor. 9:24-27.) Here, it is no a question of life or salvation, but simply one of "running in a race," and "so running that we may obtain," not life, but "an incorruptible crown." The fact of being called to run assumes the possession of life, for no one would call upon dead men to run in a race. I have gotten life, evidently, before I begin to run at all, and, hence; though I should fail in the race, I do not lose my life, but only the crown, for this and not that was the object proposed to be run for. We are not called to run for life, inasmuch as we get that not by running but "by faith of Jesus Christ" who by His death has purchased life for us, and implants it in us by the mighty energy of the Holy Ghost. Now, this life, being the life of a risen Christ, is eternal, for He is the eternal son; as He says Himself in His address to the Father, in John, "Thou hast given him power over all -flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." This life is not conditional. He does not give us life, as sinners, and then set us to run for it as saints, with the gloomy foreboding, that we may lose the precious boon by failing in the race. This would be to "run uncertainly," as many, alas! are trying to do, who profess to have entered upon the course, and yet they know not whether they have life or 'not. Such persons are running for life, and not for a crown; but God does not set up life at the goal, as the reward of victory, but gives it at the starting post, as the power by which we run. The power to run, and the object of running are two very different things; yet they are constantly confounded by persons who are ignorant of the glorious gospel of the grace of God, in which Christ is set forth as the life and righteousness of all who believe on His name; and all this, moreover, as the free gift of God, and not as the reward of our running.

Now, in considering the terribly evil consequences of the unequal marriage yoke, it is mainly as bearing upon our discipleship that we are looking at them..I say, mainly, because our entire character and experience are deeply affected thereby. I very much question, if any one can give a more effectual blow to his prosperity in the -divine life, than by assuming an unequal yoke. Indeed, the very fact of so doing proves that spiritual decline has already set in, with most alarming symptoms; but as to his discipleship and testimony, the lamp thereof may be regarded as all but gone out, or if it does give an occasional faint glimmer, it only serves to make manifest the gloom of his unhappy position, and the appalling consequences of being "unequally yoked together with an unbeliever."

Thus much as to the question of the unequal yoke in its influence upon the life, the character, the testimony and the discipleship of a child of God. I would now say a word as to its moral effect, as exhibited in the domestic circle. Here, too, the consequences are truly melancholy. Nor could they possibly be otherwise. Two persons have come together, in the closest and most intimate relationship, with tastes, habits, feelings, desires, tendencies, and objects diametrically opposite. They have nothing in common, so that, in every movement, they can but grate one against the other. The unbeliever cannot, in reality, go with the believer, and if there should, through excessive amiability, or downright hypocrisy, be a show of acquiescence, what is it worth in the sight of the Lord who judges the true state of the heart in reference to Himself? But little indeed; yea, it is worse than worthless. Then again, if the believer should, unhappily, go, in any measure, with his unequal yoke-fellow, it can only be at the expense of his discipleship, and the consequence is, a condemning conscience, in the sight of the Lord; and this, again, leads to heaviness of spirit, and, it may be, sourness of temper, in the domestic circle, so that the grace of the gospel is, by no means, commended, and the unbeliever is not attracted or won. Thus it is, in every way, most sorrowful. It is dishonoring to God, destructive of spiritual prosperity, utterly subversive of discipleship and testimony, and entirely hostile to domestic peace and blessing. It produces estrangement, coldness, distance, and misunderstanding; or, if it does not produce these, it will, doubtless, lead, on the part of the christian, to a forfeiture of his discipleship and his good conscience, both of which he may be tempted to offer as a sacrifice upon the altar of domestic peace. Thus, whatever way we look at it, an unequal yoke must lead to the most deplorable consequences.

Then, as to its effect upon children, it is equally sad. These are almost sure to flow in the current with an unconverted parent. " Their children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people." There can be no union of heart in the training of the children; no joint and mutual confidence in reference to them. One desires to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; the other desires to bring them up in the principles of the world, the flesh, and the devil: and as all the sympathies of the children, as they grow up, are likely to be ranged on the side of the latter, it is easy to see how it will end. In short, it is an un-seemly, unscriptural, and vain effort to plow with an "unequal yoke," or to "sow the ground with mingled seed"; and all must end in sorrow and confusion.

I shall, ere turning from this branch of our subject, offer a remark as to the reasons which generally actuate Christians in the matter of entering into the unequal marriage-yoke. We all know, alas! how easily the poor heart persuades itself of the rightness of any step which it desires to take, and how the devil furnishes plausible arguments to convince us of its rightness-arguments which the moral condition of the soul causes us to regard as clear, forcible, and satisfactory. The very fact of our thinking of such a thing, proves our unfitness to weigh, with a well-balanced mind and spiritually-adjusted conscience, the solemn consequences of such a step. If the eye were single (that is, if we were governed but by one object, namely, the glory and honor of the Lord Jesus Christ), we should never entertain the idea of putting our necks into an unequal yoke; and, consequently, we should have no difficulty or perplexity about the matter. A racer, whose eye was resting on the crown, would not be troubled with any perplexity as to whether he ought to stop and tie a hundred-weight round his neck. Such a thought would never cross his mind; and not only so, but a thorough racer would have a distinct and almost intuitive perception of everything which

would be likely to prove a hindrance to him in running the race; and, of course, with such an one, to perceive, would be to reject with decision. Now, were it thus with Christians, in the matter of unscriptural marriage, it would save them a world of sorrow and perplexity; but it is not thus. The heart gets out of communion, and is morally incompetent to "try the things that differ"; and, when in this condition, the devil gains an easy conquest, and speedy success in his wicked effort to induce the believer to yoke himself with "Belial"-with "unrighteousness" -with "darkness"-with "an infidel." When the soul is in full communion with God, it is entirely subject to His word; it sees things as He sees them, calls them what He calls them, and not what the devil or his own carnal heart would call them. In this way, the believer escapes the ensnaring influence of a deception which is very frequently brought to bear upon him in this matter, namely, a false profession of religion on the part of the person whom he desires to marry. This is a very common case. It is easy to show symptoms of leaning towards the things of God; and the heart is treacherous and base enough to make a profession of religion, in order to gain its end; and not only so, but the devil, who is "transformed into an angel of light," will lead to this false profession, in order thereby the more effectually to entrap the feet of a child of God. Thus it comes to pass that Christians, in this matter, suffer them-selves to be satisfied, or at least profess themselves satisfied, with evidence of conversion which, under any other circumstances, they would regard as utterly lame and flimsy. But, alas! experience soon opens the eyes to the reality. It is speedily discovered that the profession was all a vain show, that the heart is entirely in and of the world. Terrible discovery! Who can detail the bitter consequences of such a discovery-the anguish of heart-the bitter reproaches and cuttings of conscience -the shame and confusion-the loss of peace and blessing -the forfeiture of spiritual peace and joy-the sacrifice of a life of usefulness? Who can describe all these things? The man awakes from his delusive dream, and opens his eyes upon the tremendous reality, that he is yoked for life with " Belial." Yes, this is what the Spirit calls it. It is not our inference, or a deduction arrived at by a process of reasoning; but a plain and positive statement of Holy Scripture, that thus the matter stands in reference to one who, from whatever motive, or under the influence of whatever reasons, or deceived by whatever false pretenses, has entered into an unequal marriage-yoke.

O, my beloved Christian reader, if you are in danger of entering into such a yoke, let me earnestly, solemnly, and affectionately entreat of you to pause first, and weigh the matter in the balances of the sanctuary, ere you move forward a single hair's breadth on such a fatal path! You may rest assured, that you will no sooner have taken the step, than your heart will be assailed by hopeless regrets, and your life embittered by unnumbered sorrows. LET NOTHING INDUCE YOU TO YOKE YOURSELF WITH AN UNBELIEVER. Are your affections engaged? Then, remember, they cannot be the affections of your new man; they are, be assured of it, those of the old or carnal nature, which you are called upon to mortify and set aside. Wherefore, you should cry to God for spiritual power to rise above the influence of such affections; yea, to sacrifice them to Him. Again, are your interests concerned? Then remember, that they are only your interests; and if they are promoted, Christ's interests are sacrificed by your yoking yourself with " Belial." Furthermore, they are only your temporal, and not your eternal interests. In point of fact, the interests of the believer and those of Christ ought to be identical; and it is plain, that His interests, His honor, His truth, His glory, must inevitably be sacrificed, if a member of His body is linked with "Belial." This is the true way to look at the question. What are a few hundreds, or a few thousands, to an heir of heaven? "God is able to give thee much more than this." Are you going to sacrifice the truth of God, as well

as your own spiritual peace prosperity, and happiness, for a paltry trifle of gold, which must perish in the using of it? Ah, no! God forbid! Flee from it, as a bird from the snare, which it sees and knows. Stretch out the hand of genuine, well-braced, whole-hearted discipleship, and take the knife and slay your affections and your interests on the altar of God; and then, even though there should not be an audible voice from heaven to approve your act, you will have the invaluable testimony of an approving conscience and an ungrieved Spirit-an ample reward, surely, for the most costly sacrifice which you can make. May the Spirit of God give power to resist Satan's temptations!

It is hardly needful to remark, here, that in cases where conversion takes place after marriage, the complexion of the matter is very materially altered. There will then be no smittings of conscience, for example; and the whole thing is modified in a variety of particulars. Still there will be difficulty, trial and sorrow, unquestionably. The only thing is that one can, far more happily, bring the trial and sorrow into the Lord's presence when he has not deliberately and willfully plunged himself thereinto; and, blessed be God, we know how ready He is to forgive, restore, and cleanse from all unrighteousness, the soul that makes full confession of its error and failure. This may comfort the heart of one who feels he has sinned in this matter; and for one who has been brought to the Lord after marriage, the spirit of God has given specific direction and blessed encouragement, in the following passage: " If any brother have an unbelieving wife, and she think proper to dwell with him, let him not put her away: and if any woman have an unbelieving husband, and he think proper to dwell with her, let her not put him away (for the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unclean, but now are they holy)... for what knowest thou, O wife, if thou shalt save thy husband? or what knowest thou, O husband, if thou shalt save thy wife" (1 Cor. 7:12-16).

2.

We shall now consider " the unequal yoke" in its commercial phase, as seen in cases of partnership in business. This, though not so serious an aspect of the yoke as that which we have just been considering, inasmuch as it can be more easily got rid of, will, nevertheless, be found a very positive barrier to the believer's testimony. When a Christian yokes himself, for business purposes, with an unbeliever-whether that unbeliever be a relative or not-or when he becomes a member of a worldly firm, he virtually surrenders his individual responsibility. Henceforth the acts of the firm become his acts, and it is perfectly out of the question to think of getting a worldly firm to act on heavenly principles. They would laugh at such a notion, inasmuch as it would be an effectual barrier to the success of their commercial schemes. They will feel perfectly free to adopt a number of expedients in carrying on their business, which would be quite opposed to the spirit and principles of the kingdom in which he is, and of the Church of which he forms a. part. Thus he will find himself constantly in a most trying position. He may use his influence to christianize the mode of conducting affairs; but they will compel him to do business as others do, and he has no remedy save to mourn in secret over his anomalous and difficult position, or else to go out at great pecuniary loss to himself and his family. Where the eye is single there will be no hesitation as to which of these alternatives to adopt; but, alas! the very fact of getting into such a position proves the lack of a single eye; and the fact of being in it argues the lack of spiritual capacity to appreciate the value and power of the divine principles which would infallibly bring a man out of it. A man whose eye was single could not possibly yoke himself with an unbeliever for the purpose of

making money. Such an one could only set, as an object before his mind, the, direct glory of Christ; and this object could never be gained by a positive transgression of divine principle. This makes it very simple. If it does not glorify Christ for a Christian to become a partner in a worldly firm, it must, without doubt, further the designs of the devil. There is no middle ground; but that it does not glorify Christ is manifest, for His word says, "be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Such is the principle which cannot be infringed without damage to the testimony, and forfeiture of spiritual blessing. True the conscience of a Christian, who transgresses in this matter, may seek relief in various ways-may have recourse to various subterfuges-may set forth various arguments to persuade itself that all is right. It will be said that "we can be very devoted and very spiritual, so far as we are personally concerned, even though we are yoked, for business purposes, with an unbeliever." This will be found fallacious when brought to the test of actual practice. A servant of Christ will find himself hampered in a hundred ways by his worldly partnership. If in matters of service to Christ he is not met with open hostility, he will have to encounter the enemy's secret and constant effort to damp his ardor and throw cold water on all his schemes. He will be laughed at and despised-he will be continually reminded of the effect which his enthusiasm and fanaticism will produce in reference to the business prospects of the firm. If he uses his time, his talents, or his pecuniary resources, in what he believes to be the Lord's service he will be pronounced a fool or a madman, and reminded that the true, the proper, the rational way for a commercial man to serve the Lord is to "attend to business, and nothing but business;" and that it is the exclusive business of clergymen and ministers to attend to religious matters, inasmuch as they are set apart and paid for so doing. Now, although the Christian's renewed mind may be thoroughly convinced of the fallacy of all this reasoning-although he may see that this worldly wisdom is but a flimsy, thread-bare cloak, thrown over the heart's covetous practices-yet who can tell how far the heart may be influenced by such things? We get weary of constant resistance. The current becomes too strong for us, and we gradually yield ourselves to its action, and are carried along on its surface. Conscience may make some death-struggles but the spiritual energies are paralyzed, and the sensibilities of the new nature are blunted, so that there is no response to the cries of conscience and no effectual effort to withstand the enemy; the worldliness of the Christian's heart leagues itself with the opposing influences from without-the outworks are stormed, and the citadel of the soul's affections vigorously assaulted; and, finally, the man settles down in thorough worldliness, exemplifying, in his own person, the prophet's touching lament, "Her Nazarites were purer than snow they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire: their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets; their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick " (Lam. 4:7,8). The man who was once known as a servant of Christ a fellow-helper unto the kingdom of God-making use of his resources only to further the interests of the gospel of Christ, is now, alas I settled down upon his lees, only known as a plodding, keen, bargain-making man of business, of whom the apostle might well say, " Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present age " (τοῦ τῶν αἰώνων).

But, perhaps, nothing so operates on the hearts of Christians in inducing them to yoke themselves commercially with unbelievers as the habit of seeking to maintain the two characters of a Christian and a man of business. This is a grievous snare. In point of fact there can be no such thing. A man must be either the one or the other. If I am a Christian my christianity must show itself, as a living reality, in that in which I am; and, if it cannot show itself there, I ought not to be there; for, if I



continue in a sphere or position in which the life of Christ cannot be manifested, I shall speedily possess naught of Christianity but the name, without the reality-the outward form without the in-ward power-the shell without the kernel. I should be the servant of Christ, not merely on Sunday, but from Monday morning to Saturday night. I should not only be a servant of Christ in the public assembly, but also in my place of business, whatever it may happen to be. But I cannot be a proper servant of Christ with my neck in the yoke with an unbeliever; for how could the servants of two hostile masters work in the same yoke? It is utterly impossible; as well might one attempt to link the sun's meridian beams with the profound darkness of midnight. It cannot be done; and I do, therefore, most solemnly appeal to my reader's conscience, in the presence of Almighty God, who shall judge the secrets of men's hearts by Jesus Christ, as to this important matter. I would say to him, if he is thinking of getting into partnership with an unbeliever, FLEE FROM IT! yes, flee from it, though it promises you the gain of thousands. You will plunge yourself in a mess of trouble and sorrow. You are going to "plow" with one whose feelings, instincts, and tendencies are diametrically opposed to your own. "An ox and an ass" are not so unlike, in every respect, as a believer and an unbeliever. How will you ever get on? He wants to make money-to profit him-self-to get on in the world; you want (at least you ought to want) to grow in grace and holiness-to advance the interests of Christ and His gospel on the earth, and to push onward to the everlasting kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. His object is money; yours, I trust, is Christ: he lives for this world; you for the world to come: he is engrossed with the things of time; you with those of eternity. How, then, can you ever take common ground with him? Your principles, your motives, your objects, your hopes are all opposed. How is it possible you can get on? How can you have aught in common? Surely all this needs only to be looked at with a single eye in order to be seen in its true light. It is impossible that any one whose eye is filled, and whose heart is occupied with Christ, could ever yoke himself with a worldly partner, for any object whatsoever. Wherefore, my beloved Christian reader, let me once more entreat you, ere you take such a tremendous step-a step fraught with such awful consequences-so pregnant with danger to your best interests, as well as to the testimony of Christ, with which you are honored-to take the whole matter with an honest heart, into the sanctuary of God, and weigh it in His sacred balance. Ask Him what He thinks of it, and hearken with a subject-will, and a well-adjusted conscience, to His reply. It is plain and powerful-yea, as plain and as powerful as though it fell from the open heavens--be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

But, if, unhappily, my reader is already in the yoke, I would say to him, disentangle yourself as speedily as you can. I am much mistaken if you have not already found the yoke a burdensome one. To you, it were superfluous to detail the sad consequences of being in such a position; you doubtless, know them all. It is needless to print them on paper or paint them on canvass to one who has entered into all their reality. My beloved brother in Christ, lose not a moment in seeking to throw off the yoke. This must be done before the Lord, on His principles, and by His grace. It is easier to get into a wrong position than to get out of it. A partnership of ten or twenty years' standing cannot be dissolved in a moment. It must be done calmly, humbly, and prayerfully, as in the sight of the Lord, and with entire reference to His glory. I

may dishonor the Lord as much in my way of getting out of a wrong position, as by getting into it at the first. Hence, if I find myself in partnership with an unbeliever, and, that my conscience tells me I am wrong, let me honestly and frankly state to my partner, that I can no longer go on with him;

and having done that, my place is to use every exertion to wind up the affairs of the firm in an upright, a straightforward, and business-like manner, so as to give no possible occasion to the adversary to speak

reproachfully, and that my good may not be evil spoken of. We must avoid rashness, headiness and highmindedness, when apparently acting for the Lord, and in defense of His holy principles. If a man gets entangled in a net, or involved in a labyrinth, it is not by bold and violent plunging he will extricate himself. No; he must humble himself, confess his sins before the Lord, and then retrace his steps in patient dependance upon that grace which can not only pardon him for being in a wrong position, but lead him forth into a right one. Moreover, as in the case of the marriage yoke, the matter is very much modified by the fact of the partnership having been entered into previous to conversion. Not that this would, in the slightest degree, justify a continuance in it. By no means; but it does away with much of the sorrow of heart and defilement of conscience connected with such a position, and will also, very materially, affect the mode of escape therefrom. Besides, the Lord is glorified by, and He assuredly accepts the moral bent of the heart and conscience in the right direction. If I judge myself for being wrong, and that the moral bent of my heart and conscience is to get right, God will accept of that, and surely set me right. But if He sets me right, He will not suffer me to do violence to one truth while seeking to act in obedience to another. The same word that says, "be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," says, also, "render, therefore, to all their dues" - "owe no man anything" - "provide things honestly in the sight of all" - "walk honestly toward them that are without." If I have wronged God by getting into partnership with an unbeliever, I must not wrong man in my way of getting out of it. Profound subjection to the word of God, by the power of the Holy Ghost, will set all to rights, will lead us into straight paths, and enable us to avoid all dangerous extremes.

3.

In glancing, for a moment, at the religious phase of the unequal yoke, I would assure my reader that it is, by no means, my desire to hurt the feelings of any one by canvassing the claims of the various denominations around me. Such is not my purpose. The subject of this paper is one of quite sufficient importance to prevent its being encumbered by the introduction of other matters. Moreover, it is too definite to warrant any such introduction. "The unequal yoke" is our theme, and to it we must confine our attention.

In looking through Scripture, we find almost number-less passages setting forth the intense spirit of separation which ought ever to characterize the people of God. Whether we direct our attention to the Old Testament-in which we have God's relationship and dealings with His earthly people, Israel-or, to the New Testament, in which we have His relationship and dealings with His heavenly people, the Church, we find the same truth prominently set forth, namely, the entire separation of those who belong to God. Israel's position is thus stated in Balaam's parable, "lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned amongst the nations." Their place was outside the range of all the nations of the earth; and they were responsible to maintain that separation. Throughout the entire Pentateuch, they were instructed, warned and admonished as to this; and, throughout the Psalms and the Prophets we have the record of their failure in the maintenance of this separation, which failure, as we know, has brought down upon them the heavy judgments of the hand of God. It would swell this little paper into a volume were I to attempt a quotation of all the passages in

which this point is put forward. I take it for granted that my reader is sufficiently acquainted with his Bible, to render such quotations unnecessary. Should he not be so, however, a reference in his concordance to the words, "separate," "separated," and "separation," will suffice to lay before him, at a glance, the body of scripture evidence on this subject. The passage just quoted, from the Book of Numbers, is the expression of God's thoughts about His people Israel: "The people shall dwell ALONE."

The same is true, only upon a much higher ground, in reference to God's heavenly people, the Church-the body of Christ-composed of all true believers. They, too, are a separated people. We shall now proceed to examine the ground of this separation. There is a great difference between being separate on the ground of what we are, and of what God is. The former makes a man a pharisee; the latter makes him a saint. If I say to a poor fellow-sinner, "stand by thyself, I am holier than thou," I am a detestable pharisee and a hypocrite; but if God, in His infinite condescension and perfect grace, says to me, "I have brought you into relationship with Myself, in the person of My Son Jesus Christ, therefore be holy and separate from all evil; come out from among them and be separate." I am bound to obey, and my obedience is the practical manifestation of my character as a saint-a character which I have not because of anything in myself, but simply because God has brought me near unto Himself through the precious blood of Christ. It is well to be clear as to this. Pharisaism and divine sanctification are two very different things; and yet they are often confounded. Those who contend for the maintenance of that place of separation which belongs to the people of God, are constantly accused of setting themselves up above their fellow men, and of laying claim to a higher degree of personal sanctity than is ordinarily possessed. This accusation arises from not attending to the distinction just referred to. When God calls upon men to be separate, it is on the ground of what He has done for them in the cross, and where He has set them, in eternal association with Himself, in the person of Christ. But, if I separate myself on the ground of what I am in myself, it is the most senseless and vapid assumption which will sooner or later be made manifest. God commands his people to be holy on the ground of what He is: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." This is evidently a very different thing from stand by thyself, I am holier than thou." If God brings people into association with Himself, He has a right to prescribe what their moral character ought to be, and they are responsible to answer thereto. Thus we see that the most profound humility lies at the bottom of a saint's separation. There is nothing so calculated to put one in the dust as the understanding of the real nature of divine holiness. It is an utterly false humility which springs from looking at ourselves-yea it is, in reality, based upon pride which has never yet seen to 'the bottom of its own perfect worthlessness. Some imagine that they can reach the truest and deepest humility by looking at self, whereas it can only be reached by looking at Christ. "The more thy glories strike mine eye, the humbler I shall be." This is a just sentiment, founded upon divine principle. The soul that loses itself in the blaze of Christ's moral glory, is truly humble, and none other. No doubt, we have a right to be humble when we think of what poor creatures we are; but it only needs a moment's just reflection to see the fallacy of seeking to produce any practical result by looking at self. It is only when we find ourselves in the presence of infinite excellency, that we are really humble. Hence, therefore, a child of God should refuse to be yoked with an unbeliever, whether for a domestic, a commercial, or a religious object, simply because God tells him to be separate, and not because of his own personal holiness. The carrying out of this principle, in matters of religion, will necessarily involve much trial and sorrow, it will be termed intolerance, bigotry, narrow-mindedness, exclusiveness, and such like; but we cannot help

all this. Provided we keep ourselves separate upon a right principle and in a right spirit, we may safely leave all results with God. No doubt, the remnant, in the days of Ezra, must have appeared excessively intolerant, in refusing the cooperation of the surrounding people in building the house of God; but they acted upon divine principle in the refusal. " Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel, then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you; for we seek your God as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him, since the days of Esar-haddon, king of Assur, which brought us up hither." This might seem a very attractive proposal-a proposal evidencing a very decided leaning toward the God of Israel; yet the remnant refused, because the people, notwithstanding their fair profession, were, at heart, uncircumcised and hostile. " But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel." (Esther 4:1-3.) They would not yoke themselves with the uncircumcised-they would not " plow with an ox and an ass "-they would not " sow their field with mingled seed "-they kept themselves separate, even though, by so doing, they exposed themselves to the charge of being a bigoted, narrow-minded, illiberal, uncharitable set of people.

So, also, in Nehemiah, we read, " and the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers." (Chapter 9:2.) This was not sectarianism, but positive obedience. Their separation was essential to their existence as a people. They could not have enjoyed the divine presence on any other ground. Thus it must ever be with God's people on the earth. They must be separate, or else they are not only useless, but mischievous. God cannot own or accompany them if they yoke themselves with unbelievers, upon any ground, or for any object whatsoever. The grand difficulty is to combine a spirit of intense separation with a spirit of grace, gentleness and forbearance; or, as another has said, "to maintain a narrow circle with a wide heart." This is really a difficulty. As the strict and uncompromising maintenance of truth tends to narrow the circle around us, we shall need the expansive power of grace to keep the heart wide, and the affections warm. If we contend for truth otherwise than in grace, we shall only yield a one-sided and most unattractive testimony. And, on the other hand, if we try to exhibit grace at the expense of truth, it will prove, in the end, to be only the manifestation of a popular liberality at God's expense-a most worthless thing.

Then, as to the object for which real Christians usually yoke themselves with those who, even on their own confession, and in the judgment of charity itself, are not Christians at all, it will be found, in the end, that no really divine and heavenly object can be gained by an infringement of God's truth. *Per fas aut nefas* can never be a divine motto. The means are not sanctified by the end; but both means and end must be according to the principles of God's holy word, else all must eventuate in confusion and dishonor. It might have appeared to Jehoshaphat a very worthy object, to recover Ramoth Gilead out of the hand of the enemy; and, moreover, he might have appeared a very liberal, gracious, popular, large-hearted man when, in reply to Ahab's proposal, he said, " I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war." It is easy to be liberal and large-hearted at the expense of divine principle; but how did it end? Ahab was killed, and Jehoshaphat narrowly escaped with his life, having made total shipwreck of his testimony. Thus we see that Jehoshaphat did not even gain the object for which he unequally yoked himself with an unbeliever; and even had he gained it, it would have been no justification of his course.

Nothing can ever warrant a believer's yoking himself with an unbeliever,- and, therefore, however fair, attractive, and plausible the Ramoth expedition might seem in the eye of man, it was, in the judgment of God, " helping the ungodly, and loving them that hate the Lord" (2 Chron. 19:2). The truth of God strips men and things of the false colors with which the spirit of expediency would deck them, and presents them in their proper light; and it is an unspeakable mercy to have the clear judgment of God about all that is going on around us: it imparts calmness to the spirit, and stability to the course and character, and saves one from that unhappy fluctuation of thought, feeling, and principle which so entirely unfits him for the place of a steady and consistent witness for Christ. We shall surely err, if we attempt to form our judgment by the thoughts and opinions of men; for they will always judge according to the outward appearance, and not according to the intrinsic character and principle of things. Provided men can gain what they conceive to be a right object, they care not about the mode of gaining it. But the true servant of Christ knows that He must do his Master's work upon his Master's principles, and in his Master's spirit. It will not satisfy such an one to reach the most praiseworthy end, unless he can reach it by a divinely-appointed road. The means and the end must both be divine. I admit it, for example, to be a most desirable end to circulate the Scriptures-God's own pure, eternal word; but if I could not circulate them save by yoking myself with an unbeliever, I should refrain, inasmuch as I am not to do evil that good may come. But, blessed be God, His servant can circulate His precious book without violating the precepts contained in that book. He can, upon his own individual responsibility, or in fellowship with those who are really on the Lord's side, scatter the precious seed everywhere, without leaguering himself with those whose whole course and conduct prove them to be of the world. The same may be said in reference to every object of a religious nature. It can and should be gained on God's principles, and only thus. It may be argued, in reply, that we are told not to judge-that we cannot read the heart-and that we are bound to hope that all who would engage in such good works as the circulation of the Bible, the distribution of tracts, and the aiding of missionary labors, must be Christians; and that, therefore, it cannot be wrong to link ourselves with them. To all this I reply, that there is hardly a passage in the New Testament so misunderstood and misapplied as Matthew 7:1: " Judge not, that ye be not judged." In the very same chapter we read: " Beware of false prophets by their fruits ye shall know them." Now, how are we to " beware," if we do not exercise judgment? Again, in 1 Cor. 5 we read: " For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without, God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Here we are distinctly taught, that those "within" come within the immediate range of the Church's judgment; and yet, according to the common interpretation of Matt. 7:1, we ought not to judge anybody; that interpretation, therefore, must needs be unsound. If people take, even in profession, the ground of being "within," we are commanded to judge them. " Do not ye judge them that are within?" As to those " without," we have naught to do with them, save, to present the pure and perfect, the new, illimitable, and unfathomable grace which shines, with un-clouded effulgence, in the death and resurrection of the Son of God. All this is plain enough. The people of God are told to exercise judgment as to all who profess to be "within"; they are told to " beware of false prophets"; they are commanded to "try the spirits": and how can they do all this, if they are not to judge at all? What, then, does our Lord mean, when He says, "Judge not"? I believe He means just what St. Paul, by the Holy Ghost, says, when he commands us to "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and

then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5). We have nothing to do with judging motives; but we have to judge conduct and principles; that is to say, the conduct and principles of all who profess to be "within." And, in point of fact, the very persons who say, "We must not judge," do themselves constantly exercise judgment. There is no true Christian in whom the moral instincts of the divine nature do not virtually pronounce judgment as to character, conduct, and doctrine; and these are the very points which are placed within the believer's range of judgment.

All, therefore, that I would press upon the Christian reader is, that he should exercise judgment as to those with whom he yokes himself, in matters of religion. If he is, at this moment, working in yoke or in harness with an unbeliever, he is positively violating the command of the Holy Ghost. He may have been ignorantly doing so up to this; and if so, the Lord's grace is ready to pardon and restore; but if he persists in disobedience after having been warned, he cannot possibly expect God's blessing and presence with him, no matter how valuable or important the object which they seek to attain. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

We have only now to consider the philanthropic phase of the unequal yoke. Many will say, "I quite admit that we ought not to mingle ourselves with positive unbelievers in the worship or service of God; but, then, we can freely unite with such for the furtherance of objects of philanthropy-such, for instance, as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, reclaiming the vicious, in providing asylums for the blind and the lunatic, hospitals and infirmaries for the sick and infirm, places of refuge for the homeless and houseless, the fatherless and the widow; and, in short, for the furtherance of every-thing that tends to promote the amelioration of our fellow-creatures, physically, morally, and intellectually." This, at first sight, seems fair enough; for I may be asked, if I would not help a man, by the road-side, to get his cart out of the ditch? I reply, certainly; but if I were asked to become a member of a mixed society for the purpose of getting carts out of ditches, I should refuse -not because of my superior sanctity, but because God's word says, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." This would be my answer, no matter what were the object proposed by a mixed society. The servant of Christ is commanded "to be ready to every good work" - "to do good unto all" - "to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction"; but then it is as the servant of Christ, and not as the member of a society or a committee in which there may be infidels and atheists and all sorts of wicked and godless men. Moreover, we must remember that all God's philanthropy is connected with the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the channel through which God will bless-that the mighty lever by which He will elevate man, physically, morally, and intellectually. "After that the kindness and philanthropy (φιλανθρωπια) of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:4-6). This is God's philanthropy. This is His mode of ameliorating man's condition. With all who understand its worth, the Christian can readily yoke himself, but with none other.

The men of the world know naught of this, care not for it. They may seek reformation; but it is reformation without Christ. They may promote amelioration; but it is amelioration without the cross. They wish to advance; but Jesus is neither the starting-post nor the goal of their course. How, then, can the Christian yoke himself with them? They want to work without Christ, the very one to whom he owes 'everything. Can he be satisfied to work with them? Can he have an object in common with them? If men come to me and say, "we want your co-operation in feeding the hungry, in clothing the naked, in founding hospitals and lunatic asylums, in (feeding and educating orphans, in improving the physical condition of our fellow mortals; but you must remember that a leading rule of the society, the board, or the committee formed for such objects, is, that the name of Christ is not to be introduced, as it would only lead to controversy. Our objects being not at all religious, but undividedly philanthropic, the subject of religion must be studiously excluded from all our public meetings. We are met as men, for a benevolent purpose, and therefore Infidels, Atheists; Socinians, Arians, Romanists, and all sorts can happily yoke themselves to move onward the glorious machine of philanthropy." What should be my answer to such an application? The fact

is, words would fail one who really loved the Lord Jesus, in attempting to reply to an appeal so monstrous. What! benefit mortals by the exclusion of Christ? God forbid! If I cannot gain the objects of pure philanthropy, without setting aside that blessed one who lived and died, and lives eternally for me, then away with your philanthropy, for it, assuredly, is not God's, but Satan's. If it were God's, the word is, "He shed it on us abundantly THROUGH Jesus Christ," the very one whom your rule leaves entirely out. Hence your rule must be the direct dictation of Satan, the enemy of Christ. Satan would always like to leave out the Son of God; and, when he can get men to do the same, he will allow them to be benevolent, charitable, and philanthropic. But, in good truth, such benevolence and philanthropy ought to be termed malevolence and misanthropy, for how can you more effectually exhibit ill-will and hatred toward men, than by leaving out THE ONLY ONE who can really bless them for time or for eternity. But what must be the moral condition of a heart, in reference to Christ, who could take his seat at a board, or on a introduced? It the condition that that name must not be introduced? It must be cold indeed; yea, it proves that the plans and operations of unconverted men are of sufficient importance, in his judgment, to lead him to throw his master overboard, for the purpose of carrying them out. Let us not mistake matters. This is the true aspect in which to view the world's philanthropy. The men of this world can "sell ointment for three hundred pence, and give to the poor;" while they pronounce it waste to pour that ointment on the head of Christ! Will the Christian consent to this? Will he yoke himself with such? Will he seek to improve the world without Christ? Will he join with men to deck and garnish a scene which is stained with His Master's blood? Peter could say, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise and walk." Peter would heal a cripple by the power of the name of Jesus; but what would he have said, if asked to join a committee or society to alleviate cripples, on the condition of leaving that name out altogether? It requires no great stretch of imagination to conceive his answer. His whole soul would recoil from such a thought. He only healed the cripple for the purpose of exalting the name of Jesus, and setting forth its worth, its excellency, and its glory, in the view of men; but the very reverse is the object of the world's philanthropy; inasmuch as it sets aside His blessed name entirely, and banishes Him from its boards, its committees, and its platforms. May we not, therefore, well say, "Shame on the Christian who is found in a place from which his Master is shut out." 'Oh! let him go forth, and, in the energy of love to Jesus, and by the power of that name, do all the good he can; but let him not yoke himself with unbelievers, to counteract the effects of sin by excluding the cross of Christ. God's grand object is to exalt His Son-"that all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." This should be the Christian's object likewise; to this end he should "do good unto all;" but if he joins a society or a committee in order to do good, it is not "in the name of Jesus" he acts, but in the name of the society or committee, without the name of Jesus. This ought to be enough for every true and loyal heart. God has no other way of blessing men but through Christ; and no other object in blessing them but to exalt Christ. As with Pharaoh of old, when the hungry Egyptians flocked to his presence, his word was "go to Joseph;" so God's word to all is, "come to Jesus." Yes, for soul and body, time and eternity, we must go to Jesus; but the men of the world know Him not, and want Him not; what, therefore, has the Christian to do with such? How can he act in yoke with them? He can only do so on the ground of practically denying his Savior's name. Many do not see this; but that does not alter the case for those who do. We ought to act honestly, as in the light; and, even though the feelings and affections of the new nature were not sufficiently strong in us to lead us to shrink from ranking ourselves with the enemies of Christ, the conscience



ought, at least, to bow to the commanding authority of that word, BE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS.

May the Holy Ghost clothe His own word with heavenly power, and make its edge sharp to pierce the conscience, that so the saints of God may be delivered from everything that hinders their "running the race that is set before them." Time is short. The Lord Him-self will soon be here. Then many an unequal yoke will be broken in a moment; many a sheep and goat shall then be eternally severed. May we be enabled to purge ourselves from every unclean association, and every unhallowed influence so that, when Jesus returns, we may not be ashamed, 'but meet Him with a joyful heart and an approving conscience.

C. H. M.

## A Word of Exhortation

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THE rapidity with which infidel principles advance, and the feebleness of resistance that they meet, are no more prophetic truths simply, but present realities. The struggle between a superficial Christianity and the deep seated unbelief of the age has commenced. The period, is a solemn one for the Christian, and one which brings into prominence the value of the truths received by those whom God has graciously reserved from the mere powerless religion which so characterizes the state of Christianity around us.

Any one observant of the condition of this country must see that the current of infidelity, once restrained within narrow limits comparatively, has now overflowed its embankments, and, by means of the numberless publications issuing from the press, and the activity of its living agents, has laid under its influence vast portions of our fellow men, who are now in masses beginning to throw off everything like religious constraint, trampling under foot everything that is sacred, at the same time hating that religion which was too weak to hold it back in its reckless course.

The state of religious parties will be manifested in the struggle. Those bodies which, like Unitarians, have disseminated the principles which open out into rank atheism are already openly declared friends to irreligion and profanity, gliding on with the stream, and helpers in its course.

It will be found, too that many called orthodox, but who have so far been drawn into the current as to have advocated views in accordance with the latitudinarian spirit of the age, will be found powerless for resistance of the evil.

The subtlety of Satan has been such, that while every year has added to the strength of the ranks of infidels, superstition has been growing along with it. There has been more zeal for temples, for priests, for sacraments; and shall we not see that the two, apparently so distinct, so opposite, may meet at one common point, blend, and thus form unitedly for a time a stronger opposition to the truth of the living God?

On the other hand, we find that there are those who, watching with painful interest the progress of error and ungodliness, are beginning to see how frail have been their attempts to bring about a state of universal blessing on the earth.

They have been denying the plain testimony of God's Word as to the progress of evil; they have been adding institution to institution, in order to bring about their desired end: all is disappointment and confusion. The act is, the presence of Satan has been ignored, the power of the god of this world has been left out of their reckonings, and as a consequence—means unappointed of God have been brought to bear upon man's condition; the name of Jesus has been despised; the finger of God has been slighted. It now becomes a solemn period for the Christian to look well to his goings.

My object in this paper is to give a word of exhortation to such. In so doing, I feel conscious of my own weakness, but at the same time I feel the responsibility for faithfulness to God.

When Jacob was returning back from his long sojourn in those regions from which God had called out Abram-a country which had been positively forbidden to Isaac, but to which he had fled to escape the consequences of his deceitfulness towards Esau-he found that the nearer he drew towards Bethel, where God had called him to dwell, the more necessary was it ' that he should put away the strange gods that were with him. Then said Jacob unto his household, and to all that were with him, " Put away the strange gods that are among you and be clean, and change your garments. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods that were in their hand, and all their ear-rings which were in their ears and Jacob laid them under the oak which was by Shechem" (Gen. 35:1-4).

When Gideon was summoned to appear, as a mighty man of valor, to save Israel from the hand of the Midianites, he must throw down the altar of Baal that his father had, and cut down the grove that was by it; he must build an altar to the Lord, and offer a burnt-sacrifice with the wood of the grove that he had cut down (Judg. 6:25,26). When Peter was to stand foremost, and to lay to the charge of Israel that they had denied the Holy One and the Just, it was needful that he should go out and weep bitterly for the share he had had in the denial of the Lord of Glory; and so now-now - when the enemy has come in like a flood-how many strange gods must be buried-how many altars to Baal destroyed-how many acts of denial be wept over, before we can take our true place as servants of the Most High God? Happy are they, who like Abram, when he heard that his brother was taken captive by his enemies, armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan, and brought back all the goods, and also brought back again his brother Lot and his goods, and the women also, and the people (Gen. 14:14-16). Happy are they, who like Moses, have been shut up in communion with God, while the golden calf has been molten, and the people invited to the worship. He could descend from the mountain with clean hands into the midst of a defiled people. Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me (Ex. 32:26).

I believe that the grace of our God has been exceeding abundant in our day. He who foresees the evil has mercifully provided for it. The Spirit of the Lord has lifted up a standard against the enemy who has come in as a flood. Let us recount some of the mercies of our God, and see how adapted to the need of our times. God has alike called us away from the superstitions that would supplant Christ, and His gospel; and from the infidelity that would despise, and trample on both. He has so revealed His grace and love, as to fix us firmly upon His own foundation; other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid -Christ Jesus. Have we not been taught in such power the value of that precious name, that we can say, " Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. The glory of His person-the value of His incarnation-of His life-of His death-of His resurrection- of His ascension and His session at the right hand of God-of His intercession there-have we not been taught to rook for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ? We have learned the value of meeting in His name- we have realized His presence according to His promise-we have learned to prize not only the love of God the Father, and the grace of our Lord Jesus, but also the operations of God the Holy Ghost, and to honor Him according to God's word. Has not God in His mercy furnished us with those weapons which are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds; made us bearers of the seed of the kingdom, the Word of God, and fulfilled his Word, the word of Jesus to His disciples-" Lo I am with you always, even unto the end

of the world." And for why have all and every of these precious truths (and more too) been revived, preached with more clearness, and believed with more sincerity? Has it been only for our own special individual use? Has it not been rather for the need of our fellow-men and for the days of darkness in which our lot has been cast? Unto whom much has been given, of him much will be required. Have not some of us been ready in the unbelief of our hearts almost to deny the specialty of God's grace in these things, to speak of our ground of meeting as a failure, etc., and been like unto Orpah of old, who kissed her mother-in-law, and went back to her people and her gods. The grace of God to us has been this, that He has swept away the clouds and mists from His own eternal truths, and made them shine more brightly upon our hearts, and this is power.

Let us beware, brethren, lest any of us be like the men of Gideon, who turned back to their homes before the fight began, lest we lose the glory of the three hundred before whom the Midianites melted away.

The Lord be gracious to us, and renew in our hearts the freshness of His own truths, and give us more grace to walk uprightly before Him, and to seek to follow out the full blessing He would have us know.

The more dangerous the coast is, there is the more need of a light-house; and the darker the night, the more need is there that the light be full and clear; nay, the darkness of the night will but cause the lights to be more distinctly seen. We have not learned one single truth too many. Would God, our hearts, not our intellects only, were more under their power!

Y.

"Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die."-Job 2:9.

"Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil."-James 4:7.

Doth the tempter, as of old,

Urge thee on to curse thy God?

Fear not: only be thou bold;

Thou shalt bless Him for the rod.

Not in anger, but in love,

Hath He thus afflicted thee;

Let thy thoughts, then, rise above;

Praise Him, bless Him heartily.

He is wise, and thou art not;

He is good and thou art vile;

Though sharp trials be thy lot,

Patient wait "a little while."

Can that God who gave His Son,  
Now deny thee "any good"?  
He'll not leave one thing undone,  
Who redeem'd thee with such blood.  
Boldly, then, resist the foe;  
Lay thee low before thy God;  
Soon thou shalt in glory know  
Love and wisdom's in the rod.

B.

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."-Heb. 12:7,8.

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