

PRESENT TESTIMONY VOLUME 9, 1857

by G.V. Wigram

A collection of articles and writings by G.V. Wigram from Present Testimony Volume 9, 1857, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

38 Chapters

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Present Testimony Volume 9, 1857

1 Corinthians

The Epistle to the Corinthians presents very different subjects from those which occupied us in the one addressed to the Romans. We find in it moral details, and the interior order of a church, with regard to which the Spirit of God here displays His wisdom in a direct way. There is no mention of elders, nor of other functionaries Of the Church. Through the labors of the Apostle, a numerous assembly had been formed (for God had much people in that city), in the midst of a very corrupt population, where riches and luxury were united with a moral disorder which had made the city a proverb. At the same time, here as elsewhere, false teachers (in general, Jews) sought to undermine the influence of the Apostle. The spirit of philosophy did not fail, also, to exercise its baneful influence, although Corinth was not, like Athens, its principal seat. Morality and the authority of the Apostle were compromised together; and the state of things was most critical. The epistle was written, from Ephesus, where the tidings of the sad state of thee flock at Corinth had reached the Apostle almost at the moment when he had determined to visit them on his way into Macedonia (instead of passing along the coast of Asia Minor as he did), then returning to pay them a second visit on his way back. These tidings prevented his doing so, and instead of visiting them to pour out his heart among them, he wrote this letter. The second epistle was written in Macedonia, when Titus had brought him word of the happy effect of the first.

The subjects of this first epistle are very easily divided into their natural order. In the first place, before he blames the Christians at Corinth, to whom he writes, the Apostle acknowledges all the grace which God had already bestowed on them, and would still impart (chap. 1:1 - 9). From ver. 10 to 4:21, the, subject of divisions, schools of doctrine and human wisdom, is spoken of in contrast with revelation and divine wisdom. Chapter 5, the corruption of morals. Chapter 6, temporal affairs, law suits; and, again, the subject of fornication, which was of primary importance for the Christians of this city. Chapter 7, marriage is considered. Ought people to marry - the obligation of those who are already married and the case of a converted husband or of a converted wife, whose wife or whose husband was not converted. Chapter 8, should they eat things Offered to idols. Chapter 9, his apostleship. Chapter 10, their condition in general, their danger of being seduced, whether by fornication, or by idolatry, and idolatrous feasts, with the principles relating thereto; which introduces the Lord's Supper. Chapter 11, questions connected with their behavior in religious matters, individually or (17) in the assembly. Afterward, chap. 12, the exercise of gifts, and their true value and the object of their use; magnifying (13) the comparative value of charity to the end of chap. 14. Chapter 15, the resurrection, which Some denied; and chap. 16, the collections for the poor in Judea, with some salutations, and the principles of subordination to those whom God path raised up for service, even where there were no elders. It is of great value to have these directions immediately from the Lord, independent of a formal organization, so that individual conscience and that of the body as a whole should be engaged.

I will now turn back to take up the thread of the contents of this epistle from the beginning. Paul was an Apostle by the will of God. That was his authority, however it might be with others.

Moreover, the same call that had made those of Corinth Christians, had made him an Apostle. He addresses the Church of God at Corinth, adding a character (the application of which is evident when we consider the contents of the epistle) sanctified in Christ Jesus." Afterward, the universality of the application of the doctrine and instructions of the epistle, and of its authority over all Christians wherever they might be, is brought forward in this address. Happily, whatever sorrow he felt at the state of the Corinthians; the Apostle could fall back upon the grace of God, and thus recognize all the grace which He had bestowed on them. But the placing them thus in relationship to God, brought, all the effect of His holiness to bear upon their consciences, while giving the Apostle's heart the encouragement of the perfect grace of God towards them. And this grace itself became a powerful lever for the Word in the hearts of the Corinthians. In the presence of such grace they ought to be ashamed of sin.

Paul (the Spirit Himself) thus linked the Corinthians with God; and that which He was in this connection with them had all its force upon their hearts and consciences. At the same time, the use of this weapon opened their heart to all that the Apostle had to say. One must be very near the Lord to be able in practice thus to look at Christians who are walking badly. It is not to spare their sins, the Apostle is very far from doing that. But it is grace which brings their own consciences to be occupied with it as having a relationship with God that was too precious to allow them to continue in sin or to permit it.

The Epistle to the Galatians supplies us with a remarkable instance of the confidence thus inspired.

The Corinthians were enriched by God with His gifts, and His testimony was thus confirmed among them, so that they came behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of the Lord, the fulfillment of all things. Solemn day! for which God, who had called them, confirmed them in His faithfulness, that they might be without reproach in that day, called, as they were, to the fellowship and communion of His Son: Jesus Christ. Short but precious exposition of the grace and faithfulness of God, serving as a basis (if their condition did not allow the Apostle to develop it as he did to the Ephesians) to all the exhortations and instructions which he addressed to the Corinthians in order to strengthen them and direct their wavering steps.

The Apostle first takes up the folly of the Corinthians in making the chief Christian ministers and Christ- Himself heads of schools. Christ was not divided. They had not been baptized unto the name of Paul. He had, indeed, on occasion, baptized a few; but his mission was to preach, not to baptize. It was in virtue of and according to Acts 26:18, and 13:3, seq., and not Matt. 28:19. Moreover, all this human wisdom was but foolishness which God brought to nothing; the preaching of the Cross was the power of God, and God had chosen the weak things, the things of naught, foolish things according to the world, to annihilate the wisdom and strength of the world, in order that the Gospel should be evidently the power of God. The Jews asked for a sign, the Greeks sought for wisdom; but God caused Christ crucified to be preached, a scandal to the Jews, foolishness to the Greeks, but to them which are called the power of God. By things that are not, He brought to naught things that are, because His weakness is stronger than the strength of the world; His foolishness wiser than the wisdom of the age. The flesh shall not glory in His presence. But besides this, the Christian was more even than the object of God's instruction; he was himself of God in Jesus Christ; he had his life, his being, his position, as a Christian, of God. And Christ

was unto him, on God's part, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption - all in contrast with the pretensions of the human mind, with the false righteousness of the Jew under the law with the means and the measure of the sanctification it supplied, and with the weakness of man, the last traces of which God would remove in the deliverance that He would accomplish by His power in Christ at that day when He would put the last stroke to the work of His grace. Thus we are of God, and Christ is everything for us, on God's part; in order that he who glories may glory in the Lord.

It was in this spirit that Paul had come among them at first; he would know nothing but Christ, and Christ, in His humiliation and abasement, object of contempt to senseless men. His speech was not attractive with the carnal persuasiveness of a factitious eloquence; but it was the expression of the presence and action of the Spirit, and of the power which accompanied that presence. Thus their faith rested not on the fair words of man, but on the power of God - a solid foundation for our feeble souls - blessed be His name for it!

Nevertheless, when once the soul was taught and established in the doctrine of salvation in Christ, there was a wisdom of which the Apostle spoke; not the wisdom of this present age, nor of the princes of this age, which perish, wisdom and all; but the wisdom of God shut up in a mystery, a secret counsel of God (revealed now by the Spirit), ordained in His settled purpose, unto our glory, before the world was. A counsel which, with all their wisdom, none of the princes of this world knew. Had they known it, they would not have crucified the One in whose person it was all to be accomplished. The Apostle does but touch the subject of the mystery, because he had to feed them as babes, and only in order to put it in contrast with the false wisdom of the world; but the way in which this wisdom was communicated is important. That which had never entered into the heart of man, God had revealed by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. It is only the spirit of a man which is in Him, that knows the things which He has not communicated. So no one knows the things of God, save the Spirit of God. Now, it is the Spirit of God which the Apostle and the other vessels of revelation had received, that they might know the things which are freely given of God. This is the knowledge of the things themselves in the vessels of revelation. Afterward, this instrument of God was to communicate them. He did so, not in words, which the art of man taught, but which the Spirit, which God taught, communicating spiritual things by a spiritual medium. The communication was by the Spirit as well as the thing communicated. There was yet one thing wanting that this revelation might be possessed by others - the reception of these communications. This also required the action of the Spirit. The natural man did not receive them; and they are spiritually discerned. The source, the medium of communication, the reception, all was of the Spirit. Thus the spiritual man judges all things; he is judged of no man. The power of the Spirit in him, makes his judgment true and just, but gives him motives and a walk that are unintelligible to one who has not the Spirit. Very simple as to that which is said - nothing can be more important than that which is here taught. Alas! the Corinthians, whether when the Apostle was at Corinth, or at the time of writing this letter, were not in a condition to have the mystery communicated to them. A grievous humiliation to their philosophic pride; but therefore a good remedy for it.

They were not natural men; but they were carnal not spiritual men, so that the Apostle had to feed them with milk and not with meat, which was only fit for those that were of full age. That with which they nourished their pride was a proof of this - their divisions into schools of doctrine. Paul, no

doubt, had planted; Apollos watered. It was well. But it was God alone who gave the increase. Moreover, the Apostle had laid the foundation of this building of God, the church at Corinth; others had built since, had carried on the work of the edification of souls. Let every one take heed. There was but one foundation: it was laid. But in connection with it, they might teach things that were solid or worthless, and form souls by the one or by the other; perhaps even introduce them among the saints. The work should be proved, sooner or later, by some day of trial. If they had wrought in the work of God, with solid materials, the work would stand. If not, it would come to nothing. The effect, the fruit of labor, would be destroyed - the man who had wrought, saved, because he had built on the foundation, had true faith in Christ. Nevertheless, the shaking caused by the failure of all that he had thought genuine, would, as to himself, shake even his own connection with and confidence in the foundation. He should be saved as through the fire. He who had wrought according to God, should receive the fruit of his labor. If any one corrupted the temple of God, introduced that which destroyed fundamental truths, he should be destroyed himself. The subject, then, is ministerial labor, carried on by means of certain doctrines, either good, worthless, or subversive of the truth; and the fruits which this labor would produce. Finally, if any one desired to be wise in this world, let him become unintelligent in order to be wise. God counted the wisdom of the wise as foolishness, and would take them in their own craftiness. But in this the saints were below their privileges. All things were theirs, since they were the children of God. All things are yours, Paul, Apollos, all things - you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. As for the Apostle and the laborers, they were to consider them as stewards employed by the Lord. And it was to Him that Paul committed the judgment of his conduct. He cared little for the judgment man might form respecting him. He was not conscious of anything wrong, but that did not justify him. He who judged him was the Lord. And, after all, who was it that gave to the one or to the other that which He could use in service?

Paul had thought well, in treating this subject, to use names that they were using in their carnal divisions; but what was the real state of the case? They had despised the Apostle. Yes, he says, we have been put to shame, despised, persecuted, in distress; you have been at ease, like kings. A reproach in accordance with their own pretensions, their own reproaches. A reproach that touched them to the quick, if they had any feeling left. Paul and his companions had been as the off-scouring of the earth for Christ's sake, while the Corinthians were reposing in the lap of luxury and ease. Even while writing to them, this was still his position. "Would to God," he says, "ye did reign" (that the day of Christ were come) in order that we might reign with you. He felt his sufferings, although he bore them joyfully. They were set forth on God's part as though to be the last great spectacle in those marvelous games of which this world was the amphitheater; and as His witnesses they were exposed to the fury of a brutal world. Patience and meekness were their only weapons.

Nevertheless, he did not say these things to put them to shame, he warned them as his beloved sons; for his sons they were. Though they might have ten thousand teachers, he had begotten them all by the gospel. Let them, then, follow him. In all this there is the deep working of the affection of a noble heart, wounded to the utmost, but wounded in order to bring out an affection that rose above his grief. It is this which so strikingly distinguishes the work of the Spirit in the New Testament as in Christ Himself. The Spirit has come into the bosom of the Church, shares her afflictions, her difficulties. He fills the soul of one who cares for the Church, making him feel that

which is going on; feel it according to God, but with a really human heart. Who could cause all this to be felt for strangers, except the Spirit of God? Who would enter into these things with all the perfection of the wisdom of God, in order to act upon the heart, to deliver the conscience, to form the understanding and set it free, except the Spirit of God? Still, the apostolic individual bond was to be formed, to be strengthened. It was the essence of the work of the Holy Ghost in the Church to bind all together in this way. We see the man - otherwise it would not have been Paul and his dear brethren. We see the Holy Ghost whom the latter had grieved, no doubt, and who acts in the former with divine wisdom to guide them in the right way with all the affection of their father in Christ. Timothy, his son in the faith and in heart, might meet the case. Paul had sent him; Paul himself would soon be there. Some said No, and took occasion to magnify themselves in the absence of the Apostle, but he would come himself and put everything to the test; for the kingdom of God was not in word but in power. Did they wish him to come with a rod or in love?

Here this part of the epistle ends. Admirable specimen of tenderness and of authority. Of authority sure enough of itself on the part of God, to be able to act with perfect tenderness towards those who were thoroughly dear to him, in the hope of not being forced to exercise itself in another way. The most powerful truths are unfolded in so doing.

Chapter 5 He begins to treat the details of conduct and of discipline; and first of all the carnal defilement carried on in their midst to the last degree of hardness of conscience. Those who sought their own personal influence as teachers, allowed them to go on in it. He condemns it without reservation. Discipline follows -for Christ had been offered up as the Paschal Lamb, and they were to keep the feast without leaven, purging themselves from the old leaven; in order that they might be in fact, what they were before God, an unleavened lump. As to discipline, it was this. Before they knew that it was their duty to cut off the wicked person, and that God had given them the power, and imposed on them the obligation to do so, a moral sense of evil ought, at least, to have led them to humble themselves before God, and to pray that He would take it away. On the contrary, they were puffed up with pride. But now the Apostle teaches them what must be done, and enforces it with all his apostolic authority. He was among them in spirit if not in body, and with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, they being gathered together, to deliver such a one to Satan; but as a brother, for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit might be saved in the day of Christ.

Here all the power of the Church in its normal condition is displayed. Its members, the apostle,-vessel and channel of the power of the Spirit and the power of the Lord Jesus Himself, the Head of the body. Now the world is the theater of Satan's power; the Church, delivered from his power, is the habitation of God, by the Spirit. If the enemy has succeeded in drawing aside by the flesh a member of Christ, so that he dishonors the Lord by walking after the flesh as the world do, he is put outside by the power of the Spirit and delivered up to the enemy, who is in spite of himself the servant of the purposes of God (as in the case of Job), in order that the flesh of the Christian which, from his not being able to reckon it dead, had brought him morally under the power of Satan, should be physically destroyed and broken down. Thus would he be set free from the illusions in which the flesh held him captive. His mind would learn how to discern the difference between good and evil, to know what sin was. The judgment of God would be realized within him, and would not be executed upon him at that day when it would be definitive for the condemnation of those who should undergo it. This was a great blessing, although its form was terrible. Marvelous example of the government of God, which uses the adversary's enmity against the

saints as an instrument for their spiritual blessing. We have such a case fully set before us in the history of Job. Only we have here, in addition, the proof that in its normal state the Church exercised this judgment herself, having discernment by the Spirit and the authority of Christ to do it. Moreover, whatever may be the spiritual capacity of the assembly to wield this sword of the Lord, her positive and ordinary duty is stated at the end of the chapter.

The assembly was an unleavened lump, looked at in the Spirit as an assembly and not individually. It is thus that we must view it, for it is only in the Spirit that it is so. The Church is seen of God as being before Him in her new nature in Christ. Such she ought to be in practice by the power of the Spirit, in spite of the existence of the flesh, which by faith she ought to count as dead, and allow nothing in her walk that is contrary to this state. The Church ought to be " a new lump," and, consequently, ought to purge herself from the old leaven, because she is unleavened. Such is her position before God. For Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, therefore we ought to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. They did wrong, therefore, in boasting while this evil was in their midst, however great their gifts might be, A little leaven leavens the whole lump. The evil did not attach to that man alone who was personally guilty of it. They could not dissociate themselves in ordinary life from all those who in the world, walked corruptly, for in that case they would have to go out of the world. But if any one called himself a brother, and walked in this corruption, with such a one they ought not even to eat. God judges those who are outside. The assembly must herself judge those that are within, and put out whatever must be called wicked.

Chapter 6:1-11, treats the subject of wrongs. It was shameful that those who were to judge the world and the angels, should be incapable of judging the paltry affairs of this world. Let the least esteemed in the Church be employed in this service. Rather should they bear the wrong, whereas they did wrong themselves. But the wicked and the unrighteous would assuredly not inherit the kingdom. What a wonderful mixture we have here of astonishing revelations, of a morality that is unchangeable whatever may be the divine supremacy of grace, and of ecclesiastical order and discipline. The Church is united to Christ. When He shall judge the world and pronounce the doom of angels she will be associated with Him and take part in His judgment, for she has His spirit and His mind. Nothing, however, that is unrighteous shall enter into that kingdom, for in effect how could evil be judged by any that took pleasure in it. Christians should not go to a worldly tribunal for justice, but have recourse to the arbitration of the brethren, a service which, as entering so little into Christian spirituality, was suitable for the weakest among them. Moreover, the proper thing was rather to suffer the wrong. Be it as it might, the unrighteous should not inherit the kingdom.

Judaism, which took pleasure in a carnal sanctity of outward regulations, and the spirit of the world with conformity to its ways, were the two dangers that threatening the assembly at Corinth; dangers, indeed, which exist for the heart of man at all times and in all places, With regard to meats, the rule is simple. Perfect liberty, since all is allowed - true liberty, in that we are in bondage to none of these things. Meats and the belly, as in relationship to each other, should both perish; the body has a higher destiny - it is for the Lord, and the Lord for it, God has raised up Christ from the dead, and He will raise us up again by His power. The body belongs to this and not to meats.

But this doctrine that the body is for Christ, decided another question, to which the depraved habits of the Corinthians gave rise. All fornication is forbidden. To us, with our present Christian habits of

mind, a thing of course - to Pagans, new; but the doctrine exalts every subject. Our bodies are the members of Christ. Another truth connected with this is of great importance; if, by union according to the flesh, two were one body, he who is united to the Lord is one Spirit. The Spirit whose fullness is in Christ, is the same Spirit who dwells in me and unites me to Him. Our bodies are His temples. Moreover we are not our own, but were bought with a great price, the blood of Christ offered for us. Therefore we ought to glorify God in our bodies which are His. Powerful and universal motive, governing the whole conduct without exception. Our true liberty is to belong to God. All that is for oneself is stolen from the rights of Him who has bought us for His own. All that a slave was or gained, was the property of his master; he was not the owner of himself: Thus it is with the Christian. Outside that, he is the wretched slave of sin and of Satan. Selfishness his rule, and eternal banishment from the source of love, his end. Horrible thought! In Christ we are the special objects and the vessels of that love.

Chapter 7 The Apostle proceeds by answering a question in connection with the subject he had been treating. The will of God with regard to the relationship between man and woman. They do well who remain outside this relationship, in order to walk with the Lord according to the Spirit, and not to yield in anything to their nature. God had instituted marriage - woe to him who should speak ill of it! but sin has come in, and all that is of nature, of the creature, is marred. God has introduced a power altogether above and outside nature - that of the Spirit. To walk according to that power, is the best thing; it is to walk outside the sphere in which sin acts. But it is rare; and positive sins are for the most part the effect of standing apart from that which God has ordained according to nature. In general, then, for this reason, every man should have his own wife: and, the union once formed, he had no longer power over himself. As to the body, the husband belonged to his wife, the wife to her husband. If, by mutual consent, they separated for awhile that they might give themselves to prayer and to spiritual exercises, the bond was to be immediately acknowledged again, lest the heart not governing itself, should give Satan occasion to come in and distress the soul, and destroy its confidence in God - and in His love - lest he should tempt by distressing doubts (it is: for not by incontinency) a heart that aimed at too much, and failed in it. This permission, however, and this direction which recommended Christians to marry, was not a commandment from the Lord, given by inspiration, but the fruit of the Apostle's experience-an experience to which the presence of the Holy Ghost was not wanting. He would rather that every one were like himself-but every one had in this respect his gift from God. To the unmarried and the widows, it is good, he says, to abide as he himself was; but if they could not subdue their nature and remain in calm purity, it was better to marry. Unsubduedness of desire was more hurtful than the bond of marriage. But as to marriage itself, there was no longer room for the counsel of experience, the commandment of the Lord was positive. The woman was not to separate from the man, nor the man from the woman; and if they separated, the bond was not broken - they must remain unmarried or else be reconciled. But there was a case more complicated, when the man was converted and the wife unconverted, or vice-versa. According to the law, a man who had married a woman of the Gentiles, who was consequently profane or unclean, defiled himself, and was compelled to send her away, and their children had no right to Jewish privileges, they were rejected as unclean (see Ezra 10:3). But under grace, it was quite the contrary. The converted husband sanctified the wife, and vice-versa, and their children were reckoned clean before God: they had part in the ecclesiastical rights of their parent. This is the sense of the word " holy," in connection with this" question of order and of outward relationship towards God, which. was

suggested by the obligation under the law to send away wife and children, in a similar case. Thus the believer was not to send away his wife, nor to forsake an unbelieving husband. If the unbeliever forsook the believer definitively, the latter (man or woman) was free, " let him depart." The brother was no longer bound to consider the one who had forsaken him as his wife, nor the sister the man who forsook her as her husband. But they were called to peace, and not to seek this separation; for how did the believer know if he should not be the means of the unbeliever's conversion: for we are under grace. Moreover, every one was to walk as God had distributed to him.

For that which regarded occupations and positions in this world, the rule was that every one should continue in the state wherein he was called, but it must be " with God," doing nothing which would not be to His glory. If the state was in itself of a nature contrary to His will, it was sin, clearly he could not remain in it with God. But the general rule was to remain and glorify God in it.

The Apostle had spoken of marriage, of the unmarried and of widows; he had been questioned also with respect to those who had never entered into any relationship with woman. On this point, he had no commandment from the Lord. He 'could only give his judgment as one who had received mercy of the Lord to be faithful. It was good to remain in that condition, seeing what the world was and the difficulties of a Christian life. If they were bound to a wife, let them not seek to be loosed. If free, they would do well to remain so. But if they married, they did well; not marrying, they did better. He who had not known a woman did not sin if he mated, but he should have trouble after the flesh in his life here below. It will be observed, that it is not the daughter of a Christian that is here spoken of, but his own personal condition. If he stood firm, and had power over his own will, it was the better way; if he married, he still did well, if he did not marry it was better. It was the same with a woman; and if the Apostle said that, according to his judgment, it was better, he had the spirit of God. His experience if he had no commandment had not been gained without the Spirit, but it was that of a man who could say (if any one had a right to say it), that he had the Spirit of God. Moreover, the time was short, the married were to be as having no wife; buyers, as having no possession; they who used the world, not using it as though it were theirs. Only the Apostle would have them without carefulness or distraction, that they might serve the Lord. If, by reckoning themselves dead to nature, this effect was not produced, they gained nothing, they lost by it. When married, they were pre-occupied with things below, in order to please their wives and to provide for their children, but they enjoyed a repose of mind, in which nature did not claim her rights with a will that they had failed to silence, and holiness of walk and of heart was maintained. If the will of nature was subjugated and silenced, they served the Lord without distraction, they lived according to the Spirit and not according to nature, even in those things which God had ordained as good with respect to nature.

As to the slave, he might console himself as being the Lord's free-man; but seeing the difficulty of reconciling the will of a Pagan, or even an unspiritual master, with the will of God, if he could be made free he should embrace the opportunity.

Two things strike us here in passing. The holiness which all these directions breathe with regard to that which touches so closely, the desires of the flesh. The institutions of God, formed for man when innocent, are maintained in all their integrity, in all their authority, a safeguard now against the sin to which man is incited by his flesh. The spirit introduces a new energy, above nature,

which in no wise weakens the authority of the institution. If any one can live above nature, in order to serve the Lord in freedom, it is a gift of God, a grace which he does well to profit by. A second very important principle flows from this chapter. The apostle distinguishes accurately between that which he has by inspiration, and his own spiritual experience, that which the spirit gave him in connection with the exercises of his individual life, spiritual wisdom, however exalted it might be. On certain points he had no commandment from the Lord. He gave the conclusion at which he had arrived, through the help of the Spirit of God, in a life of remarkable faithfulness, and aided by the Spirit whom he but little grieved. But it was not a commandment of the Lord. On other points, that which he did not except in this manner was to be received as the commandment of the Lord (comp. chap. 14:37). That is to say, he affirms the inspiration - properly so called - of his writings, they were to be received as emanating from the Lord Himself; distinguishing this inspiration from his own spiritual competency: a principle of all importance.

After this, the Apostle answers the question respecting meats offered to idols; which gives occasion to a few words on the value of knowledge. Simply as knowledge, it is worth nothing. If we look at it as knowledge that we possess, it does but puff us up - it is something in me, my knowledge. True Christian knowledge unfolded something in God, by means of that which is revealed. God, better known, became greater to the soul. It was in Him the thing known, and not a knowledge in me, by which I made myself greater. He who loves God, is known of Him. As to the question, love decided it. Since such a question had arisen, it was evident that all consciences were not brought into full light by spiritual intelligency. Now, undoubtedly, the idol was nothing: there was but one God, the Father; and one Lord, Jesus Christ. But if he who was strong sat at meat in the idol's temple, another who had not full light would be encouraged to do the same, and his conscience would be unfaithful and defiled. Thus I lead into sin, and, as far as depends on me, I ruin a brother for whom Christ died. I sin against Christ Himself in so doing. Thus, if meat causes a brother to stumble, let me altogether abstain from it, rather than be a snare to him. Here the Apostle treats the question as arising among the brethren, as to that which regards the conscience of each; choosing to maintain in all its force that in fact an idol was nothing but a piece of wood or stone. It was important to set the question on this ground. The prophets had done so before. But this was not all that there was to say. There was the working of Satan and of wicked spirits to explain, and this he does farther on.

We may remark in passing, the expression: "To us there is but one God the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ." The Apostle does not here treat the abstract question of the Lord's divinity, but the connection of men with that which was above them in certain relationships. Pagans had many gods, and many lords, inter-mediate beings. Not so Christians. The Father abiding in the absoluteness of the divinity; and Christ, who has taken the place and the relationship of Lord towards us. The position and not the nature is the subject. It is the same thing in chap. 14:4, 5, 6, where the contrast is with the multitude of spirits whom the Pagans knew, and the number of gods and lords. Nevertheless, every one was not, in fact, thus delivered from the influence of false gods on his imagination. They were still, perhaps, in spite of himself, something to him. He had conscience of the idol, and if he ate that which had been offered to it, it was not to him simply that which God had given for food. The idea of the existence of a real and powerful being had a place in his heart, and thus his conscience was defiled. Now they were not better in God's sight for having eaten, and by eating they had put a stumbling-block in their brother's way, and, so far as

the act of those who had full light was concerned, had ruined him by defiling his conscience, and estranging him from God in unfaithfulness. This was sinning against Christ, who had died for that precious soul. If God intervened to shield him from the result of this unfaithfulness, that in no wise diminished the sin of him who led the weak one to act against his conscience. In itself, that which separates us from God, ruins us, in that which regards our responsibility. Thus, he who has the love of Christ in his heart, would rather never eat meat than do that which would make a brother unfaithful, and tend to ruin a soul which Christ has redeemed.

The Apostle was exposed to the accusations of false teachers, who asserted that he carried on his evangelization and his labors from interested motives, and that he took the property of Christians, availing himself of their devotedness. He speaks, therefore, of his ministry. He declares openly that he is an Apostle, an eye-witness of the glory of Christ, having seen the Lord. Moreover, if he was not an Apostle to others, doubtless he was to the Corinthians, for he had been the means of their conversion. Now the will of the Lord was, that they who preached the Gospel should live of the Gospel.. He had a right, then, to take with him a sister as his wife, even as Peter did, and the brethren of the Lord. Nevertheless, he had not used this right. Obligated by the call of the Lord to preach the Gospel, woe unto him if he failed to do it. His glory was to do it gratuitously, so as to take away all occasion from those who sought it. For, being free from all, he had made himself the servant of all, that he might win as many as he could. Observe that this was in his service, it was not accommodating himself to the world, in order to escape the offense of the cross. He put this plainly forward, chap. ii. 2; but in preaching it, he adapted himself to the religious capacity and to the modes of thought belonging to the one and to the other, in order to gain access for the truth into their minds; and he did the same in his manner of conduct among them. It was the power of charity, which denied itself in all things, in order to be the servant of all, and not the selfishness which indulged itself under the pretense of gaining others. He did so in every respect, for the sake of the Gospel, desiring, as he said, to be a partaker with it, for he personifies it as doing the work of God's love in the world.

It was thus they should run: and in order to run thus, one must deny oneself. In this way the Apostle acted. He did not run with uncertain steps, as one who did not see the true end, or who did not pursue it seriously as a known thing. He well knew what he was pursuing, and he pursued it really, evidently, according to its nature. Every one could judge by his walk. He did not trifle, as a man who beats the air-easy prowess. In seeking that which was holy and glorious, he knew the difficulties, he resisted in the personal conflict with the evil that sought to obstruct his victory. As a vigorous wrestler, he kept under his body which would have hindered him. There was reality in his pursuit of Heaven, he would tolerate nothing that opposed it. Preaching to others was not all. He might do that, and it might be, as regards himself, labor in vain, he might lose everything, be rejected afterward himself. He was a Christian first of all, then a preacher, and a good preacher, because he was a Christian first. Thus, also, (for the beginning of chap. 10 connects itself with the close of chap. 9) others might make a profession, partake of the initiatory ordinances, and after all not be owned of God. This warning is a testimony of the condition to which, in part at least, the Church of God was already reduced. A warning always useful, but which supposes that those who bear the name of Christian, and have partaken of the ordinances of the Church, no longer inspire that confidence which would receive them without question as the true sheep of Christ. The passage distinguishes between participation in Christian ordinances and the possession of

salvation. A distinction always true, but which it is not necessary to make when Christian life is bright in those who have part in the outward privileges of the Church.

Chapter 10 The Apostle then gives the Corinthians the ways of God with Israel in the wilderness, as instruction with regard to His ways with us; declaring that the things which happened to them were types or figures which serve as patterns for us. An important principle, and one which ought to be clearly apprehended, in order to profit by it. It is not Israel who is the figure, but that which happened to Israel, the ways of God with Israel. The things themselves happened to Israel, they were written for our instruction who find ourselves at the close of God's dispensations. That which shall follow will be the judgment of God, when these examples will no longer serve for the life of faith. Two principles are next established which also have great practical importance; " Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." This is our responsibility. On the other side, we have the faithfulness of God. He does not permit us to be tempted beyond our strength, but provides a way of escape, in order that we may not stumble. He enjoins, with regard to idolatry, that holy fear which avoids the occasion of doing evil, the occasion of falling. There is association and communion with the table of which we partake; and we Christians, being many, are but one bread and one body, inasmuch as we share the same bread at the Lord's Supper. Those in Israel who ate of the sacrifices, were partakers of the altar, were identified with it. Was this to say that the idol was anything? No. But as it written, Deut. 32, "The things which the Gentiles offered, they offered to devils and not to God." Should a Christian then partake of the table of devils? The table was the table of devils, the cup, the cup of devils. An important principle for the Church of God. Would one provoke the Lord by putting Him on a level with devils? Allusion is again made to Deut. 32:21. The Apostle repeats his principle, already established, that he had liberty in every respect, but that on the one hand he would not put himself under the power of anything; on the other, being free, he would use his liberty for the spiritual good of all. To follow out this rule, these are his instructions. Whatsoever was sold in the market they should eat without question of conscience. If any man said, "this was sacrificed to idols," it was a proof that he had conscience of an idol. They should then not eat of it, because of his conscience. For as to him who was free, his liberty could not be judged by the conscience of the other; for as to doctrine, and where there was knowledge, the Apostle recognizes it as a truth, that the idol was nothing. The creature was simply the creature of God. Communion with that which was false, I ought to avoid for myself; especially in that which relates to communion with God Himself. I should deny myself the liberty which the truth gave me, rather than wound the weak conscience of others.

Moreover, in all things, even in eating or drinking, we ought to seek the glory of God, and do all to His glory; giving no offense, by using our liberty, either to Jew or Gentile or the assembly of God; following the Apostle's example, who, denying himself, sought to please all for their edification.

Having given these rules in answer to questions of detail, he turns to that which regarded the presence and action of the Holy Ghost; which also introduces the subject of the conduct proper for them in their assemblies.

Observe here the way in which the Apostle grounded his replies, with regard to details, on the highest and fundamental principles. This is the manner of Christianity (comp. Titus 2:10-14). He introduces God and charity, putting man in connection with God Himself. In that which follows, we have also a striking example of this. The subject is a direction for women. They were not to pray

without having their heads covered. To decide this question simply of what was decent and becoming, the Apostle lays open the relationship and the order of the relationship subsisting between the depositories of God's glory and Himself, and brings in the angels, to whom Christians, as a spectacle set before them, should present that of order, according to the mind of God. The head of the woman is the man; that of man, is Christ; of Christ, God. This is the order of power, ascending to Him who is supreme. And, then, with respect to their relationship to each other, he adds, the man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man. And as to their relations with other creatures, intelligent and conscious of the order of the ways of God, they were to be covered because of the angels, who are spectators of the ways of God in the dispensation of redemption, and of the effect which, this marvelous intervention was to produce. Elsewhere (see the preceding note) it is added, in reference to the history of that which took place, the man was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, transgressed first. Let us add -from the passage we are considering - that, as to creation, the man was not taken from the woman, but the woman from the man. Nevertheless, the man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord - but all things are of God;- and all this to regulate a question of modesty as to women, when in praying they were before the eyes of others. The result - in that which concerns the details - is that the man was to have his head uncovered, because he represented authority, and in this respect was invested. (as to his position) with the glory of God, of whom he was the image. The woman was to have her head covered, as a token that she was subject to the man; her covering being a token of the power to which she was subject. Man, however, could not do without woman; nor woman without man. Finally, the Apostle appeals to the order of creation, according to which a woman's hair, her glory and ornament, showed, in contrast with the hair of man, that she was not made to present herself with the boldness of man before all. Given as a veil, her hair showed that modesty, submission, a covered head that hid itself, as it were, in that submission. and in that modesty, was her true position, her distinctive glory. Moreover, if any one contested the point, it was a custom which neither the Apostle nor the churches allowed.

Observe, also here, that however man may have fallen, divine order in creation never loses its value as the expression of the mind of God. Thus, also, in James, man is called the image of God. As to his moral condition, he needs (now that he has knowledge of good and of evil) to be born again in righteousness and in true holiness, that he may be the image of God. But his position in the world, as the head and center of all things - which no angel has been - is the idea of God Himself, as well as the position of the woman, the companion of his glory, but subject to him. An idea which will be gloriously accomplished in Christ, and, with respect to the woman, in the Church; but which is true in itself, being the constituted order of God, and always right as such - for the ordinance of God creates order, although no doubt His wisdom and His perfection are displayed in it.

The reader will remark, that this order in creation, as well as that which is established in the counsels of God in respect of the woman, of the man, of Christ, and of God Himself, and the fact that men - at least Christians under redemption - are a spectacle to angels (compare chap. 4:9), subjects which here I can only indicate, have the highest interest.

The Apostle afterward touches upon the subject of their assemblies. In ver. 2, he had praised them; but on this point he could not do so (ver. 17). Their assemblies manifested a spirit of division. This division concerned the distinction between the rich and the poor, but, as it seems,

gave rise to others. At least, others were necessary, to make manifest those who were really approved of God. Now these divisions had the character of sects; that is to say, particular opinions divided Christians of the same assembly, of the Church of God, into schools, that were hostile to each other, although they took the Lord's Supper together. If, indeed, it could be said that they took it together. Jealousies that had arisen between the rich and the poor, tended to foster the sectarian division. If, I observed, it could be said that they broke bread together - for each one took care to eat his own supper before the others did so, and some were hungry while others took their fill. This was not really eating the Lord's Supper.

The Apostle' guided by the Holy Ghost, seizes the opportunity to, declare to them the nature and the import of this ordinance. We may notice here, that the Lord had taught it him by an especial revelation-proof of the interest that belongs to it, and that it is a part of the Lord's mind in the entire Christian walk, to which He attaches importance in view of our moral condition, and of the state of our spiritual affections individually, as well as those of the Church. In the joy of Christian liberty, amid the powerful effects of the presence of the Holy Ghost, of the gifts by which He manifested Himself in the Church, the Lord's death, His broken body, were brought to mind, and, as it were, made present to faith as the basis and foundation of everything. This act of love, this simple and solemn deed, weak and empty in appearance, preserved all its importance. The Lord's body had been broken- wondrous fact! to which the Holy Ghost Himself was to bear witness, and which was to maintain all its importance in the Christian's heart, and to be the foundation and center of the edifice of the Church. Whatever might be the power that shone forth in the assembly, the heart was brought back to this. The body of the Lord Himself had been broken, the lips of Jesus had claimed our remembrance. This moral equilibrium is very important for the Church. Power, and the exercise of gifts, do not necessarily act upon the conscience and the heart of those to whom they are committed, nor of those always who enjoy their display. And, although God is present (and when we are in a good state, that is felt), still it is man who speaks and who acts upon others: he is prominent. In the Lord's Supper, the heart is brought back to a point 3. 1: I which it is entirely dependent, in which man is nothing (or only sin in the presence of grace), in which Christ and His love are everything, in which the heart is exercised, and the conscience remembers that it has needed cleansing, and that it has been cleansed by the work of Christ, that we depend absolutely on this grace. The affections also are in the fullest exercise. It is important to remember this. The consequences that followed forgetfulness of the import of this ordinance, confirmed its importance and the Lord's earnest desire that they should take heed to it. The Apostle is going to speak of the power or the Holy Ghost manifested in His gifts, and of the regulations necessary to maintain order and provide for edification where they were exercised in the assembly; but before doing so, he places the Lord's Supper as the moral center, the object of the assembly. Let us remark some of the thoughts of the. Spirit in connection with this ordinance.

1st. He links the affections with it in the strongest way. It was the same night on which Jesus was betrayed that He left this memorial of His sufferings and of His love. As the Paschal Lamb brought to mind the deliverance which the sacrifice offered in Egypt had procured for Israel, thus the Lord's Supper called to mind the sacrifice of Christ. He is in the glory, the Spirit is given; but they were to remember Him. His broken body was the object before their hearts in this memorial. Take notice of this word "Remember." It is not a Christ as He now exists-it is not the realization of what He is, that is not a remembrance, His body is now glorified. It is a remembrance of what He was on the

Cross. It is a body broken, and not glorified. It is remembered, though, by those who are now united to Him in the glory into which He is entered. They drank also of the cup in remembrance of Him. In a word, it is Christ looked at as dead: there is not such a Christ now.

It is the remembrance of Christ Himself. It is that which attaches to Himself, it is not only the value of His sacrifice, but attachment to Himself, the remembrance of Himself. The apostle then shows us, if it is a dead Christ, who it is that died. Impossible to find two words, the bringing together of which has so important a meaning, The death of the Lord. How many things are comprised in that He who is called the Lord, has died. What love! what purposes! what efficacy! what results! The Lord Himself gave Himself up for us. We celebrate His death. At the same time, it is the end of God's relations with the world, on the ground of man's responsibility - except the judgment. This death has broken every link, has proved the impossibility of any. We show forth this death until the rejected Lord shall return to establish new bonds of association by receiving us to Himself, to have part in them. It is this which we proclaim in the ordinance when we keep it. Besides this, it is in itself a declaration that the blood on which the new covenant is founded has been already shed; it is established in this blood. I do not go beyond that which the passage presents; the object of the Spirit of God here is not to set before us the efficacy of the death of Christ, but that which attaches the heart to Him in remembering His death, and the meaning of the ordinance itself. It is a dead, betrayed Christ, whom we remember. The broken body was, as it were, before their eyes at this Supper. The shed blood of the Savior claimed the affections of their heart. They were guilty of despising these precious things if they took part in the Supper unworthily. The Lord Himself fixed our thoughts there in this ordinance, and in the most affecting way, at the very moment of His betrayal.

But if Christ attracted the heart thus to fix its attention there, discipline was also solemnly exercised in connection with this ordinance. If they despised the broken body and the blood of the Lord, by taking part in it lightly, chastisement was inflicted. Many had become sick and weak, and many had fallen asleep, i.e., had died. It is not the being worthy to partake, that is spoken of, but the partaking in an unworthy manner. Every Christian, unless some sin excluded him, was worthy to partake, because he was a Christian. But any Christian might come to it without judging himself, or appreciating, as he ought, that which the Supper brought to his mind, and which Christ had connected with it. He did not discern the Lord's body; and he did not discern, did not judge, the evil in himself,- God cannot leave us thus careless. If the believer judges himself; the Lord will not judge him; if we do not judge ourselves, the Lord judges; but when the Christian is judged, he is chastened of the Lord that he may not be condemned with the world. It is the Government of God in the hands of the Lord, who judges His own house. An important and too much forgotten truth. No doubt the result of all is according to the counsels of God, who displays in it all His wisdom, His patience, and the righteousness of His ways; but this government is real. He desires the good of His people in the end, but He will have holiness, a heart whose condition answers to that which He has revealed, a walk which is its expression. The normal state of a Christian is communion, according to the power of that which has been revealed. Is there failure in this - communion is lost, and with it the power to glorify God, a power found nowhere else. But if one judges oneself, there is restoration; the heart being cleansed from the evil by judging it, communion is restored. If one does not judge oneself, God must interpose and correct and cleanse us by discipline. Discipline which may even be unto death (see Job 33 and 36, 1 John 5:16, James 5:14,15). There are yet

one or two remarks to be made. To judge oneself, is not the same word as to be judged of the Lord. It is the same that is used in chap. 11:29, "discerning the Lord's body." Thus, what we have to do is not only to judge an evil committed, it is to discern one's condition as it is manifested in the light - even as God Himself is in the light - by walking in it. This prevents our falling into evil, either in act or thought. But if we have fallen, it is not enough to judge the action; it is ourselves we must judge and the state of heart, the tendency, the neglect, which occasioned our falling into the evil; in a word, that which is not communion with God, or that which hinders it. It was thus the Lord dealt with Peter. He did not reproach him for his fault, He judged its root.

Moreover, the assembly ought to have power to discern these things. God acts in this way, as we have seen in Job; but the saints have the mind of Christ by the Spirit of Christ, and ought to discern their own condition.

The foundation and center of all this is the position in which we stand towards Christ in the Lord's Supper, as the visible center of communion and the expression of His death; in which sin, all sin, is judged. Now we are in connection with this holy judgment of sin as our portion. We cannot mingle the death of Christ with sin. It has abolished it. It is the divine negation of sin. He died to sin, and that in love to us. It is the absolute holiness of God made sensible and expressed to us in that which took place with regard to sin. It is absolute devotedness to God for His glory in this respect. To bring sin or carelessness into it, is to profane the death of Christ, who died rather than allow sin to subsist before God. We cannot be condemned with the world, because He has died and has abolished sin for us; but to bring sin to that which represents this very death in which He suffered for sin, is a thing which cannot be borne. God vindicates that which is due to the holiness and the love of a Christ who gave up His life to put away sin. One cannot say, I will not go to the Table, i.e., I will accept the sin and give up the confession of the value of that death. We examine ourselves, and we go - we re-establish the rights of His death in our conscience - for all is pardoned and expiated, as to guilt - and we go to acknowledge these rights as the proof of infinite grace.

The world is condemned, sin in the Christian is judged, it escapes neither the eye nor the judgment of God, He never permits it, He cleanses the believer from it by chastening him; although He does not condemn, because Christ has borne his sin. The death of Christ forms, then, the center of communion in the Church, and the touchstone of conscience, and that, with respect to the assembly, in the Lord's Supper.

The other branch of the truth, in reference to the Church in general and to the assemblies, is the presence and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. These, as well as the Lord's Supper, are in connection with unity.* The individual being responsible in each. It is the subject of spiritual manifestations which the Apostle takes up in chap. 12. The first point was to establish the distinctive marks of the Spirit of God. There were evil spirits, who sought to creep in among the Christians, and to speak or act pretending to be the Spirit of God, and thus to confound everything. Christians of the present day hardly believe in such efforts of the enemy as these. Spiritual manifestations are, no doubt, less striking now than at the time of which the Apostle speaks, but the enemy adapts his means of deception to the circumstances in which man and the work of God are found. As Peter says in a similar case, "As there were false prophets among the people, so shall there be false teachers among you." The enemy does not cease to act. "Forbidding to marry," etc., was the doctrine of devils. In the last days his power will be manifested still more. God can restrain him by the energy

of His Spirit, and by the power of the truth; but if he is not bridled he still acts, deceiving men, and that by such things as one would suppose it impossible (if not deceived oneself), that a man of sober sense could believe. But it is surprising what a man can believe when he is left to himself, without being kept by God, when the power of the enemy is there. We talk of common sense, of reason - very precious they are - but history tells us that God alone gives them or preserves them to us.

Here the Spirit of God manifested Himself by the effects of His power, which broke forth in the midst of the assembly, attracting the attention even of the world. The enemy imitated them. The greater part of the Christians at Corinth having been poor Gentiles, without discernment, and stupidly led by the illusions of the enemy, they were the more in danger of being again deceived by this means. When a man is not filled with the Spirit of God, who gives force to the truth in his heart, and clearness to his moral vision, the seductive power of the enemy dazzles his imagination. He loves the marvelous, unbelieving as he may be with regard to the truth. He lacks holy discernment, because he is ignorant of the holiness and character of God, and has not the stability of a soul that possesses the knowledge of God, God Himself, we may say, as his treasure, of a soul which knows that it has all in Him, so that it needs no other marvels. If a man is not thus established by the knowledge of God, the power of the enemy strikes him, 'pre-occupies him; he cannot shake it off, he cannot account for it. He is a victim to the influence which this power exercises over his mind; the flesh is pleased with it, for in one shape or another the result is always liberty to the flesh. Long led blindly by the power of evil spirits, the converted Gentiles were hardly in a state to discern and judge them. Strange to say, this demoniac power exercised such an influence that they forgot the importance even of the name of Jesus, or at least forgot that His name was not acknowledged by it. The enemy transforms himself into an angel of light, but he never really owns Jesus Christ as Lord. He will speak of Paul and Silvanus, and would have his part with Christians, but Christ is not acknowledged; and at last it is the breaking up and ruin of those who follow him. An unclean spirit would not say Lord Jesus, and the Spirit of God could not say Anathema to Jesus. But it is a question here of spirits and not of conversion, nor of the necessity of grace working in the heart for the true confession of the name of Jesus. A very true thing, as we know, but not the subject here.

We come now to positive instructions. Nothing more important, more distinctive, more marvelous, than the presence of the Holy Ghost here below in the midst of Christians; the fruit, to us, of the perfect work of Christ, but in itself the manifestation of the presence of God among men on the earth. The providence of God manifests His power in the works of creation, and His government which directs all things; but the Holy Ghost is His presence in this world, the testimony that He bears of Himself of His character. He is among men to display Himself, not yet in glory, but in power and in testimony of what He is. Christ having accomplished redemption, and having presented the efficacy of His work to God, Sovereign and Judge; the Church being ransomed and cleansed by His blood, and united to Him as His body, became the vessel of this power, which acts in His members. Thus she ought to display this power in holiness-she is responsible to do so. But in this way, as to its exercise, man becomes, in fact, individually the vessel of this spiritual energy. It is a treasure committed to him. Now the Spirit is, in the first place, the link between the Church and Christ, as well as between the Christian and Christ. It is by the Spirit that communion is realized and maintained, it is the primary function of the Spirit; and man must be in communion

in order to realize the character and discern the will of God, and that, according to the testimony, intended to be borne by the Spirit come down to earth.. But if the Church does not maintain this communion, she loses her strength as the responsible witness of God on earth, and, in fact, her joy and her spiritual intelligency also: God is ever sovereign to act as He chooses, and Christ cannot fail in His faithfulness to His body, but the testimony committed to the Church is no longer so rendered as to make it felt that God is present on the earth. The Church is not, perhaps, aware of the estrangement, because she retains for a time much of that which God has given, which is far beyond all that was according to nature; and in losing strength she has also lost the discernment of what she ought to be. But God is never mistaken as to the Church's condition-" Thou hast left thy first love. Except thou repent," saith He, "and do thy first works, I will take away thy candlestick." A solemn consideration for the Church, as to her responsibility, when we reflect on the grace that has been shown her, on the fruits that have been-and those that ought to have been-manifested, and on the power given her to produce them.

The purposes of God for the Church have their end and aim in Heaven. They will be accomplished without the possibility of the least thing failing. All that is needful to bring her members there according to His counsels, Christ will do. They are redeemed by His blood to be His.

The ways of God are accomplished and unfolded on the earth for our instruction, both in the Church and in individuals.

It is not only in His gifts that the presence of the Spirit of God is manifested. There were prophecies and miracles, men moved by the Holy Ghost, before the day of Pentecost. That which is attributed to faith in Heb. 11, is often ascribed to the Spirit in the Old Testament. But the Spirit was promised in a special way in the Old Testament. He was never at that period the presence of God in the midst of the people, as He has dwelt in the Church. The glory came to take possession of the Tabernacle or Temple. His Spirit acted in sovereignty outside the order of His house, and could be with them when that glory was gone. But the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven to dwell in the disciples and in the Church on earth, was the manifestation of the presence of God in His house, of God who was there by the Spirit. And this presence of the Spirit is so distinct and so plainly noted as a thing known and realized by the first Christians, which demonstrated instead of being demonstrated, that it is spoken of in the Word as being the Holy Ghost Himself. In John 7 it is said, " The Holy Ghost was not yet." In Acts 19 the twelve men say to Paul, " We have not so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost is." It was not a question whether there was a Holy Ghost, every orthodox Jew believed it, but whether this presence of the Holy Ghost Himself dwelling here below, the new Comforter and Guide of the disciples, of which John the Baptist had spoken, had yet taken place. When come down, it was the presence of God in His spiritual temple on earth. The place in which the disciples were gathered together was shaken to show that God was there. Ananias and Sapphira fell down dead before the apostles for having lied to God. Philip is caught away by His power from the presence of the man who had received the knowledge of Jesus by his means.

Such was the presence of the Holy Ghost. In our chapter, the apostle speaks of the manifestations of His presence in the gifts which were exercised by the instrumentality of members of the body, whether for the calling out and edification of the Church, or in testimony to those outside. Before entering on this subject, he gives the Corinthians- whom the enemy would have deeply

deceived-that which would enable them to distinguish between the manifestation of the Holy Ghost and the actings of an evil spirit. He then speaks of gifts. Now there were not divers Spirits, as in the case of demons; there was only one and the same Spirit, but diversity of gifts. This gives occasion to bring in the different relationship (for he speaks of the order of the relations of man with God-the practical energy of which is in the Holy Ghost) in which men moved by the Holy Ghost are placed with regard to God and to Christ. The Spirit, one and the same Spirit, acts in them by various manifestations. But in the exercise of these different gifts they were administrators, and there was one Lord, that is, Christ it was not, therefore, in them an independent and voluntary power: whatever might be the energy of the Spirit in them, they did not cease to be servants and stewards of Christ, and they were to act in this character, acknowledging in their service the Lordship of Christ. Nevertheless, although it was power in a man, and man who acted, so that he was a servant; and a man who was head and who was served (although He was Son of God and Lord of all), yet it was God who wrought, one and the same God who wrought all in all. It is not the Trinity, properly speaking, that is presented here in its own character. But one only Spirit acting in Christians, Jesus Lord, and God acting in the gifts.

The gifts are manifestations of the energy of the Spirit thus committed to men, under Christ, who is Head and Lord; men were to use them as serving the Lord. Now Christ thought of the profit of His Church, of those that were His, and the manifestation of the Spirit was given for the profit of souls, of the Church in general. The apostle notices several of these gifts; but he reminds us again that it is the same Spirit who works in each case, distributing to every one according to His own will. Let the reader remark this passage. The apostle had said that God wrought all these things, and had spoken of the gifts as being manifestations of the Spirit. It might have been supposed that the Spirit was some vague influence, and that one must attribute everything to God, without recognizing a personal Spirit. But these operations, which were attributed to God in ver. 6, are here attributed to the Spirit; and it is added, that He, the Spirit, distributes to each as He will. It is not, therefore, an inferior Spirit. Where He works, it is God who works; but these operations in men are gifts distributed according to the will of the Spirit. The Spirit being thus presented as acting personally in this distribution and according to His will.

Some of the gifts may require a short observation. Wisdom is the application of divine light to all the circumstances through which we pass; an expression which has a wide extent, because it applies to everything with regard to which we have to form a judgment. The Holy Ghost furnishes some in a peculiar way with this wisdom, with a wisdom according to God, a perception of the true nature of things, and of their relationship to each other, and of conduct with regard to both, which coming from God, guides us through the difficulties of the way, and enables us to avoid that which would place us in a false position towards God and man.

Knowledge is intelligency in the mind of God as it is revealed to us. Faith is not here simple faith in the Gospel; that is, not a distinctive gift which one believer may possess and another not. This is evident. It is the faith, the energy, given by God, which overcomes difficulties, which rises above dangers, which confronts them without being by them. The discerning of Spirits is not that of Pa man's condition of soul - it has nothing to do with it. It is the knowing how to discern by the mighty energy of the Spirit of God the actings of evil spirits, and to bring them to light if necessary, in contrast with the action of the Spirit of God. The other gifts require no comment. We must now return to the unity of the Spirit, with which is connected that which the apostle says, after having

spoken of the gifts. The Spirit was one, he had said, working diversely in the members, according to His will. The importance of His personality, and the immense import of His divinity (if we reflect that it is He who works in and by man) is very evident when we observe that He is the center and the living power of the unity of the whole body, so that the individuals in the exercise of their gifts are but the members of one and the same body, divinely formed by the power and the presence of the Spirit. This point the apostle develops largely, in connection with the oneness of the body, the mutual dependence of the members, and the relationship of each one to the body as a whole.

The practical instructions are easily understood, but there are some important points in the general principles. The oneness of the body is produced by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the connection of the members depends upon it. By one Spirit we have all been baptized to be one body. The Lord's Supper is the expression of this oneness: the Spirit is He who produces it, and who is its strength. The distinctive character of Jew and Gentile, and all other distinction, was lost in the power of one Spirit common to all, who united them all as redeemed ones in one only body. The apostle in this 13th verse speaks of the baptism of the Holy Ghost; but this word suggests to him the Supper, the second ordinance of the Lord, and he speaks of drinking into one Spirit, so drinking as to receive one and the same Spirit. By participating in Christ, by coming unto Him to drink, they had been made partakers of this same Spirit.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost, then, is that which forms Christians into one only body, and they are all made partakers of, are animated individually by, one and the same Spirit. Thus there are many members but one only body, and a body composed of these members which are dependent the one on the other, and have need of each other. And even those gifts which were the most shining, were, comparatively, of the least value, even as a man clothes and ornaments the least honorable parts of his body, and leaves the more beautiful parts uncovered.

Another point which the apostle marks, is the common interest that exists among them, in that they are members of one and the same body. If one suffers, all suffer, since there is but one body animated by one Spirit. If one is honored, all rejoice. This also depends on the one self-same Spirit who unites and animates them. Moreover, this body is the body of Christ. "Ye are," says the apostle, "the body of Christ and members in particular."

(Continued at page 181.)

1 Corinthians: Continued

Observe, also, here, that although that assembly at Corinth was only a part of the body of Christ, the apostle speaks of the whole body; for the assembly there was, according to the principle of its gathering, the body of Christ as assembled at Corinth. It is true, that at the beginning he speaks of all those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus; but, in fact, he addresses the Corinthian assembly; and the general expression shows, that in the walk of the Church, and in its general interests, a local assembly cannot be separated from the whole body of Christians on earth; and the language employed here shows that, as to their position before God, the Christians of one town were considered as representing the whole Church, as far as regarded that locality; not as independent of the rest, but, on the contrary, as inseparably united to the others, living and acting, with respect to that locality, as members of the body of Christ, and looked upon as such in it because every Christian formed a part of that body, and they formed a part of it likewise. From the verses that follow, we see that the apostle, while looking upon the Christians there as the body of Christ, the members of which they were, has in his mind the whole Church as the assembly of God. In the New Testament there is no other membership than that of Christ, except that they are members of each other, as forming the entire body, but never members of a church, the idea is different, it is the members of a body like that of man, as a figure, never the members of an assembly, - in the modern sense of the word. We are members of Christ, and, consequently, of the body of Christ; so were the Corinthians, as, far as that body was manifested at Corinth.

Moreover, the body of Christ, the Church, is looked at here as a whole upon the earth. God has set in the Church apostles, prophets, etc., miracles, healings, tongues. It is very plain that this is on the earth, as were the Corinthians, and that it is the Church as a whole. Healings and tongues were not in heaven, and the apostles were not those of an individual Church. In a word, it was the Holy Ghost, come down from heaven, who had formed the unity of the body on earth, and who acted in it by the especial gifts which distinguished the members.

The apostle then points out these gifts, not to give a formal and complete list of them, but to mark the order and importance of those he mentions. Tongues, of which the Corinthians were so proud, are the last gifts named in the list. Some gifts, then, were more excellent than others; they were to be estimated according to the measure in which they served for the edification of the assembly. Those which served this end were to be desired. Nevertheless, there was something more excellent than all gifts. They were the manifestation of the power of God and of the mysteries of His wisdom; Love, that of His nature itself.

They might speak with all tongues, they might have prophecy, the knowledge of mysteries, the faith which can remove mountains, - they might give all their possessions to feed the poor, and their bodies to be tortured, if they had not love, it was nothing. Love was conformity to the nature of God, the living expression of what He was, the manifestation of having been made partakers of His nature; it was the acting and feeling according to His likeness. This love is developed in reference to others; but others are not the motive, although they are the object. It has its source

within, its strength is independent of the objects with which it is occupied; thus it can act where circumstances might produce irritation or jealousy in the human heart. It acts according to its own nature in the circumstances; and by judging them according to that nature, they do not act upon the man who is full of love, except so far as they supply occasion for its activity and direct its form. Love is its own motive. In us, participation in the divine nature is its only source. Communion with God Himself alone sustains it through all the difficulties it has to surmount in its path. This love is the opposite of selfishness and of self-seeking, and shuts it out, seeking the good of others, even (as to its principle) as God has sought us in grace (see Eph. 4:32; 5. 1, 2). What a power to avoid evil in one's self, to forget all in order to do good.

The first eight qualities of love pointed out by the Spirit are the, expression of this renunciation of self; the three that follow mark that joy in good which sets the heart free also from that readiness to suppose evil, which is so natural to human nature, on account of its own depth of evil, and that which it also experiences in the world. The four last show its positive energy, which -the source of every kind thought - by the powerful spring of its divine nature, presumes good when it does not see it, and bears with evil when it sees it, covering it by long-suffering and patience; not bringing it to light, hut burying it in its own depth - a depth which is unfathomable, because love never changes. One finds nothing but love where it is real; for circumstances are but an occasion for it to act and show itself. Love is always itself, and it is love which is exercised and displayed. It is that which fills the mind; everything else is but a means of awakening the soul that dwells in love, to its exercise. This is the divine character. No doubt the time of judgment will come; but our relationships with God are in grace. Love is His nature. It is now the time of its exercise. We represent Him on earth in testimony. In that which is said of love in this chapter we find the reproduction of the divine nature, except that what is said is but the negative of the selfishness of the flesh in us. Now the divine nature changes not and never ceases; love, therefore, abideth ever. Communications from God; the means by which they are made, knowledge -as attained here below-according to which we apprehend the truth in part only, although the whole truth is revealed to us;- for we apprehend it in detail, so that we have never the whole at once; the character of our knowledge is to lay hold of different truths singly -all that is characterized by being in part passes away.

Love will not pass away. A child learns; he rejoices, too, in things that amuse him; when he becomes a man, he requires things in accordance with his intelligence as a man. It was thus with tongues and the edification of the Church. The time was, however, coming when they should know even as they were known; not by communications of truths to a capacity that apprehended the truth in its different parts, but they should understand as a whole in its unity.

Now love subsists already; there are faith and hope also. Not only shall these pass away, but even now, here below, that which is of the nature of God is more excellent than that which is connected with the capacity of human nature, even though enlightened by God, and having for its object the revealed glory of God.

Believers, therefore, were to follow after and seek for love while desiring gifts, especially that they might prophesy, because thus they would edify the Church, and that was the thing to aim at; it was that which love desired and sought - it was that which intelligence required, the two marks-of a man in Christ, of one to whom Christ is all.

Two verses in this chap. 14 demand a little attention, the 3rd and the 6th. Ver. 3 is the effect, or rather the quality of that which a prophet says, and not a definition. He edifies, he encourages, he comforts, by speaking. Nevertheless, these words show the character of what he said. Prophecy is in no wise simply the revelation of future events, although prophets, as such, have revealed them. A prophet is one who is so in communication with God as to be able to communicate His mind. A teacher instructs, according to that which is already written, and so explains its import. But in communicating the mind of God to souls under grace, the prophet encouraged and edified them. With regard to ver. 6, it is plain that coining with tongues (by the use of which the Corinthians, like children, loved to shine in the assembly), he that so spoke edified no one, for he was not understood. Perhaps he did not understand himself, but was the unintelligent instrument of the Spirit, whilst having the powerful impression of the fact that

God spake by his means, so that in the spirit he felt that he was in communication with God, although his understanding was unfruitful. In any case, no one could speak for the edification of the assembly unless he communicated the mind of God. Of such communication the apostle distinguishes two kinds - revelation and knowledge. The latter supposes a revelation already given, of which some one availed himself, by the Holy Ghost, for the good of the flock. He then points out the gifts which were respectively the means of edifying in these two ways. It is not that the two latter terms (ver. 6) are the equivalents of the two former; but the two things here spoken of as edifying the Church were accomplished by means of these two gifts. There might be "prophecy" without its being absolutely a new revelation, although there was more in it than knowledge. It might contain an application of the thoughts of God - an address, on the part of God, to the soul, to the conscience, which would be more than knowledge, but which would not be a new revelation. God acts therein, without revealing a new truth or a new fact. "Knowledge," or "doctrine," teaches truths or explains the Word. A thing very useful to the Church; but in it there is not the direct action of the Spirit in application, and thus not the direct manifestation of the presence of God to men in their own conscience and heart. When any one teaches, he who is spiritual profits by it; when one prophesies, even he who is not spiritual will feel it, he is reached and judged; and it is the same thing with the Christian's conscience. Revelation, or knowledge, is a perfect division, and embraces everything. Prophecy and doctrine are in intimate connection with the two; but prophecy embraces other ideas, so that this division does not exactly answer to the two first terms.

The apostle insists largely on the necessity of making one's self understood, whether one speaks, or sings, or prays. He desires - and the remark is of all-importance in judging men's pretensions to the Spirit - that the understanding be in exercise. He does not deny that they might speak with tongues without the understanding being at all in it; a thing of evident power and utility when persons were present who understood no other language, or whose natural language it was. But, in general, it was an inferior thing when the Spirit did not act upon, and, therefore, by means of, the understanding. Communion between souls in a common subject, through the unity of the Spirit, did not exist, when he who spoke did not understand what he said. The individual speaking did not himself enjoy, as from God, what he communicated to others. If others did not understand it either, it was child's play to utter words without meaning to the hearers. But the apostle desired to understand himself that which he said, although he spoke in many tongues; so that it was not jealousy on his part. He spoke more foreign tongues, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, than they all.

But his soul loved the things of God -loved to receive truth intelligently from Him - loved to hold intelligent intercourse with others; and he would rather say five words with his understanding than ten thousand without it in an unknown tongue. What a marvelous power, what a manifestation of the presence of God-a thing worthy of the deepest attention-and, at the same time, what superiority to all carnal vanity, to the luster reflected upon the individual by means of gifts, - what moral power of the Spirit of God, where love saw nothing in these manifestations of power in gift, but instruments to be used for the good of the Church and of souls. It was the practical force of that love, to the exercise of which, as being superior to gifts, he exhorted the faithful. It was the love and the wisdom of God directing the exercise of His power for the good of those whom He loved. What a position for a man! What simplicity is imparted by the grace of God to one who forgets self in humility and love, and what power in. that humility! The apostle confirms his argument by the effect that would be produced on strangers who might come into the assembly, or on unenlightened Christians, if they heard languages spoken which no one understood; they would think them mad. Prophecy, reaching their conscience, would make them feel that God was there - was present in the Church of God.

Gifts were abundant in Corinth: having regulated that which concerned moral questions, the apostle, in the second place, regulates the exercise of those gifts. Every one came with some manifestation of the power of the Holy Ghost, of which they evidently thought more than of conformity to Christ. Nevertheless, the apostle acknowledges in it the power of the Spirit of God, and gives rules for its exercise. Two or three might speak with tongues, provided there was an interpreter, so that the assembly might be edified. And this was to be done one at a time, for it appears they even spoke several at once. In the same way as to the prophets; two or three might speak, the others would judge if it really came from God. For, if it were given to them of God, all might prophesy; but only one at a time, that all might learn -a dependence always good for the most gifted prophets - and that all might be comforted. The spirits of the prophets, that is to say, the impulse of power in the exercise of gifts, were subject to the guidance of the moral intelligence which the Spirit bestowed on the prophets. They were, on God's part, masters of themselves in the use of these gifts, in the exercise of this marvelous power which wrought in them. It was not a divine fury, as the pagans said of their diabolical inspiration, which carried them away; for God could not be the author of confusion in the assembly, but of peace. In a word, we see that this power was committed to man in his moral responsibility; an important principle, which is invariable in the ways of God. God saved man by grace, when he had failed in his responsibility; but all that He has committed to man, whatever may be the divine energy of the gift, man holds as responsible to use it for the glory of God, and, consequently, for the good of others, and especially of the Church.

Women were to be silent in the assembly, it was not permitted to them to speak, they were to remain in obedience and not to direct others. The law, moreover, held the same language. It would be a shame to hear them speak in public; if they had questions to ask, they might inquire of their husbands at home.

With all their gifts, the Word did not come out from the Corinthians, nor had it come unto them only; they ought to submit to the universal order of the Spirit in the Church. If they pretended to be led by the Spirit, let them acknowledge (and this would prove it) that the things which the apostle wrote to them were the commandments of the Lord. A very important assertion; a responsible and

serious position of this wonderful servant of God.

What a mixture of tenderness, of patience, and of authority. The apostle desires that the faithful should come to the truth and to order, conducted by their own affections; not fearing, if necessary for their good, to avail himself of an authority without appeal, as speaking directly from God, an authority which God would justify if the apostle was forced unwillingly to use it. If any were ignorant that he wrote by the Spirit with the authority of God, it was ignorance indeed, let such be given up to their ignorance. Spiritual and simple men would be delivered from such pretensions. Those who were really filled with the Spirit would acknowledge that what the apostle wrote came immediately from God, and was the expression of His wisdom, of that which became Him: for often there may be the recognition of divine or even human wisdom when it is found, where there was not the ability to find it; nor, if it were perceived in part, the power to set it forth with authority. Meanwhile, the man of pretension, reduced to this place, would find the place profitable, and that which he needed.

We shall also observe here the importance of this assertion of the apostle's, with regard to the inspiration of the epistles. That which he taught for the details even of church order was so really given of God, came so entirely from God, that they were the commandments of the Lord. For the doctrine, we have at the end of the Epistle to the Romans, the same declaration that it was by means of prophetic writings that the gospel was disseminated among the nations.

The apostle resumes his instructions by saying, that they should desire to prophesy, not forbid to speak with tongues, and that all should be done with order and propriety. But other evils had found means to introduce themselves into the midst of the shining gifts which were exercised in the bosom of the flock at Corinth. The resurrection of the dead was denied. Satan is wily in his dealings. Apparently it was only the body that was in question; nevertheless, the whole gospel was at stake, for if the dead rose not, then Christ was not risen. And if Christ were not risen, the sins of the faithful were not put away, and the gospel was not true. The apostle, therefore, reserved this question for the end of his epistle; and he enters into it thoroughly.

1st. He reminds them of that which he had preached among them as the gospel, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and was raised again according to the Scriptures. This, then, was the means of their salvation, if they continued in it, unless they had believed in vain. Here, at least, was a very solid foundation for his argument; their salvation (unless all that they had believed was but a fable) depended on the fact of the resurrection, and was bound up with it. But if the dead rose not, Christ was not risen, for He had died. The apostle begins, therefore, by establishing this fact through the most complete and positive testimonies, including his own testimony, since he had himself seen the Lord. Five hundred persons had seen Him at once, the greater part of whom were still alive to bear witness of it. Observe, in passing, that the apostle can speak of nothing without a moral effect being produced in his heart, because he thinks of it with God. Thus, vers. 8-10, he calls to mind the state of things with regard to himself and to the other apostles, and that which grace had done; and then, his heart unburdened, he returns to his subject; the testimony of every divine witness was the same, everything declared that Christ was risen; everything depended on the fact that He was so. This was his starting point. If, said he, that which was preached among you is that Christ was raised from the dead, how happens it that some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is none, Christ is not risen; if He is not

risen, the preaching of His witnesses is vain, the faith of Christians vain. Nor that only, but these witnesses are false witnesses, for they had declared with respect to God, that He had raised up Christ from the dead. But God had not raised him up if the dead do not rise. And in that case their faith was vain, they were yet in their sins, and those who had already fallen asleep in Christ had perished. Now if it were in this life only that the believer has hope in Christ, he is of all men the most miserable, he does but suffer as to this world. But it is not so, for Christ is risen. Here, however, it is not only a general doctrine that the dead are raised. Christ, in rising, came up from among the dead. It is the favor and the power of God come in to bring back from among the dead the One who had, in His grace, gone down into death, to accomplish and to display the deliverance of man, in Christ, from the power of Satan and of death; and to put a public seal on the work of redemption, to exhibit openly in man the victory over all the power of the enemy. Thus Christ arose from among all the other dead - for death could not hold him - and established the glorious principle of this divine and complete deliverance, and he became the first-fruits of them that slept, who, having His life, await the exercise of His power, which will awaken them by virtue of the Spirit that dwells in them.

This evidently gives a very peculiar character to the resurrection; it is not only that the dead rise, but that God, by His power, brings back certain persons from among the dead, on account of the favor which He has for them, and in connection with the life and the Spirit which are in them. Christ has a quite peculiar place. Life was in Him, and He is our life. He gained this victory by which we profit. He is of right the first-fruits. It was due to His glory. Had He not gained the victory we should always have remained in prison. He had power Himself to resume life, but the great principle is the same; it is not only a resurrection of the dead, but those who are alive according to God arise as the objects of His favor, and by the exercise of that power which wills to have them for Himself and with himself. Christ, the first-fruits; those who are of Christ, at His coming. We are associated with Christ in resurrection. We come out like Him not only from death but from the dead. We mark, too, here, how Christ and His people are inseparably identified. If they do not rise He is not risen, He was as really dead as we can be, has taken in grace our place under death, was a man as we are men (save sin) so truly that if you deny this result for us, you deny the fact as to Him, and the great object and foundation of faith itself fails.

It needed to be by man. No doubt the power of God can call men back from the tomb. He will do so -acting in the person of His son, to whom all judgment is given. But that will not be a victory gained in human nature over death which held man captive. This it is which Christ has done. He was willing to be given up to death for us, in order (as man) to gain the victory for us over death and over him who had the power of death. By man came death; by man, resurrection. Glorious victory! complete triumph! We come out of the state where sin and its consequences fully reached us. Evil cannot enter the place into which we are brought out. We have crossed the frontiers forever. Sin, the power of the enemy, remains outside this new creation, which is the fruit of the power of God after evil had come in, and which the responsibility of man shall not mar. It is God who maintains it in connection with Himself: it depends on Him.

There are two great principles established here. By man, death; by man, the resurrection of the dead. Adam and Christ, as heads of two families. In Adam all die, in Christ all shall be made alive. But here there is an all-important development in connection with the position of Christ in the counsels of God. One side of this truth is the dependence of the family - so to call it - upon its

head. Adam brought death into the midst of his descendants, those who are in relation with himself. This is the principle which characterizes the history of the first Adam. Christ, in whom is life, brings life into the midst of those who are His, communicates it to them. This principle characterizes the Second Adam and those who are His, in Him. But it is life in the power of resurrection, without which it could not have been communicated to them. The grain of wheat would have been perfect in itself, but would have remained alone. But He died for their sins, and now He imparts life to them, all their sins being forgiven.

Now, in the resurrection, there is an order according to the wisdom of God for the accomplishment of His counsels. Christ, the first-fruits. Those who are of Christ, at His coming again. Thus, those who are in Christ are quickened according to the power of the life which is in Christ, it is the resurrection of life. But this is not the whole extent of resurrection as acquired by Christ in gaining the victory over death, according to the spirit of holiness. The Father has given Him power over all men, that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father had given Him. The latter are those of whom this chapter treats essentially, because its subject is resurrection among Christians; and the apostle, the Spirit Himself, loves to speak on the subject of the power of eternal life in Christ. Yet he cannot entirely omit the other part of the truth. The resurrection of the dead, he tells us, is come by man. But he is not here speaking of the communication of life in Christ. In connection with this last and nearer part of his subject, he does not touch upon the resurrection of the wicked; but after the coming of Christ he introduces the end, when He shall have given up the kingdom to the Father. With the kingdom is introduced the power of Christ exercised over all things - a different thought entirely from the communication of life to His own. There are three steps, therefore, in these events. First, the resurrection of Christ; then the resurrection of those that are His, at His coming; afterward, the end, when He shall have given up the kingdom to the Father. The first and the second are the accomplishment, in resurrection, of the power of life in Christ and in His people. When He comes He takes the kingdom, He takes His great power, and acts as king. From His coming, then, to the end, is the development of His power, in order to subdue all things to Himself; during which all power and all authority shall be abolished. For He must reign till all His enemies are under His feet; the last subdued will be death. Here, then, as the effect of His power only, and not in connection with the communication of life, we find the resurrection of those who are not His; for the destruction of death is their resurrection. They are passed over in silence-only that death, such as we see it, has no longer dominion over them. Christ has the right and the power, in virtue of His resurrection and of His having glorified the Father, to destroy the dominion of death over them, and to raise them up again. This will be the resurrection of judgment. Its effect is declared elsewhere.

When He has put all his enemies under His feet and has given back the kingdom to His Father (for it is never taken from Him, nor given to another, as happens with human kingdoms), then the Son Himself is subject to Him who has put all things under Him, in order that God may be all in all. The reader should observe, that it is the counsels of God with regard to the government of all things which is here spoken of, and not His nature; and, moreover, it is the Son, as man, of whom these things are said. This is not an arbitrary explanation: the passage is from Psa. 8, the subject of which is the exaltation of man to the position of head of all things, God putting all things under his feet. Nothing, says the apostle, is excepted (Heb. 2:8) save, as he adds here, that He is necessarily excepted who put all things under Him. When the man Christ, the Son of God, has, in

fact, accomplished this subjugation, He gives back to God the universal power which had been committed to Him, and the mediatorial kingdom ceases. He is again subject, as He was on earth. He does not cease to be one with the Father, even as He was so while living in humiliation on the earth, although saying at the same time, " Before Abraham was I am." But the mediatorial government of man has disappeared, is absorbed into the supremacy of God, to which there is no longer any opposition. Christ will take His eternal place, a man, the head of the whole redeemed family, being at the same time God blessed forever, one with the Father: In Psa. 1, we see the righteous man. In Psa. 2, the Son of God, as born on earth, King in Sion, rejected when He presented Himself on earth. In Psa. 8, the result of His rejection, exalted as Son of Man, at the head of all that the hand of God has made. Then we find Him here laying down this conferred authority, and resuming the normal position of humanity, namely, that of subjection to Him who has put all things under Him. But through it all, never changing His divine nature; nor - save so far as exchanging humiliation for glory - His human nature either. But God is all in all, and the special government of man in the person of Jesus - a government with which the Church is associated (see Eph. 1, which is a quotation from the same Psalm) is merged in the immutable supremacy of God, the final and normal relationship of God with His creature. We shall find the Lamb omitted in that which is said in Rev. 21:1-8, speaking of this same period.

Thus we find in this passage resurrection by man - death having entered by man - the relationship of the saints with Jesus, the source and the power of life, the consequence being His resurrection, and theirs, at His coming; power over all things committed to Christ, the risen Man, a power by which He destroys death, thus accomplishing the resurrection of those who are not made alive in Him; afterward, the kingdom given back to God the Father, the Tabernacle of God with men and the Man Christ, the second Adam, eternally a Man subject to the Supreme this last a truth of infinite value to us. The reader must now remark that this passage is a revelation, in which the Spirit of God, having fixed the apostle's thoughts upon Jesus and the resurrection, suddenly interrupts the line of his argument, announcing - with that impulse which the thought of Christ always gave to the mind and heart of the apostle all the ways of God in Christ with regard to the resurrection, to the connection of those that are His with Him in that resurrection, and the government and dominion which belongs to Him as risen, as well as the eternal nature of His relationship, as Man, to God. Having communicated these thoughts of God, which were revealed to him, he resumes the thread of his argument in ver. 29. This part ends with ver. 34, after which he treats the question, which they had brought forward as a difficulty-in what manner Should the dead be raised?

By taking the verses 20-28, which contain so important a revelation in a passage that is complete in itself, as a parenthesis, the verses 29-34 become much more intelligible, and some expressions, which have greatly harassed interpreters, have a tolerably determinate sense. The apostle had said, in ver. 16, " If the dead rise not," and then, that if such were the case, those who had fallen asleep in Jesus had perished, and that the living were of all men most miserable. At ver. 29, he returns to these points, and speaks of those who are baptized for the dead, in connection with the assertion, that •if there were no resurrection, those who had fallen asleep in Christ had perished. " If," he says, repeating more forcibly the expression in ver. 16, "the dead rise not at all"; and then shows how entirely he is himself, in the second case he had spoken of, "of all men most miserable," and almost in the case of perishing also, being every moment in danger, striving as

with wild beasts, dying daily. Baptized, then, for the dead, is to become a Christian with a view to those who have fallen asleep in Christ, and particularly as being slain for Him. As in 1 Thess. 4, the subject, while speaking of all Christians, is looked at in the same way. The word translated "for" is frequently used in these epistles; for "in view of," "with reference to."

We have seen that the ver. 20-28 form a parenthesis. The 29th, then, is connected with the 18th. The 30th, 31st, 32nd, relate to the 19th. The historical explanation of these last verses is found in the second epistle

(see chap. 1:8, 9, 4:8-12). I do not think that ver. 32 should be taken literally. The word translated "I have fought with beasts," is usually employed, in a figurative sense, to be in conflict with fierce and implacable enemies. In consequence of the violence of the Ephesians, he had nearly lost his life, and even despaired of saving it; but God had delivered him. But to what purpose all these sufferings, if the dead rise not? And observe here, that although the resurrection proves that death does not touch the soul (compare Luke 20:38), yet the apostle does not think of immortality apart from resurrection. God has to do with man, and man is composed of body and of soul. He gives account in the judgment of the things done in the body. It is when raised from the dead that he will do so. The intimate union between the two, quite distinct as they are, forms the spring of life, the seat of responsibility, the means of God's government with regard to His creatures, and the sphere in which His dealings are displayed. Death dissolves this union; and although the soul survives, and is happy or miserable, the existence of the complete man is suspended, the judgment of God is not applied, the believer is not yet clothed with glory. Thus, to deny the resurrection was to deny the true relationships of God with man, and to make death the end of man, destroying man as God contemplates him, and making him perish like a beast. Compare the Lord's argument in that passage in Luke, of which I have already quoted one verse.

Alas! the denial of the resurrection was linked with the desire to unbridle the senses. Satan introduced it into the heart of Christians through their communication with persons with whom the Spirit of Christ would have had no communion.

They needed to have their conscience exercised, to be awakened, in order that righteousness might have its place there. It is the lack of that which is commonly the true source of heresies. They failed in the knowledge of God. It was to the shame of these Christians. God grant us to take heed to it! It is the great matter even in questions of doctrine.

But, further, the inquisitive spirit of man would fain be satisfied with respect to the physical mode of the resurrection. The apostle did not gratify it, while rebuking the stupid folly of those who had occasion every day to see analogous things in the creation that surrounded them. The fruit of the power of God, the raised body, would be, according to the good pleasure of Him who gave it anew, for the glorious abode of the soul; a body of honor, which, having passed through death, would assume that glorious condition which God had prepared for it; a body suited to the creature that possessed it, but according to the supreme will of Him who clothed the creature with it. There were different kinds of bodies; and as wheat was not the bare grain that had been sown, although a plant of its nature, and not another, so should it be with the raised man. Different, also, were the glories of heavenly and earthly bodies: star differed from star in glory. I do not think that this passage refers to degrees of glory in heaven, but to the fact that God distributes glory as He pleases. Heavenly glory and earthly glory are, however, plainly put in contrast, for there will be an

earthly glory. And observe here, that it is not merely the fact of the resurrection which is set forth in this passage, but also its character. For the saints it will be a resurrection to heavenly glory. Their portion will be bodies incorruptible, glorious, vessels of power, spiritual. This body, sown as the grain of wheat for corruption, shall put on glory and incorruptibility. It is only the saints that are here spoken of- " they also that are heavenly," and in connection with Christ, the second Adam. The apostle had said that the first body was " natural," its life was that of the living soul; as to the body, it partook of that kind of life which the other animals possessed, whatever might be its superiority as to its relationship with God, in that God Himself had breathed into its nostrils the spirit of life, so that man was thus in a special way in relationship with God, of-His race, as the apostle said at Athens. " Adam, the Son of God," said the Holy Ghost in Luke, made in the image of God. His conduct should have answered to it, and God had revealed Himself to him, in order to place him morally in the position that was suitable to this breath of life which he had received. He had become - free as he was from death by the power of God who sustained him, or mortal by the sentence of Him who had formed him a living soul. There was not the quickening power in himself. The first Adam was simply a man - " the first man Adam." The word of God does not express itself thus with regard to Christ, when speaking of Him in this passage as the second Adam. He could not be the second Adam without being a man; but it does not say, " the second man was a quickening Spirit," but "the second Adam." Christ had not only life as a living soul, He had the power of life, which could impart life to others. Although He was a Man on earth, He had life in Himself; accordingly, He quickened whom He would. Nevertheless, it is as the second Adam, as the Christ, that the Word here speaks of Him. It is not only that God quickens whom He will, but the second Adam, Christ, the Head spiritually of the new race, has this power in Himself; and, therefore, it is said, for it is always Jesus on earth who is in question, "He hath given to the Son to have life in Himself." Of us it is said, " God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son: he who has the Son has life, and he who has, not the Son of God has not life." Howbeit, that which is of the Spirit is not that which was first, but that which is natural, i.e., that which has the natural life of the soul. That which is • spiritual, which has its life from the power of the Spirit, comes after. The first man is of the earth; has his origin, such as he is (God having breathed into his nostrils a spirit or breath of life), from the earth. Therefore he is of the dust, even as God said, " Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The second Adam, though He was as truly man as the first, is the Lord from heaven. As belonging to the first Adam, we inherit his condition, we are like him; as, participating in the life of the second, we have part in the glory which He possesses as Man, we are like Him, we exist according to His mode of being, His life being ours. Now the consequence here is, that as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Observe here, that the first Adam and the second, respectively, are looked at as in that condition into which they entered when their respective trials under responsibility had ended; and those who are connected with the one and the other inherit the condition and the consequences of the work of the one and the other, as thus tested. It is the fallen Adam who is the father of a race born after his image- a fallen and guilty race, sinful and mortal. He had failed, and committed sin, and lost his position before God, was far from Him, when he became the father of the human race. If the corn of wheat falling into the ground does not die, it bears no fruit; if it die, it bears much fruit. Christ had accomplished righteousness, made expiation for sin, overcome death, destroyed the power of Satan, before He became, as a quickening Spirit, the Head of a spiritual race, to whom - united to Himself - He communicates all the privileges that belong to the position before God which

He has acquired, according to the power of that life by which He quickens them. It is a risen and glorified Christ whose image we shall bear, as we now bear the image of a fallen Adam. Flesh and blood, not merely sin, cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Corruption (for such we are) cannot inherit that which is incorruptible. This leads the apostle to a positive revelation of that which will take place with regard to the enjoyment of incorruptibility by all the saints. Death is conquered. It is not necessary that death should come upon all, still less that all should undergo actual corruption; but it is not possible for flesh and blood to inherit the kingdom of glory. But we shall not all sleep, there are some who will be changed. The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we (for, redemption being accomplished, and Christ ready to judge the quick and the dead, the apostle always looks at it as a thing immediately before his eyes, ready to take place every moment) we shall be changed. A change equivalent to resurrection, for that which is corruptible, if not already in dust and corruption, shall put on incorruptibility; that which is mortal, immortality. We see that this relates to the body: it is in his body that man is mortal, even when he has eternal life, and shall live by Christ and with Christ. The power of God will form the saints, whether living or dead, for the inheritance of glory.

Take especial notice of what has just been said. Death is entirely conquered, annulled in its moral character, for the Christian. He possesses a life (Christ risen) which sets him above death, not, perhaps, physically, but morally. It has lost all its power over his soul, as the fruit of sin and judgment. It is so entirely conquered, that there are some who will not die at all. All Christians have Christ for their life. If He is absent, and if He does not return, as will be the case as long as He sits on His Father's throne, and our life is hid with Him in God, -we undergo death physically, according to the sentence of God; that is to say, the soul is separated from the mortal body. When He shall return and exercise His power, having risen up from the Father's throne to take His people to Himself before He executes judgment, death has no power at all over them; they do not pass through it. That the others are raised from the dead is a proof of power altogether divine, and more glorious even than that which created man from the dust. That the living are changed proves a perfection of accomplished redemption, and a power of life in Christ which has left no trace, no remains of the judgment of God as to them, nor of the power of the enemy, nor of the thralldom of man to the consequences of his sin. In place of all that, is an exercise of divine power, which manifests itself in the absolute, complete, and eternal deliverance of the poor guilty creature who before was under it. A deliverance that has its perfect manifestation in the glory of Christ, for He had subjected Himself, in grace, to the condition of man under death for sin; so that to faith it is always certain and accomplished, in His person. But the resurrection of the dead and the change of the living will be its actual accomplishment for all who are His at His coming. What a glorious deliverance is that which is wrought by the resurrection of Christ, who- sin entirely blotted out, righteousness divinely accomplished, Satan's power destroyed - transports us by virtue of an eternal redemption, and by the power of a life which has abolished death, into an entirely new sphere, where evil cannot come, nor any of its consequences, and where the favor of God in glory shines upon us perfectly and forever. It is this which Christ has won for us, according to the eternal love of God our Father, who gave Him to us to be our Savior.

At an unexpected moment we shall enter into this scene, ordained by the Father, prepared by Jesus. The power of God will accomplish this change in an instant; the dead shall rise, we shall be changed. The last trumpet is but a military allusion, as it appears to me, when the whole troop wait

for the last signal to set out all together.

In the quotation from Isa. 25:8, we have a remarkable application of Scripture. Here, it is only the fact that death is thus swallowed up in victory, for which the passage is quoted; but the comparison with Isaiah shows us that it will be not at the end of the world, but at the period when, by the establishment of the kingdom of God in Sion, the veil, under which the heathen have dwelt in ignorance and darkness, shall be taken off their face. The whole earth shall be enlightened, I do not say at the moment, but at the period. But this certainty of the destruction of death procures us a present confidence, although death still exists. Death has lost its sting, the grave its victory. All is changed by the grace which, at the end, will bring in this triumph. But meantime, by revealing to us the favor of God who bestows it, and the accomplishment of the redemption which is its basis, it has completely changed the character of death. Death, to the believer who must pass through it, is only leaving that which is mortal; it no longer bears the terror of God's judgment, nor that of the power of Satan. Christ has gone into it and borne it, and taken it away totally and forever. Nor that only, - He has taken its source away. It was sin which sharpened, which envenomed that sting. It was the law which, presenting to the conscience the exact righteousness, and the judgment of God that required the accomplishment of that law, and pronounced a curse on those who failed in it,-it was the law which gave sin its force to the conscience, and made death doubly formidable. But Christ was made sin, and bore the curse of the law, being made a curse for His own who were under the law; and thus, while glorifying God perfectly with regard to sin, and to the law in its most absolute requirements, He has completely delivered us from the one and the other, and, at the same time, from the power of death, out of which He came victorious. All that death can do to us is to take us out of the scene 'in which it exercises its power, to bring us into that in which it has none. God, the Author of these counsels of grace, in whom is the power that accomplishes them, has given us this deliverance, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Instead of fearing death, we render thanks to Him who has given us the victory by Jesus. The great result is to be with Jesus, and like Jesus, and to see Him as He is. Meanwhile, we labor in the scene where death exercises its power, - where Satan uses it, if God allows him, to stop us in our way. We labor, although there are difficulties, with entire confidence, knowing what will be the infallible result. The path may be beset by the enemy, the end will be the fruit of the counsels and the power of our God, exercised on our behalf according to that which we have seen in Jesus, who is the head and the manifestation of the glory which His own shall enjoy.

To sum up what has been said, we see the two things in Christ. First, power over all things, death included: He raises up even the wicked. And, second, the association of His own with Himself. With reference, therefore, to the latter, the apostle directs our eyes to the resurrection of Christ Himself. He not only raises up others, but he has been raised up Himself, from the dead. He is the first-fruits of them that sleep. But before His resurrection He died for our sins. All that separated us from God is entirely put away, death, the wrath of God, the power of Satan, sin, disappear, as far as we are concerned, in virtue of the work of Christ; and the title to heavenly glory is acquired for us by the-righteousness fulfilled in Him. Nothing remains of that which appertained to His former life; except the everlasting favor of God who brought Him there. Thus it is a resurrection from among the dead by the power of God, in virtue of that favor, because He was the delight of God and had accomplished His righteousness.

For us, it is a resurrection founded on redemption, and which we enjoy even now in the power of a life which brings the effect and the strength of both into our hearts, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us. At the coming of Christ, the accomplishment will take place in fact for our bodies.

With regard to practice, the Church at Corinth was in a very poor condition; and being asleep as to righteousness, the enemy sought to lead them astray as to faith also. Nevertheless, as a body, they kept the foundation, and as to external spiritual power, it shone very brightly. The apostle, in his letter, had treated the disorder that reigned among these believers, and his spirit was to a certain degree relieved by fulfilling this duty towards them; for after all they were Christians and an assembly of God. In the last chapter he speaks to them- in the sense of this, although he could not make up his mind to go to Corinth, for he had intended to visit them in going to Macedonia, and a second time in returning thence. He does not say here why He did not go thither on his way to Macedonia, and he speaks with uncertainty as to his sojourn at Corinth when he should arrive there on his return from Macedonia; if the Lord permitted, he would tarry awhile with them. The second epistle will explain all this. In their existing state, his heart would not allow him to visit them. But he treats them tenderly, nevertheless, as still beloved Christians, giving them directions suited to the circumstances of the moment. They were to make a collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, as had been arranged with the apostles when Paul left Jerusalem as the recognized apostle of the Gentiles. This was not to be done in haste when he came, but by laying up every week in proportion to their prosperity. He would send persons chosen by the Corinthians, or take them with him if he went himself to Jerusalem. He thought of remaining till Pentecost at Ephesus, where a great door was opened to him and there were many adversaries. If these two things go together it is a motive for remaining; the open door is an inducement on the part of God, the activity of adversaries makes it necessary with regard to the enemy. A closed door is a different thing from opposition. People do not hearken if the door is shut; God does not act to draw attention. If God is acting, the assiduity of the enemy is but a reason for not abandoning the work. It appears (chap. 15:32) that Paul had already suffered much at Ephesus, but he still continued his work there. He could not pour out his heart on the subject to the Corinthians, seeing the state they were in. He does it in the second epistle, when the first had produced the effect he desired. There was a tumult afterward at Ephesus, stirred up by the craftsmen, in consequence of which Paul left the city (Acts 19) Vers. 21 and 22 of this chapter in Acts, show us the period at which he wrote this letter. The danger to his life had preceded it, but he remained at Ephesus after that. The tumult closed the door and sent him away.

In Acts 19:22, we see that he had sent Timothy into Macedonia. In our epistle, he supposes that he might go on as far as Corinth. If he came, the Corinthians were to receive him as they would have received Paul. He had begged Apollos to go to them; he had already been made a blessing to them, and Paul thought he might be so again. He did not fear that Apollos would displace him in the heart of the Corinthians. But Apollos shared the apostle's feeling; he was not inclined to recognize, or by his presence to have the appearance of upholding, that which prevented Paul going thither; and the more so, because there were some in the Church at Corinth who wished to use his name as the standard of a party. Free in his movements, he would act according to the judgment which the Lord would enable him to form.

After speaking of Apollos, the apostle's mind turns again to his children in the faith, dear to him, whatever their faults might be. Vers. 13, 14, are the effusion of a heart which forgot these faults in the ardent desire of a charity that only thought of their blessing according to the Spirit. Three Corinthians had brought him supplies: it does not appear to have been on the part of the assembly, nor that it was any testimony of its love which had refreshed the apostle's heart. He would have the Corinthians to rejoice at it. He does not doubt that they loved him enough to be refreshed because he was so. Their charity had not thought of it beforehand; but he expresses his conviction that they took pleasure in the thought of his heart being refreshed'. It is touching to see here, that the apostle's charity suggests that which grace would produce in the heart of the Corinthians, communicating that which they probably would not otherwise have known of the active charity of three brethren of the assembly; and, in love, uniting them to his joy, if they had not been united to that which occasioned it. The flame of charity communicates itself by rising above coldness, and reaching the depths of divine life in the heart; and, once communicated, the soul, before unkindled, glows now with the same fire.

We find, in this chapter, four channels, so to speak, of ministry. 1st. The apostle, sent direct from the Lord and by the Holy Ghost. 2nd. Persons associated with the apostle in his work, and acting at his desire, and in the case of Timothy one pointed out by prophecy. 3rd. An entirely independent laborer, partly instructed by others (see Acts), but acting where he saw fit, according to the Lord and to the gift he had received. 4th. One who gives himself to the service of the saints, as well as others who helped the apostle and labored. Paul exhorts the faithful to submit themselves to such, and to all those who helped in the work and labored. He would also have them acknowledge those who refreshed his heart by their service of devotedness. Thus we find the simple and important principle according to which all the best affections of the heart are developed, namely, the acknowledgment of every one according to the manifestation of grace and of the power of the Holy Ghost in him. The Christian man submits to those who addict themselves to the service of the saints, he acknowledges those who manifest grace in a special way. They are not persons officially nominated and consecrated who are spoken of here. It is the conscience and the spiritual affection of Christians which acknowledges them according to their work; a principle valid at all times, which does not permit this respect to be demanded, but which requires it to be paid.

We may remark here, that this epistle, although entering into all the details of the interior conduct of a Church, does not speak of elders or of any formally established officers at all. It is certain, that in general there were such, but God has provided in the Word for the walk of an assembly at all times, and, as we see, principles which oblige us to acknowledge those who serve in it through personal devotedness without being officially appointed. General unfaithfulness, or the absence of such established officers, will not prevent those who obey the Word from following it in all that is needful for Christian order. We see, moreover, that whatever might be the disorder, the apostle recognizes the members of the assembly as being all real Christians, he desires them to acknowledge one another by the kiss of love, the universal expression of brotherly affection. This is so entirely the case, that he pronounces a solemn anathema on every one who loved not the Lord Jesus. There might be such, but he would in no way recognize them. If there were any, let them be anathema. Is this an allowed mixture? He will not believe it, and he embraces them all in the bonds of Christian love (ver. 24).

The last point is important. The state of the assembly at Corinth might give room for some uncertainty as to the Christianity of certain members or persons in connection with them, although not dwelling at Corinth. He admonishes them; but, in fact, in cases of the most grievous sin, where the discipline of God was exercised or that of man was required, the guilty are looked upon as Christians (see chap. x. for the warning; chap: xi. 32 for the Lord's discipline; for that of man, v. 5 in this epistle; for the principle, 2 Cor. 2:8). Besides, he denounces with an anathema those who do not love the Lord Jesus. Discipline is exercised towards the wicked man who is called a brother. He who calls himself a Christian yet does not really love the Lord - for there may be such is the subject of the most terrible anathema.

It is sweet to see, that after faithfully (although with anguish of heart) correcting every abuse, the spirit of the apostle returns by grace into the enjoyments of charity in his relationship with the Corinthians. The terrible ver. 22 was not felt to be inconsistent with the love that dictated the other verses. It was the same spirit, for Christ was the sole spring of his charity.

We may notice, ver. 21, that the apostle, as other passages testify, employed some one to write for him. The epistle to the Galatians is an exception. He verified his epistles to the assemblies by writing the salutation at the end with his own hand. His heart flows out, ver. 24, and he comforts himself in being able to acknowledge them all in love.

1 Peter 5:7

LORD, it belongs not to my care,
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve Thee is my share,
And this Thy grace must give.
If life be long, I will be glad,
That I may long obey;
If short, yet why should I be sad,
Since God appoints my day?
Christ leads me through no darker rooms,
Than He went through before;
And he that to God's kingdom comes,
Must enter by His door.
Come! then, since grace has made me meet,
Thy blessed face to see;
For if Thy work on earth be sweet,
What will Thy glory be?
Then, then, shall end my sad complaints,
My desert pilgrim days, -
End - in the triumph of the Saints, -
In endless songs of praise.
My knowledge of that life is small;
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with Him.
From BAXTER.

2 Corinthians

The Apostle writes the second Epistle to the Corinthians under the influence of the consolations of Christ-consolations experienced when the troubles which came upon him in Asia were at their height; and renewed at the moment when he wrote his letter, by the good news which Titus had brought him from Corinth - consolations which (now that he is happy about -them) he imparts to the Corinthians; who, by grace, had been their source in the last instance.

The first letter had awakened their conscience, and had re-established the fear of God in their heart, and integrity in their walk, The sorrowing heart of the apostle was revived by hearing this good news. The state of the Corinthians had cast him down, and a little removed from his heart the feelings produced by the consolations with which Jesus filled it, during his trials at Ephesus. How• various and complicated are the exercises of him who serves Christ, and cares for souls! The spiritual restoration of the Corinthians, by dissipating Paul's anguish, had renewed the joy of these consolations, which the tidings of their misconduct had interrupted. He afterward returns to this subject of his sufferings at Ephesus; and develops, in a remarkable way, the power of the life by which he lived in Christ.

He addresses all the saints of that country, as well as those in the city of Corinth, which was its capital; and, being led by the Holy Ghost to write according to the real sentiments which that Spirit produced in him, he at once places himself in the midst of the consolations which flowed into his heart, in order. To acknowledge in them, the God who poured them into his tried and exercised spirit.

Nothing more touching than the work of the Spirit in the apostle's heart. The mixture of gratitude and worship towards God, of joy in the consolations of Christ, and of affection for those on whose account he now rejoiced, has a beauty entirely inimitable to the mind of man. Its simplicity and its truth do but enhance the excellence and exalted character of this divine work in a human heart. "Blessed be God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of mercies, and the God of all consolation, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effected in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted it is for your consolation and salvation." Blessing God for the consolations which he had received; content to suffer, because his participation in suffering encouraged the faith of the Corinthians who suffered, by showing them the path ordained of God for the most excellent, he pours into their hearts the consolation of his own, as soon as comfort comes to him from God. His first thought (and it is always so with one who realizes his dependence on God, and who abides in His presence: See Gen. 24) is to bless God, and to acknowledge Him as the source of all consolation. The Christ, whom he has found both in the sufferings and in the consolations, turns His heart immediately to the beloved members of His body.

Remark at once the perversity of man's heart, and the patience of God. In the midst of sufferings for the sake of Christ, they could take part in the sin that dishonored His name- a sin unknown among the Gentiles. In spite of this sin, God would not deprive them of the testimony, which those sufferings gave them, of the truth of their Christianity; - sufferings which assured the apostle that the Corinthians would enjoy the consolations of Christ, which accompanied sufferings for His sake. It is beautiful to see how grace lays hold of the good, in order to conclude that the evil will surely be corrected, instead of discrediting the good, because of the evil. Paul was near Christ - the source of strength.

He continues by presenting, experimentally, the doctrine of the power of life in Christ, which had its development and its strength in death, to all that is temporal, to all that links us with the old creation, to mortal life itself. He then touches upon almost every subject that had occupied him in the first epistle, but with an unburdened heart, although with a firmness that desired their good, and the glory of God, let it cost himself what sorrow it might.

Observe here, the admirable connection between the personal circumstances of God's laborers, and the work to which they are called, and even the circumstances of that work. The first epistle had produced that salutary effect on the Corinthians to which the apostle, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, had destined it. Their conscience had been awakened, and they had become zealous against the evil in proportion to the depth of their fall. This is always the effect of the work of the Spirit, When the conscience of the Christian who has fallen, is really touched. The apostle's heart can open with joy to their complete and sincere obedience. Meanwhile, he had himself passed through terrible trials, so that he had despaired of life; and he had been able, through grace, to realize the power of that life in Christ which gained the victory over death, and could pour abundantly into the hearts of the Corinthians, the consolations and the life which were to raise them up again. There is a God who conducts all things in the service of his saints, the sorrow through which they pass, as all the rest.

Observe, also, that he does not need to begin by reminding the Corinthians, as he had done in the first epistle, of their calling and their privileges, as sanctified in Christ. He breaks out in thanksgiving to the God of all consolation. Holiness is brought forward when it is practically wanting among the saints. If they are walking in holiness, they enjoy God, and they speak of Him. This way, in which the various parts of the work of God are linked together, in and by means of the apostle, is seen in the expressions that, flow from his grateful heart. God comforts him in his sufferings; and the consolation is such, that it is suited to comfort others in whatsoever affliction it may be; for it is God Himself who is the consolation, by pouring into the heart, His love and His communion, as it is enjoyed in Christ.

If afflicted, it was for the comfort of others by the sight of similar afflictions in those who were honored of God, and the conscience of unison in the same blessed cause, and relationship with God; the heart being touched and brought back to these affections by this means. If comforted, it was to comfort others with the consolations that he himself enjoyed in affliction. And the afflictions of the Corinthians were a testimony to him that, however great their moral weakness had been, they had part in those consolations which he enjoyed himself, and which he knew to be so deep, so real, which he knew to be of God, and a token of His favor. Precious links of grace! and how true it is in our little measure, that the sufferings of those who labor, re-animate, on the one hand,

love towards them, and on the other, re-assure the laborer as to the sincerity of the objects of his Christian affection, by presenting them anew to Him in the love of Christ. The affliction of the apostle had helped him in writing to the Corinthians, with the grief that was suitable to their condition; but what faith was that which occupied itself, with such energy and such entire forgetfulness of self, about the sad state of others, amid such circumstances as then surrounded the apostle! His strength was in Christ.

His heart expands towards the Corinthians; we see that his affections flow freely - a thing of great value. He reckons on the interest they will take in the account of his sufferings, is sure that they will rejoice in what God has given him, even as he rejoices in them as the fruit of his labors, and that they will acknowledge what he is; and he is content to be a debtor to their prayers, with regard to the gifts displayed in himself, so that his success in the gospel was to them as a personal interest of their own. He could truly demand their prayers, for his life had been run in unmingled sincerity, and especially among them. This leads him to explain to them the motives of his movements, of which he had not spoken to them before, referring these movements to his own plans and motives, subject to the Lord. He is always master (under Christ) of his movements; but he can now speak freely of that which had decided him, which the Corinthians were not before in a state to know. He wishes to satisfy them, to explain things to them, so as to demonstrate his perfect love for them; and, at the same time, to maintain his entire liberty in Christ, and not make himself responsible to them for what he did. He was their servant in affection, but free to be so, because he was amenable only to Christ, although he satisfied their conscience (because he served Christ), if their conscience was upright.

His own conscience, however, was clear; and he only wrote to them that which they knew and acknowledged, and, as he trusted, would acknowledge to the end; 'so that they should rejoice in him, as he in them.

But, had there been any lightness in his decisions, since, as he now informed them, he had intended to visit them on his way to Macedonia (where he was at the moment of writing this letter), and then a second time on his return from that country? In no wise: they were not intentions lightly formed, according to the flesh, and then abandoned. It was his affection, it was to spare them; he could not bear the idea of going with a rod to those whom he loved. Observe in what manner, although showing his affection and tenderness, he maintains his authority; and they needed the exercise of this authority. And while reminding them of his authority, he displays all his tenderness. They were not Cretans, perhaps, whom it was necessary to rebuke sharply; but there was a laxity of morals which required delicacy and care, lest they should become restive; but, also, authority and a bridle, lest, in giving them liberty, they should fall into all sorts of bad ways. But he turns immediately to the certainty which was in Christ, the basis of all his own. He would not press too much upon the chord he had touched at the beginning. He lets his authority be known as that which might have been exercised, and he does not employ it. The groundwork of Christianity was needed, in order to put their souls into a condition to judge themselves healthily. They were quite disposed, through the intrigues of false teachers, and their habit of schools of philosophy, to separate from the apostle, and, in spirit, from Christ. He brings them back to the foundation, to the sure doctrine that was common to all those that had labored among them at the beginning. He would give Satan no occasion to detach them from him (see ch. 2:11).

He establishes, therefore, the great principles of Christian joy and assurance. I do not speak of the blood, the only source of peace of conscience before God, as a judge, but of the manner in which we are placed by the power of God in His presence, in the position and state into which that power introduces us, according to the counsels of His grace. Simple certainty was in Christ, according to that which had been said. It was not first Yea, and then Nay: the yea remained always yea - a principle of immense importance, but for the establishment of which there was needed the power and the firmness, and even the perfection and the wisdom of God; for to assure and make steadfast that which was not wise and perfect, would certainly not have been worthy of Him.

It will be seen that the question was, whether Paul had lightly changed his purpose. He says that he had not; but he leaves the thought of that which concerned him personally, to speak of that which pre-occupied his thoughts of Christ; and to him, in fact, to live was Christ. But there was a difficulty to solve, when the immutability of God's promises was the question. It is that we were not in a state to profit by that which was immutable, on account of our weakness and inconstancy. He solves this difficulty, by setting forth the mighty operations of God in grace.

There are two points, therefore:- the establishment of all the promises in Christ, and the enjoyment, by us, of the effect of these promises. The thing is, as we have seen, not merely to say, to promise, something; but not to change one's intentions, not to depart from what was said, but to keep one's word. Now, there had been promises. God had made promises, whether to Abraham unconditionally, or to Israel at Sinai, under the condition of obedience. But, in Christ, there was, not promises, but the amen to God's promises, the verity and realization of them. Whatever promises there had been on God's part, the Yea was in Him, and the Amen in Him. God has established deposited, so to speak - the fulfillment of all His promises in the person of Christ. Life, glory, righteousness, pardon, the gift of the Spirit, all is in Him; it is in Him that all is true, Yea and Amen. We cannot have the effect of any promise whatsoever out of Him. But this is not all: we, believers, are the objects of these counsels of God; but, in the first place, the glory of God is of Him who ever glorifies Himself in His ways of sovereign grace towards us; for it is in these ways that he unfolds and displays what He is. The Yea and Amen, therefore, of the promises of God, the accomplishment and the realization of the promises of God for His glory by us, are in Christ.

But how can we participate in it, if all is Christ, and in Christ? It is here that the Holy Ghost presents the second part of the ways of grace. We are in Christ, and we are in Him, not according to the instability of the will of man, and the weakness that characterizes him in his transitory and changeable works. He who has firmly established us in Christ, is God Himself. The accomplishment of all the promises is in Him. Under the law, and under conditions, the fulfillment of which depended on the stability of man, the effect of the promise was never attained; the thing promised eluded the pursuit of man, because man needed to be in a state capable of attaining it by righteousness, and he was not in that state; the accomplishment of the promise, therefore, was always suspended; it would have its effect if-but the if was not accomplished, and the Yea and Amen did not come. But all that God has promised, is in Christ. The second part is the "by us," and how far we enjoy it. We are firmly established by God in Christ, in whom all the promises subsist, so that we securely possess, in Him, all that is promised us. But we do not enjoy it as that which subsists in our own hands. But, further, God Himself has anointed us. We have, by Jesus, received the Holy Ghost. God has taken care that we 'should understand, by the' Spirit, that which is freely given us in Christ. But the Spirit is given to us, according to the counsels of God, for other

things than understanding merely His gifts in Christ. He, who has received Him, is sealed. God has marked him with His seal, even as He marked Christ with His seal when He anointed Him after His baptism by John. Moreover, the Spirit becomes the earnest, in our own hearts, of that which we shall fully possess hereafter in Christ. We understand the things that are given us in the glory; we are marked by the seal of God to enjoy them; we have the earnest of them in our hearts; our affections are engaged by them. Established in Christ, we have the Holy Ghost, who seals us when we believe, to bring us into the enjoyment, even while here below, of that which is in Christ.

Having again spoken of the care which manifested his affection for them, he expresses his conviction that that which had pained him had pained them also; and this was demonstrated by the way in which they had treated the transgressor. He exhorts them to receive again and to comfort the poor guilty one, who was in danger of being entirely overwhelmed by the discipline that had been exercised towards him by the mass of the Christians; adding, that if the Corinthians forgave him his fault, he forgave it likewise. He would not that Satan should get any advantage, through this case, to bring in dissention between himself and the Corinthians; for Paul well knew what the enemy aimed at, the object with which he made use of this affair.

This gives him occasion to spew how much he had them always in his heart. Coming to Troas for the Gospel, and a wide door being opened to him, nevertheless he could not remain there, because he had not found Titus; and he left Troas, and continued his journey into Macedonia. It will be remembered, that instead of passing by the western shores of the Archipelago, in order to visit Macedonia, taking Corinth on his way, and then returning by the same route, the Apostle had sent Titus with his first letter, and had gone by way of Asia Minor, or the eastern coast of the sea, which led him by Troas, where Titus was to meet him. But not finding him at Troas, and being uneasy with regard to the Corinthians, he could not be satisfied with there being a work to be done at Troas, but journeyed on to meet Titus, and repaired to Macedonia. There he found him, as we shall see presently. But this thought of having left Troas affected him, for, in fact, it is a serious thing, and painful to the heart to miss an opportunity of preaching Christ, and the more so when people are disposed to receive Him, or, at least, to hear of Him. To have left Troas was indeed a proof of his affection for the Corinthians; and the Apostle recalls the circumstance as a strong demonstration of that affection. He comforts himself for having missed this work of evangelization, by the thought that after all God led him as in triumph (not, " caused him to triumph"). The Gospel which he carried with him, the testimony of Christ, was like the perfume caused him, burning aromatic drugs in triumphal processions, a token of death to some of the captives, of life to others. And this perfume of the Gospel was pure in his hands. The Apostle was not like some who adulterated the wine; he labored in Christian integrity before God.

These words give rise to an exposition of the Gospel in contrast with the law which the false teachers mixed up with the Gospel. He gives this exposition with the most touching 'appeal to the heart of the Corinthians, who had been converted through his means. Did he begin (speaking of his ministry) to commend himself anew, or did he need, as others, letters of commendation to them or from them? They were his letters of commendation, the striking proof of the power of his ministry, a proof which he carried always in his heart, ready to bring it forward on every occasion. He can say this now, being happy in their obedience. And why did they serve as a letter in his favor? Because, in their faith, they were the living expression of his doctrine. They were Christ's letter of commendation, which, by means of his ministry, had been written on the fleshy tables of

the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, as the law had been graven on tables of stone by God Himself. This was Paul's confidence with regard to his ministry; his competency came from God for the ministry of the new covenant, not of the letter (not even the letter of this covenant, any more than the letter of anything else), but of the spirit, the true force of the purpose of God, as the Spirit gave it. For the letter kills, as a rule imposed on man; the spirit quickens, as the power of God in grace. The purpose of God communicated to the heart of man by the power of God, who imparted it to him that he might enjoy it. Now, the subject of this ministry brought out the difference between it and the ministry of the law yet more strongly. The law graven on stones had been introduced with glory, although it was a thing that was to pass away as a means of relation between God and men. It was a ministry of death, for they were only to live by keeping it. Nor could it be otherwise ordered than on this principle. A law was to be kept; but, man being already a sinner by nature and by will, having desires which the law forbade, that law could only be death to him - it was a ministry of death. It was a ministry of condemnation, because the authority of God came in to give to the law the sanction of condemnation against every soul that should break it. It was a ministry of death and of condemnation because man was a sinner. And observe here that to mingle grace with the law changes nothing in its effect, except to aggravate the penalty that results from it, by aggravating the guilt of him who violated the law, inasmuch as he violated it in spite of the goodness and the grace. For it was still the law, and man was called to satisfy the responsibility under which the law placed him. The soul that sinneth, said the Lord to Moses, will I blot out of my book. The figure used by the Apostle shews that he is speaking of the second descent of Moses from Mount Sinai, when he had heard the name of the Lord proclaimed, merciful and gracious. The face of Moses did not shine the first time that he came down. He broke the tables before he went into the camp. The second time God made all His goodness pass before him, and the face of Moses reflected the glory which he had seen, partial as it may have been. But Israel could not bear this reflection; for how can it be borne, when it must judge the secrets of the heart after all. For the exigency of the law was still maintained, and every one was to suffer the consequences of his own disobedience. Thus the character of the law prevented Israel from understanding even the glory which was in the ordinances, as a figure of that which was better and permanent; and the whole system ordained by the hand of Moses was veiled to their eyes, and the people fell under the letter, even in that part of the law which was a testimony of things to be spoken afterward. It was according to the wisdom of God that it should be so; for in this way, all the effect of the law, as brought to bear on the heart of man, has been fully developed. There are many Christians who make a law of Christ Himself, and in thinking of His love as a fresh motive to oblige them to love Him, think of it only as an obligation, a very great increase to the measure of the obligation which lies upon them, an obligation which they feel bound to satisfy. That is to say, they are still under the law, and consequently under condemnation. But the ministry which the Apostle fulfilled was not this, it was the ministry of righteousness and of the Spirit, not as requiring righteousness in order to stand before God, but as revealing it. Christ was this righteousness, made such on God's part for us; and we, made the righteousness of God in Him. He proclaimed righteousness on God's part, instead of requiring it from man, according to the law. Now, the Holy Ghost could be the seal of that righteousness. He could come down upon the man Christ, because He was perfectly approved of God. He was righteous - the righteous One. He can come down upon us, because we are made the righteousness of God in Christ. Thus it was the ministry of the Spirit. His power wrought in it. He was bestowed when that which it announced was received by faith, and

with the Spirit they also received understanding of the mind and purposes of God, as they were revealed in the person of a glorified Christ, in whom the righteousness of God was accomplished, and subsisted eternally

before Him. Thus the Apostle unites in the self-same thought, the mind of God in the Word according to the Spirit, the glory of Christ, who had been hidden in it under the letter; and the Holy Ghost Himself who gave its force, revealed that glory, and by dwelling and working in the believer, enabled him to enjoy it. °Thus, where the Spirit was, there was liberty; they were no longer under the yoke of the law, of the fear of death, and of condemnation. They were in Christ before God, in peace before Him, according to perfect love, and to that favor which is better than life, even as it shone upon Christ without a veil, according to the grace which reigns by righteousness. When it is said, " Now the Lord is that Spirit," allusion is made to the sixth verse: 7-16 is a parenthesis. Christ glorified, is -the true thought of the Spirit, which God had previously hidden under figures. And here is the practical result: they beheld the Lord with open face they were able to do it. The glory of the face of Moses judged the thoughts and intents of the heart, causing terror by threatening the disobedient and the sinner with death and condemnation. Who could stand in the presence of God? But the glory of the face of Jesus, a man on high, is the proof that all the sins of those who behold it are blotted out; for He who is there, bore them all before He ascended, and He needed to put them all away in order to enter into that glory. We contemplate that glory by the Spirit who has been given us, in virtue of Christ s having ascended into it. Therefore we gaze upon it with joy, we love to behold it, each ray that we see is the proof that in the eyes of God sin is no more. Christ had been made sin for us; He is in the glory. Now, in thus beholding the glory with affection, with intelligence, taking delight in it, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the power of the Holy Ghost, who enables us to realize and to enjoy these things. Thus the church becomes the epistle of Christ. The allusion made at the same time to the Jews, at the end of the parenthesis, where the Apostle makes a comparison between the two systems, is most touching. The veil, he says, is taken away in Christ. Nothing is now veiled. The glorious substance is accomplished. The veil is, on the heart of the Jews, when they read the Old Testament.

Now, every time that Moses entered into the Tabernacle to speak to God, or to hear Him, he took off his veil. Thus, says the Apostle, when Israel shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

There is but one more remark to be made. The things that remain are the subject of the gospel, not the ministry which announces it: the glory of the person of Jesus Christ, the substance of that which the Jewish ordinances represented only in figure.

The Apostle returns to the subject of his ministry in connection with his sufferings, showing that this doctrine of a Christ victorious over death, truly received into the heart, makes us victorious over all fear of death, and over all the sufferings that are linked with the earthen vessel in which this treasure is carried.

Having received this ministry of righteousness and of the Spirit, the foundation of which was Christ glorified beheld with open face, he not only used great boldness of speech, but his zeal was not abated nor his faith enfeebled by difficulties. Moreover, with the courage which, through grace, was imparted to him by this doctrine, he held back nothing, weakened nothing of this glory; he did not corrupt the doctrine; he manifested it in all the purity and brightness in which he had received it. It was the word of God - such as he had received it, so they received it from him, the unaltered

word of God; the Apostle thus approving himself, commending himself, to every man's conscience in the sight of God. All could not say this. The glory of the Lord Jesus was set forth by His preaching, in all the clearness and brightness of its revelation to Himself. If, therefore, the good news which he proclaimed was hidden, it was not as in the case of Moses; not only was the glory of the Lord fully revealed with open face in Christ, it was also manifested without a veil in the pure preaching of the Apostle. This is the link established between the glory accomplished in the person of Christ, as the result of the work of redemption, and the ministry which, by the power of the Holy Ghost acting in the instrument chosen of the Lord, proclaimed this glory to the world, and made men responsible for the reception of the truth, responsible for submission to this glorious Christ who announced Himself in grace from heaven, as having accomplished righteousness for the sinner, and as inviting him to come freely and enjoy the love and the blessing of God.

Now, there was no other means of coming to God. To set up any other, would be to put aside and declare imperfect and insufficient that which Christ had done, and that which Christ was, and to produce something better than He. But this was not possible: for that which He announced was the manifestation of the glory of God in the person of the Son, in connection with the revelation of perfect love, and of the accomplishment of perfect and divine righteousness; so that the pure light was the happy abode of those who by this means entered into it. There could not be anything more, unless there was something more than God, in the fullness of His grace and of His perfection. If, then, this revelation was hidden, it was in the case of those who were lost, whose minds were blinded by the god of this world, lest the light of the good news of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into their hearts.

This is translated, "Glorious Gospel." But we have seen that the fact of Christ's being in glory, the glory of God being seen in His face, was the special subject of the preceding chapter. To that the Apostle here alludes, as characterizing the gospel which he preached. It was the proof of the sin Christ had borne being utterly put away, of victory over death, of the introduction of man into the presence of God in glory according to God's eternal counsels of love. It was withal the full display of the divine glory in man, according to grace, which the Holy Ghost takes to skew to us, in order to form us after the same likeness. It was the glorious ministrations of righteousness, and of the Spirit which opened the free way for man to God, even into the holiest, in entire liberty.

When Christ was thus proclaimed, there was either the joyful acceptance of the good news, submission of heart to the gospel, or else the blinding of Satan. For Paul did not preach himself (which others did not fail to do) but Jesus Christ the Lord, and himself their servant for Jesus' sake. Because, in fact (and this is another important principle), the shining forth of this gospel of the glory of Christ, is the work of God's power - of the same God, who by His word alone caused the light instantaneously to shine out of the midst of darkness. He had shone into the Apostle's heart to give the light of the knowledge of His own glory in the face of Jesus Christ. The gospel shone forth by a divine operation similar to that which had, in the beginning, created light by a single word. The heart of the Apostle was the vessel, the lamp, in which this light had been first kindled, to shine in the midst of the world, before the eyes of men. It was the revelation of the glory which shone in the person of Christ, by the power of the Spirit of God in the heart of the Apostle, in order that this glory should shine out in the gospel before the world. It was the power of God which wrought in it, in the same manner as when light was created by the word "Let light be!" "and light was." But the treasure of this revelation of the glory was deposited in earthen vessels, in order that

the power which wrought in it should be of God alone, and not that of the instruments. In all, the weakness of the instrument spewed itself in the trying circumstances which God, for this very purpose (among others) made the testimony pass through. Nevertheless, the power of God was manifested in it so much the more evidently, from the vessel's spewing its weakness in the difficulties that beset its path. The testimony was rendered, the work was done, the result was produced, even when man broke down, and found himself without resource in presence of the opposition raised up against truth.

Afflicted by the tribulation, this was the vessel's part; not straitened, for God was in the vessel. Without means of escape, that was the vessel; yet not without resource, for God was in it. Persecuted, that was the vessel; not forsaken, for God was in it. Cast down, that was the vessel but not destroyed, for God was in it. Always bearing about in his body the death of the Lord Jesus (made like Him, in that the man, as such, was reduced to nothing), in order that the life of Jesus, which death could not touch, which has triumphed over death, should be manifested in his body - mortal as it was. The more the natural man was annihilated, the more was it evident that a power was there which was not of man. This was the principle, but it was morally realized in the heart by faith. As the Lord's servant, Paul realized in his heart the death of all that was human life, in order that the power might be purely of God through Jesus risen. But besides this, God made him realize these things by the circumstances through which he had to pass; for, as living in this world, he was always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, in order that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal body. Thus death wrought in the Apostle, in order that life, developing itself in him on the part of God and by His power, should work in the Corinthians by his means. What a ministry! A thorough trial of the human heart, a glorious calling for a man to be thus assimilated to Christ, to be the vessel of the power of His pure life, and by means of an entire self-renunciation, even that of life itself, to be morally like unto Jesus. What a position by grace! What a conformity to Christ!

Therefore it was, that the Apostle could use the language of the Spirit of Christ in the Psalms, " I believed, and therefore have I spoken." That is to say, " At whatever cost, in spite of everything, of all the danger, all the opposition, I have spoken for God, I have borne my testimony. I have had confidence enough in God to bear testimony to Him and to His truth, whatever the consequences might be, even if I had died in doing it." That is, the Apostle said, " I have acted as Christ Himself did, because I knew that He who had raised up Jesus, would do the same for me, and would present me, together with you, before His face in that same glory in which Christ is now in heaven, and for my testimony to which I had suffered death like him. We must clearly distinguish here between Christ's sufferings for righteousness and for His work of love, and His sufferings for sin.

The former it is our privilege to share with Him; in the latter, He is alone.

The Apostle said, " Will present me with you," for, he adds, according to the heart and mind of Christ towards His own, " All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might, through the thanksgiving of many, redound to the glory of God." And therefore it was that he did not allow himself to be discouraged; but, on the contrary, if the outward man perished, the inward man was renewed day by day. For the light affliction which was but for a moment (for such he esteemed it in view of the glory - it was but the temporary affliction of this poor dying body), worked out for him an eternal weight of glory which was beyond all the most exalted expression of human thought or

language. And this renewing took place, and he was not disheartened, come what might, in that he looked not at the things that are seen which are temporal, but at the things which are not seen which are eternal. Thus the power of the divine life, with all its consequences, was developed in his soul by faith. He knew the result of everything on God's part.

It was not only that there were things invisible and glorious; Christians had their part in them. We know, the Apostle says, in their name, that if this earthly house (passing away as it is) were destroyed - and it had very nearly been the case with himself - we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Precious certainty! He knew it. A certainty which caused this glory, which he knew to be his, to be a real and practical hope in his heart, by the power of the Holy Ghost; a reality present by faith. He saw this glory as that which belonged to him, with which he was to be invested. And, therefore, also, he groaned in his tabernacle, not, as so many do, because the desires of his flesh could not be fulfilled, and because satisfaction of heart cannot be found for man, even when those desires are fulfilled, nor because he was uncertain whether he was accepted, and the glory his or no; but because the body was a hindrance which deprived him of the full enjoyment of that glory which the new life saw and desired, and which Paul saw and admired as his own. It was a burden, this earthly human nature; it was no distress to him that he could not satisfy its desires - his distress was to find himself still in this mortal nature, because he saw something Better. Not, however, that he desired to be unclothed, for he saw in Christ glorified a power of life capable of swallowing up and annihilating every trace of mortality, for the fact that Christ was on high in the glory was the result of this power, and, at the same time, the manifestation of the heavenly portion that belonged to them that were His. Therefore the Apostle desired not to be unclothed, but clothed upon, and that that which was mortal in him should be absorbed by life, that the mortality that characterized his earthly human nature should disappear before the power of life that he saw in Jesus, and which was His life. That power was such that there was no need to die. And this was not a hope which had no other foundation, than the desire awakened by a view of the glory might produce. God had formed Christians for this very thing. He who was a Christian was formed for this, and not for anything else. It was God Himself who had formed him for this. This glory in which Christ, the second Adam, was at the right-hand of God. Precious assurance! Happy confidence in the grace and the mighty work of God! Ineffable joy to be able to attribute all to God Himself; to be thus certified of His love, to glorify Him as the God of love, our Benefactor, to know that it was His work, and that we rest upon a finished work, the work of God. It is not here to rest upon a work done for us; but to bless God that He has wrought us for this: we are His workmanship.

Nevertheless, something else was necessary to our enjoying this, since we are not yet glorified in fact, - and God has given it: the earnest of the Spirit. Thence- forth, if our bodies are not yet transformed; and if that which is mortal is not yet thus swallowed up, we are equally full of confidence, because being formed for glory, and Christ - who has manifested the victorious power that opened the path of heaven to Him - being our life, if we should leave this tabernacle and be absent from the body before we are clothed upon with the glory, this life remains untouched; it has already, in Jesus, triumphed over all these effects of the power of death. We should be present with the Lord - for we walk by faith, not by the sight of these excellent things-therefore we prefer to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. For this reason, we seek to be well-pleasing to Him, whether we are found absent from this body, or present in this body, when

Christ shall come to take us to Himself; and make us share His glory. For we must all be manifested before the tribunal of Christ, in order that each may receive according to that which he will have done in the body, be it good or evil. A happy and precious thought, after all, solemn as it may be; for if we have really understood grace, if we are standing in grace, if we know what God is, all love for us, all light for us, we shall like to be in the full light. It is a blessed deliverance to be in it. It is a burden, an encumbrance, to have anything concealed, and although we have had much sin in us that no one knows (perhaps even some that we have committed, and which it would be no profit for any one to know), it is a comfort - if we know the perfect love of God - that all should be in the perfect light since He is there. This is the case by faith and for faith, wherever there is solid peace: we are before God as He is, and as we are, all sin, alas! in ourselves, except so far as He has wrought in us by quickening us. And He is all love in this light in which we are placed; for God is light, and He reveals Himself. Without the knowledge of grace, we fear the light: it cannot be otherwise. But knowing grace, knowing that sin has been put away as regards the glory of God, and that the offense is no longer before His eyes, we like to be in the light, it is joy to us, it is that which the heart needs, without which it cannot be satisfied, when there is the life of the new man. Its nature is to love the light, to love purity in all that perfection which does not admit the evil of darkness, which shuts out all that is not itself. Now, to be thus in the light, and to be manifested, is the same thing, for the light makes everything manifest.

We are in the light by faith, when the conscience is in the presence of God; we shall be according to the perfection of that light, when we appear before the tribunal of Christ. I have said that it is a solemn thing - and so it is, for everything is judged according to that light; but it is that which the heart loves, because - thanks be to our God! - we are light in Christ.

But there is another idea in the passage retribution. The Apostle does not speak of judgment on persons, because the saints are included, and Christ has stood in their place for all that regards the judgment of their persons, " There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ." But they shall be manifested before His tribunal, and receive that which they have done in their body. The good deserves nothing - they received that by which they have wrought what is good grace produced it in them; nevertheless, they shall receive its reward. What they have done is counted as their own act. If by neglecting grace and the witness of the Spirit in them, the fruits which He would have produced have been turned aside, they will bear the consequences. It is not that God will have forsaken them, it is not that the Holy Ghost will not act in them with regard to the condition they are in, in this case; but it will be in their conscience that He acts, judging the flesh which has prevented the man's bearing the natural fruit of His presence and operation in the new man. So that the Holy Ghost will have done all that is necessary with respect to their state of heart, and the perfect counsel of God with regard to the person will have been accomplished, His patience manifested, His wisdom, His ways in governing, the care which He deigns to take of each one individually in His most condescending love. Each one will have his place, as it was prepared for him of the Father. But the natural fruit of the presence and operation of the Holy Ghost in a soul which has, or, according to the advantages it has enjoyed, ought to have had, a certain measure of light, will not have been produced. It will see what it was that prevented. It will judge, according to the judgment of God, all that was good and evil in itself, with a solemn reverence for that which God is, and a fervent adoration on account of what He has been for us. The perfect light will be appreciated; the ways of God known and understood in all their perfection., by the application of

the perfect light to the whole course of our life and of His dealings with us, in which we shall thoroughly recognize that love, perfect, sovereign above all things, has reigned with ineffable grace. Thus the majesty of God will have been maintained by His judgment, at the same time that the perfection and the tenderness of His dealings will be the eternal recollection of our souls. Light without cloud or darkness will be understood in its own perfection. To understand it, is to be in it and to enjoy it. And light is God Himself. How wonderful to be thus manifested! What love is that which in its perfect wisdom, in its marvelous ways overruling all evil, could bring such beings as we are to enjoy this unclouded light - beings knowing good and evil (the natural prerogative of those only of whom God can say " one of us") under the yoke of the evil which they knew, and driven out by a bad conscience from the presence of God, to whom that knowledge belonged, having testimony enough in their conscience as to the judgment of God, to make them avoid Him and be miserable; but nothing to draw them to Him, who alone could find a remedy, could bring such to the source of good, of pure happiness, in whom the power of good repels absolutely the evil which it judges.

With regard to the unrighteous, at the judgment-day they will have to answer personally for their sins, under a responsibility which rests entirely on themselves.

However great the happiness of being in the perfect light - and this happiness is complete and divine in its character-it is on the side of conscience that the subject is here presented. God maintains His majesty by the judgment which He executes, as it is written: "The Lord is known by the judgment that he executes:" there, in His government of the world; here, final, eternal, and personal judgment. And for my part, I believe that it is very profitable for the soul to have the judgment of God present to our minds, and the sense of the unchangeable majesty of God, maintained in the conscience by this means. If we were not under grace, it would be -it ought to be - insupportable; but the maintenance of this sentiment does not contradict grace. It is, indeed, only under grace that it can be maintained in its truth; for who otherwise could bear the thought, for an instant, of receiving that which he had done in the body? None but he who is completely blinded. But the authority, the holy authority of God, which asserts itself in judgment, forms a part of our relations with Him; the maintenance of this sentiment, associated with the full enjoyment of grace, a part of our holy spiritual affections. It is the fear of the Lord. It is in this sense, that " Happy is he who feareth always." If this weakens the conviction that the love of God rests fully, eternally, upon us; then we get off the only possible ground of any relation whatever with God, unless perdition could be so called. But, in the sweet and peaceful atmosphere of grace, conscience maintains its rights and its authority against the subtle encroachments of the flesh, through the sense of God's judgment, in virtue of a holiness which cannot be separated from the character of God, without denying that there is a God; for if there is a God, He is holy. This sentiment engages the heart of the accepted believer, to endeavor to please the Lord in every way; and in the sense of how solemn a thing it is for a sinner to appear before God, the love that necessarily accompanies it in a believer's heart, urges him to persuade men with a view to their salvation, while maintaining his own conscience in the light. And he who is now walking in the light, whose conscience reflects that light, will not fear it in the day when it shall appear in its glory. We must be manifested; but, walking in the light, in the sense of the fear of God, we are already manifested to God; nothing hinders the sweet and assured flow of His love. Accordingly, the walk of such a one justifies itself in the end to the consciences of others; one is manifested as walking in the light. These are, therefore, the two

great practical principles of the ministry: to walk in the light, in the sense of God's solemn judgment for every one; and the conscience being thus pure in the light, the sense of the judgment (which, in this case, cannot trouble the soul for itself, or obscure its view of the love of God) impels the heart to seek in love those who are in danger of this judgment. This connects itself with the doctrine of Christ, the Savior, through His death upon the cross; and the love of Christ constrains us, because we see that if one died for all, it is that all were dead: this was the universal condition of souls. The apostle seeks them in order that they may live unto God by Christ.

This work of manifestation is already true, in so far as we have realized the light. Cannot I, being now in peace, look back at what I was before conversion, and at all my failures since my conversion, humbled, but adoring the grace of God in all he has done for me, but without a thought of fear, or imputation of sin. Does not this awaken a very deep sense of all that God is? Such will be the case perfectly, when we are manifested, when we shall know as we are known. That this point maybe still more clear, for it is an important one, let me add some further observations here. What we find in this passage, is the perfect manifestation of all that a person is and has been before a throne characterized by judgment, without his being called in question as to acceptance. Now this is exactly what brings all morally before the heart, where it is capable of judging evil for itself. Were it under judgment, it could not. Freed from all fear, and in the perfect light and with the comfort of perfect love (for where we have the conscience of sin, and of its not being imputed, we have the sense, though in a humbling way, of perfect love), and at the same time the sense of authority and divine government fully made good in the soul. All is judged by the soul itself as God judges it, and communion with Himself entered into. This is exceedingly precious. We have to remember, that at our appearing before the judgment seat of Christ, we are already glorified. Christ has come Himself, in perfect love, to fetch us; and has changed our vile body, according to the resemblance of His glorious body. We are glorified, and like Christ, before the judgment takes place. And mark the effect on Paul. Does the thought of being manifested awaken anxiety or dread? Not the least. He realizes all the solemnity of such a process. He knows the terror of the Lord; has it before his eyes; and what is the consequence? He sets about to persuade others in need of it. There are, so to speak, two parts in God's nature and character: His righteousness, which judges also everything; and His perfect love. These are one in Christ, ours in Christ. If, indeed, we realize what God is, both will have their place: but the believer in Christ is the justice which God, from His very nature, must have before Him on His throne, if we are to be with Him, and enjoy Him. But the Christ before whom we are, is our righteousness. He judges by the righteousness which he is; but we are that righteousness, the righteousness of God in Him. Hence, this point can raise no question in the soul, will make us adore such grace but can raise no question, only enhance the sense we have of grace ourselves, make us understand it as suited to man as he is, and feel the solemn and awful consequences of not having part in it, since there is such a judgment. That other, and, indeed, essential part of the Divine nature, love, will work in us towards others; and knowing the terror of the Lord, we shall persuade men. Thus Paul (it is conscience in view of that most solemn moment) possessed the righteousness which he saw in the judge, for that which judged was His righteousness: but then he consequently, earnestly, seeks others, according to the work which had thus brought him near to God, to which he then turns: verses 13, 14. But this view of judgment, and our complete manifestation in that day, has a present effect on the saint, according to its own nature. He realizes it by faith. He is manifested. He does not fear being manifested. It will unfold all God's past ways towards him when he is in

glory, but he is manifested now to God; his conscience exercised in the light. He has thus a present sanctifying power.

Observe here, the assemblage of powerful motives, of pre-eminently important principles; contradictory in appearance, but which, to a soul that walks in the light, instead of clashing and destroying each other, unite to give its -complete and thoroughly furnished character to the Christian minister and ministry. First of all, the glory, in such a power of life, that he who realizes it does not desire death, because he sees in it that which can absorb whatever in him is mortal; and he sees it with the certainty of enjoying it. Such a consciousness of possessing this life (God having formed him for it, and given him the earnest of the Spirit), that death to him is but a happy absence from the body, in order to be present with the Lord.

Now, the thought of ascending to Christ, gives the desire of being acceptable to Him, and presents Him (the second motive or principle that gives a form to this ministry) as the judge who will render to every one that which he has done. Here the solemn thought of how much this judgment is to be feared, takes possession of the apostle's heart. What a difference between this thought and the "building of God," for which he was waiting with certainty! Nevertheless, this thought does not alarm him; but, in the solemn sense of the reality of that judgment, it impels him to persuade others. But here a third principle comes in, namely, the love of Christ, with reference to the condition of those whom he sought to persuade: since this love of Christ's showed itself in His death, it is that all were already dead and lost.

Thus we have here set before us, glory, with the personal certainty of enjoying it; and death, become the means of being present with the Lord; the tribunal of Christ, and the necessity of being manifested before it; and the love of Christ in His death, all being already dead. How are such diverse principles as these to be reconciled and arranged in the heart? It is that the apostle was manifested to God, therefore the thought of being manifested before the tribunal, produced no other effect on him than that of solemnity, and an urgent motive for preaching to others, according to the love which Christ had manifested in His death. Accordingly, the idea of the tribunal did not in the least weaken his certainty of glory. His soul, in the full light of God, reflected what was in that light, namely, the glory of Christ ascended on high as man. And the love of this same Jesus was strengthened in its activity, by the sense of the tribunal which awaits all men.

What a marvelous combination of motives we find in this passage, to form a ministry characterized by the development of all that in which God reveals Himself, and by which he acts on the heart and conscience of man! And it is in a pure conscience that these things can have their force together. If the conscience were not pure, the tribunal would obscure the glory, so far as belonging to oneself, and weaken the sense of His love. At least, one would be occupied with self in connection with these things, and one should be so. But when pure before God, it only sees in a tribunal which excites no sense of personal uneasiness, and, therefore, has all its true moral view, an additional motive for seriousness in its own walk, and a solemn energy in the appeal which the known love of Jesus impels it to address to men.

As to how far our own relations with God enter into the service which we have to render to others, the apostle adds another thing that characterized his walk, and that was the result of the death and resurrection of Christ. He lived in an entirely new sphere, in a new creation, which had left behind, as in another world, all that belonged to a natural existence in the flesh here below. The truth that

Christ had died for all, proved that all were dead; and that He died for all, in order that those who live, should live no longer to themselves, but to Him who died for them, and rose again. They are, in connection with this new order of things in which Christ exists, as risen. Death is on everything else. Everything is shut up under death. If I live, I live in a new order of things, in a new creation, of which Christ is the type and the head. Christ, so far as in connection with this world below, is dead. He might have been known as the Messiah, living on the earth, and in connection with promises made to men living on the earth in the flesh. The apostle no longer knew him thus. In fact, Christ, as bearing that character, was dead; and now, being risen, He has taken a new and a heavenly character. Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he belongs to this new creation, he is of the new creation. He belongs no more at all to the former; the old things have passed away, all things are become new. This system is not the fruit of human nature and of sin, like all that surrounds us here below, according to the flesh. Looked at as a system existing morally before God, all things are of God. All that is found in it, is of God, of Him who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. We live in an order of things, a world, a new creation, entirely of God. We are there in peace, because God has reconciled us to Himself, who is its center and its source. We enjoy it, because we are new creatures in Christ; and everything in this new world is of Him, and corresponds with that new nature. He had also committed to the apostle, a ministry of reconciliation, according to the order of things into which he had been himself introduced. Being reconciled, and knowing it by the revelation of God, who had accomplished it for him, he proclaimed a reconciliation, the effect of which he was enjoying.

All this flowed from an immense and all-powerful truth, namely that God was in Christ. In order that the apostle might be its minister, it was also necessary that Christ should be made sin for us. One of these truths presents the character in which. God has drawn nigh to us; the other, the efficacy of that which He has done for the believer.

Here is the first of, these truths, in connection with the apostle's ministry, which forms the subject of these chapters. God was in Christ; that is to say, when Christ was on earth. Three things were connected with it; to reconcile the world, not to impute transgression, and to put the word of reconciliation into the apostle. As the result of this third consequence of the incarnation, the apostle assumes the character of ambassador for Christ, as though God exhorted by his means, he besought men, in the name of Christ, to be reconciled to God. But this embassy supposed the absence of Christ, and acted in His stead. It was, in fact, based upon a truth of immeasurable importance, namely, that God had made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, in order that we should be made the righteousness of God in Him. This was the true way to reconcile us, and that entirely, to God, according to the perfection of God fully revealed. For He had set His love upon us where we were, giving His Son, who was without spot, or motion, or principle, of sin; and making Him (for He offered Himself to accomplish the will of God) sin for us, in order to make us in Jesus - who, in that condition, had perfectly glorified Him - the expression of His divine righteousness, before the heavenly principalities, through all eternity; to make us His delight, as regards righteousness, " that we should be the righteousness of God in Him." Man has no righteousness for God; God has made him, in Jesus, His righteousness. It is in us that this divine righteousness is seen fully verified. Marvelous truth! which, if its results in us cause thanksgiving and praise to resound when looking at Jesus, it silences the heart, and bows it down in adoration, astonished at the sight of His wonderful acts in grace.

Paul had said, that God exhorted by his means. In chap. 6, the affection of the apostle carries on, by the Spirit, this divine work, beseeching the Corinthians that it might not be in vain, in their case, that this grace had been brought to them. For it was the acceptable time, the day of salvation. The apostle had spoken of the great principles of his ministry, and of its origin. He reminds the Corinthians of the way in which he had exercised it in the varied circumstances through which he had been led. The cardinal point of his service is, that he was the minister of God, that he represented Him in his service. This rendered two things needful; first, that he should be in all things without reproach, and then that he should maintain this character of God's minister, and the exercise of his ministry, through all the opposition, and in all the circumstances through which the enmity of man's heart, and the cunning even of Satan, could make him pass. Every where, and in all things, he avoided, by his conduct, all real occasion of being reproached, in order that no one should have room to blame the ministry. He approved himself in all things as a minister of God, worthily representing Him in whose name he spoke to men; and that with a patience which showed an inward energy, a sense of obligation to God, and a dependance on Him, which the realization of His presence, and of our duty to Him, can alone maintain. It was a quality which reigned through all the circumstances of which the apostle speaks, and had dominion over them. Thus he showed himself to be the minister of God in everything which could test him; in pureness, in kindness, in love; as a vessel of power; whether disgraced or applauded; unknown to the world, and known and eminent; outwardly trodden under foot of man, and chastened, inwardly victorious and joyful; enriching others, and in possession of all things. Here ends his description of the sources, the character, the victory over circumstances, of a ministry which displayed the power of God in a vessel of weakness, whose best portion was death.

The restoration of the Corinthians to a moral state befitting the gospel, associated with the circumstances through which he had just been passing, had allowed him to open his heart to them. Pre-occupied till now with his subject of the glorious Christ, who, having accomplished redemption, sent him as the messenger of the grace to which that redemption had given free course, and having spoken with a free heart of all that was comprised in his ministry, he returns with affection to his beloved Corinthians, showing that it was with them that he had all this openness, this enlargement of heart. " My mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians," he says, " my heart is enlarged, you are not straitened in me, but in your own affections." As a recompense for the affections that overflowed from his heart towards them, he only asks for the enlargement of their own hearts. He spoke as to his children. But he avails himself of this tender relationship to exhort the Corinthians to maintain the place in which God had set them: "Be not in the same yoke with unbelievers." Having a hold upon their affections, and rejoicing deeply before God in the grace which had restored them to right sentiments, his heart is free to give way, as though beside himself, to the joy that belonged to him in Christ glorified: and, with a sober mind after all, when his dear children in the faith were in question, he seeks to detach them from all that recognized the flesh, or implied that a relationship that recognized it were possible for a Christian,-from everything, that denied the position of a man who has his life and his interests in the new creation, of which Christ is the Head in glory. An angel can serve God in this world: little would it concern him in what way, provided that way was God's-but to associate himself with its interests, as forming a part of it, to ally himself with those who are governed by the motives that influence the men of this world, so that a common conduct would show that the one and the other acted according to the principles that form its character, would be, to those heavenly beings, to lose their

position and their character. The Christian,-whose portion is the glory of Christ, who has his world, his life, his true associations, there where Christ has entered in,-should not either, nor can he, as a Christian, put himself under the same yoke with those who can have only worldly motives, to draw the chariot of life in a path common to both. What communion is there between Christ and Belial, between light and darkness, faith and unbelief, the temple of God and idols? Christians are the temple of the living God who dwells and walks among them. He is a God to them; they are a people to Him. Therefore must they come out from all fellowship with the worldly, and be separate from them. As Christians, they must stand apart, for they alone are the temple of God, who- will not have unbelievers and men of this world dead in their trespasses and sins, to form a part of His temple. It were better to have no temple. Such a one would not be suited to the God of holiness and life. He will be with those who are His temple, in the relationship of a Father with sons and daughters who are dear to Him. This, observe, is the special relationship which God assumes with us.

The two preceding revelations of God with men are named here, and He takes a third. To Abraham He revealed Himself as Almighty; to Israel, as Jehovah or Lord. Here the Lord Almighty declares' that He will be a Father to His own, to His sons and daughters. We come out from among the worldly, for it is just that (not physically out of the world, but while in it), in order to enter into the relationship of sons and daughters to the Almighty God: otherwise we cannot practically realize this relationship. God will not have worldlings in relation with Himself as sons and daughters; they have not entered into this position with regard to Him. Nor will He recognize those who remain identified with the world, as having this position; for the world- has rejected His Son, and the friendship of the world is enmity against God; and he who is the friend of the world is the enemy of God. It is not being His child in a practical sense. God says, therefore, " Come out from among them, and be separate, and you shall be to me for sons and daughters." Remember that it is not a question of coining out of the world -it is while we are in it-but of coming out from among the worldly, to enter into the- relationship of sons and daughters, in order to be to Him for sons and daughters, to be owned of Him in this relationship.

But it is not only that from which we are separated to be in this position of sons and daughters, that engages the apostle's attention, but the legitimate consequences of such promises. Sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty, holiness becomes us. It is not only that we are to be separate from the world; but, in relationship with God, to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Holiness in the outward walk, and that which is quite as important, with regard to our relationship to God, purity of thought. For, although man does not see the thoughts, the flow of the Spirit is stopped in the heart, there is not enlargement of heart in communion with God, it is much if His presence is felt, His relationship to us realized; grace is known, but God scarcely at all, in the way in which He makes Himself gradually known in communion.

The apostle returns to his own relationship with the Corinthians; relations formed by the word of his ministry. And now, having laid open what this ministry really was, he seeks to prevent the links being broken which had been formed by this ministry between the Corinthians and himself, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

"Receive us, we have wronged no one"-he is anxious not to wound the feelings of these restored ones, who found themselves again in their old affection for the apostle, and thus in their true

relations with God. "I do not say this to condemn you," he adds; " for I have said before, that ye are in my heart to die and live with you. My boldness is great towards you, great is my glorying of you, I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all my tribulation." He is not now unfolding the principles of the ministry, but the heart of a minister, all that he had felt with regard to the state of the Corinthians. When he had arrived in Macedonia (whither, it will be remembered, he had gone without visiting Corinth), after he had left Troas, because he did not find Titus there, who was to bring him the answer to his first letter to the Corinthians - when he was come into Macedonia, his flesh had no rest there either; he was troubled on every side, without were fightings, within were fears. There, however, God, who comforts those that are cast down, comforted him by the arrival of Titus, for whom he had waited with so much anxiety; and not only by his coming, but by the good news he brought from Corinth. His joy went beyond all his sorrow, for his heart was to live and die with them. He saw the moral fruits of the operation of the Spirit, their desire, their tears, their zeal with regard to the apostle, and his heart turns again to them, in order to bind up, by the expression of his affection, all the wounds (needful as they were) which his first letter might have made in their hearts.

Nothing more touching than the conflict in his heart between the necessity he had felt, on account of their previous state, to write to them with severity, and in some sort with a cold authority, and the affections which, now that the effect had been produced, dictated almost an apology for the grief he might have caused them. If, he says, I made you sorry by the letter, I do not repent: even though he might have repented, and had done so for a moment. For he saw that the letter had grieved them, were it but for a season. But now he rejoiced, not that they had been made sorry, but that they had sorrowed unto repentance. What solicitude, what a heart for the good of the saints! If they had a fervent mind towards him, assuredly he had -given them the occasion and the motive. No rest till he had tidings; nothing, not open doors, nor distress, could remove his anxiety. He regrets, perhaps, having written the letter, fearing that he had alienated the hearts of the Corinthians; and now, still pained at the thought of having grieved them, he rejoices, not at having grieved them, but because their godly sorrow had wrought repentance. He writes a letter according to the energy of the Holy Ghost. Left to the affections of his heart, we see him, in this respect, below the level of the energy of inspiration which had dictated that letter which the spiritual were to acknowledge as the commandments of the Lord; his heart trembles at the thought of its consequences, when he receives no tidings. It is very interesting to see the difference between the individuality of the apostle and inspiration. In the first letter, we remarked the distinction which he makes between that which he said as the result of his experience, and the commandments of the Lord communicated through him. Here we find the difference in the experience itself. He forgets the character of his epistle for a moment, and, given up to his affections, he fears to have lost the Corinthians by the effort he had made to reclaim them.

The form of the expression he uses, shows that it was but for a moment that this sentiment took possession of his heart. But the fact that he had it; plainly shows the difference between Paul the individual and Paul the inspired writer.

Now he is satisfied. The expression of this deep interest which he feels for them, is a part of his ministry, and valuable instruction for us, to show. the way in which the heart enters into the exercise of this ministry, the flexibility of this mighty energy of love, in order to win and bend hearts by the opportune expression of that which is passing in our own: an expression which will

assuredly take place when the occasion makes it right and natural, if the heart is filled with affection; for a strong affection likes to make itself known to its object, if possible, according to the truth of that affection. There is a grief of heart which consumes it, but a heart that feels godly sorrow is on the way to repentance.

The apostle then sets forth the fruits of this godly sorrow, the zeal against sin it had produced, the heart's holy rejection of all association with sin. Now, also, that they had morally separated themselves, he separates those who were not guilty from those who were so. He will no longer confound them together. They had confounded themselves together morally, by walking at ease with those who were in sin. By putting away the sin they were now outside the evil; and the apostle shows that it was with a view to their good, because he was devoted to them, that he had written to testify the loving occupation of his thoughts about them, and to put to the test their love for him before God. Sad as their walk had been, he had assured Titus when encouraging him to go to Corinth,* that he would certainly find hearts there that would respond to this appeal of apostolic affection. He had not been disappointed, and as he had declared the truth among them, that which he had said of them to Titus was found true also, and the affections of Titus himself were strongly awakened when he saw it.

In the next chapter, the apostle (being on his way to Judea) exhorts the Corinthians to prepare relief for the poor of Israel; sending Titus that all might be ready as of a willing mind—a disposition of which he had spoken on his journey as existing among these Christians, so that others had been stirred up to give likewise. And, now, while reckoning upon their good-will, and knowing that they had begun a year before, he would run no risk of finding that facts gave the lie to what he had said of them. Not that he would burden the Corinthians and ease those of Judea, but that the rich should provide for the need of the poor brethren, in order that none should be in want. Every one, if his will were in it, should be accepted of God according to his ability. He loved a cheerful giver. Only, they should reap according as they sowed. Titus, happy at the result of his first visit, and attached to the Corinthians, was ready to go again and gather this fruit also for their own blessing. With him went the messengers of the other churches, charged with the collection made among them for the same purpose—a brother known to all the churches, and another of approved diligence, stimulated by Paul's confidence in the Corinthians. The apostle would not take charge of the money without having companions whose charge it should also be, avoiding all possibility of reproach in affairs of this kind, taking care that everything should be honest before men as well as before God. Nevertheless, he did not speak by commandment in all this, but on account of the zeal of other churches, and to prove the sincerity of their love.

It will be remembered, that it was this collection which occasioned all that happened to Paul at Jerusalem, that which put an end to his ministry, stopped him on his way into Spain, and perhaps other places; and which, on the other hand, gave occasion to write the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and it may be, to the Hebrews. How little we know the bearing of the circumstances we enter upon—happy that we are led by Him who knows the end from the beginning, and who makes all things work for good to those who love Him.

In closing these exhortations to give according to their ability, He commends them to the rich goodness of God, who was able to make them abound in all things, so that they should be in circumstances to multiply their good works, enriched to all bountifulness, so as to produce in

others (by means of the Apostle's services in this respect), thanksgiving unto God. For, he adds, the happy effect of your practical charity, exercised in the name of Christ, would not only supply the want of the saints (through his administration of the collection made at Corinth), but abound also in thanksgiving to God; for those who received it blessed God that their benefactors had been brought to confess the name of Christ, and to act with this practical liberality to them and to all. And this thought stirred them up to pray with fervent desire for those who provided in this way for their need, because of the grace of God manifested in them. Thus the bonds of eternal charity were strengthened on both sides, and glory redounded to God. Thanks be to God, says the Apostle, for His unspeakable gift: for whatsoever may be the fruits of grace, we have the proof and the power in that which God has given. Here ends the matter of the epistle, properly so called.

The Apostle returns to the subject which pre-occupied him; his connections with the Corinthians, and the truth of his apostleship which was questioned by those who seduced them, throwing contempt on his person. He was weak, they said, when present, and his speech contemptible, though bold when absent; his letters being boastful, but his bodily presence contemptible. "beseech you," says the Apostle, "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ (showing thus the true character of his own meekness and humility when among them), not to compel me to be bold among you, as I think of being with regard to some who pretend that I walk after the flesh." The strength of the war that he waged against evil was founded on spiritual weapons, with which he brought down all that exalted itself against the knowledge of God. This is the principle on which he acted, to seek to bring to obedience all who hearkened to God, and then severity to all disobedience, when once obedience should be fully established, and those who would hearken were restored to order. Precious principle: the power and the guidance of the spirit acting in full, and with all patience, to restore to order, and to a walk worthy of God; carrying the remonstrances of grace to the utmost, until all those who would hearken to them, and willingly obey God, were restored; and then to assert divine authority in judgment and discipline, with the weight which was added to the apostolic action by the conscience and common action of all those who had been brought back to obedience.

Observe, that the Apostle refers to his personal authority as an apostle; but that he uses it in patience (for he possessed it for the purpose of edification and not for destruction), in order to bring back to obedience and uprightness all those who would hearken; and thus preserving Christian unity in holiness, he clothes the apostolic authority with the power of the universal conscience of the church, guided by the Spirit, so far as there was conscience at work.

He then declares that such as he is in his letters, such shall they find him when he is present; and he contrasts the conduct of those who took advantage of his labors, beguiling a people who had already become Christians, in order to stir them up against him, with his own conduct in going where Christ had not yet been known, seeking to bring souls to the knowledge of a Savior of whom they were ignorant. Also, he hoped that when he visited the Corinthians, his ministry would be enlarged among them by their increase of faith, in order that he might go on beyond them, to evangelize regions that still lay in darkness. But he who gloried, let him glory in the Lord.

In chap. 11, jealous with regard to his beloved Corinthians with a godly jealousy, he carries yet farther his arguments relating to false teachers. He asks the faithful in Corinth to bear with him a little, while he acts like a fool in speaking of himself. He had espoused them as a chaste virgin to

Christ, and he feared lest any should corrupt their minds, leading them away from the simplicity that is in Him. If the Corinthians had received another Christ from the teachers lately come among them, or another spirit, or another gospel, they might well bear with what these teachers did. But certainly the Apostle had not been a whit behind in his instructions, even if they compared him with the most renowned of the apostles. Had, he wronged them by receiving nothing at their hands (as these new teachers boasted of doing) and in taking money from other assemblies, and never being a burden to them? A subject for boasting, of which no one should deprive him in the regions of Achaia. Had he refused to take anything from them because he loved them not? God knew -No; it was to deprive the false teachers of a means of commending themselves to them by laboring gratuitously among them, while the Apostle received money. He would deprive them of this boast, for they were false apostles. As Satan transformed himself into an angel of light, so his instruments made themselves ministers of righteousness. But, again, let them bear with him while he spoke as a fool. If these ministers of Satan accredited themselves as Jews, as of the ancient religion of God, consecrated by its antiquity and its traditions, he could do as much. A Hebrew of the Hebrews, and possessing all the titles to glory of which they boasted. And if it was a question of Christian service to speak as a fool - certainly the comparison would not fail to show where the devotedness had been. Here, in fact, God has allowed this invasion of the Apostle's work by these wretched Judaizing men (calling themselves Christians) to be the means of acquainting us with something of the indefatigable labors of the Apostle, carried on in a thousand circumstances of which we have no account. In the Acts, God has given us the history of the establishment of the church in the great principles on which it was founded, and the phases through which it passed in coming out of Judaism. The Apostle will have his own reward in the kingdom of glory, not by speaking of it among men. Nevertheless, it is profitable for our faith to have some knowledge of Christian devotedness, as it was manifested in the life of the Apostle. The folly of the Corinthians has been the means of furnishing us with a little glimpse of it.

Troubles and dangers without, incessant anxieties. within, a courage that quailed before no peril, a love for poor sinners, and for the church that nothing chilled; these few lines sketch the picture of a life of such absolute devotedness, that it touches the coldest heart; it makes us feel all our selfishness, and bend the knee before Him who was the living source of the blessed Apostle's devotedness, before Him whose glory inspired it.

Nevertheless, though forced to speak of himself, the Apostle would glory only in his infirmities. But he is, as it were, outside his natural work. His past life unfolds before his eyes. The Corinthians obliged him to think of things which he had left behind. After having ended his account, and declared that he would glory in his infirmities alone, there was one circumstance that recurred to him. Nothing can be more natural, more simple, than all these communications. Must he glory? It is but unprofitable. He would come to that of which a man - as in the flesh - could not glory. It was the sovereign power of God, in which the man had no part. It was a man in Christ, of whom he spoke - such a one had been caught up to the third heaven - to paradise. In the body, or out of the body, he knew not. The body had no part in it. Of such a one he would glory. That which exalted him on the earth, he would put aside. That which took him up to heaven; that which gave him a portion there; that which he was "in Christ," was his glory, the joy of his heart, the portion in which he readily would glory. Happy being! whose portion in Christ was such that, in thinking of it, he is content to forget all that could exalt him as man; as he says elsewhere, "that I may win Christ."

The man, the body, had no share in a power, to taste of which he had to be caught up into heaven; but of such a one he would glory. There, where God and His glory are everything, separated from his body, as to any consciousness of being. In it, he heard things which men in the body were not capable of entering into, and which it was not fitting that a mortal man should declare, which the mode of being of a man in the body could not admit. These things had made the deepest impression on the Apostle; they strengthened him for the ministry, but he could not introduce them into the manner of understanding and communicating which belongs to man's condition here below.

But many practical lessons are connected with this marvelous favor shown to the Apostle. I say, marvelous, for, in truth, one feels what a ministry must his have been, whose strength and whose way of seeing and judging were drawn from such a position. What an extraordinary mission was that of this Apostle But he had it in an earthen vessel. Nothing amends the flesh. Once come back into the consciousness of his human existence on earth, the Apostle's flesh would have taken advantage of the favor he had enjoyed, to exalt him in his own eyes, to say, "None have been in the third heaven but thou, Paul." To be near God in the glory, as out of the body, does not puff up. All is Christ, and - Christ is all self is forgotten. To have been there, is another thing. The presence of God makes us feel our nothingness. The flesh can avail itself of our having been in it, when we are no longer there. Alas! what is man? But God is watchful; in His grace He provided for the danger of His poor servant. To have taken him up to a fourth heaven - so to speak - would only have increased the danger. There is no way of amending the flesh. The presence of God silences it. It will boast of it as soon as it is no longer there. To walk safely, it must be held in check, such as it is. We have to reckon it dead, but it often requires to be bridled, that the heart be not drawn away from God by its means, and that it may neither impede our walk nor spoil our testimony. Paul received a thorn in the flesh, lest he should be puffed up on account of the abundant revelations which he had received. We know by the Epistle to the Galatians, that it was something which tended to make him contemptible in his preaching a very intelligible counterpoise to these remarkable revelations.

God left this task to Satan as He used him for the humiliation of Job. Whatever graces may be bestowed on us, we must go through the ordinary exercises of personal faith, in which the heart only walks safely when the flesh is bridled, and so practically nullified, that we are not conscious of it as active in us when we wish to be wholly given to God, and to think of Him and with Him, according to our measure.

Three times (like the Lord with reference to the cup He was to drink), the Apostle asks Him that the thorn may be taken away; but the divine life is fashioned in the putting off of self, and -imperfect as we are -this putting off is wrought by our being made conscious of the humiliating unsuitableness of this flesh which we like to gratify, to the presence of God and the service to which we are called. Happy for us when it is by way of prevention, and not by the humiliation of a fall, as was the case with Peter. The difference is plain. There, it was self-confidence mingled with self-will, in spite of the Lord's warnings. Here, though still the flesh, the occasion was the revelations which had been made to him. If we learn the tendency of the flesh in the presence of God, we come out of it humble, and we escape humiliation. But in general, and, we may say, in some respects with all, we have to experience the revelations that lift us up to God, whatever their measure may be. And we have to experience what the vessel is in which it is contained, by the pain it gives us through

the sense of what it is - I do not say, through falls.

God, in His government, knows how to unite suffering for Christ, and the discipline of the flesh, in the same circumstance; and this explains Heb. 12:1-11. The apostle preached: if he was despised in his preaching, it was truly for the Lord that he suffered; nevertheless, the same thing disciplined the flesh, and prevented the apostle priding himself on the revelations he had enjoyed, and the consequent power with which he unfolded the truth. In the presence of God, in the third heaven, he truly felt that man was nothing, and Christ everything. He must make practical experience of the same thing below. The flesh must be annulled where it is not a nullity, by the experimental sense of the evil which is in it, and must thus become, consciously, a nullity in the personal experience of that which it is. For what was the flesh of Paul - which only hindered him morally in his work, by drawing him away from God - except a troublesome companion in his work?

Observe here, the blessed position of the apostle, as caught up into the third heaven. He could glory in such a one, because self was entirely lost in the things with which he was in relation. He did not merely glory in the things, neither does he say "in myself." Self was completely lost sight of in the enjoyment of things that were unutterable by the man, when he returned into the consciousness of self. He would glory in such a one; but in himself, looked at in flesh, he would not glory, I save in his infirmities. On the other hand, is it not humiliating to think, that he who had enjoyed such exaltation, should have to make the painful experience of what the flesh is, wicked, despicable, and selfish? Observe also, the difference between Christ, and any man whatsoever. Christ could be on the mount in glory with Moses, and be owned as His Son by the Father Himself; and he can be on the plain, in the presence of Satan and of the multitude; but, although the scenes are different, He is alike perfect in each. We find admirable affections in the apostle; and, especially in Paul, we find works, as Jesus said, greater than His own; we find exercises of heart, and astonishing heights by grace: in a word, we see a marvelous power developed by the Holy Ghost in this extraordinary servant of the Lord; but we do not find the evenness that was in Christ. He was the Son of man who was in heaven. Such as Paul, are chords on which God strikes, and on which He produces a wondrous music; but Christ is the music itself. Finally, observe that the humiliation needed to reduce the rebellious flesh to its nothingness, is used by Christ to display His power in it. Thus humbled, we learn our dependence. All that is of us, all that constitutes the self, is infirmity, a hindrance. The power of Christ is perfected in it. It is a general principle; humanly speaking, the cross was weakness. Death is the opposite of the strength of man. Nevertheless, it is in it that the strength of Christ revealed itself. In it He accomplished His glorious work of salvation.

It is not sin in the flesh that is the subject here, but the strength of man. Christ never leant on it for a moment; He lived by the Father, who had sent Him. The power of the Holy Ghost alone was displayed in Him. Paul needed to have the flesh reduced to weakness, in order that there might not be in it the motion of sin, which was natural to it. When the flesh was reduced to its true nothingness, as far as good is concerned, and in a manifest way, then Christ can display His strength in it. That strength had its true character. Remark it well: that is always, its character. Strength made perfect in infirmity. The blessed apostle could glory in a man in Christ above, enjoying all this beatitude, these marvelous things which shut out self, so much were they above all we are. While enjoying them, he was not conscious of the existence of his body. When he was again conscious of it, that which he had heard could not 'I be translated into those communications

which had the body for their instrument, and human ears as the means of intelligence. He gloried in that man in Christ above. Here below, he only gloried in Christ Himself; and in that infirmity which gave occasion for the power of Christ to rest upon him, and which was the demonstration that this power was that of Christ, that Christ made him the vessel of its manifestation. But this, nevertheless, was realized by painful experiences. There is an impulse, an ineffable source of ministry on high. Strength comes in the humiliation of man as he is in this world, when the man is reduced to nothingness - his true value in divine things-and Christ unfolds in him that strength which could not associate itself with the strength of man,, nor depend on it in any way whatsoever. If the instrument was weak, as they alleged, the power which had wrought must have been, not its power, but that of Christ.

Thus, as at the beginning of the epistle, we had the true characteristics of the ministry, in connection with the objects that gave it that character; so we have here its practical strength, and the source of that strength, in connection with the vessel in which the testimony was deposited, the way in which this ministry was exercised by bringing a mortal man into connection with the ineffable sources from which it flowed, and with the living, present, active energy of Christ, so that the man should be capable of it, and yet that he should not accomplish it in his own carnal strength - a thing, moreover, impossible in itself.

Thus the apostle gloried in his sufferings, and his infirmities. He had been obliged to speak as a fool; they, who ought themselves to have proclaimed the excellence of his ministry, had forced him to do it. It was among them that all the most striking proofs of an apostolic ministry had been given. If, in anything, they had been behind other churches, with regard to proofs of his apostleship, it was in their not having contributed anything to his maintenance. He was coming again. This proof should still be wanting. He would spend himself for them, as a kind father; even although the more he loved, the less he should be loved. Would they say that he had kept up appearances by taking nothing himself, but that he knew how to indemnify himself by using Titus, in order to receive from them? It was no such thing. They well knew that Titus had walked among them in the same spirit as the apostle. Sad work, when one who is above these 'wretched motives, and ways of judging and estimating things, and full of the divine and glorious motives of Christ, is obliged to come down to those which occupy the selfish hearts of the people with whom he has to do; hearts that are on a level with the motives which animate and govern the world that surrounds them! But love must bear all things, and must think for others if one cannot think with them, nor they with oneself.

Is it, then, that the apostle took the Corinthians for judges of his conduct? He spoke before God in Christ; and only feared lest, when he came, he should find many of those who professed the name of Christ, like the world of iniquity that surrounded them; and that he should be humbled amongst them, and have to bewail many who had already sinned, and had not repented of their misdeeds.

For the third time he was coming. Everything should be proved by the testimony of two or three witnesses; and this time he would not spare. The apostle says, "This is the third time I am coming;" yet he adds, "as if I were present the second time, and being absent now." This is because he had been there once, was to have gone there on his way to Macedonia, was coming a second time, but did not, on account of the state the Corinthians were in; but this third time he was coming, and he had told them beforehand; and he said beforehand, as if he had gone the second time, although now absent, that if he came again, he would not spare.

He then puts an end to the question about his ministry, by presenting an idea which ought to confound them utterly. If Christ had not spoken by him, Christ did not dwell in them. If Christ was in them, He must have spoken by the apostle, for he had been the means of their conversion. " Since," he says, "ye seek a proof that Christ speaks in me, put yourselves to the test [to see] whether ye be in the faith. Do ye not know your own selves, that Christ dwells in you, unless ye be reprobates;" and that they did not at all think. This was quite upsetting them, and turning their foolish and stupid opposition, their unbecoming contempt of the apostle, to their own confusion. What folly to allow themselves to be led away by a thought which, no doubt, exalted them in their own eyes; but which, by calling in question the apostleship of Paul, necessarily overturned, at the same time, their own Christianity.

From " which to you-ward is not weak," to the end of verse 4, is a parenthesis, referring to the character of his ministry, according to the principles brought forward in the previous chapter. Weakness, and that which tended to contempt, on the side of man; power on God's part: even as Christ was crucified in weakness, and was raised again by divine power. If the apostle himself was weak, it was in Christ; and he lived in Him, by the power of God, towards the Corinthians. Whatever might be the case with them, he trusted they should know that he was not reprobate; and he only prayed to God that they should do no evil, not in order that he should not be reprobate (i.e. worthless in his ministry), but that they might do good, even if he were reprobate. For he could do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. He was not master of the Corinthians, for his own interest, but was content to be weak that they might be strong; for what he desired was their perfection. But he wrote, being absent, as he had said, in order that when present he might not be obliged to act with severity, according to the authority which the Lord had given him for edification, and not for destruction.

He has written that which his heart - filled and guided by the Holy Ghost-impelled him to say: he had poured it all out; and now, wearied, so to speak, with the effort, he closes the epistle with a. brief sentences. " Rejoice, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace." Happen what might, it was this which he desired for them; and that the God of love and of peace, should be with them. He rests in this wish, exhorting them to salute one another with affection, as all the saints, including himself, saluted them; praying that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, might be with them all.

Abraham

I have been particularly interested latterly in the history of Abraham; and I send you a brief outline of what has struck me in this history as a picture of many interesting elements of the life of faith. There is a difference between public worship and personal communion brought out in this history, and the intimacy of the latter, and ground on which it is built, which have especially occupied me. But I can, on account of other occupations, only give the outline.

His life, in as far as it is presented to us as a life of faith, begins by his calling, when in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charan. The God of glory appeared to him, says Stephen. In a word, it was God's revelation of Himself to him, by which he was called into the path of life. Object of divine election, Jehovah's revelation of Himself to him calls him out of darkness and subjection to the power of Satan (for his family worshipped other gods beyond the flood out of the land of promise), and gives to him the promises, in connection with a faith which set out, on the simple word of God, to be led where God Himself should show him his country and his home. He was to quit all for the word and promise of God. This is the first element and character of the life of faith. The Lord gives sufficient of the details of this history to show that till Abram had fully broken with all God called upon him to leave, he could not, though he had left much, and might plead the best claims of nature for the rest, attain the end for which he had left all the rest. He had left Ur, come to Charan, and dwelt there. However, after Terah's death, he left Charan, as the Lord had said to him, and now comes to Canaan. This begins the second part of the life of faith: that which passes in the place of promise.

In that life we are called on to set out, trusting God towards the place of promise and hope, called by the blessed revelation of God to our souls. And we are called to walk with God in this place of blessing and communion into which we are entered in spirit. This is the second part of our Christian life. It is found here (chapter 12:6 -8). Abram walks up and down in the place of promise - to us heavenly places. The Canaanite, the hostile power of evil, is still in the land. Joshua will, in time, root them out; but for Abram's walk of faith, they are still in the land, while he walks there in hope. How true it is, and how far we are from always sufficiently bearing it in mind.

The Lord appears to Abram; this is the ground of worship, as well as of walk. He does not evidently appear to him to cause him to set out, leaving all; for He appears to him when he is, though a stranger there, in the land to which God has brought him. But He appears to draw out to Himself the affections of him whom He has brought there. But it is not in that condition Abram is to possess or inherit it. He would have lost much by such a possession, his being a stranger there led his heart and hope, through grace, to a city which had foundations - a better country, that is, a heavenly. We can surely say, it was expedient for us that Christ went away. Oh, how sweet the heavenly associations and hopes to which He has drawn us, and into which He has introduced us by the Spirit He has sent down on His going up on high. How truly He has set man in heavenly places with God. How far better than the establishment of an earthly kingdom, however glorious it may be. There is something peculiarly excellent and blessed in a life of faith, dependent on God

for enjoyment in what is not seen. A man of the world, one, at least, whose life was passed as such, a sage of their own, has said, " Whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, exalts man in the scale of intellectual being." How much more so when it is God who fills it all up, and that in the creating and unfolding of affections, which are awakened and formed by Christ and have Him, and the divine perfectness which is in Him, for their object and their source.

But to return to the history we are studying. The Lord appeared- made Abram. feel practically that he was not to have the land - God, and confidence in Him was his portion-he was a stranger there; promise as to this, was his proper portion, but in his seed he should inherit it. There was a settled purpose of God, and this purpose he was thus to know. How blessed, thus, to rest in God, our heart founded on communications from Himself, and that He can bless us in teaching us to trust Him enough to live the life of faith, to be content with Him. The heart of a stranger, who has God with him, is, of all, the best in this world; it was, in the perfectest way and degree, Christ's. Judgment God will execute to introduce others into actual blessing; we have all with Him, and now, and, indeed, forever, in Himself. We have no need of judgment to enjoy our portion, though we know judgment will issue and work deliverance for all else. This is the church's place, and it is a very blessed one - she suffers with Christ. This position in Abram's case drew out worship. It is its true and real power for us. It was to the God who appeared to him that he raised his altar: the revelation of Himself by God in the place of promise, draws out worship; as the revelation of Himself, when we are far from it, sets us in the way to the place of rest that God is to spew us. It is this blessed revelation of Himself by God putting us into conscious relationship with Himself, flowing from what is known to faith only, which forms the ground of worship. It is His favor, direct interest in us, His having brought us by His revelation into connection with Himself, which in and by this confidence creates worship. Our worship answers to the revelation we thus have, while it is founded on the grace of it. The revelation of His purpose, and of the way of the accomplishment of His promise, accompanies and makes part of the revelation on which it is founded. But this puts the soul into permanent intercourse with God of this kind. The worship, to Abram, realizes the various parts of the home promised to faith to be possessed when pilgrimage is over; and when he realizes the enjoyment of it, his pilgrimage, his altar, is renewed. He goes around the place of promise and hope, where he is yet a stranger; but when he pitches his tent in the enjoyment of it, then he raises his altar too. This is a sweet and happy picture of the life and occupation of faith. These two elements - the setting out on the journey towards the place of promise, and the happy acknowledgment of God in it, form the two parts of the life of faith. The rest of this chapter, on which I do not enlarge, shows the failure of the believer, who is apt, if the place of promise does not afford him all for present need which he wants, instead of consulting God to go down to the world for help. This, though accompanied by outward prosperity as it has been with the church - leads to further unfaithfulness. Abraham has no altar, here, nor till he returns to the altar he made at the beginning, where he had last had one - no new communion no further acquaintance with the place of promise. All he can do, through grace, is to get back to the place he has left.

When Abraham had returned to the altar he had left to go southward, he again gets into worship. Here, though perhaps the prosperity of Egypt had given occasion to the strife and sorrow, the conduct of Abram is beautiful and characteristic of one having the heavenly portion. If Egypt had betrayed him, it had, at least, taught him a lesson. Returned with this experience into communion

with God, he has enough in this to give up all the rest in grace. There is a moment when our own faith is put to the test: often we walk by that of others; but our own state must be tried. Lot, a believer; chooses the world (and contrary to every right feeling), and vexes his righteous soul in the midst of what was the very object of coming judgment. As soon as the worldly-minded believer and his portion are -together, the distinction made by faith and faithfulness in the disinterestedness of heavenly happiness and grace, where God was a sufficient portion, was given effect to by the worldly wish of Lot. Abram is told to go over the whole place of promise, and know its length and breadth; northward, southward, eastward, and westward, all its extent-it all was his. That is, when once the heart has left all that selfishness would have of what might seem within the limits of the land, but was taken by the carnal heart to please itself, the full extent and blessed details of what we are to enjoy with God is made known to us -and experimentally. We have here, then, after the general character of the life of faith, and failure in it, an important experimental element of it: after failure and restoration to communion by grace, and complete victory over, and renunciation of the world, such a sense of the -value of the heavenly and unseen things, as frees from the influence of the world. The consequence is, an escape from being entangled in what is the scene and object of judgment, and a full experimental knowledge of the inheritance of faith. Note, Abram escapes, and gets the increased privilege by walking in the path of faith, where there is no perception of the consequences. Abram had yielded through weakness and want of faith in trial; but his heart was right, and after the trouble his fault had occasioned, and his restoration, the very effect of this humbling experience is to give the superiority to all worldly influence which saves him entirely from the fatal mistake of Lot.* Here the Lord, though He does not appear as when He called, or revealed Himself in the land of promise, speaks to Abram. And Abram, after removing his tent, builds an altar where he comes to sojourn. For our worship is in the measure in which we enter into the details of our portion from God.

We have here three, in a certain sense four, of these altars, in what we have hitherto read. First. The one built on the Lord's revelation of Himself in the land, which gives the general character of the worship of faith. Secondly. One showing the permanent abiding character of worship in his strangership. In Egypt, out of the place of promise and faith none; then what made me say, in a certain sense a fourth, the return to the place of strangership and worship in the place of promise; and, lastly, when his exercised heart had renounced all but God; and God - the worldly-minded believer having chosen the well-watered plain - had made him realize all the extent of the scene of promise, he builds an altar there to worship the God who had bestowed all on him, assured him in the possession of it, and given him the present knowledge of and enjoyment of it in hope. But renouncing the world, is the path to victory over it; the choosing of it, is captive subjection to its power. Lot is carried away captive by the powerful ones of the earth, along with those among whom his worldly propensities had led him. Abram, free and walking in the faith of God, has more force from Him than all the kings, conquerors or conquered, and delivers Lot and the kings who could not help themselves. The full victory of faith is here presented - ours is not with carnal weapons, when it is gained, and what is figured will only be fully accomplished in connection with the Jews. This brings Abram, under Melchizedek blessing, God taking the character which is properly millennial, of possessor of heaven and earth. Praise and blessing constitute the priestly work of Melchizedek. This is the victory of faith, and the full blessing of Christ, priest and king over God's universal dominion, being established-all enemies being overcome. But it historically gives occasion, not merely to renouncing the world completely, but the refusal of the least dependence

on it. Abram depends on God for wealth and everything. In such a relationship receiving from the world, depending on it, for advantage as its debtor, is pollution. Thus closes this part of Abram's history, and the worship which belongs to it. Details of the most interesting kind are given in what follows; but they are the development of his personal relationship with God. What we have examined is, in its general characters, the public life of faith. What follows enters into the private and personal communion which belongs to the life of faith, through the divine grace which visits it. We do not find worship, but what we may be allowed reverently to call intercourse. In one place we are told God talked with Abram. Abram, no doubt, fell on his face, the fitting position in such intercourse; and even when he, in all liberty, pleaded with Jehovah for others, when Jehovah appeared to him in the form of a man, it was with the fullest recognition of the divine glory of Him with whom he spoke. Still it was not worship, but communications from Jehovah to Abram, and in return Abram's with Him.

This has evidently a peculiar character of blessing and privilege—a grace, an intimacy to which our highest and most adoring attention is due. And if we have the lovely picture here of this gracious familiarity of God with the earliest and, so to speak, infant movings of faith, surely in the riper knowledge of all His ways, and of all His grace, which we have by redemption, and through the gift of His Holy Spirit, this privilege is not lost. It may have a deeper character — a more reverent one, as filled with a deeper knowledge of God— more confiding, because His love is better known — less familiar, but more intimate; still it exists, and the gracious picture of it in Abram's case is not lost for our instruction. It has a Christian, not a patriarchal character; but the same God who loves us, and the same faith that trusts Him, meet through His grace to receive the gracious communications of that love, and to tell our wants and the feelings of our hearts, and the wants of others too, to one on whom we know how to count. These communications have a very different character, both on the side of the Lord, and (in consequence of that) on the side of Abram, but they were all what I may call personal.

The first occasion of these communications from God was Abram's definite refusal to take anything from the world, even where he had rendered it the greatest possible service. He would have nothing to say to it, from a thread to a shoe-latchet. His faith had got the victory over its power. His value for his own relationship with God refused its proffered reward. God meets this in Abram, and says, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. His defense in battle had been God; His abundant reward, not the poor and perishing gifts of a world, to which its debtor after all always owes something—at least, acknowledges that he will receive from it—but the Lord Himself. Such, in general, is the blessed announcement made by the Word of the Lord to Abram. There is a difference between the communications of chap. 15 and chap. 17. God does not, so to speak, personally visit Abram in chap. 15. He communicates to him what He is for him in a vision, a great and special blessing, but evidently different from the personal revelation of chaps. 17 and 18. The two communications have this essential difference: in chap. 15. God declares what He is for Abram, in chap. 17 what He is: and this last leads to much deeper communion, and a larger unfolding of grace and imbuedness with the mind of God, than the revelation of chap. 15. This latter makes Abram's wants and desires the measure of His blessings, or, at least, they characterize these latter. Hence Abram is thrown back upon himself. God meets him there in full grace, but meets his wants and wishes. Now this is most precious. God spews His most tender condescension. He inspires us with confidence: we can tell Him our wants, open our hearts to

Him, in consequence; and all the communication that results, while it makes us know God better, leads us up to that knowledge of Him which makes us see our own littleness in what we have presented to Him as the object of our desires, and gives us to find our joy in Himself, and draw our feelings towards others from Himself, and our assimilating enjoyment of what He is for ourselves.

Thus, when God had spoken to Abram of his being His shield, and His reward, Abram says, What wilt Thou give me. The first want of his heart is presented to God. God had told Abram He Himself was his reward; but where our feelings and need are referred to, if God presents Himself as our portion, the human heart will turn by the very confidence that is produced in it, to its own thoughts and its own desires. Abram's reward led Abram to Abram's wants and feelings and wishes. Though God, and even because God had said He was his reward, the love and goodness was felt, but did not put aside, nor lead Abram beyond what Abram desired to have from that goodness, if it was there. God knew all this, and used it for the occasion of bringing out His own thoughts and purposes. This is the grace, then, that comes down to the heart of man himself, and draws it out in confidence towards God, but thereby leaves it in the circle of its own wants and feelings; but its wants and feelings, such as they can exist in connection with God; but then, remark, not going beyond this world, beyond what man wants as conscious of his position here. The interference of God in goodness to us in this sphere is full of sweetness, but it is not in its object heavenly. As a man upon this earth, Abram wanted a son to continue his name, and posterity to inherit and enjoy the promises. God was fully minded to give this. The natural wish and desire of Abram, Abram connects, with the testimony of divine favor God had, in the revelation which Abram had received when in the land, promised a seed to Abram connected with the inheritance of the land. Abram naturally wished to associate the promised blessings and glory with his own descendants. If his desire had been merely to enjoy God in heaven, such a wish had had no place; the moment his thoughts rested on earth, and God had promised him blessing there, such wish came in. It fell in with God's purposes, but took, necessarily, if the blessing was to be made precise, an earthly character. Our wants, whatever character they may have, necessarily have their place on earth. We may bring God into them, but it is into them we bring Him, and there indeed He is gracious enough to come. I have said, that the answer of God when making His promise precise, necessarily took an earthly character. The chapter makes this evident. The numerous seed and limits of the land are given. Some principles are also given full of blessing, but which characterize the position of Abraham; most blessed in themselves, but still meeting man's need and weakness, not properly communion in the truest and highest sense. God was communicating with Abram, and Abram speaking with Him; but it was not communion in the sense of the enjoyment of God Himself, and in conformity to His nature. Righteousness is imputed to Abraham; blessed truth! How could He stand before God, or be the blessed one of God, without it? He believes in the power of resurrection in God, and in His faithfulness to perform His promise, and it is counted to him for righteousness. It is the first time this great and all-important truth is taught in Scripture, or even the word for it found: and, I doubt not, intentionally so, though we know there were believers before. But now in the great root of the tree of promise, this fundamental truth was to be brought out. The very ground of man's blessing was laid here, but it was still meeting man's need. He could not be before God, or inherit the promise without it. He had it not in himself. God counts his faith to him as such.

Next, to assure the feeble heart of man, God binds Himself by covenant. Most gracious condescension, indeed; but what does it meet in this wondrously condescending grace?-Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it. God then, while nature and man passes through the dark shadow of the power of death (and this Christ as man has done for us), passes between the pieces, and binds Himself in a covenant of death to accomplish this desire if the believer's heart, according to His own thoughts; and promise lays the sure foundation of it in Christ. The very limits of the land are pointed out, the power of them that held them is naught. In this very remarkable passage, we learn the blessed and perfect assuring of man in the righteousness of faith, and the immutability of the covenant, only it is not communion in life, but earthly, and meeting need, though the thing given was pure grace. God has a people, and He gives them a law. Chapter 16 I pass over. It is not the life of faith, but the effort of flesh to obtain the blessing its own way: the promised blessing, but under law. It is, typically, legal Israel.

In chap. 17 we have the revelation of God Himself to Abram. Jehovah appears, but He does not appear as formerly to call on him to leave all and come to the land; nor merely to communicate promises. He reveals Himself in what was to be His own name of relationship with Abram - Himself under this name - and gives Abram a name in connection with Himself. This is the highest way of revelation. To us it is the communication of a still better name, a far nearer relationship. The Father's name is revealed to us by the Son, and we are called sons. This is the best and highest possible revelation of God in relationship, for it is that of the Father to Christ the Son Himself. Still we have, as to Abraham, this kind of revelation. God does not here reveal what He is for Abraham, but what He is. Abraham was to walk before Him, known in that character. I am the Almighty God-walk before me. Hence Abraham falls on his face, and does not ask for anything to meet the desires of his own heart. God takes with him. Such is the character of this wondrous interview. Jehovah reveals His intentions, and gives Abram a name in connection with them. God does not bind Himself through sacrifice, only assures to Abraham the various blessings. But He puts Abraham into the condition of intercourse with Himself, as belonging to Himself, by the sign of the death of the flesh; there, of course, in figure, still he is thus placed in the enjoyment of the relationship. Thus God is revealed to Abraham, and Abraham brought into personal relationship with God. He knows Him as none else does. God is about to judge the world, and He now appears to Abraham to give him the immediate promise of the son as about to come. He comes in human form, with two others, angels also in human form. These latter went on to Sodom to execute judgment on it, and at the same time deliver Lot. But Abraham saw at once who approached, and would detain Him awhile. With exquisite propriety, he does not, while skewing unfeigned reverence, break through the disguise which hid from others the presence of Jehovah. The angels were there, Sarah was there, it may be others. He deals with the mysterious guest as He presents Himself, only with the utmost attention and reverence. However, promises belong but to One, and He it is who speaks to the patriarch: But the word of present accomplishment being given, they rise up to go on their way; and now Jehovah will deal with Abraham as a man deals with his friend. He speaks with Abraham, not of what concerned himself, but the world. It is not Abraham's wants, or even Abraham's walk, but the intention of God which He would have him know, opening His thoughts and counsels to him (as in Eph. 1:10,11). The two men go on towards Sodom; and Abraham and the Lord remain together. What a place of privilege and blessing. It is not worship. It is not a call to follow when the Lord led. That had all had its place. It is communion, personal intercourse with God about what concerns Himself and His ways; intercourse founded on God's

revelation of Himself, and on personal acquaintance with His character. Grace working on the heart, and producing intercession. The whole scene is instructive. His son and heir is promised as a present thing. That is our own hope. It is a settled one, independent of all that happens to the world; our own peculiar hope. We are in communion with God, on the ground of His special revelation of Himself to us, and the expected heir is revealed as coming. God then deals with us in the intimacy of friends, and tells us His purposes and plans, awakening in us, by the grace He exercises towards us, and the confidence it imparts, the spirit of grace and intercession founded on what He is, on our knowledge of Him. Abraham does not ask anything for himself here; he pleads for others. Indeed, what could he ask, when enjoying converse with God, and the certain and present promises of the son. He is in the place of blessing, and walking in the spirit of communion, and of the God he now knows. This began with the revelation of Himself by God. Now that Abraham is alone with Him all is boldness, though reverence, with one well known. The very silence of Abraham when others were there, and Jehovah had hid Himself, belonged to a knowledge of Him which none else had. Jehovah surely had clearer judgment, and even surer ways of deliverance and mercy than even Abraham knew; but we speak of the terms on which Abraham was on with Him. It closed this wondrous conference; and when Abraham's words were exhausted, and the Lord had answered him to the end, He went His way, when He had done communing with Abraham. What a place for the child of faith to be in. And such is our place. God has revealed Himself, yet more fully and nearly. He tells us the good pleasure of His will, according to the good pleasure He has purposed in Himself. He tells us of the soon-coming Son. He tells us, though but as a part of His will and counsels, of the coming judgment of the world. Our place is in grace with Him who communes with us.

Before the Lamb, Before the Throne

Rev. 7:9-17.

Before the Lamb, before the throne,
Behold a vast innumerable throng,
From every kindred, people, zone,
Of every various speech and tongue.
In snowy robes, with boughs of palm -
Their glory charm'd my raptur'd gaze;
While, jubilant, a lofty psalm
The many-voiced chorus raise.
Solemn and grand arose the strains;
And high the joyous anthem rung;
"Salvation to our God who reigns,
And to the Lamb!" the theme they sung.
And all the angels - gather'd round
The elders and the living four -
Fall with their faces to the ground,
And God upon the throne adore.
Amen! Let blessing, glory, power,
Thanksgiving, honor, wisdom, might,
Be to our God for evermore,
Through never-ending day and night!
Then said an elder, "What these bands,
Bright-shining in their white array,
With palms of victory in their hands?
O tell me, canst thou? whence came they.
"Outcame they to this glorious height,

From the great Tribulation-flood:

They've wash'd their robes and made them white

In the Lamb's precious cleansing blood.

"Therefore, before God's holy throne,

They day and night His praises tell;

Their worship He who reigns shall own,

And with them will forever dwell.

"Hunger no more, nor thirst, nor heat,

Nor sun-blight, shall they ever know;

Fed by the Lamb, who guides their feet

Where founts of living water flow.

"Grief ne'er shall cast a shadow there,

To cloud the gladness of the way;

And God Himself, with tenderest care,

Shall wipe all sorrowing tears away."

Remarks on the Church

The first place in Scripture in which we find the word "CHURCH," is in Matt. 16, " And Simon Peter said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (verses 16-19). Remark here, 1st. The doctrine about the Church is nowhere found in the former volume of Scripture; the doctrine is, here, first found in the second volume -in the more recently given Scriptures. Search the whole of what is vulgarly called the Old Testament, and you will not once find it. Those, therefore, who only had that book, could not have guessed what the Master was here speaking about. It was to them an altogether new subject.

2ndly. As here, first found, it is not spoken of as something then, already, existing, but as something still future and he says not, "is," or "has been built"; but, "I will build"- thus describing a future action. There was an action to come, - the which, or the, aim of which, was not only not known to the apostles, at that time, but was not understood even by Peter himself, after the death and resurrection of the Lord; as may be seen at the beginning of Acts 1. He and the rest of the apostles clave, so long as they could, to Jewish hopes.

3rdly. Peter's confession to Christ is, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." On this the Lord remarks, that this was a direct revelation to Peter from God. And He adds from Himself, " Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church," - and goes on, - " And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it:" " And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19). And what follows the announcement about this new thing, the Church? Not promises of earthly ease and blessing; but, 1stly. A plain announcement of His coming sufferings. 2ndly. The transfiguration. 3rdly. The preparation of His people to be as a heavenly people upon earth.

1stly. His sufferings. "From that time forth began Jesus to spew unto his disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and Chief Priests and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, hut those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall

reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. 16:21-28).

2ndly. The transfiguration, " And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was -transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with

Him. " Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles: one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And when the disciples heard it, they felt on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist (Matt. 17:1-13).

3rdly. The power of Him who was of heaven (shown in the Lord's healing of the lunatic, verses 14-18), and of those who have faith in Him, verses 21 and 22. His and their freedom of God from tribute, and yet subjection for peace's sake thereto; and lastly, the character and rules of the kingdom of heaven (chap. 18).

It is here we find (in what is vulgarly or commonly called, the Scriptures of the New Testament) the second occurrence of the mention of the Church. " And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:17). It is a most remarkable commandment, and must have sounded strangely in Jewish ears. No longer was a man to have an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; and the magistrate present to judge, in God's name, between Jew and Jew; but in some new body that was spoken of, as if about to be built, a private wrong was done to an individual, he had a first and second step marked out for him to take so as to gain his brother; and, if these failed, he left the matter with the Church, and, if its appeal failed, the man became unto him as a heathen man and a publican.

Our minds are so habituated to the thoughts in which we were educated, that we quite forget that while the Church is no new name in our ears it was quite other- wise to those in our Lord's day. No new term of any recently developed science is more strange to us than this term of Church must have been to Jewish ears as thus announced.

In the commencement of the Acts, we find our Lord preparing his disciples for a new testimony which was to be given upon earth. Himself risen from the dead -He was not about to become king in Sion-but to leave the earth and go on high. His disciples, whose understandings he had opened,

that they might understand the Scriptures (see Luke 24:45), were to await the promise of the Father and power from on high. That power was given, as we read at the commencement of Acts 2; and one of its effects was a bold testimony gathering unto those to whom the Holy Ghost had come down, and by His power a people; these are called in v. 47 the Church.

The Lord added to the Church daily the escaped. Observe here, the Holy Ghost had come down from Heaven from God, even the Father and from the Lord Jesus, as Son of Man ascended up on high, and He has taken up His dwelling-place in and with the company that clave to the name of Jesus. The truth given in John 15:26, and 16:7-14, had been acted upon, and that which the Lord saw and spoke of to be true of His disciples, as contrasted with the Jewish people, as such in John 17, was now outwardly and manifestly seen to be true-yea, had become a testimony to all the Jews. Pertaining to the Father-given to the Son-receiving His word-not of the world as He was not of the world. The Lord's love stretched, indeed, beyond Jerusalem. He bade (Acts 1:8,) the testimony to go out to all Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth. Faith might falter in men. Though chosen of God the Jews might not yet have stoned Stephen as they had crucified Messiah-but the company now called the Church was a company apart, and not only had its own character, ways, hopes, and power, but was the residence of the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven in witness of the perfect acceptance on high of the man Christ Jesus. We read that fear came upon all the Church (v. 11) when God showed in the awful yet just judgment of Ananias and Sapphira, that the Holy Ghost Himself was in the Church. " But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own; and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart; thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." (Acts 5:3,4.)

It is not too much to say, that the Church was at the time here spoken of, evidently a habitation of God through the Spirit. The doctrine of Paul, as given to us in the Epistle to the Ephesians, was not known. It pleased God first to present, while still pleading with Jews and Jerusalem, the truth of the Church as a habitation of God through the Spirit. When they had rejected the testimony, variously turned as it was to them ward-when Samaria had heard the word and received it-when a persecution, raised on the death of Stephen, had spread the word (where faith and faithfulness had not, in heavenly energy, carried it). Stephen stoned-and Paul chief sinner and persecutor converted,-the way was open, according to divine thoughts, for the Son of God to be preached, as we find Paul doing it immediately upon his conversion, and in process of time for the doctrine of the Church in the Heavenly side of it to be unfolded,-the doctrine of the Church, not merely as a habitation down here upon earth of the Spirit, (who will also fill it when 'tis a habitation for God on high) but of the Church as the body of Christ. This was not, known at Pentecost.

Adam the first, in the garden of Eden, was not only the center of a system, but he was also the head of a race; for all men came from him, and he was also the source of that race; for Eve herself, who was the mother of all, was taken out of his side. The blessed second Adam is the center of a heavenly and divine system, and is Head and Source to the Church. It seems (to me at least) that there are two figures in Ephesians, one (as in the close of chap. 1 and in chap. 4) in which he is the Head of a body,-the Head as contrasted with the complement of the members, all of whom stand in him (see also Rom. 5) and the second, as in Eph. 5 in which He is the second Adam, in whom the Church is, as Eve was in Adam.

I need not say, that there was no collision between the doctrine of the Church as a habitation for God by the Spirit, and the doctrine of the Church as the body and bride of Christ. Both are found in Ephesians, and both are found in the new Jerusalem,-realization of our hopes yet to come. Yet while the one is in no way inconsistent or incompatible with the other; - the one was revealed before the other,-the -the one first revealed is often known where the second is not known; and more than this, not only might the revelation of the second most blessed truth have been needful, as the full expression of what God had to communicate by the word, but as the means of giving power under the then circumstances for

testimony. It will, I believe, be found that the separation of these two truths is connected largely with the errors of the day.

We have noticed first, the mention of the Church by the Lord, when its very name, as introduced by the Lord, must have been as an enigma or riddle to those around Him. Secondly, the formation of the Church at Jerusalem by the descent of the Holy Ghost, when (as all acquainted with the subject are aware) the hopes in the minds of preachers and hearers did not go beyond the then place of testimony. Christ, as able to bless Israel (the gospel beginning at Jerusalem) is the subject of Acts 2-7. And thirdly, that view of the Church in which it is presented in Ephesians, as the body of Christ. Has the gap which took place between the formation of the Church at Jerusalem (in which it became as on earth a habitation for God through the Spirit) and the revelation, through Paul, of the doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ been sufficiently noticed? We think not.

The testimony at Jerusalem and the work there, was mainly by Peter: to him, among men naturally, that work attaches, and the Petrean phase of the Church was what God gave him as his honor. The Pauline phase did not clash with the Petrean, though distinguishable from it. The former was more connected with man upon earth than the latter; the latter more connected with the grace of a risen and ascended and glorified Head of a body, part of which was down here, than was the former; more heavenly, too, but neither of them exhausted the topic of blessing; for if Peter and the eleven, as witnesses of the resurrection, set up the Church here below, and if Paul showed how a heavenly, earth-rejected Messiah had a body down here, every member of which was necessary to, and vitally one with, the Head, there still remained the individual believer dwelt in by the life of God, to be treated of;-for how the individual believer should be placed together with others, as a habitation for God on earth at Jerusalem, when all were in one place; and how this truth had a higher import connected with believers in the risen Jesus in every place,-themselves also the members of a body, the heavenly head of which is Christ in heaven. Neither of these truths unfold the doctrine of the individual believer as possessor of Divine life. This was reserved specially for John as a work, and presents truth of the most precious and enduring nature-truth in which the soul individually has to do with God in the highest; and truth which abides, whether - there be a body of believers upon earth or not, or, after the Petrean mold, whether there be, after the Pauline, a second member whom one can recognize as a fellow-member in the heavenly body. At Patmos, John realized the full savor of the Johannic phase of the Church-a soul, it might be, in solitude as to men, but possessed of divine life, and visited as such by the Lord in Patmos-and the doctrine of divine life in the soul, with all its bearings, is John's peculiar subject in his epistle.

It does not require much wisdom to see that without our Lord's sojourn and mission on the earth, neither could God have shown out all the riches of His grace before or to man-for none but the Lord Himself was that all-nor could man have been fully and completely convicted: but now, man in rebellion visited by God Himself in grace, and, as Son of man, presenting all the divine grace according to the mind and wants of man in ruin, has been personally rejected, insulted, and, so far as the human race could do it, murdered and sent out of the world. And not only the wickedness of Israel and of the gentiles (that is, of the world) has fully shown itself, but also the entire weakness of His people, for they all forsook Him and fled. This outrageousness of wickedness and extreme of weakness was man's answer to the testimony of Grace given by Jesus upon earth.

Risen from the dead, we find Him, in Acts 1, speaking of the kingdom of God (ver. 3); but as to the testimony He was about to raise, marking it thus: " And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me" (ver. 4); and marking its range, again, thus: " But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (ver. 8). Then we read: " And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (ver. 9). But the hope of His return shines forth in the moment of His departure, for, " And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (ver. 10, 11).

Nothing is said about this new testimony being the body of Christ; nor is there, in chap. 2, where we have the account of the descent of the Holy Ghost and its effects, a word thereupon. Indeed, a company, a people of God upon earth, was rather what is described as the result: " Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved" (2:41-47).

I know it has been said: This was not the Church; been said so directly and indirectly; positively and by implication. And said so, so frequently, that a word of answer may not be amiss.

1. Then I answer: The Holy Ghost writes, Acts 2:47, of this very company, "the Lord added to the Church daily," etc., and again, " fear came upon all the Church" (v. 11). Though this would suffice, I remark:-

2. That the very Paul whose doctrine, par excellence, the objectors profess to follow, and an error as to whose doctrine has led them into the denial they make, is against them- as a comparison of Acts 8:3, 1 Cor. 15:9, Phil. 3:6, and Gal. 1:13, proves. The gravamen of his, Paul's sin, according to his own account, is thus given: " For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. 15:9); "Concerning zeal, persecuting

the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Phil. 3:6). I set this first that Paul's own thought may stop objections which might be raised as to Acts 8:3: "As for Saul, he made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and, women committed them to prison." These are the words, as are those above, of the Holy Ghost. No one who owns Him would set them aside; but, lest it should be thought, "the Church," in Acts 8:3, was merely "the Church which was at Jerusalem," we find Paul's havoc of this very Church was the gravamen of his sin. It was, as to him, whose views of the Church-special revelation to himself-are given in the Epistle to the Ephesians: it was to him " the Church of God."

3. In writing to the Churches of Galatia, of which he very much stood in doubt lest they, by Judaizing, had left the gospel of Christ for another which was not another, etc., he says: "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God and wasted it" (Gal. 1:13). The same idea is confirmed in ver. 22, 23: "And was unknown by face unto the Churches of Judaea which were in Christ: but they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed." This may suffice to prove that Paul hesitated not to call the witness formed and raised up at Pentecost "the Church of God," though the doctrine of its being the body of Christ was not known until his own preaching and writing.

4. Two more verses may be cited. They are of peculiar interest as connected with the uniting of Jerusalem and Antioch together. " Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.... And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." See also 12:1, 5, compared with 13:1; 14:27; and remark that if the Church has "which is at Jerusalem " added in Acts 8:1, the same is spoken of as the Church in 12:1: " To vex certain of the Church"; *ibid.* 5, " Prayer was made of the Church unto God." And again, we find the place Antioch marked in 13:1: "There were in the Church that was in Antioch"; 14:27, and being returned to Antioch they "gathered the Church together," etc. Of Paul and Barnabas also it is said: " And being brought on their way by the Church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the Church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that-God had done with them" (14:3, 4).

" Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole Church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren."

Three more passages from Acts and we have done. " And when he [Paul] had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the Church, he went down to Antioch" (18:22). "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church" (20:17). " Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (*ibid.* 28).

The new action on God's part as predicted by Christ in chap. 1, clearly lays the wide world under Ea new responsibility, viz, that He, the earthly Messiah, being gone on high, the Holy Ghost should come down to those there that were His; and raise a testimony which if it began at Jerusalem was

also for " the uttermost part of the earth" (ver. 8). And here is seen, quite independently of any light afterward given to Paul, the basis of the responsibility of Christendom.

I cannot doubt but that this community of responsibility is not commonly seen. Indeed it is distinctly denied by the church of Rome, by Protestantism, and by Nonconformity severally. Rome cuts itself off from, and carefully makes it known, that it is separate from all testimony which is not subject to it, and owns no identity in any sense-no community with Protestantism. And yet both have the scriptures of truth, both have the light of revelation, both stand in that light, and where the Spirit is, and both are giving true or false witness for Christ and will be judged accordingly, and neither of them can get away from the evil which has been wrought in Christ's name, in a failed economy, and not yet been judged of God. Protestantism professes to separate itself from Rome, from the wide channel of God's testimony, but will not thereby escape God's judgment on this account. What should she have done? Certainly not have denied the common responsibility of Christendom as though she had nothing to do with it, as though a protest against Rome washed the hands of all responsibility before God. Each individual who saw it, should have owned the common failure, taken up the confession of it as his own burden, and without pretending to be, as to responsibility, free before God from it, have separated himself, body, soul, and spirit, from all the evil. To separate oneself from evil individually, to lay aside the evil and to take of the good, is a very different thing from raising a body to protest against an evil, or to satisfy oneself because one is of such a protesting body. I do not say that the reformers began by Protestantism; they did not, but their work has lapsed into it. So with Nonconformity; whatever godly power may have first led individuals to deplore the evil of Protestantism as such, and to endeavor to seek out God's paths to walk in, Nonconformity as it now is, boasts of its separation, not only from Romanism, but from Protestant nationalism: and that which is common to Nonconformity, Protestantism, and Romanism, is not felt and owned, and mourned over. There is no sense of the common failure of all professions. Whereas, to be Christians in very truth, those only get excepted by God from judgment who anticipate his act and take up the sin and bear it on their hearts before Him (Ezek. 9; 1 Cor. 5:2; 11. 31, 32).

For us to get away from the place which has failed (Rom. 11:13-25) is impossible: to attempt, or rather pretend to do it, is to pretend to leave the place of testimony God has set and found us in, which is rebellion and self-will. To know where we are, and to be humbled for the common failure, and yet to endeavor to separate ourselves from every evil, and from all those that are evil, and take up every good, is of God and will bring blessing.

I say again, if I had not the epistles of Paul, if I knew nothing about the Church as the body of Christ, I have, in the contrast between what the Church at Jerusalem as a people of God was and what she now is, and, I may add, between what she is and what the hope of her Lord's return makes meet-a responsibility laid upon me in common with all that bear the Lord's name upon earth before men, and I mourn for the failure before God and make confession of the sin.

That the doctrine of Paul, of the Church as the body of Christ, gave him power and energy, and has a special word to those among the people of the Lord whose hearts are awake to receive it, is clear. It may give guidance, too, in the midst of the people that bear the Lord's name -in the house here below-to think that I am a member in particular of that body of which Christ is the head, and may not do anything inconsistent therewith.

Rome, Greece, the reformed Churches of Europe - have they this hallowing light, this hallowed ambition, that if there are a people on earth to whom testimony has been committed, who can, who may, who will, as a channel of testimony be cut off (Rom. 11), yet that in this channel are found those that are the members of Christ's body; that all must deplore the failure, each one separate himself from all evil, and from those that walk in evil, and only walk as a member of Christ's body?

Rome, the queen of the world-the Protestant Churches married to the state-own not this. They own not the common failure as resting upon all and each member; they own not the Church as dwelt in by the Spirit, and as thus the body of Christ; they own not separation from all evil; separation, in a great house, from all evil and all evil persons, unto God. Nonconformity was free to do it-did it to some extent; but, as one (himself an able Nonconformist) has remarked, " every trust-deed of a chapel, all church-property," owns headship in Cesar, and so denies the Church's pilgrim, widow character of dependance upon God; an absent Lord; and the Holy Ghost present.

As responsibility connects itself with the Church as a people down here, so power connects itself with the Church as the body of Christ who is in heaven. Power not only for the crisis of Paul's day in establishing Churches and upholding what was falling, but power also for our day; power for detection of what we practically are not, in contrast with what we are spiritually and in Him; and power, I doubt not, somehow or the other, of so getting forth the precious from the vile in the midst of evil around us that He, if not we, may be content. Paul found it so to himself in the end of his career.

For one cannot read the New Testament with intelligence, without seeing how Paul's end was different from Paul's beginning. How different, for example, his position in the end of Acts from his position from chap. 17-21: as different as the-testimony of an individual before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel, is different from the setting up and being blessed among Churches. And in the Second Epistle of Timothy, for instance, he has got pretty much into John's doctrine: that if all has failed outside, he and Timothy can comfort one another.

It is not within the range of my present object to go into the detail of the doctrine of the Church, as the body of Christ, as so fully given us in Ephesians. Though I may remark that in that epistle there are two aspects of the Church, as it were-a heavenly and an earthly. A heavenly, in which the light of purpose and counsel from before the foundation of the world is seen, playing and shining in the person of the Lord Jesus in heaven, Head of His body the Church, and the chief Cornerstone of the edifice of God's habitation. The earthly aspect, if I may so call it, shows us the quarries whence the members were digged down here-Jews and Gentiles, alike under the power once of the world, the flesh, and the devil, but redeemed unto God.

Into the doctrine about the soul in its individuality of blessing, I enter not into detail; but I would call attention to the fact, that in many portions of the word the individual is looked at as such, and the appeal and doctrine made to it in that view. In some portions, the force of the text is entirely falsified, and in others its bearing is lost if the individuality of the address is not seen.

The Dismissal of Hagar

When Hagar was driven from the house of Abram by Sarah, the angel of the Lord met her, and told her to return and submit herself under the hand of her mistress. For it was very wrong in her to have acted in her mistress's house as if she had been the principal person there. She was a mother, it is true, and Sarah was still without a child. Nevertheless, she was but a servant; and acting in any other character, she entirely forgot her place. The angel, therefore, reproved her, ordered her to go back, and charged her, while she remained in Abram's house, to be in subjection to Sarah (Gen. 16).

This is a mystery. During the age of the Law, two elements were found together - that of law, and that of grace. There were the demands of righteousness, addressing themselves to man, and there were " the shadows of good things to come," the witnesses of grace, revealing God in Christ. The Jew who made the law the principal of the two, mistook God's mind; the Jew who used it subordinately, having his soul nourished by the tokens and witnesses of grace, was, so far, a Jew after God's own heart.

This right-minded Jew is seen, for instance, in Nehemiah (see Neh. 8). The Law was read on the first day of the seventh month; that day (as Lev. 23:24 teaches us) in the Jewish year which witnessed grace or revival. The two elements were, therefore; on that occasion, brought into collision. At the hearing of the law the congregation weep. But Nehemiah tells them not to weep, but to rejoice; and he tells them to do this on the authority of that day, the first day of the seventh month. And they do so, making the witness of grace principal, and using the Law subordinately.

This was according to God.

In due time the Lord comes; and, in the course of His ministry, He settles the question, or rather verifies the decision already made, between these two contending elements (see Matt. 12:5,6). The Sabbath represents the rights and demands of the Law, the priests in the temple witness the ways and provisions of grace. The Lord declares how the Sabbath had to yield to the Temple, whenever their rights interfered with each other. And this was as though He were the angel of Gen. 16, telling Hagar to be under the hand of Sarah while she remained in the house of Abram.

The apostle in Rom. 2, I judge, teaches the same; for he rebukes the Jew for making his boast of the law, not knowing the "goodness," i.e., the grace of God, in leading him to repentance. In the apostle's thought (of the Spirit surely), the Jew who was then refusing Christ and the Gospel, was making the Law principal, instead of using it as the servant of grace. He was resting in the Law, ignorant of the riches of divine "goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering."

But we are to go further with the history and with the mystery of Hagar. In process of time, one of the conflicting parties in the house of Abraham has to leave it, as we say, for good. Hagar is dismissed a second time, and there is then no angel or angel's voice bidding her to go back. Sarah had now become a mother; and her son, the son of a freewoman, must occupy and fill the house all alone (chap. 21).

And this is a mystery also.

In this present age - in these days of the risen, glorified Jesus, when the Spirit has been given to the elect on the title of all their sins being forgiven and Jesus ascended-the Law is not to appear. It has been nailed to the cross. We are dead to that wherein we were held. The handwriting of ordinances has been blotted out. The light and glory of the work of Christ must fill the house of God with one simple, bright, and gladdening element. Hagar has left Abraham's house, and left it forever.

And as the Lord, in Matt. 12, was like the angel telling Hagar, that while she remained in the house she was to be subject to her mistress, so the apostle, in the epistle to the Galatians, is like Sarah insisting on Hagar quitting the house forever. For it is now, in this age of a glorified Christ and of a given Spirit, no longer a mistress and a servant dwelling together under one roof, but a mother and her child, the freewoman and the heir. Scripture spoke in Sarah, as Gal. 4 tells us. It was the Holy Ghost who gave the word. And whether we look at the zeal of Sarah in Gen. 21, or the earnestness of Paul in Galatians, we learn the precious secret of the bosom of God, that He will have His elect in the adoption and liberty of children. Relationship, as well as redemption, is of the grace in which we stand.

Fellowship With Christ: 1. Association With Christ Jesus in His Death

All our blessing-all that God has to give, and all that we can receive-flows to us through association with the Christ of God, in His earth-rejected but heaven-honored position.

1.-On Association with Christ Jesus in His Death.

Rom. 6:5 -" If we have been planted together in the likeness of His [Christ's] death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

The word together does not here refer to us merely (as though it were said, " we, all together, were planted," etc., or, " we all were planted together "); but it refers to us together with Christ (as though it were said, we- believers-have been planted together with Christ, in the likeness of His death, etc.). It might be rendered, word for word, thus-

For if we have (or are) become co-planted (with Him) in the likeness of His death, we shall also be (in that) of His resurrection.

Adam (the first) transgressed in Eden; there was moral death in Paradise; as to the body, death was first seen outside of the garden; with transgression, man became exposed to wrath, to a wrath the full force of which is not seen until the second death.

Now, herein was the mercy of God shown; that when man, as such (all men), were lying under the just judgment against the sin of their forefather Adam-when each man had received from that head of the family the law of sin and death in his members - when each one was in himself a sinner, also in action, and many, also, were transgressors of the known will of God loving self, and hating God and one another - God gave His Son, in love, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but might have everlasting life. That Son of God went, as Son of man, to the cross, and there tasted - and oh! how fully - of the bitter wages of sin in His death upon the cross. Personally guiltless, not only innocent but incorruptibly pure, no penalty resting upon Him, He was treated as if He were the only one that had penalty resting upon Him - as if He were guilty. The cup was given into His hand to drink, - the cup of wrath, due to us alone, - and He drank it in our stead. And now the way is open for God to act toward those who are personally guilty tinder penalty, as though they were guiltless under no penalty. This way He proposes to sinners. His love, and mercy, and compassion, in having provided such a way, and the perfectness of the work, is found in the gospel.

In a field into which sin had entered, and death by sin - where the sentence of death lay upon all, for that all have sinned - where all are dead through the offense of their common source - all under a judgment of condemnation, death reigning over them, for that they are sinners and transgressors -none 'able to turn aside the penalty, none competent to bear it - into that field the doctrine of grace, through the Lord Jesus Christ, has been introduced. "The free gift"; "the grace of God, and the gift by grace"; "the free gift is of many offenses unto justification"; "they which receive

abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Christ Jesus"; "by the righteousness of one (the free gift was) toward all men unto justification of life"; "by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous"; "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord":-Such are the expressions in which the blessed subject is presented to us in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Romans.

To turn now to our portion of scripture in Rom. 6.

In all religion which is based and built upon what a man, as a creature, can do, certain things are, for the time, taken for granted; a certain power is supposed to be in him, - a certain goodness of will, at least, is admitted possibly to exist, otherwise, why and how should he trade on his own account with God? If he believed himself hopelessly ruined, to have no strength and no will for God, he would hardly attempt to utilize his time so as to prepare for death and for judgment. For it is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment, is a truth which characterizes not only the reality of man's position as a creature, but also all his thoughts of religion as a creature. As a fallen creature, he has to meet death and to stand in judgment. Contrasted with this is the religion of grace; in it death and the judgment are behind us, and not before us.

This changes everything; for it clearly connects the believer with a system in which a mere human creature, as such, has no place. As a creature, I go not beyond the range of creature thoughts and the ruin I am in; I think, to use my life that I may meet death and stand in judgment. But, as a believer, I have to do with the resurrection-power which raised Christ from the grave; and death and judgment are behind me, that I may be able to live in grace. To stand on both grounds at once, or to stand with a foot upon each, is impossible.

I, creature-life-death and judgment to come-stand in contrast with Christ, once dead but now alive again for evermore, resurrection-power' heaven and glory.

I do not think Christians have marked the contrast enough, or that they are adequately alive to the impossibility of one and the same person being at any given time upon the two grounds. The religion of nature supposes that I am alive; the religion of Christ that I am dead and buried. The religion of fallen human nature supposes I have more power now that I am fallen than man unfallen had; i.e., that I can undo the fall from which my forefather kept not himself; the religion of grace settles that power is all in God and Christ. The former supposes I can stand before God in my sins to adjust my matters with Him; the latter declares that the Christ of God has adjusted everything before God, when He was forsaken on the cross, because He bore my burden, and paid the penalty due by me.

A man cannot be in Christ and out of Christ at the same time. If in Him, all is settled; if apart from Him, he is lost.

But as to the believer in Christ: " Shall we continue in sin?" says Paul. Away with the thought. If dead to it, how shall we live in it. We have become identified with Jesus Christ in His death, baptized into Jesus Christ-baptized into His death.

I - under sentence for Adam's transgression, morally dead myself-a transgressor, also, and a sinner-had, in myself, nothing to expect but the penalty, the penal consequences of this state of

sin. Christ endured the penalty; took, in the bitter cup, the penal consequences, the punishment due to me. Grace has identified me with Him,-buried me, by baptism, into His death. The penalty paid, I am clear. I have been planted together in the likeness of His death. So identified with Him who died, that, as certainly as He was personally guiltless who was reckoned as guilty upon the cross, so all the I, that was most grievously guilty, is reckoned guiltless. Christ was the beloved Son in whom God was always well pleased. There was nothing in Him, or that He did, that could challenge anything but favor from God. His going to the cross, even, was obedience - " obedient unto death, the death of the cross"; " the cup which my Father hath given, shall I not drink it " Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God!" There was nothing that exposed Him to wrath, no penalty was due to Him; but He, the Just One, took up the penalty due to us. He would stand in our stead in the judgment. It is I, myself, not my actions done, or my thoughts and intentions even, which is in question. What a man is, the state of his being is infinitely worse than his actions. I was guilty, exposed to the wrath of God on account of what I was; but, through the death of the guiltless One, I am guiltless in God's sight.

In that He died, He died unto sin once (6:10). There is but one sense in which it can be said of Christ that He died unto sin, and that one sense is penalty, as bearing its penalty. We were morally dead and under sentence; He bore the sentence, and to those that believe there is an end of the whole matter. Adam's judgment is passed and executed; the sentence against all our transgressions, sins, omissions, and commissions - and that, too, against the very root of all these, sin in our nature - is executed and past, and never can revive. What to man was impossible- what seemed, in the nature of things, absurd- God has made true to faith. "I have to live so as to be able, if possible, to meet death, and then to stand before God in the judgment," says thoughtful man outside of Eden. " God has put death and the judgment forever behind me," says faith; "they are passed and not future to me, through the death of the Lord Jesus."

Faith lets God be true, though every man be a liar; and, therefore, faith accredits God's testimony. He that has faith is " dead to sin;-he has been baptized into the death of Jesus Christ; - buried with Him by baptism into death; - planted together in the likeness of His death; - the old man crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed; - he that is dead is freed from sin," etc. Yes, everything that man in nature - man in fallen nature - had to reckon with God about, thought that he had to settle with God, but which he never could have settled, has all been settled and reckoned for between God and Christ. In nature, death to a man is the doorway out of life- this life-into the world unseen; and the second death is the realizing fully what in God's presence is the anguish prepared for the devil and his angels, whose • slave man has been. In grace Christ's death is, to faith, the answer, put into time that is passed, of all that was or that seemed to be against us; it is the doorway into life,- doorway where all our guilt is left, for the judgment against us is there passed, - doorway into -eternal life, where all is life, and love, and favor.

In the latter part of Rom. 5 Paul had shown the two headships that of Adam, and that of Christ, and the contrast between the positions and portions of those to whom each was severally in headship before God. In chap. 6 he shows what is the passage from off the ground of Adam, on which all men are by birth, on to the ground of Christ, which pertains to those only who have faith, and receive the grace which God presents to faith. Faith and confession unto salvation (says the word) identifies us with Christ; and with Christ, not only as one who has merits, and against whom, personally, no charge could stand, but with Christ, who has met and borne, in His own person, all

the consequences justly due to all that we - looked at as part of a fallen race, as having the law of sin in us, as having done sin, and as having to meet death and judgment - were exposed to. Not one point or item which stood against us but what has been met; and more than this, for " I "the fallen creature I -is got rid of. Faith puts us on the other side of death and of judgment; that is no part of our portion, or inheritance, or lot, from Adam; but faith sets us in eternal life, and gives us heaven and glory. To nature and to common sense, as derived from Adam, the thing is impossible, unreasonable, absurd; and to nature it supposes a confusion of times past and to come. What! I, who am here, with death and the judgment before me, am to consider that death and the judgment are behind me! so might nature exclaim; and it might add, More easily might the sun stand still upon Gibeon, and the moon in Ajalon (Josh. 10:12) - more readily should the shadow go backward ten degrees by which it had gone down (2 Kings 20:11, Isa. 28:8), than that thing be! But to faith it is not ONLY so. By faith, I can say I am not only dead and have passed the judgment, so that there can be naught against me, for who shall punish a dead man, who has been fully judged already; -the justice of God, justice due to Christ who died for me, is my safety; - but I am alive again for evermore, in a life which death cannot touch, which knows no grave, and is beyond judgment--yea, in which judgment is turned to victory.

This is reckoned, counted so of God, and therefore sure. Yes; but while that is true, and makes all sure to the faith which accredits God's written word, there is more than the mere reckoning and counting to be thought of. For "the why" of this is revealed. God has given to us the Spirit of Him who - being holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, Himself the Just One died for us, the unjust. That Spirit has communicated to us the divine nature, we are born of an incorruptible seed. And though the bodies in which we dwell are still unrenewed, they yet are redeemed; and the power that will change and renew them is in Him who sits at the right hand of God. The grace that made me one with Christ-the grace which gave Christ to be Head of His Body, the Church - the grace which sought to make its exceeding riches known in us, through the love of God, are the why and because of this reckoning, this counting.

I may remark, too, a difference, and to a conscience in God's presence, and to a renewed man, it is a most important one the difference between, on the one hand, I, in nature, having to die when God's providence brings the hour, and then to stand in judgment before the great white throne after the thousand years are ended: and, on the other, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ in securing a race for Him, having made good death and present acceptance to me, within the veil where Christ, earth-rejected, sits at His own right hand; and the means of this-the death upon the cross, under judgment, of the Son of Man, who was divinely perfect, yet took (proof of His perfection) my place and bore my judgment. Himself, the Judge of quick and dead, will never forget His judgment as borne by Himself for me.

The difference is immense; because it is between things being settled according to the claims of God as Creator over a creature, and the same thing being settled according to the right of God as Redeemer to make Himself a name in displaying the riches of His grace in saving rebels.

Faith knows that it is finished! Not only Christ's death upon the cross, but ours also to guilt, and all penalty through Him. It is finished: the penalty is paid, the guilt is passed: we were guilty and under penalty, but we are so no longer, for the penalty is paid it is finished I With most Christians, the truth I speak of has not hold of their minds, and their - minds have no hold of it.

When thinking of what they were by nature, they know, perhaps, that the mercy and compassion of God has found an answer to it all in Christ. But the thought of most minds is rather as if they were one with Christ a-dying on the cross, than one with Christ who has died and is alive again for evermore. To their minds the sentence is not, as yet, seen as having been fully executed - and they never have settled peace. They want their old man, their original selves, to be still alive before God, though perhaps a-dying. Some think of this old man, this original self, as yet to be crucified, that then they may find acceptance; but of course they find not how to accomplish this; others, again, talk of it as being "a crucifying," but that it will only die when body and soul are separated; - of course peace is the put off till death. Some, again, pray that we "may die" in Christ; so misapplying, to the question of their personal acceptance with God, verses which, in Scripture, apply to the walk of a person who is personally accepted. For instance, " I protest by your rejoicing, I die daily," is often so applied: the verse means nothing of the sort, but quite another thing; even this, that Paul was heedless about guarding the life of his body in its present state, because its resurrection was assured; and, moreover, to him to live was Christ, and to die was gain. Then, again, two other verses are often thus most sadly misused, viz., Rom. 8:13, and Col. 3:5. In both of them, Paul speaks of the walk and work of accepted persons, and not of the work by which acceptance is gained.

In the first of these verses, remark, mortification of the deeds of the body, flows out of life in Christ, and is the pathway into life lit; in glory. To say that mortification of the deeds of the body gains life, is Romanism and legalism of the very coarsest kind. Again, as to Col. 3:5, the very perusal of the verse is enough: " Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry " (vers. 3-5).

And observe WHAT the members spoken of are, fornication, uncleanness, etc. And (ver. 6) they are the things which draw down vengeance on the children of disobedience-the things which used to mark those to whom Paul wrote (ver. 7), but now were to mark them no longer. Again; do not many Christians really ignore the force of Christ's death in judgment as their substitute, by a system which, while it recognizes Him alive to intercede for them, supposes their old guilty selves to be alive and recognized too as alive and guilty in God's presence. While they are in holy intercourse with God and the Lamb, they have a blessed, present taste of guilt put away, or, rather, they forget all about it, and taste acceptance and security; but, when going through the routine of ordinary life, they are verily, in their own thoughts, guilty. The effect is, that instead of having been once for all cleared from all that belongs to Adam the first,' and set free to walk in the power of a new life in Christ, habitual failure and sinning, and fresh application for pardon and peace and acceptance mark their state and course. The habit of sinning and failing thus gets justified. Adam is honored and nourished and reckoned to be alive, is carefully kept, and must be allowed to breathe and act while alive, according to his nature -that is, sin; and they think that this it is which constitutes a Christian life, even the constantly washing out, by fresh applications to the throne of mercy and the blood there, the soil that flows forth from ourselves. This is a practical denial of being dead with Christ, and leads to a sanction of sinning, and to a denial of the perfectness of the one offering once offered, the one purgation of sin once made. I never saw it exist where a clear view of the new life in Christ was seen; indeed it could not be in such case;

nay, more, a clear view of new life in Christ cannot be sustained, unless our being dead as to all that we were according to Adam, has been seen: dead as to its penalty and lordship over us.

Believing in Christ, I am one with Him. One with Him who [not being unjust, but the alone Just One] died for me [who was unjust]; as before God I am to recognize that I am so indissolubly one with Christ in His death, through grace and divine power, that I am cleared from the Adam-standing, that God has nothing against me. I am clear upon the counts: 1. Of my being a descendant from the rebel Adam. 2. Of my having a nature prone to sin through the law of sin and death in the flesh. 3. Of the issues of this nature in me being not according to God, but contrary to Him. To each of these counts in the charge, I can say I was guilty, but am clear, as one that was guilty but has been cleared. I personally am accepted - I have for the acceptance of myself no pardon to ask - all that needed pardon in that sense is through Christ dead and buried. I do not in that sense need washing afresh, or that Christ should either die again or shed more blood, or offer His blood again, or apply His blood again; His hands, and feet, and side, and forehead, as well as His sitting at the right hand of God, tell me that all that is finished. I am free, therefore, to walk in a new life, even in the unmixed life which I have in Christ, who is in God. In Him surely there is no mixture of the old life of Adam, the rebel, and the new life of the Christ of God. Yes! it will be said, but as to practical failings Have you done with Adam? Have you not a law of sin and death in your members? What do you do with that?

My answer to such a question would be this - I can look at things, 1st, according to God, and according to God's presence; or, 2ndly, according to man and man's presence; or, 3rdly, according to what will be when God brings His own people home to His own presence.

1st. Of things according to God and God's presence; I can know nothing whatsoever save from the Scripture. " It is written," is the alone explanation of God's thoughts, to those that have faith and are led by the Spirit. Now according to that word, I find that what Christ has done as to those that are united to Him, who once died though now He liveth for evermore, has cleared them personally and individually of all culpability. Who shall condemn - who shall lay anything to the charge of those whom God has justified by the death and resurrection of Christ. All that I, as from and of and in Adam, was, Christ took upon Himself, and what it was, was told out fully and once for all upon His cross; and the judgment thereon, borne by Him: all that He was and is, is mine in the power of the new life in which I am associated with Him. And more than this, for my security of being with Him and like Him, hereafter, is in Himself who is hidden in God; and the answer to all my wilderness-walk as a Christian here below, is found in Him as alive from the dead, an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

2ndly. According to man and man's presence. My being personally without culpability before God, does not take the law of sin and death out of my members. Then I must sin still and be always failing, you will say.

Nay. It is left in me because of the good pleasure of. God, who, as the living God, has been pleased to undertake Himself to conduct His people through the wilderness. He wills that we should find grace to make choice of Him and His ways, in preference to ourselves and to our own ways; and He leaves us the full leisure to show whether we will identify ourselves with Him who first identified Himself with us; whether we will appropriate Him and His path, who has appropriated us to Himself. This, however, is in the government of God in time; of God governing

the ways, and forming for eternity the characters of the people whom He has eternally saved. As according to man and in man's presence, I desire to justify myself in my having hailed Jesus Christ as the alone Savior, and preferred righteousness which is of faith to that which is of works; I desire to prove that the works of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, are better than the works of the flesh under law; I desire (according to a new nature), to justify God, and Christ, and the Spirit of grace, against the world, Satan, and the flesh. To me to live is Christ and to die is gain, for." in all things more than conquerors through Him that loved us," is not effaced from our banner. I do not, for a moment, suppose sin to be taken out of my body; it ought not to be; I, as a Christian, do not even wish it to be so while I am in the wilderness. God forbid. No: but being occupied with Christ on high, and Christ in the coming glory, I, yet not I, but Christ that dwelleth in me, can keep it under. Keeping under his body and bringing it into subjection, Paul could do what Saul could not-appropriate his body and all its members unto the glory of God, and give himself to the service of Christ, in spite of Satan who, through lust and the course of the world, had once been his absolute master. Paul himself was, through grace, the master when walking near the Lord, and realized the sweetness of victory, not only over him who had been his master, and over circumstances, but over himself.

The power of this our life and walk here below, is not the death of Christ, though that puts us free. from the life of man and of earth, to live the life of Christ and of heaven upon earth; save for His death there would be no such freedom: but the power of our life and walk down here is in the living grace of a living Christ, Head over all things to His Church, which is His body; and Himself the great High Priest- Captain of salvation. It is as alive from the dead that He guards us, and that if we do fail He restores, and that He washes all His people from the defilement of the wilderness as they pass through it. Instead of this, the wretched system I advert to practically denies this present grace of the living God, and in denying our death through Him that died, leaves us to go on sinning, and in uncertainty laboring for forgiveness; and it practically denies, too, the existence of a church militant upon earth, and the grace of God which., while it secured the salvation of Lot as well as of Abram, left it to each when saved, to show out his own walk and the experience consequent thereon in the wilderness.

3rdly. As to what will be when God brings home His own people to His own presence. If God has already identified us that believe with His Christ, who is in Himself-if he permits us, down here, each in a little world of His own, to put down the evil and to take up the good in detail - a time is coining when we, whom He has redeemed, will meet Him in His own circumstances and glory. Faith desires that Christ's personal presence should be the honored place of full fruition, and it alone - to be with Him, to see Him, to be like Him-waits; and faith would have it wait, until He has His full joy, and until He can receive His church and present her to Himself, a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. I would not have it otherwise. In the wilderness, let me have the wilderness portion Christ has given and marked for me; let me suffer with Him; let me fill up that which remains of those sufferings of the Christ: if absent from the body and present with Himself in spirit patience and bliss will go together; as now patience and suffering go together; - but, only when He has His full joy, would I have mine, even at the second coming. But then He shall change this vile body, and fashion it like unto His own glorious body, by the mighty power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.

As connected with the Lord's government in the church (1 Cor. 11:27-34), and with the Father's regulating of His family (1 John 2:1), a person who knows himself saved can most clearly, if and when he fails, make confession of failure, and ask not only for pardon as a servant or as a child, but also that the consequences of the failure be removed. But then remark, 1st, that no one but a person who knows himself to be already saved can think of his work as a servant, or of his walk as a child. If an unsaved man were to do so it would be self-righteousness, self-justification. He is not saved, his works are not, to his mind, fruits - of the Spirit and of fellowship with Christ. What must I do to be saved? is really his question; self and not Christ is in question. It is monstrous to think of the works, whether they are good or bad, whether they can be accepted or not, before and in the presence of One who has already condemned the very being himself whose works are in question. And according to John (3:18), man is under condemnation already. Man's thoughts are, that a sinner must work, and a saint, if such can be found, must rest. God's command is, that the sinner do rest from his own works, and that the saint do labor to bring forth fruit unto God. And so entirely distinct before God is the salvation of the soul and works, that the Scripture never refers to the works of an unsaved man, save to show that he is condemned; the tree is condemned, and the fruit proves it. It never speaks of a saved man, without supposing that there will be works, and fruit unto God, for God to examine. The tree was planted 'to bear fruit. He that is one with Christ is fruitful.

And, secondly, let men say what they like about their failing every day, and every hour, and in everything. It may be true, or it may not-it makes no difference to me -I have to follow (not them but) Paul, even as he followed Christ. Now I utterly deny that his life was a life of incessant failure. The even course of it justified his saying " To me, to live is Christ;" and again: " 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). He was in all things more than conqueror through Him that loved him: and may not, ought not we to follow him even as he followed Christ?

I know it is easy to excite the flesh to say, in self-confidence, " To me to live shall be Christ:" but I know also that the first step in the life of obedience, raises the question of how far do we know, practically, this death of which I speak: not dying, not willingness merely to suffer and purpose to deny oneself, but how far we have learned what it is to count ourselves already dead through Christ. So Paul saw and felt to be the case when he wrote to Timothy. It is a faithful saying: " For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him" (2 Tim. 2:11).

Here it was not the value of association with Christ that had died (as in Rom. 6), so as to get judicially clear from all the penalties resting upon man as a creature, and as a descendant of Adam's (in which light all judgment is past and none remains, save for us to judge 'ourselves in our walk); but it is the value of that association as setting one free from self, that we may suffer for Christ and endure hardness as His good soldiers.

A man must be fully assured, through faith and the Spirit, that in God's presence he is dead judicially, in Christ,- looked upon by God in this sense as dead,- able to reckon himself as dead for him to be able to use that death against Satan, the world, and the flesh: to give, if I may be allowed the expression, by it, the slip to himself and all that self furnishes as a handle to Satan, the world, or lust to lay hold of.

The way that Christ's death is made of little effect by most Christians; the way that they have judaized it, out of its eternal value and the estimate heaven forms of it, and reduced it down to be a part of a human system of their own, borrowed from the law of fallen humanity and the elements of the world (both of which Marked Judaism), is a most solemn sin. The Colossians (who had been dead in their sins and in the uncircumcision of the flesh (2:13), that is morally dead, are thus charged: "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" etc. (2:20). They would sanction worldliness and accredit their own flesh, if they did so. And he adds: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God " (3:3). "Dead," says he - most correctly - " seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (in. 9). If the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?

He has so appropriated all that I was, as to bear the record of it in His own body; my soul knows those hands, those feet, that side, that forehead -but, blessed be God, I know them in Him who was dead but is alive again; I know them in Him who shall reign forever - as the Lamb that was dead, but is, alive again for evermore.

Reader! if God has shown you these things, may He add this grace, even that they act in power upon you, and that you find power to act upon them.

Fragment: Acts 15

Gal. 2:2.-" Lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain."

By the wisdom of God the conference at Jerusalem (Acts 15) was the alliance, by the Jewish apostles, of Paul's doctrine with Noah's four laws -the law of Moses being left out.

Fragment: Failure

The Failure. -How far does God choose for us work and a path beyond the measure of our present faith -that we may grow up into it? It was so in the case of Noah (with his ark and salvation by water); -with Abram, called to go forth to a city whose Builder and Maker is God; -to Saul, the persecutor, to become the apostle of the uncircumcision.

The question is important in the hour of failure, as to responsibility, because a man (like Lot) might say: "I have but taken outwardly before man the place which inwardly was mine before." There is a great deal of this sort of thing now-a-days from the flesh. But God may say to such a one as Lot: "Consulter of thine own flesh, thou hast despised the way in which I allowed thee to be set, and preferring thine own way to mine, thou hast gotten thee to the city I will destroy, though I save thyself."

Two men fail: one turns back to his old course in nature or religion; the other God leads on, a poor failed thing, going after God in a new line.

There is no hour in which it is more important, or more difficult, not to consult one's own flesh, than in an hour of defeat.

How much of our disappointment, one with the other, comes from mortified pride! I love, perhaps a Christian, and, instead of seeing him only in Christ, deck him according to my imagination with that which God never put in or upon him. The man is left-but my shadow is gone, when I get into the light of God's presence; or when we meet in the dark outside of His presence.

OF HIM, AND THROUGH HIM, AND TO HIM, ALL THINGS! Romans 11:36.

Such, under the power of divine inspiration, was the language of a servant of God. He had been just made to run rapidly through the past, present, and future of the inhabitable earth; had seen its changing phases as connected with God, and His dealings through various economies; had been shown that the divine object in all those variations, so bewildering to man in his pride, had been very simple: God had so wrought as to include all in unbelief, that so He might have mercy upon all. It is not here Adam and Paradise, but man (Jew and Gentile) outside of Paradise. He speaks not here directly of how the creature had been allowed to break up the creatures' circumstances of finite blessing, so as that the ruin might fall into the hand of God, that He might do, in mercy, as might seem good to Him, with that which had failed as being an expression of His power and wisdom-and had failed when set upon its own responsibility: but He speaks rather of how all light and responsibility committed to the failed creature in the various economies or dispensations only more fully proved the creature to be a failed one, and brought him into the place in which mercy alone had a right to speak. Tried, in various ways, man ever proved himself a ruined rebel; but God had planned a wide-spread display of His own mercy, and when all the various parts of the inhabitable earth should have shown out what they were, God would show out, in these same places, what He was as the God of Mercy. He would have scope enough to do it in them; varieties of vessels too would be there; and the display would have its brightness enhanced by the contrast

between the smallness of what had been and the greatness then to be present, and by the contrast between the mercy of God and the unrighteousness of the creature. " For 'God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (ver. 32). His whole soul is moved-and well it might be so-and filled with the glorious subject-it rolls forth the blessed anthem: " O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen" (ver. 33-36).

This last clause, " For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things," is thus the reasonable solution of the whole vision of God's dealings with man upon earth, in dispensation. It is abstract enough, yet strikes a cord of praise in the apostles heart, and he adds, " To whom be glory forever. Amen."

This explanation of these ways of the God of Mercy in His long-suffering dealings with man in rebellion upon earth, traced (from chap. ix. to chap. xii.) through various economies, comes in after the explanation (from chap. 1 to chap. 8) of the mercies of God. Nothing but mercy could do for man, whether without revelation, or under the law, or without law: and mercy's path was already plain, for Christ *had died, and risen, and ascended up on high, and God, the Holy Ghost, was come down to be at once the power, and seal, and sustainer of blessing to those that believed in Him from whom He was come down. These mercies of God (from chap. 1-8) so rich, so full, so heavenly, and so divine as they are set forth in chap. 8, magnified and confirmed by their connection with these ways of the God of mercy, through all His dealings with man upon earth, are brought to bear (chap. 12 to end) as the power of living to God. The origin or source of mercy is God; its power of endurance and success is God; it leads all whom it embraces to God: of, through, and to Him, in one sense or other, are all things, but most directly of, through, and to Him all those things of which Paul was here speaking.

And this truly is a great salvation-to see God as the end of our retrospect; God as the source to us of it, at least, as a whole; to know God to be more present in power than all else, whether it be self, Satan, the world, or the flesh-God overruling all-causing all things to work together for good to them that love Him; in the present purpose, too, of all that is there as to faith, God and God alone. And if He be alone in the purpose which is present, He surely must fill the future-of Him, through Him, to Him all things.

Our Gospel is divine as well as heavenly. As being heavenly, the grand purpose of it is shown in the family, as seen in the Father's house in John 14, and in the Bride, the Lamb's wife, seen in glory in Rev. 21 and 22. In this respect, our glad tidings lead us up to heavenly spheres in contrast to Israel's glad tidings, which will place them in the center of an earth which shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, even as the waters cover the sea. As divine, it gives us the power of known association, through grace, with the God of eternity in the past, the present, and that which is to come; in knowing the spring and source of our all to be the Eternal God; in knowing the way, 1st, of deliverance from evil and of entrance into blessedness-in all the wondrous works, sufferings, services, and offices of the blessed Lord Jesus; and, 2ndly, of the application of this, and the securing of it, immediately to us to be by the Holy Ghost; and all tending to God; but

because tending in a present purpose of the soul, God is known as a present as well as a future end.

I desire to say a few words upon this in connection with the full liberty of the gospel of Christ in the soul and life of a believer. For I believe many have failed, and that there is danger to many of us of failing herein: to some, from not seeing the importance of this truth, as a united whole, viz., that our gospel, in its fullness, is this our full association with God-our being able to say with truth, "of Him, through Him, to Him, all things!" And to others there is danger from their not seeing the inseparableness of the three statements of, through, and to Him, all things. The subject is one of immense importance to the Christian, as to his own soul, as having to judge himself that He be not judged of the Lord; and it is one of pre-eminent interest to brotherly love, as affording the solution of, and the cure for, a great deal of ill-proportioned Christianity in those we love;-it gives, too, the explanation, I am fain to believe, of a great many of the differences that try brotherly love. May the meditation of it lead us to judge ourselves, that we may be better able to help others, to forbear toward the weak, and not to be stumbled by the strong.

I may add, that in a day like the present, when rush, hurry, and bustle characterize man in all his doings, quietness and calmness will be the fruit of this being hidden (oneself and all one's circumstances) in God. For what trouble can trouble His abode? What whirlwind can reach the soul that dwells in the secret of His presence?

Adam, in the fall, took a new position for himself. Creation was all of God, and through God, and to God; and so was himself, Adam, as part of it. His position and condition, as created, were in accordance one with another also. In the fall, he changed his condition and position too. Refusing to be subject to, to live to God, so far as the thoughts of his heart and the intentions of his mind were concerned, lie, in purpose, set up for himself. He would be as God. That he could not thus take himself out of the Almighty's hands is clear. The unchangeableness of the living God's purpose, "that all Should be to his own glory," stood fast. The creature that would not be so could not reverse that; he could only, in his puny littleness, set himself in opposition-and be broken. He did change his inward condition in changing his position before God, in ceasing to be subject, and in acting upon his power to be voluntarily dependent, he lost himself-he fell.

This departure from God was man's own act, though set on to it by Satan. It was man's own act; and he has reaped the fruits of it, and is under the consequences of it. It is a great moral disease, it is morally ruin, for a creature so to have sunk down into itself- to have become so surrounded and filled with itself, that self has taken the place of spring, and power, and end of everything to it. It knows, in sin, no God above it, that it can depend upon. God is to it a Being of power adverse to itself. Now the Gospel of God's grace meets man in all his selfishness - meets him just there where he feels that God ought to be against him, and brings in those parts of the divine character which man, so placed, can recognize, in order to give rest to his soul. Such a soul must own God to be above it, and not adverse to it either. And yet it may be very far from seeing how the whole salvation is of God, and the whole application of it through Him. But it is learning that there is a mighty God above, and something of His ways, and is getting unconsciously set in its right place before God-its right place of dependance. When light dawns more clearly into it it finds that, indeed, it is fully saved, and that the blessed work of its salvation, while it suits it, came forth not for its sake, but because of what God was and is in His own being. He is merciful, and delights in

mercy - has delighted in doing mercy's work, and does delight in, giving to man the full enjoyment of it. The discovery of this gives solid peace - we understand where mercy has set us. And this is most blessed. Yet I think it will be found that there is a something which precedes this, even the spirit of obedience; -the soul seeking, oft it knows not why, God and His presence, and entire surrender to him of everything. Now, this desire to do God's will,- this owning of "all to God"-and therefore that nothing can suffice oneself save to be "wholly"-heart, mind, soul, and body -- in principle and in practice to God, is a very important thing. In a creature it is nothing less than God's glory. It can never be given up if we are to be like Christ, - if God is to be God to us. I call attention to this point, because I am persuaded that in a clear understanding of it the safety of the whole flock of God, and of every soul individually is concerned. God must be the end, the sole end, where His power is. The Son of God, the perfect servant of God, knew no other end than God's will and God's glory. It was His glory to be here below, doing nothing but God's will, suffering nothing but God's pleasure. If any fain any other state as one of blessedness here below for the disciple, they deceive their own selves, and are hearers only, and not doers of His will.

It is true the desire to be, to live, to God may in us, at first, be mixed up with other elements, which may have to be judged and removed. It may be, at first, little more than the revived sense of what we were made for as creatures, when conscience is acting in the presence of God. It may be mixed up, afterward, with a sense of power in us to stand upon nature's foundation; - and as such power exists not, - the thought that one has it is a delusion; it may be legal, from one supposing that the law was given that we might live by it; it may have a thousand false colorings, - but when all is said and done, the truth remains, that if any one have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His; - and the Spirit of Christ was and is emphatically the spirit of holy gracious obedience to God. Spirit of discernment, without doubt,. He is - to divide, nicely, between foundation and super.. structure; between the duties of root and of branch; spirit of judgment too He is, owning Christ the Savior in His place and service, and the believer as saved in his place and duties, too, - but always the spirit of obedience; always and ever in subjection to God and the word of His grace, and leading unto obedience. Let the difficulty of retaining the spirit of obedience unclouded be fully admitted, - but still, if saved, we are saved unto God, and the life of God in the soul, and he that touches that touches our all.

The Spirit of God has, as His unmixed purpose, to seek the glory of God and the honor of Christ. What else would you charge upon that Holy One as His purpose and work here below? Is it from a taste for the world in its present state, - is it from the pleasures of the treatment He has experienced from the flesh and from the devil, that He abides among and in us? Did He own us as His end, - when He sought us, - while He keeps us? Oh, no: merciful and long-suffering as He is to us ward, He is so because He links us up with a great purpose of God in Christ. And would I debase to the level of my thoughts and affections His actings in me? Nay, I am called -upon to rise to His level rather. Now I do most solemnly believe, may I be wrong, that very many are in jeopardy just in not seeing how their perfect liberty in Christ supposes (what it gives) a perfect purpose to live, to be to God, and to God alone. And sure I am that it is impossible for two to walk together except they be agreed. Will God give up His object in order to walk with me, if I have an object at variance with His? Or must I give up my object to walk with Him, according to that which He seeks. And is it not here that one fruitful course of separation among disciples of Christ is found? namely, the various allowed measures of mixing up with God's sole object - which is His

glory in the honor of Christ as Lord of all -portions of worldliness, fleshliness, and Satanic objects. I warn my brethren, the Church and the world cannot walk on together. God's spirit is onward, forward the face of every one that is led by Him is, as it were, set firmly for an onward, forward course. If men will walk according to the flesh, they cannot seek heaven, but the world; and then not the Holy Ghost, but the prince of the power of the air is He that worketh in them. I feel the moment to be one of crisis in this respect. If you are God's, - live to Him and go onward, - forward a little while further; how very little is the little while! and count the flesh to be already crucified with its affections, and lusts, and the world a wilderness. If you will not do this Satan will catch your flesh, and into the world sink you must.

My salvation in Christ is perfect; but I am not perfect. How can a man that is not perfect in himself walk according to a perfect position if he is set in it? It is just here where the intercession of Christ, who is in Heaven, comes in. Having set us in the perfect liberty of the appreciation of His own work by God the Father - the Lord now on high is occupied in bringing us through the wilderness.

If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1). From on high He sees our sin as he did Peter's (John 13.18), even before we sin; and as He said to Peter, " 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, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31,32).

Nothing but a living Christ on high could suffice to meet our needs, assure our hearts, and cultivate our affections.

Fragment: Greek Translated "Day"

Rev. 1:10. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," **■γεν■μην ■ν πνε■ματι ■ν τ■ κυριακ■ ■μ■ρα.**
Query. I was, in spirit, in the judgment pertaining to the Lord's view of things.

Such is the rendering which results from rendering **■μερ■** "day," in the sense in which it is used in 1 Cor. 4:3: "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self." The word **■μερ■** is here rendered "judgment" in the text, and "day" in the margin. The day characterized by man is man's day, -the day characterized by the Lord is the Lord's day. But then again it may be well noted that "day" in 1 Cor. 4.3, is not used in the sense of a period of light between sunrise and sunset, but in a moral sense, as the estimate naturally connected with a given state of things, just as we speak of deeds of darkness-things not fit for daylight-or of things fit for midnight, or for midday light. The word rendered "of the Lord" is an adjective -lordly, or pertaining to the Lord. The comparison of Rev. 1:10, and 1 Cor. 4:3, has its value; see also 1 Cor. 3:13.

Fragment: John 1:29

John 1:29.-When the Lord came into the world sin lay at the base of its all;-and even all the divine actings were framed upon this sad truth, that man was in rebellion,-in himself sinful and surrounded by sin. The Lord came: Himself the very expression of what God was and is-that His ways and His thoughts are not as man's ways and man's thoughts: the one, through whom and by whom, a new order was to be introduced -Himself, through His finished work, to be the base and center of an entirely new state of things.

The Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world.-It is not said, "who took"-nor is it said, "the sins"-but, taking away-the sin-of the world.

Fragment: Revelation 11

Rev. 11. The book of the Acts of the Apostles gives us the account of the establishment of the Church, and its being called to be the witness for God. This involves the setting aside, from its place of standing before God, of Jerusalem. It was soon after broken up as a place. From that, onward, we have no recognition, on God's part, of any places upon earth, as such. Individual persons as forming parts of the church are recognized, and churches are recognized in the epistles; but places, as such, are never owned as having, as mere places, any interest in the mind of God.

In this eleventh chapter of Revelation, however, we find a definite place on earth again recognized as the subject of special interest to the Divine mind; and in that chosen. place, spite of all its evil, and spite of all the evil of the Gentiles, we find a witness is raised and marvelously maintained there.

Fragment: Worldliness

Worldliness and earthly-mindedness have blinded the minds and hardened the hearts of Christians, now-a-days, to an extent very few have any idea of. There are, I am persuaded, very few cases touching upon the safety, and well-being of the Church of God, which can' be left to be judged by the mass of believers. On whom can one cast one's burden of responsibility as to the spirituality of the saint's walk and conduct. In cases innumerable which have occurred, I have found that the affections to the person of Christ have not been lively enough to make Christians indignant at open insults put upon Him-and they have had neither the heart nor the mind to stand apart from that which was the expression of indifferentism to Him.

Fragments

When Satan is at work in power among men, the human mind will religiously believe any lie. It will act so as even nature and natural conscience left to themselves would condemn. He that killeth you will think that he doeth God service, was one instance of this: the strong delusion to believe a lie in the latter day is another. The human mind-nature - natural conscience left to itself-could hardly justify Saul's persecution of Stephen and the Church: it never could justify man's treatment of the Lord's Christ-nor will it attempt to do so, when man stands in the light, and has to judge himself. Passion, lust, prejudice, will go a great way; but Satan will lead, will push, a great deal further.

It seems to me, that, on the subject of the holiness and catholicity of the Church, nature would give a judgment against a good deal which nature, when blinded by Satan, holds hereon. Doth not nature say, that if God be personally present, all that which is identified with Him must be really so, and be so in all its individual parts. It is unreasonable, contrary to common sense, unnatural-as men speak- to think, or to talk of association with God, of conduct the result of our being drawn after or led by Him,-without the presence of "reality," and of individual surrender to Him, being, as it were, granted, presupposed. The thing said, "that I am led of God," assumes that He really has appropriated me individually. Now, one of the things which is constantly meeting us, is talk about "holiness" and "catholicity," where the conduct, where the thoughts of the speaker, give no token of the consciousness of the reality of God's presence, of individual personal walking with Him.

This is emphatically the case in Romanism, and wherever the conscience is morbidly at work, under the enemy, upon the notion of the Church.

True is it, also, that it is God only who can, by the Spirit and the faith, enable the conscience to act truly as to and in the things of God. Reason, common sense, nature, can detect inconsistencies; but they can neither shut out Satan nor bring in God or His wisdom.

Fragments

.... "We will not say... the former days were the best. I do not believe it. I own we have been humbled and exercised, and been ensnared and drawn aside, and have betrayed nature again and again,-to our rebuking and shame, but still the present days are the best. He has used all to our blessing; and the heart is a little nearer to Him, and the hope more surely is making Him its object.

" That is a fine bold saying of faith in Psa. 49, though, perhaps, in its fullest sense, we may, through preventing grace, have not been called to utter it. 'Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall encompass me about.'

"There is the early springing of the year's growth in its infant greenness, while as yet it has not been broken or withered, and it is lovely to the eye; but it is not fit for the sickle, as it is when broken and tossed by summer and autumn sun and wind, and [with us] the experience of the soul

is after such a pattern. It is freshest and more pleasant in its earlier buddings, but it is far less ready then, for the bosom of Him that binds the sheaves."

Galatians

The Epistle to the Galatians sets before us the great source of the afflictions and conflicts of the apostle, in the regions where he had preached the Gospel, that which was at the same time the principal means employed by the enemy to corrupt the Gospel. God, it is true, in His love, has suited the Gospel to the wants of man. The enemy brings down that which still bears its name, to the level of the haughty will of man and the corruption of his natural heart, turning Christianity into a religion that suits that heart, in place of one that is the expression of the heart of God - an all holy God -and the revelation of that which He has done in His love, to bring us into communion with His holiness. We see at the same time, the connection between the Judaizing doctrine of those who hindered the apostle's work, and the attacks that were constantly aimed against his ministry, because that ministry appealed directly to the power of the Holy Ghost, and to the immediate authority of Christ. In withstanding the efforts of the Judaisers, the apostle necessarily establishes the elementary principles of justification by grace. Traces both of this combat with the spirit of Judaism, by which Satan endeavored to destroy true Christianity, and of the maintenance by the apostle of this liberty and authority of his ministry, are found in a multitude of passages in Corinthians, in Philipians and Colossians, in Timothy, and, historically, in the Acts. In Galatians, the two subjects are treated in a direct and formal way. But the Gospel is, consequently, reduced to its most simple elements,- grace to its most simple expression. But with regard to the error, the question is but the more decisively settled,- the irreconcilable difference between the two principles, Judaism and the Gospel, the more strongly marked.

God allowed this invasion of the Church in the earliest days of its existence, in order that we might have an answer, by Divine inspiration, to these very principles when they should be developed in an established system, which would claim submission from the children of God as being the Church that He had established, and the only ministry that He acknowledged. The immediate source of true ministry, according to the Gospel that Paul preached to the Gentiles, the impossibility of uniting the law and that Gospel,- of binding up together subjection to its ordinances and distinction of days, with the holy and heavenly liberty into which we are brought by a risen Christ; the impossibility, I repeat, of uniting the religion of the flesh with that of the Spirit, are plainly set forth in this epistle.

The apostle begins, at the very outset, with the independence, as to all other men, of the ministry which he exercised, pointing out its true source, from which he received it without the intervention of any intermediate instrument whatsoever: adding, in order to show that the Galatians were forsaking the common faith of the saints, " all the brethren which are with me." Also, in opening the subject of his epistle, the apostle declares at once, that the doctrine introduced by the Judaisers among the Galatians, was a different Gospel (but which was not really another) not the Gospel of Christ.

He begins, then, by declaring that he is not an apostle either of man or by man. He does not come on the part of men, as though sent by them, and it is not by means of any man that he has

received his commission, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised Him from the dead. It was by Jesus Christ, on the way to Damascus; and by the Father, it appears to me, when the Holy Ghost said, " Separate to me Barnabas and Paul." But he speaks thus, in order to carry up the origin of his ministry to the primary source of all real good, and of all legitimate authority.

He wishes, as usual, to the assembly, grace and peace, from God in His character of Father, and from Jesus in His character of Lord. But he adds here to the name of Jesus, that which belongs to that character of the Gospel which the Galatians had lost sight of, namely, that Christ had given Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age. The natural man, in his sins, belonged to that age. The Galatians desired to return to it, under the pretext of a righteousness according to the law. Christ had given Himself for our sins in order to take us out of it: for the world is judged. Looked at as in the flesh, we are of it. Now the righteousness of the law has to do with men' in the flesh. It is man as in the flesh who is to fulfill it, and the flesh has its sphere in this world; the righteousness which man would accomplish in the flesh, is directed according to the elements of this world. Legal righteousness, man in the flesh and the world, go together. Whereas Christ has viewed us as sinners, having no righteousness, and has given Himself for our sins, and to deliver us from this condemned world, in which men seek to establish righteousness, by putting themselves on the ground of the flesh which can never accomplish it. This deliverance is also according to the will of our God and Father. He will have a heavenly people, redeemed according to that love which has given us a place on high with Himself, and a life in which the Holy Ghost works, to make us enjoy it and cause us to walk in the liberty and in the holiness which He gives us in this new creation, of which Jesus Himself, risen and glorified, is the head and the glory.

The apostle opens his subject without preamble: he was full of it. How was it possible that the Galatians had so quickly forsaken him who had called them, according to the power of the grace of Christ, for a different gospel. It was by this call of God that they had part in the glorious liberty, and in the salvation that has its realization in heaven. It was by the redemption that Christ had accomplished, and the grace that belongs to us in Him, that they enjoyed heavenly and Christian happiness. And now they were turning to an entirely different testimony: a testimony which was not another gospel, another true good tidings. It did but trouble their minds by perverting the true Gospel. " But," says the apostle, reiterating his words on the subject, " if an angel from heaven, or he (Paul himself) preached anything besides the Gospel that he had already preached to them, let him be accursed." Observe here, that he will allow nothing in addition to that which he had preached. They did not formally deny Christ; they wished to add circumcision. But the Gospel which the apostle had preached, was the complete and whole Gospel. Nothing could be added to it without altering it, without saying that it was not the perfect Gospel, without really adding something that was of another nature, that is to say, corrupting it. For the entirely heavenly revelation of God was what Paul had taught them. In his teaching, he had completed the circle of the doctrine of God. To add anything to it was to deny its perfection, and to alter its character, to corrupt it. The apostle is not speaking of a doctrine openly opposed to it, but of that which is outside the Gospel which he had preached. Thus, he says, there cannot be another Gospel; it is a different Gospel, but there is no good tidings except that which he had preached. It is but a corruption of the true, a corruption by which they troubled souls. Thus, in love to souls, he could anathematize those who turned them away from the perfect truth that he had preached. It was the

Gospel of God Himself. Everything else was of Satan. If Paul himself brought it, let him be anathema. The pure and entire Gospel was already proclaimed, and it asserted its claims, in the name of God, against all that pretended to associate itself with it. Did Paul seek to satisfy the minds of men in his Gospel or to please men? In no wise: he would not thus be the servant of Christ.

He then speaks, historically, of his ministry, and of the question whether man had anything to do with it. His Gospel was not according to man, for he had not received it from any man; he had not been taught it. That which he possessed, was his by the immediate revelation made to him by Jesus Christ. And when God, who, from his mother's womb, set him apart, and had called him by His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in him, the revelation had at once all its own power as such. He did not consult any one. He did not put himself into communication with the other apostles; but at once acted independently of them,, as. being directly taught of God. It was not till three years after, that he went to make acquaintance with Peter, and also saw James. The Churches of Judea did not know him by sight: only they "glorified God for the grace he had received. Moreover, he was only fifteen days in Jerusalem. He then went into Syria and Cilicia. Fourteen years afterward, he went up to Jerusalem (we have the account in Acts 15) with Barnabas, and took Titus with him. But Titus, Gentile as he was, had not been circumcised; an evident proof of the liberty in which the apostle publicly stood. It was a bold step on his part to take Titus with him, and thus decide the question between himself and the Judaizing Christians. He went up because of false brethren, who sought to spy out the liberty into which Paul (enjoying it in the Spirit) introduced believers; and he went up by virtue of a revelation.

We may observe here, how the communications of God may be inwardly the guides of our conduct, although we yield to motives presented by others. In the fifteenth chapter of Acts, we find the outward history; here, that which governed the apostle's heart. God, in order that the thing might be decided at Jerusalem, to shut every mouth and to maintain unity, did not allow the apostle to have the upper hand at Antioch, or to arrange on the spot the walk of the assembly formed in that place. Neither did He allow him to isolate himself in his own convictions; but made him go up to Jerusalem and communicate to the chief apostles that which he taught, so that there should be community of testimony on this important point; and that they also should acknowledge Paul as taught of God independently of them, and at the same time recognize his ministry as sent of God and that he was acting on the part of God as much as themselves. For although God would have him communicate to them that which he had taught others, he received nothing from them. The effect of his communication was, that they owned the grace which God had granted him and the ministry he had received for the Gentiles, and they gave to him and to Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.

Had he gone up earlier, whatever his knowledge might have been, the proofs of his special and independent ministry would not have existed. But he had labored fruitfully for many years without receiving any mission from the other apostles, and they had to recognize his apostleship as the immediate gift of God, as well as the truths which God had imparted to him: the proofs were there; and God had owned this apostleship, as He had given it. The twelve had nothing to do but to acknowledge it if they acknowledged God as the source of all these excellent gifts. Paul was an apostle from God, without their intervention. They could acknowledge his ministry, and in it, the God who had given them that which they themselves exercised.

Moreover, Paul had always acted independently in the fulfillment of his mission. When Peter came to Antioch, he withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. He was not, as to Paul, as a superior before whom his subordinates must maintain a respectful silence. Although God had wrought mightily in Peter, yet his companion in apostleship, faithful to him who had called him, could not allow the Gospel to be falsified which had been committed to his own care by the Lord Himself. Ardent as he was, poor Peter always cared too much about the opinion of others. Now, the opinion that prevails in the world, is always that which influences the heart of man; and this opinion is always one which gives a certain glory to man after the flesh. Paul, taught from above, and full of the power of the Spirit, who, by revealing heavenly glory, had made him feel that all which exalted the flesh obscured that glory, and falsified the Gospel that declared it,- Paul, who lived and moved, morally, in the new creation, of which a glorified Christ is the center,- and as firm as he was ardent, because he realized the things that are not seen; as clear-sighted as firm, because he lived in the realization of spiritual and heavenly things in Christ,- Paul, for whom to win Christ thus glorified was everything, clearly sees the carnal walk of the apostle of the circumcision. He is not deterred by man; he is occupied with Christ who was his all, and with the truth. He does not spare one who overturned this truth, be his position in the Church what it might.

It was dissimulation in Peter. While alone there, where the influence of heavenly truth prevailed, he ate with the Gentiles, he surrounded himself with the reputation of walking in the same liberty as the others. But when certain persons came from James, and from Jerusalem, where he himself habitually lived, from that center where religious flesh and its customs still exercised (under the patient goodness of God) so much power, he no longer dared to use a liberty which was condemned by those Christians who were still Jewish in their sentiments; he withdrew himself. What a poor thing is man And we are weak in proportion to our importance before men; when we are nothing we can do all things, as far as human opinion is concerned. We exercise, at the same time, an unfavorable influence over others in the same degree as that in which they influence us-in the same degree as we yield to the influence which the desire of maintaining our reputation among them exercises over our hearts. Peter, who fears those that came from Jerusalem, draws away all the Jews and even Barnabas with him in his dissimulation. Paul, energetic and faithful, through grace, alone remains upright; and he rebukes Peter before them all. Why would he compel Gentiles to live as Jews in order to enjoy full Christian communion, when he, being a Jew, had felt himself free to live as the Gentiles. Themselves Jews by nature, and not poor sinners of the Gentiles, they had given up the law as a means of securing the favor of God, and had taken refuge in Christ. But if they sought to rebuild the edifice of legal obligations, in order to acquire righteousness, why had they overturned it? Thus acting, they made themselves transgressors in having overturned it. And more than that: since it was in order to come to Christ-in exchange for the efficacy which they had formerly supposed to exist in the law as a means of justification-that they had ceased to seek righteousness by the law, Christ was a minister of sin. His doctrine had made them transgressors! For, in rebuilding the edifice of the law, they made it evident that they ought not to have overthrown it: and it was Christ who had made them do so. What a result from the weakness which, in order to please men, had returned to those things that were gratifying to the flesh! How little did Peter think of this: how little do many Christians suspect it: to rest upon ordinances is to rest upon the flesh; there are none in heaven. When Christ, who is there, is everything, it cannot be done. Christ has indeed established ordinances to distinguish His people from the world, by that which signified on the one hand that they were not of it, but dead and risen

with Him, and, on the other hand, to gather them on the ground of that which alone can unite them all; on the ground of the cross, and of accomplished redemption, in the unity of His body. But if, instead of using them with thanksgiving, according to His will, we rest upon them, we have forsaken the fullness, the sufficiency of Christ, to build upon the flesh, which can thus occupy itself with these ordinances, and find in them its fatal sustenance, and a veil to hide the perfect Savior, of whose death, as in connection with this world and with man living in the flesh, these ordinances so plainly speak to us. To rest upon Christian ordinances is exactly to deny the precious and solemn truth, which they present to us, that there is no longer righteousness after the flesh, since Christ is dead and risen. This the apostle deeply felt: this he had been called to set before the eyes and the consciences of men by the power of the Holy Ghost. How many afflictions, how many conflicts, his task cost him! The flesh of man likes to have some credit; it cannot bear to be treated as vile and incapable of good; to be excluded and condemned to annihilation, not by efforts to annul itself, which would restore it all its importance, but by a work that leaves it in its tame nothingness, and that has pronounced the absolute judgment of death upon it-so that convicted of being nothing but sin, it has only to be silent. If it acts, it is only to do evil. Its place is to be dead, and not better. We have both right and power to hold it as such, because Christ is dead, and we live in His risen life. He has Himself become our life. Alive in Him, I treat the flesh as dead; I am not a debtor to it. God has condemned sin in the flesh, in that His Son came in the fashion of the flesh of sin, and for sin. It is this great principle which the apostle sets forth at the end of the chapter. He had discovered that to be under a law was to find himself condemned to death. He had undergone, in spirit, the whole force of this principle; his soul had realized death in all its power. He was dead; but in this case it was dead to the law. The power of a law does not reach beyond life; and, its victim once dead, it has no more power over him. Now, Paul had acknowledged this truth; and, attributing to the principle of law its whole force, he confessed himself to be dead by law; dead then to law. But how? Was it by undergoing the eternal consequences of its violation? By no means. It is quite another thing here. Instead of violating the law, he acknowledged its force in his soul, but in death, in order that he might live to God. But where could he find this life, since the law only slew him? This he explains. It was not himself, in his own responsibility,-exposed as he was to the final consequences of the violation of the law,-who could find life in it. Christ had been crucified: He who could suffer the curse of the law of God, and death, and yet live in the mighty and holy life which nothing could take away; which made it impossible for death to hold Him, although, in grace, He tasted it. But the apostle (whom this same grace had reached, owning it, according to the truth, as a poor sinner in subjection to death, and blessing the God who granted him the grace of life and of free acceptance in Christ) had been associated with Christ by faith, he was crucified with Him; it is Christ whom death, under the law, had reached. The law had reached Saul, the sinner, in the person of Him who had given Himself for him, and it had now no more right over him, for the life to which the dominion of the law was attached, had come to its end upon the cross. Nevertheless, he lived; yet not he, but Christ, in that life in which Christ rose from among the dead; Christ lived in him. Thus the dominion of the law over him disappeared (while ascribing to the law all its force), because that dominion was connected with the life in regard to which he reckoned himself to be dead in Christ, who had really undergone death for this purpose. And Paul lived in that mighty and holy life, in the perfection and energy of which Christ was risen from among the dead, after having borne the curse of the law. He lived to God, and held the corrupt life of his flesh as dead. His life drew all its character, all its

mode of being, from the source whence it flowed. We have seen that, as to Paul's soul, it was by the faith of Jesus Christ. By faith in Jesus Christ, Paul lived indeed. The Christ who was the source of his life, who was his life, was its object also. It is this which always characterizes the life of Christ in us; He Himself is its object; He alone: the fact that it is by dying for us in love that He who was capable of it, the Son of God, has given us, thus freed from sin, this life as our own, being ever before the mind. In our eyes He is clothed with the love He has thus shown us. We live by faith of the Son of God, who has loved us, and given Himself for us. And here it is personal life, the individual faith that attaches us to Christ, and makes Him precious to us as the object of the soul's intimate faith. Thus the grace of God is not frustrated: for, if righteousness were established on the principle of law, Christ died in vain, since it would be by keeping the law ourselves that we should, in our own persons, acquire righteousness.

What a loss, dreadful and irreparable, to lose such a Christ, as we, under grace, have known Him; such a righteousness; such a love; the Son of God our portion, our life; the Son of God devoted for us, and to us. It is indeed this which awakens the strong feelings of the apostle: " O foolish Galatians," he continues, " who has bewitched you?" Christ had been portrayed as crucified before their eyes. Thus their folly appeared still more surprising, in thinking of what they had received, of what, in fact, they were enjoying under the gospel, and of their sufferings for the sake of that gospel. Had they received the Spirit through works done on the principle of law, or through a testimony received by faith? Having begun by the power of the Spirit would they carry the thing on to perfection by the wretched flesh? They had suffered for the gospel, for the pure gospel, unadulterated with Judaism and the law. Was it then all in vain? Again, He who ministered to them the Spirit, and worked miracles among them, was it through works on the principle of law, or in connection with a testimony received by faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. It was the principle established by God in the case of the father of the faithful. Therefore, they who placed themselves by grace on the principle of faith, they were the children of Abraham." And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles through faith, preached this Gospel before-hand to Abraham, saying, " In thee shall all nations be blessed." So that we have the principle on which Abraham stood before God, and the declaration that it was in him the Gentiles should be blessed. Thus, they who are on the principle of faith are blessed with Abraham the believer; while the law pronounced an express curse on those who did not keep it in every point. This use of the 27th chapter of Deuteronomy has been considered elsewhere. I would call to mind only that the twelve tribes, having been divided into two companies of six each, the one to announce the blessing and the other the curse; the curses alone were recited-the blessings entirely omitted. At the same time, the Scripture plainly set forth that it was not the works of the law that justified; for it said, " The just shall live on the principle of faith." Now the law was not on the principle of faith, but he who has done these things shall live by them. But was not this authority of the law to be maintained, as being that of God? Assuredly. But Christ had borne its curse (having redeemed and thus delivered those who - subject before to the sentence of the law - had now believed in Him); in order that the blessing of Abraham might reach the Gentiles through Him, so that all believers, both Jew and Gentile, should receive the Spirit who had been promised.

Christ had exhausted for the believer- who before was subject to the law and guilty of having broken it-all the curse that it pronounced on the guilty; and the law which distinguished Israel, had

lost its power over the Jew who believed in Jesus, through the very act that bore the most striking testimony to its authority. The barrier, therefore, no longer existed, and the former promise of blessing could flow freely (according to the terms in which it was made to Abraham) upon the Gentiles, through the channel of Christ who had put away the curse, that the law brought upon the Jew; and both Jew and Gentile, believing in Him, could receive the Holy Ghost, the subject of God's promises, in the time of blessing.

Having thus touched on this point, the apostle now treats, not the effect of the law upon the conscience, but the mutual relationship that existed between the law and the promise. Now the promise had been given first, and not only given, but it had been confirmed; and had it been but a human covenant solemnly confirmed, it could neither be added to nor annulled. But God had engaged Himself to Abraham by promise, 430 years before the law, having deposited, so to say, the blessing of the Gentiles in his person (Gen. 12). This promise was confirmed to his seed (Isaac: Gen. 22), and to only one, he does not say to the seeds, but to the seed, and it is Christ who is this seed. A Jew would not deny this last point. Now the law, coming so long after, could not annul the promise that was made before and solemnly confirmed by God, so as to render it of no effect. For if the inheritance were on the principle of law, it was no more on that of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Wherefore, then, the law? since the unchangeable promise was already given, and the inheritance must come to the object of that promise, the law having no power to change it in any way. It is because there is another question between the soul and God, or, if you will, between God and man, namely, that of righteousness. Grace, which chooses to bestow blessing, and which promises it beforehand, -is not the only thing which God has at heart, although it is the only source of blessing for us. The question of righteousness must be settled with God the question of sin and of the guilt of man.

Now the promise, which was unconditional and made to Christ, did not raise the question of righteousness. It was necessary that it should be raised, and in the first place by requiring righteousness from man who was responsible to produce it and to walk in it before God. Man ought to have been righteous before God. But sin had already come in, and it was in reality to make sin manifest, that the law was brought in. Sin was indeed present, this will of man was in rebellion against God, but the law drew out the strength of that evil will, and it manifested its thorough contempt of God by overleaping the barrier which the prohibition of God raised between it and its desires.

The law was added that there might be transgressions, not (as we have seen already, when meditating on the Romans where this same subject is treated) that there might be sin, but that there might be transgressions, through which the consciences of men might be reached, and the sentence of death and, condemnation made to be sensibly felt on their light and careless hearts. The law was, therefore, introduced between the promise and its fulfillment, in order that the real moral condition of man should be made manifest. Now the circumstances under which it was given rendered it very obvious, that the law was in no wise the means of the fulfillment of the promise, but that, on the contrary, it placed man upon an altogether different ground, which made him know himself; and, at the same time, made him understand the impossibility of his standing before God on the ground of his own responsibility. God had made an unconditional promise to the seed of Abraham. He will infallibly perform it, for He is God. But in the communication of the law there is nothing immediate and direct from God. It is ordained by the hand of angels. It is not God who, in

speaking, engages Himself simply by His own word to the person in whose favor the promise is to be fulfilled. The angels of glory who had no part in the promises (for it was angels who shone in the glory of Sinai; see Psa. 68) invested, by the will of God, the proclamation of the law with the splendor of their dignity. But the God of the angels and of Israel stood apart, hidden in His sanctuary of clouds and fire and thick darkness. He was encompassed with glory. He made Himself terrible in His magnificence, but He did not display Himself. He had given the promise in person—a mediator brought the law. And the existence of a mediator necessarily supposes two parties. But (and it was the foundation of the whole Jewish religion) God was one. There was, therefore, another on whom the steadfastness of the covenant made at Sinai depended. And, in fact, Moses went up and down, and carried the words of the Lord to Israel, and the answer of Israel, who engaged themselves to perform that which the Lord imposed on them as a condition of the enjoyment of the effect of His promise. "If ye will indeed obey my voice," said the Lord. "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," replied Israel intermediately through Moses. What were the consequences? The apostle, with touching tenderness, as it appears to me, does not answer this question, does not deduce the necessary consequences of his argument. His object was to show the difference between the promise and the law, without needlessly wounding the heart of a people whom he loved. On the contrary, he endeavors at once to prevent any offense that might arise from what he had said; farther developing at the same time his thesis. Was the law against the promises of God? By no means. If a law had been given that was to impart life, then righteousness (for that is our subject in this passage) should have been by the law. Man, possessing divine life, would have been righteous in the righteousness that he had accomplished. The law promised the blessing of God on the terms of man's obedience: if it could have given life at the same time, this obedience would have taken place, righteousness would have been accomplished on the ground of law; they to whom the promise had been made would have enjoyed its fulfillment by virtue of their own righteousness. But it was the contrary which happened, for, after all, man, whether Jew or Gentile, is a sinner by nature; without law, he is the slave of his unbridled passions; under law, he shows their strength by breaking the law. The Scripture has shut up all under sin, in order that this promise, by faith in Jesus Christ, should be accomplished in favor of those that believe.

Now, before faith came, i.e. Christian faith, as the principle of relationship with God, before the existence of the positive objects of faith in the person, the work, and the glory of Christ, as man, had become the means of establishing the faith of the Gospel, the Jews were kept under the law, shut up with a view to the enjoyment of this privilege which was to come. Thus the law had been to the Jews as a child's conductor up to Christ, in order that they might be justified on the principle of faith. Meanwhile, they were not without restraint; they were kept apart from the nations not less guilty than they, but kept separate for a justification, the necessity of which was made more evident by the law which they did not fulfill, but which demanded righteousness from man; thus showing that God required this righteousness. But when once faith had come, man—until then subject to the law—was no longer under the tutelage of this law, which only bound him until faith was come. For this faith, placing man immediately in the presence of God, and making the believer a son of the Father of glory, left no more place for the guidance of the tutor employed during the nonage of one who was now set free, and in direct relationship with the Father. The believer, then, is a son in immediate connection with his Father, with God; God Himself being manifested. He is a son, because all who have been baptized to have part in the privileges that are

in Christ, have put on Christ. They are not before God as Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, male or female; they are before God according to their position in Christ, all one in Him, Christ being, for all, the common and only measure of their relationship with God. But this Christ was, as we have seen, the seed of Abraham: and if the Gentiles were in Christ, they entered consequently into this privileged position; they were, in Christ, the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise made to that seed.

The relative position, therefore, of the Jew (even though he were godly) before the coming of Christ, and of the believing Jew or Gentile when Christ had been revealed, is clearly set forth; and in the commencement of the fourth chapter the apostle sums up that which he had said. He compares the believer before the coming of Christ to a child under age, who has no direct relation with his father as to his thoughts, but who receives his father's orders without his accounting for them to him, as a servant would receive them. He is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the Father. Thus the Jews, although they were heirs of the promises, were not in connection with the Father and His counsels in Jesus, but were in tutelage to principles that appertained to the system of the present world, which is but a corrupt and fallen creation. Their walk was ordained of God in this system, but did not go beyond it. We speak of the system by which they were guided, whatever divine light they might receive from time to time to reveal Heaven to them, to encourage them in hope, while making the system under the rule of which they were placed yet darker. Under the law, then, heirs as they were, they were still in bondage. But when the time was fulfilled and ripe for it, God sent forth His Son, an act flowing from His sovereign goodness for the accomplishment of His eternal counsels, and for the manifestation of all His character. It was God who did it. It was He who acted. The law required man to act, and it manifested man to be just the contrary of that which he ought to have been according to the law. But the Son of God comes from God. He requires nothing. He is manifested in the world in relation with men under the double aspect of a man born of woman and a man under law.

If sin and death came in by the woman, Christ came into this world by the woman also. If through law man is under condemnation, Christ puts Himself under law also. Under this double aspect He takes the place in which man was found-He takes it in grace without sin, but with the responsibility that belonged to it-a responsibility which He alone has met. But still the object of His mission went much farther than the manifestation in His person of man without sin, in the midst of evil, and having the knowledge' of good and evil. He came to redeem those that were under law, in order that believers (be they who they may) should receive the adoption. Now, that Gentile believers had been admitted to share the adoption was proved by the sending of the Spirit, who made them cry, "Abba, Father." For it is because they are sons that God sent the Spirit of His Son into their heart as well as into that of the Jews without distinction. The Gentile, a stranger to the house, and the Jew, who under age differed in nothing from a servant, had each taken the position of a son, in direct relation with the Father-a relation of which the Holy Ghost was the power and the witness-in consequence of the redemption wrought in their behalf by the Son; the Jew under the law needing it as much as the Gentile in his sins. But its efficacy was such that the believer was not a bondman but a son, and, if a son, an heir also of God by Christ. Previously, the Gentile had been in bondage, not, indeed to the law, but to that which, in its nature, was not God. They knew not God, and were the slaves of everything that boasted of the name of God, in order to blind the heart of man, alienated from Him who is the true God, and from His knowledge.

But what were these Gentiles, become Christians, now doing? They desired to be again in bondage to these wretched elements, worldly and carnal, to which they had formerly been in subjection; things of which the carnal man could form his religion, without one moral or spiritual thought, and which placed the glory due to God in outward observances, which an unbeliever and a heathen ignorant of God could call his religion, and glory in it.

As figures, which God used to bear testimony beforehand to the realities that are in Christ, they had their true value. God knew how to reconcile the employment of these figures, which are profitable to faith, with a religious system that tested man in the flesh, and that served to answer the question, whether, with every kind of help, man was able to stand before God and to serve Him. But, to go back to these ordinances made for man in the flesh, now that God had shown man's incapability of becoming righteous before Him, now that the substance of these shadows was come, was to go back to the position of men in the flesh, and to take that standing without any command of God that sanctioned it. It was to go back to the ground of idolatry, that is to say, to a carnal religion, arranged by man without any authority from God, and which in no way brought man into connection with Him. For things done in the flesh certainly had not that effect. "Ye observe days and months and seasons and years." This the heathens did in their human religion. Judaism was a human religion ordained of God, but, by going back to it when the ordinance of God was no longer in force, they did but go back to the paganism out of which they had been called to have part with Christ in heavenly things. "I fear concerning you," said the apostle, "that I have labored in vain." But they reproached the apostle with not being a faithful Jew according to the law, with freeing himself from its authority. "Be ye then," said he, "as I am; for I am as ye are, namely, free from the law. Ye have done me no wrong in saying so. Would to God ye were as much so," He then reminds them of his thorn in the flesh. It was some circumstance adapted to make him contemptible in his ministry. Nevertheless, they had received him as an angel of God, as Jesus Christ. What was become of that blessedness? Had he become their enemy because he had told them the truth? Zeal was good; but if it had a right thing for its object, they should have persevered in their zeal, and not merely have maintained it while he was with them. These new teachers were very zealous to have the Galatians for their partisans, and to exclude them from the apostle, that they might be attached to themselves. He labored again, as though travailing in birth, in order that Christ should be formed, as if anew, in their hearts; a touching testimony of the strength of his Christian love. This love was divine in its character; it was not weakened by the disappointment of ingratitude, because its source was outside the attraction of its objects. Moses said, "Have I conceived all this people, that I should carry them in my bosom?" Paul is ready to travail in birth with them a second time.

He does not know what to say. He would like to be present with them, that he might by seeing them adapt his words to their condition, for they had really forsaken Christian ground. Would they then, since they desired to be under the law, hear the law? In it they might see the two systems, in the type of Hagar and Sarah; that of law, gendering to bondage; and that of grace, to liberty: nor that only, but the positive exclusion of the child of bondage from the inheritance. The two could not be united; the one shut out the other. The bond-child was born according to the flesh, the free-child according to the promise. For the law and the covenant of Sinai were in connection with man in the flesh. The principle of man's relationship with God, according to the law (if such relations had been possible), was that of a relationship formed between man, in the flesh, and the

righteous God. As to man, the law and the ordinances were only bondage. They strove to bridle the will, without its being changed. It is all-important to understand, that man, under the law, is man in the flesh. When born again, dead, and risen again, he is no longer under law, which has only dominion over man in that he is alive here below. Read ' Jerusalem which is above is our mother'-not the mother of us all.' It is in contrast with Jerusalem on earth, which, in its principles, answered to Sinai. And, observe, that the apostle is not here speaking of the violation of the law, but of its principle. The law, itself, puts man in a state of bondage. It is imposed on man in the flesh, who is opposed to it. By the very fact, that he has self-will, the law and that will are in conflict. Self-will is not obedience.

Ver. 27, presents some difficulty to many minds, because it is generally confounded with Hagar and Sarah. But it is a separate consideration, suggested by the idea of Jerusalem above. The verse is a quotation from Isa. 54, which celebrates the joy and glory of the earthly Jerusalem, at the beginning of the millennium. The apostle quotes it to show that Jerusalem had more children during the time of her desolation than when she had a husband. In the millennium, Jehovah, the Lord, will be her husband. He had been so before. At present, she is desolate, she bears not. Nevertheless, there are more children than previously when she was married. Such were the marvelous ways of God. All Christians are reckoned, when earth takes its course again, as the children of Jerusalem, but of Jerusalem with no husband and desolate, so that the Galatians were not to own it, as if God did still. Sarah was not without a husband. Here is a different order of thought. Without a husband and desolate, so that properly speaking, she has none, Jerusalem has more children now than in the best days of her career, when Jehovah was a husband to her. For, as regards the promise, the Gospel came forth from her. The Church is not of promise. It was a counsel hid in God, of which the promises had never spoken. Her position is a yet higher one; but, in this place, the apostle's instruction does not rise to that height. But we are also the children of promise, and not of the flesh. Israel, after the flesh, had no other pretension than to be the children of Abraham after the flesh. We are so only by promise. Now, the Word of God cast out the child of the bond-woman, born after the flesh, that he might not be heir with the child of promise. As to us, we are the children of promise. It is in this liberty, the liberty of Christ, that they were to stand fast, and not put themselves again under the yoke of the law. If they took that ground, they made themselves responsible to keep it personally and wholly, and Christ was of no effect to them. They could not rest upon the work of Christ for righteousness, and then hold themselves responsible to fulfill righteousness themselves according to the law. The two things contradict each other. Hence, too, it would. be no longer grace on which they stood. They forsook grace, in order to satisfy the requirements of the law. This is not the Christian's position.

Here is the Christian's position: He does not seek for righteousness before God as a man who does not possess it; he is the righteousness of God in Christ, and Christ Himself is the measure of that righteousness. The Holy Ghost dwells in Him. Faith rests in this righteousness, even as God rests in it, and this faith is sustained by the Holy Ghost, who turns the heart that is established in that righteousness towards the glory that is its recompense-a recompense which Christ enjoys already, so that we know what that righteousness deserves. Christ is in the glory that was due to the righteousness which He accomplished. We know the righteousness which He has accomplished, because God has owned it by setting Him at His right hand on high; the glory in which He is, is the just reward, as it is the proof, of that righteousness. The Spirit reveals the glory,

and seals to us that righteousness on which faith builds. It is thus that the apostle expresses it: " We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope (the hoped-for glory) of righteousness by faith. To us it is faith, for we have not yet the thing hoped for, i.e., the glory due to that righteousness." But Christ possesses it, so that we know what it is we hope for: It is by the Spirit that we know it, and that we have the assurance of the righteousness which gives us the title to possess it. It is by faith; for, in Christ, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avail anything, but faith working by love. There must be a moral reality.

The apostle's heart is oppressed at the thought of what they were rejecting, and the mischief this doctrine was doing. It overflows. In the midst of his argument, he interrupts himself: " Ye did run well, who has hindered you from obeying the truth?" To be so easily persuaded of this Judaizing doctrine, which was but a fatal error, was not the work of Him who had called them. It was not thus that, through grace, they had become Christians. A little leaven corrupted the whole. Nevertheless, the apostle regains his confidence by looking higher. By resting on the grace, which is in Christ towards His own, he can re-assure himself with regard to the Galatians. He stood in doubt, when he thought of them; he had confidence when he thought of Christ, that they would surely not be otherwise minded. Thus delivered from the evil, by grace, as in the moral case of the Corinthians, he was ready to punish all disobedience, when all that knew how to obey had been brought back fully to obedience; so, here, also, every heart that was susceptible of the influence of the truth, would be brought back to the power of the truth of Christ; and those who, active in evil, troubled them by false doctrine, those whose will was engaged in propagating error, should bear their burden. It is very beautiful to see the apostle's uneasiness, when he thinks of men-the fruit moreover of his love for them-and the confidence which he regains as soon as he lifts up his heart to the Lord. But his abrupt style, his broken and unconnected words, show how deeply his heart was engaged. The error that separated the soul from Christ was to him more terrible than the sad fruits of practical separation. We do not find the same marks of agitation in the epistle to the Corinthians; here, the foundation of everything was in question. In this case of the Galatians, the glory of Christ the Savior was at stake, the only thing that could bring a soul into connection with God; and on the other hand, it was a systematic work of Satan to overthrow the Gospel of Christ, as needed for the salvation of men.

Here, interrupting himself, he adds, And I, if I preach circumcision, why am I persecuted? It will, in fact, be seen, that the Jews were habitually the instigators of the persecution which the apostle suffered from the Gentiles. The spirit of Judaism, as has been the case in all ages, the religious spirit of the natural man, has been Satan's great instrument in his opposition to the Gospel. If Christ would put His sanction on the flesh, the world would come to terms and be as religious as you please, and would value itself upon its devotion. But, in that case, it would not be the true Christ. Christ came, a witness that the natural man is lost, wicked, and without hope, dead in his trespasses and sins, that redemption is necessary, and a new man. He came in grace, but it was because man was incapable of being restored; and, consequently, all must be pure grace and emanate from God. If Christ would have to do with the old man, all would be well-but, I repeat, He would no longer be Christ. The world then, the old man, does not endure him. But there is a conscience, there is a felt need of religion, there is the prestige of an ancient religion held from one's fathers; true, perhaps, in its original foundations, although perverted. Thus the prince of the world will use carnal religion to excite the flesh, the ready enemy, when once awakened, of the

spiritual religion, which pronounces sentence upon it.

It -is only to add something to Christ. But what? If it is not Christ and the new man, it is the old man, it is sinful man: and, instead of a needed and accomplished redemption, and an entirely new life from above, you have a testimony that agreement between the two is possible, that grace is not necessary, except, at most, as a little help, that man is not already lost and dead in his trespasses and sins, that the flesh is not essentially and absolutely evil. Thus, the name of Christ is made subservient to the flesh, which willingly adorns itself with the credit of His name, in order to destroy the Gospel from its very foundations. Only preach circumcision, accept the religion of the flesh, and all difficulty will cease, the world will accept your gospel, but it will not be the Gospel of Christ. The cross, in itself (i.e., the total ruin of man-man proved to be the enemy of God), and perfect finished redemption by grace, will always be a stumbling-block to one who desires to maintain some credit for the flesh. Would to God, says the apostle,-for he sees the whole Gospel falling into ruin before this device, and souls destroyed,-would to God, that they who trouble you were cut off! What have we seen since then! Where is the holy indignation of the apostle.

He then touches on the point of the 'practical consequences of this doctrine, and explains how the doctrine of perfect grace was connected, without the law, with a walk worthy of the people of God. Ye have then been called, he says, unto liberty, only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh-which the flesh would readily do. God gave the law to convince of sin, the flesh would use it to work out righteousness. He acts in grace, that we may be above sin and outside its dominion, the flesh would use grace as an occasion to sin without restraint. The Christian, truly free from the yoke of Sin, as well as from its condemnation (for Christ risen, is his life as well as his righteousness, and the Spirit is the power and guide of his walk towards glory, and according to Christ), instead do serving his lusts, seeks to serve others, as free to do it in love. Thus the law itself is fulfilled, without our being under its yoke; for the whole practical law is summed in this word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

If, yielding to the flesh, and attacking those who were not circumcised, they devoured one another, they were to take heed that they were not consumed one of another. But the apostle would give something more positive. " This, I say then," he continues, after the brief interruption of his subject, " Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." It is not by putting oneself under the law that one has power against sin. It is the Spirit (given in virtue of the ascension of Christ, our righteousness, to the right hand of God), who is the Christian's strength. Now the two powers, the flesh and the Spirit, are antagonistic. The flesh strives to hinder us when we would walk according to the Spirit, and the Spirit resists the working of the flesh, to prevent it from accomplishing its will. But if we are led of the Spirit, we are not under the law. Holiness, true holiness, is accomplished without the law, even as righteousness has been. And there is no difficulty in judging between that which is of the flesh and that which is of the Spirit; the apostle enumerates the sad fruits of the former, adding the sure testimony that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. The fruits of the Spirit are equally evident in their character, and assuredly against such things there was no law. If we walk according to the Spirit, the law will find nothing to condemn in us. And they that are Christ's. have crucified the flesh and its lusts. This is what they are, inasmuch as they are Christians-it is that which distinguishes them. If these Galatians really lived, it was in the Spirit, let them then walk in the Spirit. Here is the answer to those who then sought, and now seek, to bring in law for sanctification and as a guide; the strength and the rule for

holiness are in the Spirit-the law does not give the Spirit. Moreover, for it is evident that these pretensions of observing the law had given liberty to the pride of the flesh-the Christian was not to be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another. If any one, through carelessness, committed some fault, the Christian's part was to restore this member of Christ, dear to Christ and to the Christian, according to the love of Christ, in a spirit of meekness, remembering that he himself might fall. If they wished for a law, here was one, to bear each other's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ, i.e., the rule of all His own life here. below. It is not by boasting, when one is nothing, that true glory was acquired. It is but deceiving oneself, says the apostle, in language which, by its simplicity, pours unspeakable contempt on those who did so. These legalists boasted much of themselves, imposed burdens on others, and investing themselves with their Judaic glory: that which was a burden to others, and one which they did not help them to bear, was vain glory to themselves. They gloried in their Judaism, and in making others subject to it-but what was their work? Had they labored really for the Lord? In no wise. Let them prove their own work; then they would have reason to glory in what they had done themselves, if there was any Christian work of which they had been the instruments. It certainly would not be in what they were doing then, for it was another who had done the work of Christ in Galatia. And after all, every one should bear his own burden.

The apostle adds a few practical words. He who was taught should, in temporal things, succor those who taught him. Furthermore, although grace was perfect and redemption complete, so that the believer received the Holy Ghost as a seal thereof, God had attached infallible consequences to a man's walk, be it after the flesh or after the Spirit. The effects followed the cause, and they could not mock God by making a profession of grace or Christianity if they did not walk according to its spirit, as led, in a word, by the Holy Ghost, who is its practical power. Of the flesh they would reap corruption; of the Spirit, life everlasting. But, as Christians, they must have patience, in order to reap and not grow weary of well doing; the harvest was sure. Let believers, then, do good to all, especially to those of the house of God.

Paul had written this letter with his own hand, an unusual thing for him. He generally employed others (as Tertius for the Epistle to the Romans), dictating to them that which he wished to say, adding the benediction with his own hand, as certifying the correctness of that which was written (1 Cor. 16; 2 Thess. 3:17). A remarkable proof of the importance that the apostle attached to his writings, and that he did not send them forth as ordinary letters from man to man, but as being furnished with an authority that required the use of such precautions. They were carefully invested with the apostolic authority. In this case, full of sorrow, and feeling that the foundations had been overthrown, he wrote the whole with his own hand: accordingly, in saying this, he returns immediately to the subject which had caused him to do so. Those who desired to make a fair show after the flesh constrained the Gentiles to be circumcised, in order to avoid the persecution that attached to the doctrine of the Cross, to free salvation by Christ. The circumcised were Jews, of a religion known and received even in this world; but to become the disciples of a crucified man, a man who had been hung as a malefactor, and to confess Him as the only Savior, how could the world be expected to receive it? But the reproach of the Cross was the life of Christianity; the world was judged, it was dead in its sin, the prince of the world was judged, he had only the empire of death; he was (with his followers) the impotent enemy of God. In the presence of a judgment like this, Judaism was honorable wisdom to the world. Satan would make himself a partisan of the

doctrine of one only God; and those who believed in it would join, themselves to their former adversaries, the worshippers of devils, in order to withstand this new enemy who cast reproach on the whole of fallen humanity, denouncing them as rebels against God, and as devoid of the life which was manifested in Jesus only. The Cross was the sentence of death upon nature; and the Jew in the flesh was offended at it, even more than the Gentile, because he lost the glory with which he had been invested before others, on account of his knowledge of the only true God. The carnal heart did not like to suffer, and to lose the good opinion of the world, in which a certain measure of light was accepted or tolerated by people of sense (and by sincere persons when there was no greater light to be had), provided they did not set up pretensions that condemned everybody, and judged everything which the flesh desired and relied on for its importance. A compromise which, more or less, accepts the flesh,-which does not judge it as dead and lost,-which, in however small a degree, will acknowledge that the world and the flesh are its basis,-the world will accept. It cannot hope to strive against the truth that judges the whole conscience, and it will accept a religion that tolerates its spirit and adapts itself to the flesh, which it desires to spare even when painful sacrifices must be made; provided only that the flesh itself be not entirely set aside. Man will make himself a fakeer, sacrifice his life, provided that it is self that does it, and that God shall not have done the whole in grace, condemning the flesh as incapable of well doing, having nothing good in itself.

The circumcised did not observe the law-that would have been too wearisome, but they desired to glory in proselytes to their religion. In the world, the apostle had seen nothing but vanity and sin and death; the spirit of the world, of the carnal man, was morally degraded, corrupt, and guilty, boasting in self, because ignorant of God. Elsewhere he had seen grace, love, purity, obedience, devotedness to the Father's glory and to the happiness of poor sinners. The cross declared the two things; it told what man was, it told what God was, and what holiness and love were. It was another who had accomplished it at the cost of His own life, bearing all possible sufferings; so that the apostle could give free course to all the affections of his heart without boasting himself of anything; on the contrary, forgetting himself. It is not self that we glory in when we look at the cross of Christ; one is stript of self. It was He who hung upon that cross who was great in Paul's eyes. The world which had crucified Him was thus seen by the apostle in its true character; the Christ who had suffered on the cross in His likewise. In that cross would the apostle glory, happy, by this means, to be dead to the world, and to have the world ended, crucified, put to shame, as it deserved to be, for his heart. Faith in the crucified Son of God overcomes the world. To the believer the world has its true character; for, in fact, in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value (all that has passed away with a dead Christ), but a new creature, according to which we estimate everything as God estimates it. It is to such, the true children of God, that the apostle wishes peace. It was not Israel circumcised after the flesh that was the Israel of God. If there were any of that people who were circumcised in heart, who gloried in the cross according to the sentiments of the new creature, those were the Israel of God. Moreover, every true Christian was of them, according to the spirit of his walk. Finally, let no one trouble him with regard to his ministry. He bore the stigmata of the Lord. It is known that marks were printed on a slave with a hot iron to indicate the person to whom he belonged. The wounds which the apostle had received fully showed who was his master. Let his right, then, to call himself the servant of Christ be no more questioned. Touching appeal from one whose heart was wounded at finding his service to the Master whom he had loved called in question! Moreover, Satan, who imprinted

those marks, ought, indeed, to recognize them-those beautiful initials of Jesus.

The apostle desires that grace be with them (according to the divine love that animated him), But as souls dear to Christ whatever their state might be. But there is no outpouring of heart in greetings affectionately addressed to Christians. It was a duty-a duty of love-which he fulfilled; but for the rest, what links of affection could he have with persons who sought their glory in the flesh, and who accepted that which dishonored Jesus, and which weakened and even annulled the glory of His cross. Without any wish of his, the current of affection was checked. The heart turned to the dishonored Christ, although loving those that are His in Him. This is the real feeling contained in the last verses of this epistle.

On Gifts and Offices in the Church

It is far more happy to be occupied in considering the riches of the grace of God and of the love of Christ, than to be discussing questions of offices and of institutions. It is, however, at times necessary to speak about these also, when they are put forward with a view of troubling the peace of Christians and of exciting their minds, as if their Christianity were defective, as if they were walking disorderly, and as if, before God, something were lacking to them. It is, then, in order to clear up these contested points, and to tranquillize the minds of Christians, that I would say a few words upon offices and gifts. I do so, however, with the most fervent desire that each one, after being really enlightened upon the subject, may turn from these questions and leave them entirely alone, so as to be occupied with Christ, and his exhaustless love and immeasurable grace. For it is that which nourishes and edifies, while questions tend to dryness and barrenness of soul.

There is a great difference between gifts and charges. Gifts flow down from The Head, which is Christ, among the members, so as to assemble, by their means, the church outside of the world, and to build it up so far as thus gathered together.

Those to whom charges were entrusted, were as such "overseers," or "servants," established in each locality by the apostles, and who received from them, their position and their authority. They might have gifts - and it was desirable that they should; but very often they had none. In either case, when they were faithful and devoted to their service, they were blessed of God. We will now examine the instruction of Holy Scripture concerning gifts.

Everything which is good is a gift, and comes from God. But, here, we speak of gifts in a rather more restricted, and more limited sense; viz., the gifts bestowed by God for the gathering together of His Church and for its edification, according as it is written: " Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Eph. 4:8). That is, the gifts of which we speak are those which, according to Scripture, Christ received from the Father, after having ascended up on high, to be Head over all things to the Church.

Man, through sin, has brought many a thing to a close in ruin. Without law, he was lost in dissoluteness, in independence, in towering violence and corruption. Under the law, he became a transgressor and despiser of the authority of God. God visited man in mercy, there where he was lying in misery, vile, and disobedient; and man has rejected God. He was a sinner, driven out of the earthly paradise. God came down into the world of this misery of man's; but, so far as it lay in man's power to do it, he drove God out of the world. There remains thus, for man-as altogether the servant of the prince and god of this world-nothing but judgment. God will not, however, in any, even the least respect, fail to accomplish his own designs. Every hope for the first man, as such, is lost. But God has glorified the second man, Adam, even Him who was obedient (the Lord from heaven), and has taken Him up into the heavenly place predestined for Him. Yet He still acts in grace upon the hearts of the children of men, to give them a new life, and to gather the objects of His grace outside of the world, uniting them to Christ glorified, so that they may enjoy, together with Him, all blessings, and which is more precious than all else, that they may rejoice together

with Him in the Father's love. Thus, those that are born again are also members of Christ, of Him who is the Head of the body. But there is still another truth which connects itself with the object we have in view; viz., that Christ has won that position, by the accomplishment of the work of redemption. We were captives of the Devil and of sin. Now we are set free; Christ has led captivity captive, and he fills those whom He sets free, with the power of the Holy Spirit, that they may serve Him. Having overcome Satan and finished the work of redemption, He is ascended up on high, and, as Head of the Church, He has received of the Father, the Holy Spirit of promise, for the members of His body.

The Christian being redeemed, receives the Holy Spirit in two manners. He is sealed with the Spirit, the earnest of our inheritance, and, thus, is one with the Lord, and united to Him; then, he has received the Holy Spirit as power for service to Christ. Such is the way the gifts connect themselves with these truths. The work of redemption is accomplished; and believers are perfectly purified from their sins, so that, by virtue of the blood of Christ, wherewith they are sprinkled, the Holy Spirit can dwell in them. Christ having glorified God, His Father, upon earth, has sat down, as Man, at the right hand of God, as Head of the Church, whose everlasting righteousness He is. As such, He has received the Holy Spirit for His members; that is to say, for those that believe in Him (Acts 2:33; Eph. 4:8). We are the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). Already the Holy Spirit-sent by the Father in the name of the Son - and come down from the Son, dwelling in believers as the witness of His glory and the Spirit of power, as the Spirit of liberty and adoption, on behalf of the Father, and as coming from the Father, in order to communicate to them the certainty of salvation, and also to accomplish on the earth, as power and wisdom, the work of the Lord, in the members of the body. All important and precious as is the first named point, we will, for the present, leave it, in order to say a few words on gifts. The Holy Spirit is upon earth, in virtue of the finished work of redemption, and of the session of Christ at the right hand of God. There He acts, by means of the gospel, so as to proclaim the love of God, to gather together the elect, and to form of them one body, the body of Christ. Every converted soul which has received the life of Christ, and been sealed with the Holy Spirit, is a member of Christ, of the heavenly Head. We can consider, then, the gifts, as either the gifts of Christ, or as the operation of the Holy Ghost now upon the earth.

The holy Scripture gives us both of these aspects. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. iv., it speaks of the gifts of Christ. In 1 Cor. 12 and 14, it speaks of the unity of the body, and of the gifts as produced by the Spirit in the different members. In each case, the gifts are in connection with the unity of the body, as may be easily seen, by reading the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Before going further, let it be remarked, that the gifts are of two kinds: 1st. Such as serve to awaken souls, and to gather the Church; and 2nd, such as are signs to the world, signs of the presence of God in the Person of the Spirit in the Church. The Epistle to the Ephesians speaks to us only of the former; the Epistle to the Corinthians speaks of both. The word of God itself makes the above distinction, when it says that tongues are for a sign to unbelievers, and prophesyings are for believers (1 Cor. 14:22). This distinction is important, because it is impossible that anything should fail which is necessary for the conversion of souls, and for the building up of saints; whereas it is easy enough to conceive that God should withdraw that which was an ornament to the Church, and a token of its acceptability, when the Church is unfaithful, and when, instead of

honoring God, she has grieved the Spirit. Nevertheless, this external testimony remained, according to the wisdom of God, in the Church, so long as it was needed, in order to confirm the preaching of the truths of the gospel.

All gifts proceed immediately from Christ, the Head, and have their existence in believers by the energy of the Holy Spirit. The chapters Eph. 4 and 1 Cor. 12, present to us these two important truths very clearly and very explicitly, while at the same time they give us their principle and their development. Eph. 4 treats exclusively of the gifts which serve for the gathering and edification of the church. Christ is ascended up on high, and has received gifts for men, who, in the enjoyment by faith of the work of Christ in redemption, by the which they are completely delivered from the power of Satan, to which they were previously subject - having, also been made vessels of the grace and power which flows down from on high - of Christ, who is the Head - become instruments of the Christ who is absent, by means of the gifts which are communicated to them. The Lord laid the foundation by the apostles and prophets, who are (says the apostle Paul, Eph. 2) the foundation, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. There yet abide evangelists, pastors, and teachers; and, so long as Christ loves the Church, and is the alone Source of grace - so long as He desires to nourish the members of His own body - these same gifts will remain for the edification of the Church. But whereas - while the healthful action of these gifts is by means of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit-Christians are, unhappily, often unfaithful, and neglect His rebukes, it comes to pass that the development of the gifts, and their public efficacy, are little apparent, and their activity is diminished. This is true in general; and that both as to individual Christian life, and as to the practical state of the Church. But it is not the less true, that Christ always faithfully cares for His own body. On that care we can always count, though, as to details, we may be humbled on account of our own unfaithfulness. Also, the Lord has said, the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few; and that we should pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers.

Every one who has received a gift has, thereby, become servant of Him who communicated it to him. In every case we are the servants of Christ, who alone is Lord of our souls; but every Christian, in particular, is His servant, as to any gift He may have conferred upon him; and, because He has conferred it on him, each one is responsible both to use it and to trade upon it. I mean to trade with it, with the view for which Christ communicated it. Without doubt, each Christian is subject to the general discipline of the Church, or of the assembly, both as to his whole life and as to his service. But he serves Christ, and not men. He brings forth fruit for the assembly, because he serves Christ-he renders service to Christians, because he is the servant of Christ the Lord. Also, he must needs serve, because he is the servant of Christ, and has received, for that end, a part of his Lord's goods. Such is the doctrine of the parable of the three servants, whose lord went into a far country, and gave unto them of his goods; to the one more, to the other less. With what view; that they might be idle and listless? No; he committed to them the talents in order that they might trade with them. We do not commit materials and tools to men, in order that they may do nothing. Not only is such a thought senseless, but, if the love of Christ and His love to souls energizes in our hearts, idleness and inaction are altogether impossible.

The presence and the activity of Christ's love in our hearts is thus, in truth, tested. If the love of Christ be active in my heart, would it be possible for me to remain inactive in any case in which I could be of use to one soul beloved of Him? Certainly not. The power to act thus, the wisdom

needful to do it, in a way which would be agreeable to Him, come, always and directly from Himself, while the love of Christ in the heart is that which keeps the heart lively. In order to have courage for action, I must have confidence in Christ, otherwise the heart will say, " Perhaps He will not accept what I do "; " it may be He will not be content with me "; " would not this be too rash, too hasty?" " it might be proud to attempt that." The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the way "; whereas love is not inactive, but intelligent, because it confides in Christ: Love apprehends what Love wishes; it yields itself to the will of Christ, and follows the example of Christ, its guide. Such is the action of that very love which is in Christ, and which acts with humble and true wisdom. It is obedient and intelligent, understanding from grace its duty, and drawing out of the love of Christ courage to fulfill it. And whose conduct did Christ approve of and accept? Was it his who, out of a heart's confidence, labored without any other commandment, or his who was afraid to do so? We all know the answer. The approbation of Christ suffices for the heart of the Christian, and suffices for his justification in his deed. Brethren, when we have His acceptance manifest and declared, we may leave all the rest alone. This is just what to be faithful to Christ means. Let us have patience. He will judge everything ere long. Till then let us walk by faith His word is enough for us. At the time appointed He will justify us before the world, and will put full honor upon His own word and our faith.

The Lord Jesus has, then, received these gifts as Himself a Man, and has given them to men, for the effectuating the work of the Gospel and of the Church; those, therefore, who have received these gifts must needs turn them to their full profit, according to God, to win souls, to edify Christians, and to glorify their Lord and Heavenly Master. In the fourth chapter of Ephesians, we have seen the gifts of edification represented as being trusts made here below by Christ Himself ascended up on high, while the members of His body upon the earth are being gathered, and while, by means of an activity which acts the one upon the other, the body grows, and is at the same time kept from every wind of doctrine, until it come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

The gifts are looked at in 1 Cor. 12 rather according to the energy of the Holy Spirit upon earth, who distributes them to each as He will. Therefore we find here, not only gifts of edification, but all those which are the result of the power of the Spirit and signs of His presence. This chapter examines everything which can be considered as a spiritual manifestation; and while it distinctly speaks of the action of the power of devils, it shows us the means of distinguishing these from divine gifts. It sets forth, in the very clearest manner, the doctrine of the body and members of Christ, drawing our attention to this: that there is but one only Lord, by whose authority those who have gifts labor whether in the world, or in the assembly of saints- to accomplish the work of God by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. Each member is dependent upon the action of the others, because all have been baptized by one and the same Spirit.. In the chapters Rom. 12 and 1 Peter 4:10, the gifts are briefly enumerated. In Romans, again, as the members of the body of Christ, and, in general, with the object of exhorting those who possess gifts not to go beyond that which has been given to them, but to keep within the limits of their gift. In 1 Peter 4, the Holy Spirit exhorts Christians to use the gifts which have been bestowed upon them, as the immediate and faithful stewards of God Himself; to speak as the oracles of God; to serve as by the ability received of God. In all this teaching, we find nothing about office; the subject is simply the members of the body of Christ who all take their part in the edifying of the body, and who are held responsible to

do so. All do not speak-. all do not preach the Gospel - all do not teach, because all have not these gifts; but all are obliged, according to Scripture, to do (according to the scriptural order of the house of God) that which God has given them to do. When once it is understood that all Christians are members of Christ, and that each member has his own proper work, his own service in the body, all becomes simple and clear. We have all a duty to fulfill, and that in the strength of God; and the less seen is, perhaps, the most precious, while exercising itself before God and not before man. But all have something to do. To say that all have office is to deny that there are special offices. Nothing can be clearer, if we examine history and the instruction of Scripture upon this point. We see in it that in that which concerns either the preaching of the Gospel in the world, or the edification of Christians in gathering, the question is never about office, but that all depends upon gifts.

Let us turn to a few passages in proof of this assertion.

We have already called attention to Matt. 25 In the parable of the talents committed to the three servants, the Lord lays down this principle, that two of them are worthy of praise because they had traded, without being otherwise authorized than by the fact itself, that their lord had committed to them his money; while the third is blamed and punished for having expected a warrant, because he had not confidence in his lord, and had not dared to trade without some further obligation. This means, that the gifts themselves are, for the workman, a warrant or authorization fully sufficient to trade with the gift which he has, if the love of Christ constrains his heart; but if this love is not there, he is under responsibility; and the proof that the love of Christ is not in action in him is, that he has not served by means of his gift - he is a bad and a lazy servant. Christ gives not gifts with the object that we should not turn them to profit; He gives them, rather, that we may use them with energy. We find also, that, in point of fact, so it was among the early Christians. When the persecution which ensued upon the death of Stephen had dispersed the Christians, they went everywhere preaching the Gospel (Acts 8:4). And we read, 11:21, that the hand of the Lord was with them. But is it possible that if I know the means by which a soul may be saved, I ought not to announce that way, though God may have rendered me able to do so? In private, any one can do such a thing; but the ability to preach in public is precisely the gift of God in this respect.

Paul, finding himself in prison at Rome, many of the brethren in the Lord waxed bold on seeing his bonds, and fearlessly dared to preach the Word (Phil. 1:13,14).

When false teachers go forth to seduce the Lord's people, the receiving them or the not receiving them in no wise depends upon any office they have, or upon the absence of an official character. Even a woman is directed to judge for herself by doctrine (2 John). It did not for an instant come into the thought of the apostle to use such a means as the possession of office, in order to guard a woman on the occurrence of a time of difficulty; he simply writes to her to judge each according to his doctrine. It does not even come into his head to counsel this woman, to ask of him who presents himself as preacher whether he has office, or is consecrated, or ordained. On the contrary, he praises the beloved Gaius, because he had received the brethren who were gone forth in the name of Christ; and he exhorts him, to bring them on their way in a manner worthy of God. In so doing, Gaius would become a co-laborer with the truth (3 John, 8).

So far as the preaching of the Gospel is concerned, the Word of God, then, confirms this doctrine, that each, according to his capacity, and the opportunities which God in His grace affords him, is

obliged to announce the good news.

The Scripture is quite clear, also, as to the edification-of believers. Not only does it present us with this general truth, that Christ has given gifts, and that the Holy Spirit acts thereby, in order that we may fulfill the work of God in every way (Eph. 4 and 1 Cor. xii.); but, moreover, it speaks with exactness and clearness of the duty of those who possess gifts. The Holy Spirit says by the mouth of Peter (1 Peter 4:10) - "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Then, in 1 Cor. 14, we find the order according to which the exercise of gifts should take place-"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." James shows us distinctly the true limits of this service, without reference to office, when he says that believers should not be many teachers, because that the responsibility thereof would be all the greater, and that (since we all in various ways offend) they would suffer a so much the greater judgment. It is, then, perfectly certain that gifts, and the service which believers render by gifts, are completely independent of the possession of office; and that those to whom God has communicated these gifts are obliged to use them for the edification of the saints. The Scripture gives the rules according to which the exercise of the gifts ought to take place; it requires that the spirits of the prophets be subject to the prophets, and that all be done unto edification, in such wise that there be no disorder in the assembly. As to office, the Scripture says not one single word upon this subject in this respects

It is remarkable, that, in the epistle to the Corinthians, elders are never once mentioned; and there, where there existed so much trouble and evil, the apostle, nevertheless, does not propose Now, on this subject, we beg that it may be remarked, that between Gift and Office there exists a great difference, and that this difference depends upon the nature of the two things. The gift has its course, it is available everywhere. If I am an evangelist, I shall preach the gospel wheresoever God may call me. Am I a teacher? I shall teach believers according to my ability, wheresoever I may chance to find myself. Apollos teaches at Ephesus; he is also of use to believers at Corinth. But if any one has received an office, he fulfills the service which is connected with it in the determinate place where he has been nominated thereunto. Is he an elder, or a deacon at Ephesus, he ought to fulfill his office at Ephesus; his official authority is valid at Ephesus. At Corinth he would have none. The possessors of office are not, as such, members of the body of Christ; though those who are installed therein are themselves individually such. The gifts, as gifts, are the various members of the body (see Eph. 4, 1 Cor. 14, and Rom. 12), who ought to render their service according to the will of God, wheresoever they may find themselves. The Scripture never says that an evangelist is the evangelist of an assembly or of a flock; neither does it recognize a teacher or a pastor of a flock; but God has put such gifts in the Church, in the body of Christ. "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him, in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the to the assembly

to nominate or establish elders; but he acts upon the conscience of Christians by the word, in order that they may be roused to remove the evil.

whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. 4:11-16). There were, without any question, at the commencement, offices in the assemblies; we find two kinds of them in the Holy Scriptures; overseers and servants, and if any one is pleased to make the distinction, sisters in service. The first named were ordinarily (presbyteroi) what are now called elders. The others were deacons or deaconesses. We do not find, however, that elders were established in any determinate manner among the Christian Jews. Among the Christians who had been called by grace, from among the Heathen, we see very clearly, that they were chosen and installed in their charge by the apostles or their delegate. We read in Acts xiv. 29, that Paul and Barnabas choose, in each town, elders for the assemblies; and in Crete the apostle left Titus, in order that he might establish elders in every town. As to Timothy, although that was not his service, having been left by the apostle at Ephesus, to watch as to doctrine, yet he received from Paul instruction as to the qualities suitable for an overseer. Nevertheless, the apostle did not enter into conference upon this point with the assemblies; but he did everything himself personally, or else he entrusted this service exclusively to his delegate; even there where assemblies were already formed.

We find but little in Scripture about the servants (or deacons). In the sixth chapter of the Acts, we read that the apostles, not wishing to have any more to serve tables, require the Christians to choose seven from among themselves, who should fulfill the duties of deacons, though they are not called by the name; and to say the least, they had in many respects the suited qualifications which are enumerated by the apostle Paul to Timothy and to Titus.

It may be asked, What ought we to do, now that there are no apostles, as to elders? Our God who has, in all times, foreknown the wants of His beloved Church, has given us the answer in the Word, and has taken sufficient heed of these wants. We read, " And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (1 Thess. 5:12,13); at the same time, the apostle distinctly sets forth the common responsibility of all the saints. " Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men" (1 Thess. 5:14,15).

In Heb. 13 he speaks of the real leaders of the assembly. " Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Heb. 13:7). The word is the same as that used in Acts 15:22, " of Judas and Silas, chief men among the brethren."

Such ought to be esteemed among them. We see, *ibid.* ver. 7, that some of them were dead; yet we see here what had been their disposition; -but the rest still lived.

The duty of elders is that of oversight. In Acts 20 the apostle gives them this name (in our language, bishop, in Greek episcopos). We find this title again in the Epistle to the Philippians. In Acts 20:28,31, we see in what their duty consisted; to nourish with sound doctrine; to be watchful

against false teachers, and attentive to everything. The passage in 1 Peter 5:1-3, speaks the same thing.

The duty of deacons is also, as for the elders, expressed in their name. The Greek word diaconos, signifies servant. They served the assembly as its servants; there were also sisters (as Phoebe) with the same title. If we examine Acts 6, the seven who cared for the poor widows as deacons had this service specially allotted to them for their portion.

These were the offices, then, in the various assemblies, which the apostles, and Paul in particular, established when all was yet in order. There were in each assembly several elders.

Nevertheless, all the elders had not gifts. "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine" (1 Tim. 5:17). The deacons, like all other Christians, had to exercise them when they possessed them. The deacons, when they fulfilled their charge faithfully and carefully, found also their own spiritual profit therein. "For they that 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" (1 Tim. 3:13). As we may see most fully made good in the cases of Stephen and Philip, Acts 6; 7; 8.

We see, too, elsewhere, how Christians, without losing their proper responsibility according to grace, had to be subject to those that were at the work. "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth" (1 Cor. 16:15,16). The Christian can never lay aside his individual responsibility. The discipline of the assembly recalls to a walk according to that responsibility, when the Christian has forgotten so to walk. Brethren, then, who by the Lord's grace are called to the work, labor to maintain the Christian walk, to strengthen the feeble, to instruct the ignorant, to exhort and to encourage all, to nourish by the word and to render all able, by that divine nourishment, to honor God and the doctrine of the Savior-in short, to be in every way a help, the common responsibility being in view.

The Christian can say: All things are mine-the activity of the workman of God, as much as his efforts to remove every kind of evil. "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:22,23). The apostle says, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5).

These two public offices then are now entirely wanting to us; no one can restore them officially according to Holy Scripture, after a divine sort, because no one has received, in order to do so, authority or commission on the part of God to do so. But the Scripture provides morally for subjection to those whom God raises up to service: and inasmuch as Christ is infallibly faithful toward His body, and inasmuch as the Holy Spirit is always in the Church upon earth, the gifts necessary to the edification of the assembly are always there. The feeble state of the Church of God shows itself, it is true, in this respect as in every other; but Christ ever remains faithful, and cannot cease to nourish his members.

The doctrine of Scripture as to gifts has been almost forgotten; or else it is altogether set aside by assigning the right to edify men to those who have been placed by men in their positions-positions

which men have for the most part invented for themselves. And when even it is conceded that God furnishes the gifts, it is not any the more permitted to those who possess them, to exercise them without a sanction from man.

The confusion arising from the mixture of gifts and offices, which men have invented, has resulted in what is ordinarily called "clergy," and even worship; and it is carried so far as to maintain, that, if this confusion is not recognized, the service due to God is denied. But the true service to God is there, where each member of Christ serves God also (be it in the word, or be it for the edification of the brethren, and thus of the whole body of Christ) with the gift which Christ has communicated to him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

If the public re-establishment of the offices which Scripture recognizes is not possible, in the existing state of the Church, God has nevertheless previously ordained all that is necessary, all that is good for such a state, sad as it may be - as also He will infallibly give all that is useful to those who ask it of Him.

As to the imposition of hands, to authorize the exercise of gifts, the Scripture owns no such necessity. When hands were laid on the apostles Paul and Barnabas, they were simply recommended to the grace of God for the work which they then fulfilled. But both of these, had now for a long time exercised their gifts; it was not then on the part of the prophets at Antioch, anything else than a commendation to the grace of the Lord, for a special work. The twelve apostles laid their hands on the seven who are ordinarily called deacons; and though that is nowhere said, it is likely enough, from analogy, that the apostle Paul, or his delegates, laid hands on the elders. But as to the exercise of gifts, it is spoken of everywhere, as exercised without that ceremony, even in such a manner that (if it was necessary) all Christians ought to have the imposition of hands. It is as clear as the light of the sun, that, as all might "prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted" (1 Cor. 14:31) -, all, in effect, preached; and that many having spoken with divers tongues, the imposition of hands for the exercise of gifts was completely impossible.

The Scripture is ignorant of any official ceremony for the administration of the Lord's Supper, as men speak; and God nowhere therein declares, that it is the privilege of a person consecrated, or set apart, to administer it. "The disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7). Probably those who were esteemed among them began the breaking of bread, with prayer, before distributing it, because it is evidently comely as a general principle that such should have this place and not a service, and charity does not behave itself unseemly: nevertheless, Scripture has said nothing upon the subject. The blessing used in worship is but a giving of thanks, as we see in 1 Cor. 14:16, "Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" Even the Lord gave thanks before breaking the bread. "And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24).

God - I

Faith sets a man with God, and, as an individual, alone with God. Abel acted as an individual; Enoch walked alone with God; Noah found grace in His sight; Abram was called out from all, and was the friend of God. Joseph, and Moses, and Samuel, and David, and Daniel, and all the worthies of Faith's household, each found his springs to be in God - and his guidance to be from God.

How individual and solitary, too (not only on the ground of His being the only sinless, the only perfect One, but also in the mode of His walk), was the Blessed Lord! " Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God." "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" These were the mottoes of His life here below.

How beautifully, too, in the thief upon the cross, do we find his faith (divinely taught) setting Him alone with God-able to condemn, not only his own past course, but all that, the religious of that day were doing; and able to give to Christ a title true of him alone from among men. "This man hath done nothing amiss." He adds, " Lord! remember me... in Thy kingdom!" And the Lord's word to Peter is to be noted: "If I will that he [John] tarry till I come, what is that to thee? FOLLOW THOU ME."

The secret of all practical holiness in a believer is found in this individual walk with God-a walk which, as it keeps him in the light, where Christ is at the right hand of God, keeps him in humble self-judgment, because he sees the contrasts between Christ and himself-yet in firmness, because he has to do with God, and acts for and from God.

Directly I can say, God's word proclaims a thing to be unholy, I am to cease from it at once. It is unholy to me at least, and to tamper with it would be defilement. Every godly soul (that knows even Rom. 14) would assent to this: every godly soul must say, "Obey God rather than man; obey God according to your light, and do not go beyond it."

I have been asked (alas for the askers!) when so acting, " Are you infallible Are you going to lord it over the conscience of others?" My answer is simple: "I walk with God, and judge myself; not an inch for me on the road God's word seems to me to prohibit; right onward where the word enjoins me to go forward."

'Tis replied, " How do you know you are right?" I answer, "While walking in dependence upon God alone to lead me to see His mind, that I may do it-do you think He'll not be faithful to Himself 7 (John 7:17). And, as to the consciences of others, I lord it over no soul. Let each walk with God; but only let each remember, that if my walk is with God, alas! for him whose walk is not in the same pathway: be he before me or behind."

There is no holiness in communion - no " communion of saints," apart from this solitary walk with God - of the saints as individuals.

The restless disquietude of many around, convinces me they are not walking with God.

The Good News of God's Purpose in Revelation

Better gospel than can be gleaned from Revelation I know not.

It is the book of the actings of God in power; in power for and by His Christ, in spite of man's and Satan's wickedness. The world, the flesh, and the Devil, with all his wiles, get ejected to make way for God (even the Father), for the Christ (who is the Son of the Father), and for the blessed Spirit (our Present Comforter). First. Christ comes in to look after the candlesticks he had set up in the Churches to give light for God. Satan had again succeeded upon earth to show how little trustworthy man was; but Christ, in the midst of judgment remembers mercy, and separates each one that hath an ear to hear. No refuse fare is theirs; but stores as goodly as is their Savior's own portion.

Then John, caught up into heaven, finds that notwithstanding all man's failure below, there is an all above that is secure, and the secret of the security is this; the Lamb upon the throne has power and title before the Lord God Almighty, to all that He reserves to Himself on the one hand, and on the other hand, he has a heart and a mind to use all for his own, the poor broken people whose trust is in Him. The reserved book is taken by Him from the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne, and opened to John, - to John, for us.

The first four seals tell of the state of earth and man upon it -judgments reveal it. The fifth shows the housed-security of those who have suffered on it, and their now unhindered sympathy with the righteousness of God's judgments, and the graciousness of the sympathy to them as of the patience, for the sake of others, of Him who governs all. The sixth seal shows the moral state of man on earth. The injurious and blasphemers of God are ever dark enough in their suspicions of Him, to read Him according to what they themselves are to Him-ward.

A parenthesis, deep with meaning, follows. The Church was housed already-that Church which Israel never dreamed of, for it was the secret and the mystery of God. If she be housed - what next remains of the three great objects, " the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God," but the Jews and the Gentiles? These are for earth, she was for heaven. True, and yet it is the Lord's prerogative to act as He wills-and here He shows how deeply He delights in mercy and in grace. Resurrection and heaven seem to go together. But the risen and ascended Lord has to rule on earth too. He will separate for resurrection from the earth whom He will. He will call a remnant. 144,000 Jews-of the earthly kingdom 144,000-sealed that they may go unscathed through the judgments. He will call likewise, and have an innumerable company out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. The ektromatal Church (born out of season) may be the Bride, and these posthumous children may not be of it, but they shall be in resurrection to behold, and themselves to be witnesses of the heavenly divine grace of Him who is Head of His body, the Church, King of Israel, and the Covenant of the Gentiles. And not till these have been shown in the seventh chapter, do we find the censer by which prayer had mounted up to heaven filled with fire and cast down to the earth, as the sign of judgments to begin upon earth.

What follows can hardly be justly appreciated without recalling the state of things when Christ left the earth, and thereupon set up a new witness. The Jews were under judgment, and had to ask leave of the representative of the Head of the image of Daniel-the Gentile dynasty- to murder the Messiah. This leave was freely given (by that which had a beast's heart), and even Herod and Pontius Pilate struck hands in friendship, making up an old quarrel in the murder of the Prince of life. That Prince of life, from heaven, sent down the Holy Ghost-power to sustain the testimony of His weak servants-to Jew or Gentile. The body in service is found, however, judged in the churches (chap. 2 and 3 of this book), and, as we know, went on from bad to worse. Let any one that wishes to see the prophetic picture of it compare the sins of profession with the sins of the pagans. " This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with. sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was" (2 Tim. 3:1-9). " For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath skewed 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: because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and. their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:18-32).

Now, it is upon the three-ply knot of wickedness that God has to act, when judgment does begin. A Gordian knot in which Jewish iniquity, Gentile godlessness, and religious ungodliness are all found.

And even the maze is greater, for the two and the ten tribes are found to have different positions and different experiences in the last day; and, as to the Gentiles, not only does the image find its place and judgment, but also nations external to the prophetic earth (Gog and Magog, Tubal and Meshech and Rosh) come into question; while at the same time the religious corruption will not be merely what it ever has been, but Satan-inspired, and man worshipping. Now, what would man do with such a mass, but reject it all in the lump; not so Christ: in the midst of judgment he for the churches remembers mercy, and in mercy he for others remembers judgment. To cut off the wicked from among the godly, and to take forth the precious from among the vile, are two acts which, though differing, both tell of mercy as of judgment.

So when a cup of iniquity has been allowed to fill itself in a place that is consecrated, and the iniquity becomes so full that there is now no room for Christ, no answer from within to his name, heaven-sent judgments, in such a case, have still mercy in prospect. Now, such is the state of things and circumstances, supposed in these eighth and ninth chapters, Jews, Gentiles, and religious profession, are each of them upon territory in a place which Christ is to fill. None of them, at the time supposed, have room for Him, nor an ear to listen to Him. Heaven-sent judgments tell - not only God's estimate of the state - but, in this case, a claim over the place; and are the prelude to the introduction of Christ.

It is a great truth, little thought of that if God meets any one, or comes into any place, He ever is what he is; that which collies under various circumstances out from God, to the parties or place, takes its form according to what the state of that place or party may be, and according to God's thoughts and plans about it.

In the eighth and ninth chapters we get judgments of a peculiar character. They are not the mere disciplinary acting of God in His moral government; these actings, as in the book of Esther, so assuming the routine character of the world's course, that it needed a simple faith to see God hidden in the course of events. Nor are they, again, as those judgments of the first four seals, in the sixth chapter, the chastening rod of God in plagues, kept in His own hand as the sword, famine, and the pestilence. Nor are they the desolating, all-destroying blasts of His wrath, against what is being cast out from before Him as judged. They are awful judgments, telling that there is a righteous God who judges, judgments which turn the tide and current of man's wickedness, to accomplish the Lord's own purposes. And be it remembered, that man's forgetfulness of God, and of any titles in God, blots not out either God or His titles. He lives still, and He acts in spite of man's forgetfulness of Him as the Creator, as the God of Providence, God of Heaven, and of the whole earth, etc.; and, when He will, He shows that He still holds man responsible; and He exercises judgment, upon a Nineveh, or upon an Egypt, upon all, as He wills.

In chapter ten, God's claim to the land of promise is put in by the wonderful messenger there revealed-who is evidently the Lord Himself. That claim having once been put in, Jerusalem comes into question; and its strange moral state, and the strange moral state of the Gentiles, are brought to light in the eleventh chapter.

The chapter of the power and testimony of the two witnesses, evidently is not according to Paul and Peter's time and position, but according to that of Moses and Elias.

Precious, to the heart that loves Christ, the rejected, man of sorrow; precious to the heart, that for His sake is willing to be rejected here below, is the plain evidence of this eleventh chapter, viz., that the very scenes of the suffering of Christ are remembered by God; and that, therefore, a time will come when on this earth, and in-that part of it, an irresistible testimony shall be raised for Him who, if Lord of Heaven, is also Lord of Earth too.

That which seems to me to be emphatically the Gospel of the tenth and of the eleventh chapters, is this; that however wicked the nation Israel might be, and however much Satan might have been permitted, on account of Israel's sins, to get the land into his possession, and (their sins having separated between themselves and God) even to fill the land (which should have been full of God's displays and testimonies for Himself; amid a feeble but dependent and obedient people) with all sorts of wickedness;-still, notwithstanding all this, the rightful Heir had the title to the land. And, if Israel knew not how to hold their land and welcome their King to it, their King was recognized on high, as worthy to take the land -and to judge His enemies in it, in order that He might gather back, in grace, the very nation that rejected Him, to the very land where they rejected Him. The title deed, and the counsel about the land, and about Jerusalem, had Christ Himself as their object, and, primarily, Him alone, who though God, would dwell with men.

This peculiar place of the seed. of the woman in the divine mind, plans, and counsels - this way that a title stands good in Him for Himself and for those whom grace may take out from among the rebellious; this germinating of power to the establishing and making good of Christ's titles and claims, in spite of everything, is of the very essence of the Gospel, is the very Gospel of God's power itself - " The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

And to any soul that knows the murderous, lying, cruel character of Satan - the fretting, vexing character of sin in itself- and the awfulness of being in opposition to God-the truth that God does mean to prepare scenes in which His own power and name will have full sway-and all that cannot yield subjection or amalgamate therewith, be forever excluded-is good tidings of great joy, and as a pleasant land of rest, though seen in the distance, from the midst of a roaring tumultuous ocean.

Well, this is seen, and the machinery connected with it, in the eleventh chapter. Jerusalem on earth is claimed by the Lord, as a place of testimony for Himself, claimed against all the powers of darkness; and the testimony made good: for who can withstand God. The testimony closes in death, however, and in the partial triumph of the adversary. But Death and Resurrection are God's way of acting; and the witnesses, raised, ascend up into heaven - their enemies beholding - and a judgment from God follows.

The kingdoms of this world are about to become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ-the joy of heaven sounds out (and well it may), and the security of all blessing is shown - the ark of the covenant is shown in heaven. All is secure then in the highest. God and His Christ are there - the purpose to bless is sure in the temple in heaven - and the time is come!

But if the spring is full of living water - if the full. power of God's delight in His anointed Son is ready to show itself forth in a kingdom and glory - what of the channels through which this glory is to flow? What of the places into which it is to flow? On earth all is evil,. because Satan has power, but the power of Satan is that he has a place in the heavenlies above the earthly range of things. The heavenlies are cleared out in the twelfth chapter - and principalities and powers of evil shall never

again hold them in possession. And is there no good news, no joy, in the thought, that this citadel of the adversary's power shall be cleared out by Him who is above the adversary, and who is our Lord and our God, and that he shall take possession of the place with us?

This twelfth chapter is the explanation of many a sorrow, and many a difficulty now, -for it shows us where the adversary is, and what he is doing. But this same chapter gives us the power to rejoice, for it shows more clearly than any other portion of the coming doom and downfall of him that opposes us.

Cast out from heaven, his wrath is all the hotter upon earth - but all his rage works TOGETHER with the all things, to show how God acts, and how He can turn even the adversaries' rage to His own glory.

Evil may be hurried on, with fearful rapidity, by Satan - but God uses all the sorrow to work out Israel's repentance; and, even before that is accomplished, he works out, from the ranks of Satan, a mass of Jews and a mass of Gentiles - forced out by the very pressure of evil - but forced out to find God! Oh His ways are perfect, and He works from Himself!

There are those of all kindreds, tongues, and nations, who suffer for Him, chap. 13:7-10, and 20:4.

And there are on the Mount Sion (chap. 14) 144,000 with the Lamb, having his Father's name written upon their foreheads. How touchingly is the joy in heaven here described! verses 2, 3. And have not our hearts the foretaste of the blessing?

Verse 6, The everlasting Gospel.

Verse 8, The announcement Babylon is fallen.

Verse 9, The warning to separateness from the beast, his image and mark.

Verse 13, The blessedness of the dead.

Verse 14, The Son of Man come for the harvest. And verse 17, Another angel for the vintage.

Triumph over evil must be divine to be real. If the flesh or fleshly energy attempt it in any of us -success there cannot be. But who is in the Spirit and cannot see how the destruction of evil is God's glory, and how His grace shines out in His giving man to participate with Him. The seven angels with the seven last plagues, which fill up the wrath of God are seen; but at the same time (all joy in the thought!), those that had gotten the victory over the beast and his image and his mark. Faith is victorious 'ere God in judgment removes the evil with which faith had to contend. These victors stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God; and they praise and magnify the Lord God Almighty. Who more fit to do so than those who through Him and His grace had overcome the evil? They have judged and overcome the evil before God sweeps it away. They have vindicated God in what He does. The full connection of these plagues with God is shown (15:5-8), and the judgments roll on through chap. 16 on the circumstances and places of evil.

And are our hearts and souls so possessed by the power of God, that we overcome daily and practically all that which God is about to judge? Happy He who can thus say, "To me to live is Christ."

Babylon's iniquity as the great whore, and her judgment (chap. 17), and Babylon as a city (chap. 18), both the abomination of God, are shown and judged. And is it not joy to know that all the nets by which Satan has ensnared souls, all deceitful appearances, all the confusion of flesh with spirit, all the spiritual wickednesses shall be openly judged of God, and that the world and the flesh shall come shortly into judgment here below, God will then and thus justify, not only Himself, but every faithful act of the weakest saint, who may have had to take forth the precious from the vile, and been counted a fool for not living in Sodom. Surely there is joy both in the thought of God's destroying all Satan's network, and the very traps with which he now catches souls. With those at least to whom the snare is broken, and who are escaped, with them there can be no desire that God should deal gently with that which they have judged. And when Babylon the whore, Babylon the city, is judged, where shall we be the while?

Chapter 19 Heaven thrills with joy when the news is heard on high. " And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And He saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at His feet to worship Him. And He said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:6-10). Such fruition of joy lies before us!

But all is not yet done. For if the nests of iniquity are destroyed-if the framework, religious and civil, of evil is destroyed, the heads still remain and the root too.

The King of kings, and Lord of lords comes forth. The armies of earth are gathered against Him. The beast is taken and the false prophet; and both are cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant are slain. The heads and body of evil are thus set aside. How feeble is man, even when set on and backed by Satan, when he comes into collision with God.

Chapter 20. The ROOT of the evil, Satan, is then seized and bound for a thousand years. Then follows the display of God's spoils taken from Satan. " And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was Given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4).

This is the first resurrection. Those who in the time of God's patience had, through grace and by faith and the Spirit overcome the evil, must be set forth as reigning with Christ a thousand years.

But the earth, which will witness their glory- and the men of it (though evil be banished all around during its continuance) will not be perfect. The creature, if left to itself, is but a creature still. Divine wisdom appoints a last trial of man. Satan is let loose for a little season, and there are those that take part with him.

Blessings and good government will not change man: - it is peace to our hearts to know that our springs lie higher up than in any creature-ground even in God Himself. The fallibility of man, in the

best circumstances, is never more forcibly shown out than in that which closes the millennium - nowhere more powerfully taught the blessedness of being able to say, "All our springs are in Thee."

The general resurrection leads to the judgment of man's doings - as the first resurrection had been the just judgment of God as to the worthiness of Christ, a display of the fruits of God's redeeming love acting from itself for men through Christ.

The post-millennial blessing, chap. 21:1-8, and the detailed blessedness of the millennial glory chap. 21:8 -22:6, need no comment.

The close, chap. 22:7-21, is solemn but blessed.

No portion of the word more thoroughly skews the value of our all being, "from," "through," and to God, and God alone-none more calculated to strike confusion upon the thought of self holding the place of spring, channel, or end (which is the religion of fallen humanity); none better fitted to act as a purge on the soul where a mixture of God and man may still be found.

Hark! Ten Thousand Voices Crying: the Original Form

1.

O the joy of the salvation
We possess around the throne
Countless thoughts of admiration
Mingling leave that joy but one.

2.

Hark! ten thousand voices crying,
"Lamb of God!" with one accord;
Thousand thousand saints replying,
Bursts at once the echoing chord.

3.

Long with free and glad devotion
Universal praise prevails,
Till, blest fruit of deep emotion,
Voice by voice in silence fails.

4.

Now, in wondrous adoration,
Dwelling on His matchless love,
Sway'd with power of that salvation,
Silence fills the courts above.

5.

Then their richest thoughts unfolding,
Each to each with joy divine,
Heavenly converse blissful holding,
Tells how bright His glories shine.

6.

Some on God's high glories dwelling,
Brightly beaming in His face;
Some His First-born greatness telling,
Ordering all things in their place.

7.

These of Godhead's counsels deep
Him th' Accomplisher proclaim;
These how Jesus' self could weep,
Of Godhead's love the Witness came.

8.

All on love surpassing rest,
That clothed in flesh the great I AM: -
Till from a heart divinely perst
Bursts forth at length the loud exclaim,

9.

"Praise the Lamb!" - at once awaking
The gather'd hosts, their voices throng;
Loud and wide each tongue partaking,
Rolls renew'd the endless song.

10.

Grateful incense this, ascending
Rises to the Father's throne;
Every knee to Christ is bending,
All the mind in heaven is one.

11.

All the Father's counsels claiming
Equal honors to the Son,
All the Son's effulgence beaming
Glory of His Father's throne.

12.

By the Spirit all pervading
Radiant hosts unnumber'd round,
Breathing glory never fading,
Echo back the blissful sound.

13.

Joyful now the wide creation
Rests in undisturb'd repose;
Blest in Jesus' full salvation,
Sorrow now nor thralldom knows.

14.

Rich the streams of bounty flowing,
Common blessings from above,
Life and holy joy bestowing,
Tell of God's unwearied love.

15.

Hark the heavenly notes again!
Loudly swells the air-borne praise;
Throughout creation's vault, " Amen,
" Amen!" responsive joy cloth raise.

The Lord Himself Shall Come

1.

The LORD Himself shall come
And shout a quickening word;
Thousands shall answer from the tomb:
"Forever with the Lord!"

2.

Then as they upward fly,
That resurrection-word
Shall be their shout of victory,
"Forever with the Lord!"

3.

How shall I meet those eyes?
Mine on the cross I cast,
And own myself the Savior's prize:
Mercy from first to last.

4.

"Knowing as I am known!"
How shall I love that word,
How oft repeat before the throne,
"Forever with the Lord!"

5.

That resurrection-word,
That shout of victory -
Once more: "Forever with the Lord!"
Amen, so let it be!

The Man of God

Who is on the Lord's side? Who? Who cares for the glory of God upon earth? Who for the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ down here? Who stands for the rights and for the interests of God the Holy Ghost upon earth: as to the testimony of the word of life among men- and as to the walk of those who have received that word of life?

'Tis the man of God's place to answer, "I- I am the man you call; - the duties you describe are mine, -fruit of the calling wherewith I have been called. Other duty, other service or occupation here below have I none."

His answer may be with an "Alas! it is I," and with many tears, if His day be as Jeremiah's or himself as Timothy, but answer to the challenge He must and will, when it reaches Him. But the man of God has not to serve at his own cost, or to live upon his own resources; - he cannot count upon his own energy, plans, or will, - he may be weaker than was Timothy, - as little trustworthy, in himself, as was Peter, BUT there is one thing which he has to do, and there is but one thing for which he is here; namely, to be the man of God - the man for God - wholly for God, and for God alone.

Speaking abstractedly (that is, of things as they are in principle, and should be in practice, and not of things as they are), how true is it that, if " God is for me," then " I am for God."

His service is perfect freedom. To a creature, however high, what liberty is there, can there be,-but in the service of God? And what for a fallen creature -Where shall he find liberty? Where shall he find a land, a life of perfect freedom? Is this earth a land of perfect freedom to the sinner? - this earth, with all the tears, death, sorrow, crying, and pain which are its very atmosphere? The very thought is folly the teaching it is deception. To such an one is the life of self-will, and the pleasures of sin (which are but for a moment) a life of perfect freedom, leading as it does to death, and after that the judgment? They are better than hell-fire, -better than that life which shall have its worm that dieth not, and its fire that is not quenched - better, alas! to an unrenewed heart, than would be heaven (with no joys there but those of God and the Lamb) to it in its unrenewedness; but land of liberty- life of perfect freedom, must be looked for elsewhere. And where alone they can be found, there are they stored up, in rich provision, for the very chiefest of sinners.

'Tis sweet to think that He that challenges man to take his place with Him, does so as the God of mercy and of compassion - does so, too, as thus claiming of man that he too should honor the Son of God, and the wonderful work that He hath wrought, and thus be " born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet, 1:23).

And if God has indeed commended His love to us thus, " in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" for us, "when yet without strength"- " ungodly"- " sinners"- "enemies" (Rom. 5:6-10); if

He has used our state of rebellion and hatefulness as an occasion to set forth His bowels of mercy and of compassion -to prove that He indeed, and He alone is God - [and 'tis a fact that " God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved"]-who that knows Him, and His mercy, and His compassion, that would wish, or desire to shut out from his own soul, any claim, any challenge, which God might make upon it-God, Who is Love, has said, My son, give me 'thy heart. And (oh, happy, blessed truth!) He has, by the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, spoken in a way, in a language that man's heart can understand. He who is the appointed judge of quick and dead, has already borne the judgment due to our sins in His own body on the tree; alive again from the dead, He has revealed Himself to us, quickened us, and made us to know Himself as the One in whom our life is hid with God. What then now shall hinder my perfect peace? I have access to God: and there, upon the throne, I find Him who paid for me the penalty of my sins - I find God's righteousness in raising Him from the dead is inseparable from the pardon, acceptance and full blessing of those that believe in Him, - the seal of the Spirit (spirit of adoption and earnest of the glory) is upon me, and my whole soul finds liberty with God, and His service is perfect freedom. The understanding is not unfruitful. I know that He is in the Father, and we in Him, and He in us. And if every part of the gospel suits my soul, as a, creature-it has taught me also, that not only the gospel suits me before God, but suits God Himself in receiving me. Through it my deliverance, acceptance, and coming' glory, redound more to His praise than would my loss, condemnation, and eternal misery do without it. And the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is the power of the comfort and joy.

Tis well to look at this, because it skews how readily the response of every member of God's family to His every claim comes forth; comes forth with the intelligence that so, according to that which is human and that which is divine, to obey is liberty. God works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure works which God prepared before the foundation of the world, that we should walk in them-we were created for them - and He works all our works in us.

Life, eternal life, is an element in a Christian much more important than any dispensational gift. It has its instincts and its tendencies. Communion with God; obedience and praise are among its most remarkable features, and characterize it, everywhere, in every grade of the family: in fathers, in young men, and in children; and not only in every grade of the family, but in every position of each of its members. No apostle, or bishop, or deacon, could fulfill his calling upon the mere ground of his office call. Eternal life is an element not only of deeper weight than the call to a service of any kind, but also is the element which is the power in which alone any service can be carried out.

And what though inward weakness and difficulty in circumstances force us to say, Who is sufficient for these things? Can this weakness, can these difficulties silence the spirit of obedience in the child of God? No. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty: and liberty, too, to say, though with humbleness, " Lo, I come to do thy will, Oh God!" but, to say it, too, with confidence, because we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose, and also that it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. The Spirit of God always thinks first of God Himself; of His being and character as being eternal; of His relationships, as, however passing they, through a creature's sin, may in

some cases be, yet as involving, while they last, the glory of God. The rainbow points to a relationship which will pass - but, while it lasts, God will remember Himself to fulfill His promises connected with it. Man, when renewed, oft thinks of God's claims over him more than He does of the basis of those claims in the works, being, and character of God: he is right as to the claims, but wrong as to the putting himself so forward, as though because he is in question, therefore God must think more of his faithfulness and unfaithfulness than He does of Christ and His work and of His own character and glory. Yet, at the same time, there is an element of truth which never should be forgotten: God is first in everything, and thus, if the Holy Ghost is in me-while lie will surely make me know, that all God's works are wrought as the I AM the first and the last - that His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting,- yet, that having saved me for His own name's sake with a salvation complete, and finished in Christ, it is that I am to live to Him and Him alone.

He never gives up His place of being the end; the one for whom all things are created - and it is in His very greatness that He can condescend to lay claim to and to accept such little cups of cold water as we can give. The cup is His, and the water is His, from Him the will and the power to draw it, and from Him, too, the desire to offer it - and His also the grace to accept and to love the service of His saints. He is wonderful, and nowhere more so than as the living God walking with his people. To deny that He cares that I should live to Him and to Him alone, would be to deny my own honor and glory -just as much as I should deny my place and life of dependance, if I assumed that I had any power in myself to live to Him, and were not absolutely and hourly debtor to Him, and to Him alone, to counterwork the evil of my nature, and the power of the evil of my circumstances, and to give more grace. The humbled heart knows this, but if it knows in God's presence the suitability to itself of the two phrases, " Chiefest of sinners," etc., " less than the least of all saints:" it knows also, on the other hand, that it becomes God, is meet for God to think that Christ is worthy to fill every vessel with grace worthy, by the Spirit, to reclaim and keep every poor saint living to God, and to God alone. To me to live is Christ, was Paul's word. And 'tis the veriest sweetness of life divine in the soul of a poor sinner to be serving the living and true God, while He waits for His Son from heaven who has delivered us from the wrath to come.

But while the doctrines of grace set all the children on one level as to the benefits of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord - all partakers of one Spirit, one life, one hope, etc.- this, by no means, hinders God from separating some by office, or power, from the mass of them and giving to them peculiar benefits for the sake of all the rest. Such I conceive to be the case with " the Man of God." God's man for a crisis, or a generation, will have a distinctive place, as had Timothy in his day; and when Paul wrote about "the Man of God," Timothy was the party before him. I do not think any one can read the portion in which the term "the Man of God" occurs, and not see that it was a champion of the warrior band of whom Paul was speaking. The principles to the champion and to the band might be common - but there was a distinctiveness of intelligence and of power to the champion for the sake of the band, which the band possessed not. Timothy has a crisis to meet, a generation to serve, and Paul was teaching him how to do it.

" But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast

been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:10-17).

No one that fears God would dare to say that God has no right to raise up, and have on earth, here a man and there a man, with no other object save to recall to His people His claims over them. No one that has entered into the history of the development of redemption, but what must admit that there was a chain of such witnesses for God from the time that failure set in in Old Testament times onward. None that cares for the glory of God, the honor of Christ, the Holy Ghost as Comforter, and the flock of the Lord, and looks back from the present time to the days when the volume of inspired Scripture was perfected; but what must admit that grace has raised up, from time to time, men who were wise to know the signs of the times - men, whom God fitted to see and to know the bearing of His Scriptures upon the present phases of things. In olden times new truth came forth through the prophets, but, since the book was perfected, God has raised up men of intelligence and power to see the bearing of the contents of the book upon the present phase of things.

To deliver the Truth of God, and to deliver it in a way worthy of the Revealer of it, must be every servant's aim. Of that there can be no doubt. There is a stern reality of Truth, and the bearings of it upon men in the wilderness have an awfulness connected with them. The Lord Jesus was perfect as the witness for God, as he was perfect in every other respect. He knew all the fullness of the divine glory, of the divine character, for He was God; and he knew the solemn, awful importance to man, for eternity, of time-relationships with the truth of God. Creation glory, glory in Providence, as well as the revelation of the glory of God in redemption, have a direct bearing upon every man, and also, upon every servant of God. When I consider how the Lord Jesus was the truth, and how; from His days upon earth, instead of truth being generally revealed (as in Revelation) by visions, it flowed through the thoughts and affections of the New Testament prophets, I feel how, in a peculiar way, responsibility rests upon us, the handlers and the holders of the Scriptures, as to the way in which we present truth to others. God knows how feeble we are, and how little we know how to commend the truth, and ourselves unto every man's conscience. But we do want our message to be read and to be received; and it is not enough for us to have left the letter at the door of the house. And when among the saints there is rebuke, or warning, or even more severe acts of zeal for God, have we not to say, "In many things we offend all." The work we have to do may seem to be within our range of power, and we may put forth our own strength, as did Moses, at first: or it may seem to lie altogether beyond our power, and we may, as did Moses afterward, refuse to go in the strength of the Lord. And yet the heart and its affections, the mind and its desires, may be still set upon that on which God is set. This singleness of eye as to object,- this purpose of heart to seek that which is the Lord's, -- and it only is of great price. And it rises in value to one that loves what God loves, in the very measure in which an individual feels he himself fails in it. Certainly, if I love God, and love His glory and His people, and yet find, alas! but little practical singleness of eye, and but little full purpose of heart to subserve that which I love, I shall rejoice if I find that, just where I fail, there others who do not fail are present.

I speak now as it would be with a man whose whole heart, mind and soul were occupied with an object -who was plunged into a rough stream busy about a great work. " The work, must be done; I am in to do it -may I be the happy doer of it: but, if I have failed, thank God that there are others who have not failed." The flesh does not so speak, I know; nor would a half-heart, or a double mind so speak. No: but if the work is in my heart and mind, and the doing of it is my business - then, if I fail, I thank God if others do not fail.

I have often, when feeling ready to find fault with others at work, had cause to stop and warn myself, thus: "If you are of the warrior band, take care, in finding fault with this other, you are not really proclaiming that yourself (the fault-finder) have leisure enough, at home and away from the work, to find fault with an ease-renouncing laborer in the field, your own Master's servant: and the fault, in such case, I find, is oftener about the way of doing it, than about the thing sought to be done, or about the object and aim of the laborer. Luther and Calvin made great mistakes, no doubt of it; so did Whitfield and Wesley; but they lived out their light for God. On the other hand, men, as men (and alas! many half-hearted Christians, in the days of Luther and Calvin, agreed with them), do not conceive that God has the right to have here a man and there a man, with nothing whatever to do but to look after HIS interests upon earth. They do not understand any one, it may be a mere stranger to them, saying: " I, as God's servant, must protest against this or against that, because it is against His mind - or because it is not for His glory."

Now it is just this that I conceive " the man of God" has to do. So I judge as one who counts himself to be of the warrior band, though, practically, (it is my confession), more ready to look round to see who is on the Lord's side, than able to go forward in the Lord's might -a leader. Clearly, a guide ought to try to inspire the hatred of evil, and the dread of it; surely he should desire to inspire the love of good, and the choice of it: but, if he aims at being a voice for God upon earth, he will oft have to bring out (and that badly enough too), God's thoughts upon a given deed or a given action, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. If he be, as was Peter, self-confident, he'll meet at the Lord's hand, correction; if he have a good opinion of himself, or seek, from man, admiration, the Lord will correct all this. There is no need for me to be zealous for the Lord to take the rod - it may fall upon myself first if I do so - I had better pray for myself. Weaknesses within and difficulties outside may exist, but they do not change the work that we and the man of God have to do; He has to be God's man- a man for God after all. Every medal has two sides: if there be no cross on one side, there is no crown on the other. Every generation tests God's family, and servants, and they test it too. If all speak well of us now, it is because they do not see the Master in us. If we showed more of Him, the generation would stone us, and then religiously build us tombs. But I fear if our mausoleums are to be built with the stones we get thrown upon us, they will be small indeed, after all. It was not so with Whitfield-with. Wesley-with many a one who has trod the earth. Their own generation - the great mass of the religious of their own generation, could not bear them; the survivors, however, spake well of them. The fiery ordeal is good; how few of us can boast of it as ours. It is good even to be left alone with God. Not pleasant, but good. And in looking at the Lord's course on earth - and at Paul's course as assimilated to it - I have been struck how Paul was left alone. There was a needs he, as to atonement to be made, that the Lord should be left alone - none in that could stand with Him. There was no such needs be as to Paul; but in the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, which were sufferings of testimony and service, Paul was left alone.

Far be it from us, in the energy of our own wills, to ask for such a place; but if the Lord gave us energy of faith, we should find ourselves there: when we come thither, may we be prepared to recognize that it is no strange place, fiery though it may be, - if all men forsake, yet will the Lord never forsake. The Epistles of Paul to Timothy were both of them the expressions of a heart which knew what it was, oft alone, to bear the heat and toil of the day. And, if the writer was lionhearted as any free-born citizen of Rome, how gently, yet firmly, does he try to rouse the courage of his more timid and gentle fellow-servant to prove himself worthy -in all patience, and in all long-suffering, yet with full purpose of heart, readiness of mind, and personal self-surrender, to follow the Man of Sorrows right through to the end of the course here below.

Nothing can communicate the strength of the unchanging will and purpose of the Divine mind to the life, here below, in such feeble rushes as we are (in contrast with the eddying deluge of human will that surrounds us), but full fellowship in the patience and hopes of the Lord Jesus.

The Old and the New Testament

Through several centuries, at the first, "The Gospels and Apostles" is said to have been the name in common use for what is now called the "New Testament." I cannot doubt but that many have felt the inconvenience of the names "The Old and the New Testament." 'Tis a name which, popular as it is, is very inaccurate. The New may, in a sense, be looked upon as a legacy left by Christ; but the Old, whose testament was it? And if it be said that "testament" means "covenant," it is a mistake; and though it avoids the difficulty of making the Old to be the testament of bulls and goats, by asserting that it is the covenant in their blood which is meant-it introduces the evil of putting the church under covenant. I see not why " The Old Scriptures," and " The New Scriptures"-" The Old and New Scriptures" should not be adopted as a conventional and, so far as I see, less objectionable name.

Peace With God

God's ways are not as our ways, nor God's thoughts as our thoughts! How entirely is this seen in the Gospel of the grace of God as we have it. The very highest and brightest glory of God made at once to shine out just where man's failure gives occasion to God to show Himself more brightly than He could in the fields of creation or of providence. The highest glory of God and the ruin of the creature in himself- both shown by one work and in one person.

I do not find Christians established, as they should be, in grace. I do not find Christians understanding, as they should do, themselves discovered and saved in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.

I am but a poor sinner in myself, but I do desire that those that are the Lord's should, with me, know more of what the blessedness of being hidden in God's light, in Christ in God, is. I would say a few words hereon, according to what I have in conscience myself found to be true before God.

There is a Man in Heaven. There is a Man - the seed of the woman-the Son of Man-upon the throne of God - even He is there who was rejected and murdered here below - Jesus Christ. In Him the Lamb that was slain, but is alive again for evermore, God finds there is the perfect expression of all His own glory.

To know that that Jesus whom we crucified is at the right hand of God, made Lord and Christ, - if our knowledge goes no further - cannot give peace. It discovers to us the contrast between us and God. We, down here on earth, murdered Him. Who that knows Him, but what will say, " I should have done it, had I been there and been left to myself." God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. We and God stand in contrast in our actings towards Christ. This is all true - and it is well to be taught it, well to have the 'conscience plowed up by it. But, let it be remarked that, Such conviction of conscience is a judgment which, however just, supposes man to be standing upon the ground of what HE HIMSELF is as a rebellious creature before God. He measures what he has done; - he sees what God has done: and his sentence is, " I act in contrast to God, and the consequence must be, that He, acting in power according to what I am, I am ruined."

Righteousness, apart from mercy and grace, is in question, on God's part; and works on, our own parts, works which never can in us be perfect; we are unlike what Christ was - we acted otherwise towards Him than we should have done - God would have had us receive Him whom we murdered:-and now God has shown Himself opposed to what we did, and has raised Him from the dead.

So entirely is this judgment formed upon the assumed ground that we are to be treated as we deserve, perhaps, even with the thought that other ground for us to stand upon than that of our own doings there is none, that often when the heart has been warmed towards the Lord in His beauty and loveliness by grace, and the light thus breaks in, the very fact of God having raised from the dead, and given glory to Him whom our sins crucified is felt to be our utter ruin. This is, as we shall see, not true, according to God and His grace, and His acting in giving us light; but is still

most true as to what we deserve, if we are to be treated according to our deserts as men, as inhabitants of the earth, as parts of the human race, as according to what we, in principle, are as such-and according to what we should have done if we had been in Jerusalem when Christ was crucified, and had been left to ourselves. It is most true, if we are to be treated as we deserve: that is, if we stand upon our own responsibility for blessing as individuals, or as parts of the human race.

It is just here, when occupied with Jesus Christ raised from the dead and gone into Heaven, that the soul (however, through grace, attracted towards and appreciating His beauty) learns the contrast between itself and God. But there is another lesson it has to learn, and that is, not the contrast between man's actings towards Christ and God's - but the contrast between God's estimate of Christ Himself and His work and man's. Conscience, man's conscience, can see how it is guilty, and Christ is vindicated; but it has to learn how God 'makes that Christ the center of a new system, and that new system one in which ruined sinners, who have no standing from their own merits and deserts, find a present and a perfect rest, because this Jesus Christ is reckoned of God worthy to be the Savior of the lost. Such a thought clearly changes everything. The question no longer is, what am I to expect if treated according to my deserts? What shall I, who murdered God's Son on earth, find at His hand standing upon the ground of my own responsibility and obedience? But is it indeed true, that God delights to save the lost, and counts His Son worthy to be the Savior of the lost, and that the work accomplished contains perfect salvation in it? Yes, this is the question, not what do I deserve? But what does God say that He delights to do for lost sinners, as showing out the deserts and worthiness of Christ. The whole ground is changed. God takes the place in my conscience, which "I" had; and "Christ Jesus in Heaven " takes the place which my deservings held.

I believe the power of the blood, and the worth of the righteousness, are not so much in question now, - that they have been studied and learned-and that the failure rather is just where conscience is in question. I shall not, therefore, speak of them, of how nothing but the fact that Christ bore the full judgment upon the cross due to me, to my sin and to my sins, ever could set me free from guilt; of how nothing but the fact that, being an integral member through the spirit of that body of which Christ is the Head, God looks upon me as He looks upon His Son, and loves me as He loves Him, could suffice to give full liberty of conscience, heart and spirit in God's presence. Believing that the hitch- to conscience - rather lies elsewhere, I would say a few words on How do I know that the work done is done for me, that it is mine.

Now conscience enlightened by the word pleads (when hard beset, 'too' by Satan, the world and the flesh), " there is the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." I cannot say He is not there. I cannot say but that all divine glory is there. How came I to know it? It was not by superior wisdom, or by innate skill. No, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts." God brought the light into me - God made me see the Gospel - and not only does he thus arrogate to Himself the in-shining of the light to my soul, but also he gives double weight to the statement, by explaining the solemn fact of the darkness of the many.

"If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is in the image of God, should shine unto them."

Now, here I get something more than conscience reasoning about a Christ seen before it-something more even than renewed affections finding repose in the Lamb slain alive again for evermore-something more than the effect of pungent despair saying, amid accusations from Satan, in the sense of its low estate, and stand in a vapor that rises from within-The Lord Jesus, and not I, is Judge of quick and dead; the Lord Jesus, and not Satan, is the Judge; " Thou, Lord Jesus, shalt answer for me." For we have the plain word of God laying g it down to faith, that as God caused the light first to shine in creation, so the light of grace shined into us by His power.

You cannot know Christ and not be quickened by Him, for He is a quickening Spirit. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. Have I that light of Him who was " life, light, and love in one." And how shall I separate in Him the light and love (which I see) from the eternal life. I never find a man can do it in God's presence, nor in the presence of God's word.

Here, then, is my rest. I cannot say Christ is not the glory of God. I cannot say I know him not - it would be a lie. His light shines in its lovely beauty.

Well (God says), where it shines there is life-eternal life.

The Precious and the Vile

If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.-Jer. 15:14.

In considering movements which affect the mass that professes itself Christian in one's own day, it is often as important as it is difficult, to divide between that which is of man and that which is of God. When the mass is out of order, a great truth may often act upon it in a way which shows the mass is out of order. Perhaps instead of such and such a truth, being, as it appears to be, the expression of the faith of the mass,-an action of the mass, - it has become an act from outside upon the mass; if so, there may, there will, be much that is defective, much, perhaps, that is positively evil manifested, and yet a truth of God may be there, and be to be recognized.

Take, for instance, the Bible and the Missionary Societies. What strong effects have been wrought upon the professing mass by these associations. That the associations were themselves defective, cannot be doubted-they were human associations; not the church of God as set up by Him; each attempting a part of the church's work and but a part - and mixing up the good sought after with a quantity of human evil. The love of the Bible, and the sense of its claim over all men, was of God; so was the evangelist character of the body professing faith in Christ, - even this, that the holders of Bible-truth should be men to carry the message the wide world over men that can utter its contents. But these two principles in our day were the principles of a few, and they have used them in these societies as a means of acting upon the mass, which still lies practically in the world; they were not, they are not, the real principles of the many even yet. I am not finding fault; for, however defective and mixed the constitution and actions of the societies may have been, I am persuaded God has had His part, which is the precious to be taken forth from the vile.

Sense of responsibility; first, as to having the Bible, and, secondly, as to helping on the preaching of it to the heathen - can only be of God. The sense of both the one and the other marked the early Christians - was inseparable from the faith and the presence of the Spirit. The Bible Societies are but modern and human expressions of the former principle, and Missionary Societies of the latter. The principles are of God, and dear to every child of God. The difference between the constitution of the societies and that of the church tells its own tale; so also, I conceive, does the fact that the action of these societies is both partial in its object (each society having some one object) and is rather an action upon the mass of nominal Christians, than the action of the mass.

Within the last few years we have seen another association - the Evangelical Alliance. This is rather the effect of the action of a principle held by a few upon the many, than the action of the many from principle; and, while the scope of the action is less controlled than in either of the before-mentioned societies, it is yet limited and arbitrary. I conceive in this movement, also, there is the precious which faith will recognize as being of God, and take forth from all the vile with which it may be mixed. The master-principle here I conceive to be that stated by James in his epistle, viz., that one trait of faith is, that it is energetic, and will act and show itself by good works. I thank God for the good, and though I keep myself apart from the evil of confederacy, I can rejoice if that which in solitude I am acting upon to God, is used by others before the public to act upon the

mass, and to lead the mass to act at all. To act by means of a truth upon another, and to communicate that same truth so as to become the spring of action to that other, are two very different things. The principle itself is one of eternal and divine moment; faith acting, through life, in the soul, must show itself by recognizing God, and that which is of God before man. The irregularity of the movement I conceive to be the proof of the mass being out of order, and that, while the principle of the few who are acting is in itself divine, they err through not seeing aright its bearing.

One effect of all these associations is, to the considerate mind, clear, though little thought of by the actors in them. Their action has been showing, and is showing, the error and insufficiency of the ecclesiastical apparatus of the day; and they have been, and are, developing new objects and new motives, which cannot exist long with the old machinery. It is not for me to prophesy how these things will work; how far, on the one side, they may be overruled of divine grace to gather His elect together, where there is faith; or how far, on the other, where mere human will, and energy, and novelty have had their sway; they may lead many into a maze, out of which they will see no readier exit than infidelity. I am persuaded the old high church view was correct, viz., that all these things were innovations upon, and not consistent with, the church order of 1800; that to sanction them would be to endanger it. And I am afraid, too, that the tendency of all these associations is to hurry man out of his walk, as an individual with God, into public, where human influences may neutralize faith.

One point I would notice as to the evangelical alliances, whether in England or on the continent, which I conceive to be solemnly important, because it is the denial of the doctrine of the church of the living God. It is this that Christians, AS SUCH, are to be united together for every good work. I purposely state the principle broadly, because of the various modifications found in the various alliances and their branches. That good works should be pressed as inseparable from life is blessed; but that association, upon the ground of life in Christ, should be used, as it constantly is, for the setting aside of God's, holy order and the government by the Lord Jesus in heaven, through the Holy Ghost down here, is most evil.

It is impossible to read the reports of the Evangelical Alliance at London, in Paris, etc. without seeing with sorrow the self-complacent joy at finding that they could all be happy there together, in spite of all their differences of judgment and conduct when at home. And where was there godly sorrow for the then exhibition of the sectarian, schismatic state of the professing church-where the grief and mourning for the quenching and grieving of the Holy Ghost?

Many will remember how, at one of the earlier meetings of the Alliance in London, a godly man, now with the Lord -a popular preacher of no little eloquence too -raised the question, whether the table of the Lord was not properly the first expression of Christian fellowship. I believe it to be so most surely; and more than that, even that the association of Christians, apart from discipline and the owning of the Spirit of God, is the very denial of the church of God as set upon earth -it is the denial of God, present as the living God, to govern now the people He has saved; it makes little of man's sin in continuing the present state of disorder; and in the occasional table, so, from time to time held, there is nothing but dishonor practically put upon the various guests and the usual habit of their church association, if they have any.

Principles may be of God, may be connected with the life and conduct of the church of God, as such; and yet, if held apart from other truth, which originally was connected with them, or if acted out in another energy, or with other objects than those originally proposed, they lose much of their blessedness, and oft become even mischievous as to the glory of God and the well-being of His people.

Eph. 4:3-6.

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

The Present Age, and the Age Which Is to Come

[Taken from the French, and presented for examination].

" Who gave Himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."-Gal. 1:4,5.

The Lord Jesus was born to be a King; for this end came He into the world, that He might render testimony to the truth. But when His own received Him not, He for a time gave up His reigning here below, and, withdrawn to the heavens, He there gathers a church down here, which is to be His bride, and share His inheritance with Him. This period of the absence of the Lord Jesus is, for us, this present evil world [or age]. The church being completed and gathered into His presence, He will come with her to make good His just claims, and, Himself the true Melchizedek, will subject to His scepter of righteousness and peace the kingdoms under the wide heavens. Then will be the kingdom of God, or the world [or age] to come.

" The present age," and " the age to come," give us concisely the subjects which it is proposed to consider in these pages; while we more especially seek to trace, throughout these two periods adverted to, the characteristics and destinies of the Church.

How can we, as members of the said Church, walk worthily of our calling, if we have not, as a preliminary, a clear and distinct conception of it? Let us then not despise the lamp of prophecy, which, in casting its light directly upon the glorious end of our pilgrimage, can enlighten all our path, guiding and making sure our passage across the dark places of the world which we traverse.

May the Lord, in His grace, deign to make these pages, in some measure, subservient to that end!

1.-the Nature of the Church

The church is not the succession, or even the assemblage, of all the saints who have lived from the beginning of the world to its end. It is "the body of Christ," formed by His Spirit at Pentecost, and gathering from that time onwards, which personally will be with its Head, before He comes to judge the world, and to establish therein His reign. It is, moreover, a mystery which was not revealed in other ages.

The one in which "the Church" is meant, i.e., the body of believers, which has Christ in heaven at its head: here it is looked at as - according to what it essentially is, and as one whole, -a body.

The other, which is a popular use of the word, is when it is spoken of more as in contrast with other things down here: in which case, very often, professing Christians, or heavenly saints - believers in the Messiah whom Israel has rejected, etc., would more accurately present what is meant.

In the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, etc., we have the doctrine of the Church. In Corinthians, Hebrews, Galatians, etc., we have doctrine, of all importance to individual believers, to Christians, who are members of the Church but not the doctrine of the Church, so much as the doctrine of the churches.

The noticing this is very helpful in the study of the Word, and will be so in the perusal of this article.

The Church did not exist, as such, until Pentecost; but the doctrine of the Church as the body of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the Heavenly Head, was not known until Paul. Christendom is not that body; the Churches so-called are not that body, but are the fruit - not yet judged (from which, therefore, no believer can get separate)--of man's separation of the testimony raised by God at Pentecost, upon earth, from the vital blessing. We are in the place where God has set His testimony, and cannot get out of it: to pretend to get out of it is to rebel against God, and to deny the responsibility which clings to us. What we have to do is to separate ourselves, in the power of the real blessing we have in Christ, from all the evil which surrounds: and so walk with God, and those that judge themselves in His presence. As man has separated the form of the Church from the power - so will God finally separate the essence of the evil man has introduced from the form, and judge it in Babylon. Babylon and Christendom are not the same thing.-ED.)

So does the word of God teach us, and so also more particularly teaches Paul, - the minister of the doctrine of the Church, the medium chosen for the making known of the mystery.

" For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, (if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel: whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me

by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him" (Eph. 3:1-12).

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and He is the savior of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject into Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (lb. v. 32).

"And He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church: whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:18-27).

We remark then, that-

1st. The Church is entirely distinct from Israel in times which are past, and from Israel and the nations in the age, or world to come.

1. Israel was a people according to the flesh, separated in external things from all others, in a particular country which had been assigned to it as its abode.

The Church is a people drawn out of the midst of all others, although dwelling in the midst of them, dispersed over the whole earth, and in which all national characteristics are completely set aside.

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-29).

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2.11-22).

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11).

2. Israel's nationality was according to the flesh. Every one who was born of Israelitish parents, circumcision on the eighth day being duly observed, was an Israelite.

The Church's unity is according to the Spirit. It is neither pedigree according to the flesh, nor any ceremonial which makes a man to be a Christian, but only faith, and the being born of the Spirit.

" But at many as received him, 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" (John 1.12, 13).

3. And not only so - but "the Church is the habitation of God through the Spirit," - " the temple of God," - as is also each member of it (1 Cor. Ili. 16; vi. 17; 2 Cor. 6.16; Eph. 20-22; 1 Peter 2:5). It is the "body of Christ" in which, Consequently, Ins Spirit dwells; as the spirit of a man dwells in his body (Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:4, etc.). And, therefore, it is that our worship is characterized by these words: "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), in contrast with the worship of Israel, which consisted " in shadows and Carnal ordinances" (Col. 2.17; Heb. 9.1-10).

Israel had, indeed, a habitation of God connected with it - in the tabernacle and in the temple; but the temple being itself " of this creation," was but a shadow of good things in the heavens, and the sacrifices therein offered were in connection with the blessings promised to Israel, that is, still " of this creation";-of lambs, of fruits, of wine, of oil, etc., and not spiritual sacrifices, as with us.

4. The royalty and the priesthood in Israel, pertained of right to one family, and were thus privileges according to the flesh. Every son of Aaron was priest on attaining a certain age,

whatsoever his private character might be (Ex. 28:1; Lev. 8; Num. 18:1, 7-19). The Levites alone could serve in the temple and instruct the people (Deut. 33:10; 2 Chron. 30:22; 35:3).

We, on the contrary, have but one only High Priest in the heavenly places, even Jesus, as the epistle to the Hebrews spews us. All the members of the church are kings and priests, through the Spirit who is in them (1 Peter 2:5,9). As to ministry, it is the privilege of no family; is connected with, no position according to the flesh; but depends entirely upon the gifts which the Spirit distributes to every man severally as He will (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:6-11; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

5thly. In Israel, God would only be served in one place, there where He had placed His name (Deut. 12:11; 16:6, 6).

In the church, no places are holy upon earth. There where two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord, there is He in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20). There is another consequence of the dwelling of the Spirit in believers. The Spirit being in them, they are themselves the temple of God.

6thly. The covenant which was formerly made with Israel, at least, so far as they are considered as a people, was a covenant according to law and upon the condition of obedience (Lev. 18:5; Ex. 19:5,6; Deut. 27:12-26; 28.)

The covenant, in connection with which, in some sense, the church stands, or we, who are of the church, stand, is a covenant of unconditional and free grace (John 3:16,17,36; Eph. 2.4-6, etc.)

7thly. The blessings of the covenant formed with Israel were all earthly blessings in the land (Lev. 26:3-12; Deut. 7:12-15; 8:7-18; 11:8-15, 21; 28:1-14).

The church is blessed, according to divine counsel and purpose, with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. (Eph. 1:3; Col. 3:1-4; Phil. 3:18-21). Upon earth she must needs expect afflictions and the cross (Matt. 16:24-26; Luke 14:26, 27; John 12:25,26; 15:18-21; 16:1-4; 2 Tim. 3:11-13).

8thly. Israel was called of God to make war with its the principle, too, of our blessing. The author, perhaps, felt a difficulty, in common with many minds, on which a remark or two may well be made here; viz., on the exact place assigned by Paul to the second covenant, in connection with the ministry committed to him. The covenants with Israel display God in government. The church is a heavenly counsel-not for the earth - the rich counsel of God.

The blood of the covenant once shed upon the cross, and the Lord risen - all was ready, on God's part, for the administration and establishment of the second covenant in pure, full grace. The Jew, with whom it was to be formed, would have nothing to say to God in grace. The spiritual grace which had prepared a way for the forgiveness of sins, and thus for the writing of the law upon their hearts (so that they might have all earthly blessings in the land) was there. The blood had been shed, the Lord was risen: when they still turned away, these blessings of grace and forgiveness stood fast for all that believed; yet an ascended heavenly Christ communicated rather spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, and this to whosoever should call upon the name of the Lord, than earthly blessings in the land. This regards us as individually saved by grace, and gives a most simple explanation to Paul's statements in 2 Cor. 3 and 4; and Heb. 8 and 10, about the second covenant- without at all putting us, as individuals, or the church (which stands on counsel and

purpose from the foundation of the world), under it.

Perhaps confusion has arisen, also, in some minds from a careless use of the term " church," and from want of attention as to the difference in the epistles, some of which present the church in its corporate character, and us, of course, in it, as Eph., and others speak of believers in their individual character, as Gal., Heb., Peter. It is of all importance, on the one hand, not to put the church under the second covenant, which Paul never does, and on the other, to give the full place, which he does, to the second covenant, in connection with the ministry committed to him.- ED. enemies, and to exterminate them (Num. 10:9; Deut. 7:12,16 - 26).

But the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; no other sword should we know how to wield save that of the Spirit. And even if enemies of God are in question, the Christian must endure, as did once his Savior (2 Cor. 10:4,5; Eph. 6:10 - 17; Matt. 13:30; Luke 9:54,55).

Two periods, the characteristic traits of which are so different, can they be but one and the same period? In other words, can the church possibly be but the continuation of Israel?

It will be said, perhaps, " The church, as it now exists, is an improved development of the church in the times of Israel, and the church of the last days (in which Israel, as a whole, shall be saved, and the earth shall be covered with the knowledge of the Lord) will still be an improved development of the church as it now is." But is it possible to use the term improved development as applicable to the substitution of one set of principles in the place of others which are often diametrically their opposite? And again, what becomes of the notion of one sole church, in progressive development throughout all periods of time, from the beginning, if the principal characteristics of the past economy re-appear in the economy which is to come? Now, this is precisely what the word of God teaches, with the exception of one or two points, in which there is a difference, even a contrast, between Israel of old and Israel in the last days. Thus:-

To begin with the differences: the covenant formed of old with Israel, at Sinai, was according to law, as we have already seen - the blessings being dependent upon obedience. The covenant which God will make with Israel in the last days will, on the contrary, be a covenant of grace - of unconditional and free grace. In this respect, it is new, by reference to the covenant of Sinai. And herein is found the reason of the continuance of the blessings of this covenant, so long as the heavens and the earth shall endure. Whereas, the blessings of the covenant of the law soon came to an end (Jer. 31:31-37; 33:11-26; Ezek. 37:25-28).

Moreover, the covenant, according to unconditional grace, is based upon the covenant already made with Abraham, four hundred and thirty years before the law; and this is the covenant to which the holy men of Israel, when speaking of the final blessing, always make reference, in the presence of God, and not to the covenant of Sinai (Psa. 105:8, etc.; Mic. 7:18-20, see the whole chapter; Luke 1:72,73). This may explain why the Lord Jesus is called " Mediator of the new covenant" (Heb. 9.15), that is to Israel hereafter; and His blood " the blood of

the new covenant" (Matt. 26:28); and the cup of the supper, " the new covenant in the blood of the Lord" (Luke 22.20). This may also serve to explain the use of Jer. 31:31-37, in Heb. 8:8-12; 10:16, 17).

Israel was the only people upon earth, with whom God entered into covenant. " Whose are the covenants" (Rom. 9:4), [to them alone pertain the two covenants], and whose God He proclaimed Himself to be. So will it NOT be in the age to come; on the contrary, " Many nations.... people" (Zech. 2:11). " Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar: for mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people" (see Isa. 56:3,6,7). Rut then and this brings us back to the connection between Israel of old and Israel in the last days -

1. To the daughter of Zion only, the Lord has said-

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zech. 2:10-12).

That is, among the nations, then all blessed, Israel will take its place of pre-eminence. Who can entertain a doubt of this, after reading, for instance, Isa. 14:1, 2; 49:21-23; 54:3; 60:3-16, etc.

2. As formerly the saints in Israel were called to exterminate their enemies, so will it be yet again. Even at the time spoken of in the Psalms -

"Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand" (Psa. 149:5,6; see also Mic. 4:13;5:8, 9; 7:10).

The wicked shall "be trodden down as the mire of the streets."

3. As in the last dispensation, God chose but one place upon earth where to reveal His name and receive the worship of His saints; so will He do yet again, and the place will be the same Jerusalem, " the city of the great king," concerning which He has said -

" Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there forever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually" (2 Chron. 7:15,16; see also Isa. 2:2,3; Jer. 3:17; Mic. 4:1, 2; Ezek. 20:40,41;43. 7; Zech. 8:1-3, 20-23; 14:16-21).

4. The worship of God will again assume, at least in several respects, the same characteristics of being earthly and for man as a creature upon earth, which it formerly had in Israel. Sacrifices and burnt offerings, and cakes and perfumes will again be offered, and again will the feast of tabernacles be kept (see the last citations and Jer. 33:17,18).

5. As before the calling of the Church, the blessings wherewith God rewarded His saints were earthly blessings, so will it be again in the last times. (Isa. 60; 61:4, 5, 6; 65:11-25; Jer. 31:12-14, 23-28; Ezek. 36:24-30; Hos. 2:18-22; Amos 9:13-15).

I would now, again, ask, Is it possible to turn these characteristics of the saints of the last times into those of the saints of the Church, without turning upside down instruction, the most positive, which the word gives concerning the Church, and the calling of those who are members of it?

Can Christians ever lay hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, to go and seek God at Jerusalem, and there keep the feast of tabernacles, Christians who have learned of their Master that in the Church, of Father is worshipped neither upon the mountain of Samaria, nor in Jerusalem, as such; but that God seeks those that can worship Him in spirit and in truth (see John 4:21-24.)

Can Christians ever take the sword to avenge themselves on their enemies,-Christians to whom it is said-

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you " (Matt. 5:44).

Christians - can they ever, without inconsistency, expect to have their blessings upon the earth,-they to whom it is said-

" If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:1-4).

And are they, who, in the Church, have been taught that there is "neither Jew nor Greek" (Col. 3.11), once again to become men servants and maid servants to Israel - the laborers, vine-dressers, and rebuilders of the walls in ruins, etc.

Nor is this all. The Lord has said -

" And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:26,27).

And we see the fulfillment of this promise (Rev. 20) in that the members of the Church, after having formed the retinue of the Lord when He comes to destroy the wicked one, live 'and reign with Him a thousand years, over those nations which Satan has not seduced. These nations, sheltered from the seductions of Satan, comprise, evidently, the saints of those blessed times when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. But if these saints are only a continuation of the Church -if they are, moreover, the Church itself, as some indeed say-what would be the result? Why, that a part of the Church would reign in heaven over another part of the Church upon earth. Can we admit this? Is this the unity of the body, as taught us by the apostle, when he says-

" There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4).

A single truth, once admitted, removes all these impossible incongruities, and scatters all these contradictions. The Church is the body of Christ, gathered by His Spirit, since the day of Pentecost, and which, when once completed, will be united to its Head in heaven, before that He will come to judge the world, and therein establish His kingdom. His Church once removed from the world, God resumes His long interrupted relationships with Israel, and, after having judged it, He, in grace, makes good all the promises He had given to Abraham and to the fathers. And that is the reason why, in the last days, we again find Israel in a position and with traits, in many respects, similar to those which it formerly had. Only formerly, when under a covenant of law, it could not but soon lose the blessings which had been set before it; in the last days, under the covenant of grace

made with Abraham, it cannot any more lose the blessings of which it will have become the subject.

But we will return to this again. For the present, let us continue our study of the nature of the Church.

2nd. The Church, a mystery - hidden from all ages -is not found in the Old Testament, save in, shadows and figures.

The church is " the mystery of Christ." " Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel..." "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:4,5,6,9). " Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations; but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:26,27).

It may be asked - Is not the object of this mystery simply the call of the Gentiles? No; the simple fact of the Gentiles being called to the knowledge of God upon earth, is not a mystery concealed in the Old Testament; for at every turn one finds declarations similar to this. " And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 49:6). " All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations" (Psa. 22:27,28).

A fact thus clearly revealed is not a hidden mystery. But the call of certain elect ones from among the Gentiles, to be, together with some from among the Jews, " fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ in heaven, by the gospel" (Eph. 3:6): - Of this it may well be said - " Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:26,27, see also Col. 3.10, 11). Such, of a truth, is the mystery, never known to saint or seer in the Old Testament. And, indeed, if we study attentively that which they have said of the call of the Gentiles, we shall see, among other things, that they always speak of whole nations, of nations as nations, with their princes and their kings; we shall see, too, that while fully recognizing God, and participating in the blessings He gives, these nations, nevertheless, have a place distinct from Israel; it is, too, as the result of terrible judgments poured out upon them by the Lord, that these nations are converted; none of which things could be said of us. We have also already remarked that the worship of these nations, when converted, differs from the worship of believers now. It was not then properly and specially of the call of the Gentiles in the church that the prophets spake, for that was to them a hidden mystery.

Why, then, do the apostles, in their teaching, use passages from the Old Testament prophets which speak of the call of the Gentiles? It may be because the special call of certain Gentiles to

form, together with certain Jews, one and the same body, the body of Christ animated by His Spirit, is a particular fact included in the general fact of the call of the nations; just as the

First-fruits were included in the harvest (Deut. 26). For if there are earthly first-fruits (Rev. 14:1- 4), we are the heavenly first-fruits, " even we who first trusted in Christ (Eph. 1:12; James 1:18).

We are, in some sort, like that handful of corn, that basket of fruit, which the pious Israelite went to gather in his field to offer to God in the temple. Israel and the nations, converted in the latter days, are the harvest. That which was said of the harvest might be said, also, in many respects, of the first-fruits. Both the one and the other grew in the same soil, shared the same rain and the same sun; but in other respects there was a great difference; thus the first-fruits were gathered before the harvest, and belonged to God; the harvest, on the contrary, belonged to the people. Just so that which is said of Israel and of the Gentiles, converted in the latter days, can also be said, in some respects, of the saints now. They are the same sort of sinners, saved by the same name, for " there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12). They are cleansed by the same blood, sanctified by the same word (Zech. 12:10-14, and 13:1; 1 John 1:7; Eph. 5:26).

Lastly, we are saved now, as Israel and the nations will be saved hereafter, by virtue of the purest, freest grace, and a work wrought by God, according to which - God will not remember sin but pardon iniquity; and this not by virtue of our works, nor as having ourselves found strength to fulfill our responsibilities according to the covenant of Sinai, which never any one did -but all of divine free grace. There are these correspondences, but there are, also, as we have already seen, points of difference; for instance, the church will be taken away before the conversion of Israel and of the nations; the church is blessed with spiritual and heavenly blessings - Israel and the nations with earthly blessings.

In each of these respects, one could not say of us that which is said of Israel and the nations. Moreover, let any one read, in the very writings of the prophets, the passages cited by the apostles, in connection with what precedes and what follows, and he will ordinarily find details which absolutely cannot be applied to us; the passages have only one side on which they are applicable; by this side it is that the apostles look at them, it is on account of it that they cite them.

For instance, in Rom. 15, Paul applies to us passages relative to the call of the nations, because the work, in his day, was, in a sense, a pledge and a commencement of that calling. The calling might be seen in it, just as in the first-fruits brought to the temple, the inhabitant of Jerusalem saw the pledge of the year's ingathering (See Lev. 23)

When the apostle, in writing to the Hebrews (chap. 8), cites Jer. 31:31-34, his object is to show that the covenant of works of Sinai, being insufficient to make anything perfect, was certainly to be replaced by

another covenant, that of unconditional grace. Now, the covenant in the age to come with Israel being such, the apostle, in writing to the Hebrews, could avail himself, under his then circumstances, of the words of the prophet.

When the apostle repeats his quotation (Heb. 10) it is in order to show that, an absolute pardon having been announced and promised, it was necessary that a great and perfect sacrifice, -such

as that of Jesus,- should once for all have cleared the way for pardon. Now, as we have already seen, that is equally true of the Church's relationship with God, and also of the covenant with Israel in the last days. Yet it needs but to peruse the very words of Jeremiah, with the contexts, in order to see that they do not relate properly and directly to the Church. Thus, God said, " I will make a new covenant with the louse of Israel, and with the house of Judah" (ver. 31). Now, we are neither of Israel nor of Judah.

" Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (ver. 32). God never brought our fathers out of Egypt, nor made a covenant with them,-for we are sinners from among the Gentiles, concerning whom, on the contrary, it is said-" Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2.11, 12). Again, in that covenant, God promises that Jerusalem shall be rebuilt (Jer. 31:38) " from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate towards the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more forever" (vers. 39, 40). What is the application of all this to the Church or to ourselves?

Let us now, in following up our subject, take as specimens some of those passages in the prophets where there would be most reason to expect to find the Church spoken of, -and let us see if she is really to be found there, or if the passages themselves confirm what Paul says, that the Church is a mystery not revealed in other ages to the children of men.

The promise of God to Abraham, that all the families of the earth should be blessed in his seed (Gen. 12:3; 22:18, 28:14), is, in a certain sense, quoted in connection with Christians in Gal. 3:8, etc. But there is a restriction in the application. The application is not, in a sense, positive and absolute - as if the blessing of believers in Christ was exactly that which was promised - but the quotation applies in the extent in which believers in Christ form the first fruits of the conversion of the world. In the Church, it is one family out of a hundred, or out of a thousand, which has been blessed in the seed of Abraham, and not all the families of the earth: nor will they be so any more than they are now, seeing that, on the contrary, man goes on in his wickedness, growing worse and worse, seducing and being seduced, until the apostasy comes, and the man of sin also, whom the Lord will destroy at His coming (2 Tim. 3:13, 2 Thess. 2:3-8). But, when God says all the families of the earth, He means ALL the families, and not a small number from among them. This promise, then, has not its perfect accomplishment in the Church, but it will have it after the rapture of the Church, when the wicked one having been destroyed, " the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea " (Isa. 11:4-9).

And when the Lord said that Abraham saw his day and was glad (John 8:56) it was not of the Lord's first coming in humiliation that he spake. For how could the Father of the Faithful have been glad to see his Lord rejected and crucified by his own posterity in their unbelief; and to see that posterity, just chastisement of their unbelief, rejected of God and dispersed over the whole earth; their land under a curse and desolate? Yet such is the destiny of Israel during the Church's sojourn

here below. But the day of Christ, which Abraham and all the patriarchs and the prophets saw from afar and hailed with joy, is that which the Word of God invariably calls by that name (2 Cor. 1:14, 2 Thess. 2:1), and that is the time of His glorious reign. In that day, not only shall all the nations of the earth be blessed in the seed of Abraham (Zech. 8:13, 20-23, Psa. 72:17), but that seed itself shall be multiplied as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the sea shore (Isa. 27:6; Jer. 31:27; 33:22; Ezek. 36: 9-11, 37, 38). It shall possess the gate of its enemies (Gen. 22:17). The last chapter of Micah from ver. 8 gives a splendid picture of that which the Holy Spirit Himself declares to be the realization of the truthfulness of God to Jacob, and of His free gifts promised to Abraham and to the fathers of olden time.

When Jacob spake prophetically upon his death-bed, " The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. 49:10). " the gathering" of which he speaks is not of the Church, but of the nations against Jerusalem in the last days of the age, in the thought and with the intention of destroying it, but, in truth, themselves there to be judged of the Lord ere they are blessed;- 'tis one of the grand scenes constantly in view in prophecy (see Isa. 66:18, 19; Joel 3:2,11; Zeph. 3:8, 9; Zech. 14:2; Mic. 4:11-13; Matt. 25:31,32, etc.; Rev. 19:17-21).

It is, indeed, to this gathering and to this judgment of the nations that Matt. 25:31 refers; - where it is a mistake to introduce the Church, as if the Church already justified, risen and seated in heavenly places, had to appear in judgment with the wicked, to hear the sentence pronounced of its condemnation or of its acquittal, whereas it is said, that it shall never come into judgment. " 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). Neither is this gathering that of the last judgment as described in Rev. 20:11,12. (Compare especially Matt. 25:31,32, with Joel 3:12 and Jer. 3:17).

Then, when the nations shall have been gathered against Jerusalem, Judah shall devour as a lion on the right hand and on the left (Mic. 5:8, Zech. 12:1-8). Then, also, a little later, will be realized the pictures of temporal prosperity found in Gen. 49:11,12; Joel 3:16-18; Amos 9:13. And these were the hopes of the patriarchs, even the glorious day of the coming of their Lord to redeem his people, the children of Jacob and the posterity of Israel.

Analogous remarks might be made upon the prophecies of Balaam, Num. 23:7-10,17-24; 24:5-9, 17-19: on the songs of Moses, Deut. 32, of Hannah, 1 Sam. 2:1-11: of David, 2 Sam. 22 and 23: and in short upon the greater part of the songs of the Old Testament, to which we may add those of Mary and Zacharias in the New Testament (Luke 1:46-55, 68-79). These songs, which were given as suited to the particular circumstances of those who pronounced them, and which apply in measure to those circumstances, ordinarily stretch onward to the second coming of the Lord and to the establishment of His glorious reign upon earth, without stopping at the Lord Jesus as heavenly Head of His body the Church.

The second Psalm gives us a striking instance of this absence of the Church in the revelations of the Old Testament. " Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" (ver. 1).

Of a truth, as said Peter, "Who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were

gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together. For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:25-28). These words have then already had, at least, a first accomplishment in the rejection of the Lord. According to this, we might have expected to find that this Psalm spoke to us of the Church and its destinies; such would have been according to the natural order of events: but is it so?

Assuredly not. In the administration of the Church, Jesus is not King in Sion: so far from it, this is the time in which Sion is without a king, widowed and desolate. In the Church, God does not speak to the nations in wrath, and His Son does not break them in pieces with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter. On the contrary, Israel, having rejected its king, and being itself, on this account, set aside, God postpones His wrath, which, if it took its course according to this prophecy, would bring in the immediate judgment of the earth. He introduces a time of patience and of grace, during which He invites all men, without any distinction, to repentance, and faith unto salvation. The Son, so far as he is concerned, casts out none that come unto Him. 'Tis the time of the forming of the Church, passed over in the most perfect silence in the Psalm; and it is when these Christianized nations,-themselves trampling under foot the long-suffering of God,-will again be in league, under the direction of the Antichrist against the Lord; -'tis then, I say, that the prophecy of this second Psalm will again resume its testimony, and will have its perfect fulfillment. God will then speak in His wrath; will set His King upon Sion, and will give him all the kingdoms of the world as an inheritance (Rev. 11.15; 19:11, etc.; 2:26, 27).

The Psa. 110 is open to similar remarks. Eighteen hundred years have rolled on since the first word of this Psalm found its accomplishment in the ascension of the Lord Jesus, and His sitting down at the right hand of God. The rest waits still for its accomplishment. Without question Jesus is, from the moment named, the Great High Priest; but the blood of the victim was offered behind the veil, within the holy place; there He is invisible, and He is not come forth to bless the people. Recognized by God as the true Melchizedek, Priest and King, originator of righteousness and peace for the earth, He has been, and is; openly manifested as such He is not. Ere that he must first fulfill these words: " He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries" (ver. 6); as it is said, " I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy" (Deut. 32.42). He must, in short, destroy those who destroy the earth, which is by no means that which He does under the administration of the Church, in which He invites of sinners the very chiefest to come to Him that they may have life. Thus the prophet passes from the ascension of the Savior, directly to His return in glory to establish His kingdom upon earth, and says nothing about the Church which fills up the interval between these two events.

The eighth Psalm has also had the beginning of a fulfillment, when the multitudes who followed Jesus and the children of Jerusalem, cried: " Hosanna to the Son of David" (Matt. 21.8-16). Events were then in progress toward the fulfillment, but the rulers having suppressed this homage, having even stirred up the people to demand the death of Him who was among them as King, meek and lowly; the kingdom was postponed for a time yet to come.

" We see not yet all things put under Him," says the apostle to the Hebrews (2:8). That will not be fulfilled until the Lord Jesus, made manifest from heaven, will have renewed the world at His coming in glory; it is " the world to come," or the inhabitable earth to come (Heb. 2.5), described by the Psalmist, in which also all creation, delivered from the bondage of corruption, will praise the Lord (Rom. 8:20; Psa. 148). But as to the Church which came in between the ascension of the Savior and the establishment of the world to come, the Psalmist says not a word.

Isa. 11. The first two verses evidently describe the Savior in His first coming. Then, onward to the fifth verse, He is represented as the just and faithful Judge, which is His character at the time of His second coming (Rev. 19:11). " He shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (Isa. 11:3). Such is not His conduct in the Church, to which He promises persecutions and afflictions, with no other defense than that of faith, and the patient hope of His coming: but, once returned, " And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. 2:8). Then, because He will have avenged His "elect which cry unto Him day and night" (Luke 18:7), it may be said, " I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found" (Psa. 37:35, 36). Then, in short, the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, and the material creation will be renewed. Here then, again, it is the first coming of the Lord, knit up with the second coming to judge and establish His reign; the Church which fills up the interval between these two comings not being noticed.

Let us examine Dan. 9:24-27, without stopping at the beginning of the prophecy, on which we all are happily agreed:-

" Seventy weeks are determined upon Thy people and upon Thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the over-spreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

After sixty and nine weeks of years, Messiah (or the Prince) shall be cut off, but not for Himself [or, and He shall have nothing]. Compare this with, " Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God. And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength" (Isa. 49.4, 5). - That He has been cut off, we know. Well, then we read Dan. 9.26: " And the people of the prince that shall come [the people of the fourth monarchy, out of which the prince or leader (that is Antichrist) is to come] shall destroy the city and

the sanctuary." That also has had its accomplishment in the destruction of 'Jerusalem by Titus. Now, is it possible to place the seventieth week immediately after the sixtieth? The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, mentioned after the 'sixty-ninth week, although it came about forty years 'after the death of the Savior, has already put an interval between these two weeks. Then, if one could, in any sense, say that during the three years and a half which followed the death of Christ, the covenant of grace was confirmed with many, what is the sacrifice and what the oblation which then ceased? If it be said, 'the Jewish sacrifices'; in the thoughts of God they ceased at the death of the Savior, which rendered them useless, as was signified by the rending the veil of the temple in twain; in point of fact, they ceased with the destruction of the temple, which rendered them impossible; but in neither case was it three and a half years after the death of the Savior. " By the overspreading of abominations He shall make it desolate" [rendered in the margin, "Upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator"], is generally understood an idol set in the temple. But that could not be said of the army of Titus, for then the temple was burnt contrary to his will, and before it could be defiled by any idol; and then, again, that did not take place in the seventieth week. In short, what is said of this seventieth week remains inexplicable if it is made to follow immediately after the sixty-ninth. But if between the two is placed the whole time of the Church, as we have seen must be done in several other passages, then many of the difficulties disappear. After the sixty-ninth week the Christ was rejected, and that time which should have been blessing to Israel was, on the contrary, the time of its rejection. Thence onward, also, Israel not being any more recognized as the people of God upon earth, time CEASES TO BE COUNTED as to it,-" And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined" (ver. 26): this is the destruction of Jerusalem, the desolations which followed, and will not end but with the war, the controversy which the Lord will have with His people. These are the " many days" during which they are " without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim" (Hos. 3.4). This is precisely the time of the Church here below. But when once the Church is gathered into the heavens, God enters again into relationship with the people of the earth, first to judge, and then to bless them. Time, then, AGAIN BEGINS TO BE RECKONED for the earthly people. It is the seventieth week, or the time of Antichrist; for, inasmuch as they did not receive Jesus, who came in the name of His Father, there shall come another in his own name, and him they will receive. During the first half of that week (i.e. during three and a half years), he enters into covenant with many in Israel, whom he will gain by flattery. But in the second half, laying aside the mask, and wishing to be adored as God, he will make the daily sacrifice (the re-establishment of which he had sanctioned) to cease; and in the very temple where God ought to be served, he places the image of the beast, abomination which is the cause of desolation, since all those that refuse to worship it are put to death, until " that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" [or, rather "upon the desolator," as in margin]. That is, Antichrist shall fall smitten of the Lord Himself. Then are to be accomplished on "the people" and " the holy city" of Daniel, all the blessings spoken of in ver. 24. If we accept the translation proposed by some, " in order that criminality may be consummated, and the measure of iniquity filled up" (for to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin), it changes not the course of thought, because the measure of iniquity filled up brings in the judgment upon the wicked oppressor, and consequently the deliverance of the oppressed. This is the end of the indignation of the Lord upon Israel. The two halves of that last week are, then, the epochs which have so prominent a place in the prophecy, the time, times, and the dividing of time, the 1260 days

and the 42 months (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 11:3; 12:6, 14; 13:5).

As to Joel 2:28,32, quoted in Acts 2:16 -21, the perusal of the words suffices to show that they had not at Pentecost their entire accomplishment. If there was, then, an outpouring of the spirit, prophecy, and so a partial accomplishment, so that Peter could say, " This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," there were neither wonders in the heaven above nor signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke, the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood; and certainly there was not that great and terrible day of the Lord. What conclusion must we draw then? but that this prophecy, in strictness, referring to the setting up of the kingdom of Messiah, had, in the times of Peter, but a beginning of fulfillment, because the kingdom, then offered to Israel and soon rejected by it, made way for the church; and not until the return of the Lord will this prophecy resume its course of accomplishment, and have, as the kingdom itself, its perfect fulfillment. Then, in very deed, will there be signs in the heaven and upon the earth - the great and terrible day of the Lord, and an outpouring of the Spirit, which will be for Israel as the rain of the latter-day, as Pentecost was the former rain (Isa. 13:6-13; 28:6; Hos. 6:3; Zech. 12:10, etc.) And then will be found the fulfillment of Matt. 24 and Rev. 6-20.

In proof that, Israel restored in the latter days, and the church, are but one and the same, we often hear Amos. 9:11, 12, cited in connection with Acts 15:15-17. But in reading the end of that passage in the prophet, we see that, in such case, the church should be the conqueror of the nations, and of Edom in particular. We may remark, too, the words of James, "How God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name." But, then, when referring to the prophet, instead of quoting (ver. 11) "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen," etc., he says (Acts 15:16) " After this will I return and will build again the tabernacle of David," for " in that day" he substitutes, " after this will I return." Evidently James, speaking by the Spirit, does not apply the words of Amos to the church, but to the re-establishment of Israel. Indeed, he says, " God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name." Here we have the church plainly announced and defined; but it is James, and not the prophet, who thus announces it. Then, "after this" (after this economy of the church) " God will build again the tabernacle of David." This is Israel's restoration. "That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this," says Amos (9:12). "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things," says James (Acts 15:17); the latter, doubtless, not wishing to arrest the thoughts upon the warlike exploits of Israel in the last days, clearly revealed fact as it was; but rather upon the conversion of the nations by the instrumentality of Israel. The conquest and the conversion of the nations come last.

No; the church, the body of Christ, is not in the Old Testament; at least, she is not there, save as in Christ, in whom she is shut in and hidden, as Eve was hidden in. Adam, before that God drew her forth thence. The church is to be seen there but in shadows and figures; now is the time for the taking of Eve out of the pierced side of Him to whom she is espoused, while He rests upon His Father's throne; that Bride that He shall present unto Himself a glorious church not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing - that she may reign with Him over the creation then already blessed of God. She is again shadowed forth in Enoch, who, by faith, walked here below with God, whom God took before that the deluge of His wrath fell upon a world overwhelmed in sin. She may be seen in Rebecca, whom a heavenly steward, sent by the Father, is come to affianced to the

well-beloved Son, whom he cheers with rich presents, and guides across the desert towards the abode of her Lord, who comes forth to meet her. But the heavenly mystery contained in these touching pictures, remained concealed, even from those who formed the chief actors in the history. That which the prophets of Israel announce clearly and without mystery, is the sufferings of Christ and the glories which should follow afterward (1 Peter 1:11). It is the kingdom which the Son of Man will establish at His coming in glory (Dan. 2:44; 7:13, 14, 27), in which, also, all the kingdoms of the earth shall be subjected to Him, and shall serve Him: kingdom of God, because then the Lord will be king in all the earth (Zech. 14:9); kingdom of heaven, because it is from heaven He comes who establishes it (Dan. 7:13; Matt. 26:64). Then, too, will He manifest His glory in the highest of the heavens, in heavenly saints, as well as in those who are upon the earth. Kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6), because, then, Israel will hold the first place upon the earth, its sons being princes over the whole earth (Mic. 4:8,9), and pre-eminently because He who will then reign, is He who has, in grace, manifested Himself to the world as Son of David, and who then still bears the name of King of Israel (Isa. 33:20-22; Zeph. 3:14,15).

3rd. The first Mention of the Church in the New Testament, and its Formation by the Holy Spirit.

If we now turn to the New Testament, we find therein that the first mention of the church is in the teaching of the Lord in connection with His rejection by Israel. Afterward we find it formed by the Holy Spirit upon the foundation of Jesus, slain but risen from the dead -taking the place of Israel and of its kingdom, postponed from that moment to a later period.

It is, indeed, the King of this kingdom, and not the Head of the church, that the angel announces to Mary, when he says - " And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:31-33).

Never was the Lord, in the church, found sitting upon the throne of David; neither has He reigned over the house of Jacob, which, on the contrary, has been rejected and without a king. But such was the promise to Israel (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 9:6,7, etc.; Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:15-17, etc.)

That which John the Baptist preached was the kingdom (Matt. 3:2); and all that followed in his preaching was in harmony with this beginning. He presents himself as the voice spoken of by Isa. 40:3, etc. " The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His path straight," and according to the prophet himself, " And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," etc. Is that the church period? To answer " Yes" would be to set John in direct opposition with Paul, who calls the church period the time of travail and groaning of the whole creation, and not only of the creation, but of us also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, and he gives no other end to these groanings than that of the redemption of our bodies; that is to say; our change to glory at the coming of the Lord (Rom. 8:19-23). Ah! the time when every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; when the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, is in strong contrast with what we now see -in contrast with the time of creation's groaning - for it is the time of refreshing that is to come from the presence of the Lord the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:19 - 21). Then will the day of the Lord

of hosts be " upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up" (Isa. 2:14, etc.) Then will He fill the earth with the knowledge of Himself and of His glory (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14), just according to John Baptist's announcement. So, again, when He says, " Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable" (Luke 3:17). These words carry us forwards to the time of harvesting; for in the east the winnowing of the wheat and the purging of the floor come immediately after the harvest, and form part of it; in no case could they possibly precede it. Now, " the harvest is the end of the age" (Matt. 13:39; read from 37-43). It is then the judgment exercised by the Lord at the end of the present age, when He will destroy those that corrupt the earth, and will establish therein His kingdom; John announced not the church in this place. At the time he spake of, it will have finished its course here below, and will be with the Lord.

When, also, He cried, saying, " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29); this, in a certain sense, includes the church, because the church is included in the world; but it will not have its full accomplishment save in the world to come; when the world, as a whole, will partake of the benefits of the sacrifice of Jesus. Now, He is the propitiation for our sins - for the sins of us who are members of the church. Then He will be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). This was doubtlessly given to John to see in prospect.

Thus John, like all the ancient prophets, looking upon the earthly people of the Lord, saw, through the Holy Ghost, the great and splendid things which the Lord would accomplish on the earth, when He should establish His kingdom; but the Church, in that which is distinctively peculiar to her, her calling, walk here below, her rapture, etc., was still for John a mystery hidden, Jesus alone, who came down from heaven, could reveal these things. Such, I doubt not, is the force of that word of John himself. " He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all" (John 3:31). And here, also, it may be remarked, that not only did John not present himself as the Bridegroom or the Messiah; but that he also did not claim to be the bride or part of it; he calls himself the Friend of the Bridegroom (read John 3:28-32).

John summoned Israel to repentance, in order to prepare the way for the glorious kingdom of the Lord which he proclaimed; but the rulers, in rejecting the baptism of John, "rejected the counsel of God" against themselves (Luke 8:30). And, doubtless, it was a sore trial to John not to be able to understand that the kingdom which he had announced was interrupted by the rejection of Jesus, even as Elijah could not bear that his testimony should remain without effect as to the conversion of Ahab and Israel (1 Kings 19:3-15; Luke 7:19-28).

Jesus himself began His preaching, saying, " Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). " The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). And in truth the seventieth week of Daniel was there. The time of the kingdom and of all the blessings was come. In order that Israel might enter upon possession, it was only needful to obey the call of the Lord; "to repent and believe the gospel," "the gospel of the kingdom of God" (ver. 14).

Let us follow the Lord in the synagogue of Nazareth on the sabbath day. He opens the book of the prophet Isaiah and reads, " The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach

the acceptable year of the Lord " (Luke 4:18,19).

Well, if we now read Isa. 61, we shall see that it clearly proclaims the return of the favor of the Lord upon Israel, and all the blessings which pertain to the sabbatical year and the jubilee; the forgiveness of debts, the liberty of the captive, the rest and blessing of the earth (Ex. 23:10,11; Lev. 25; Deut. 15). It was then the true jubilee, that is to say, the kingdom with all its blessings which Jesus proposed to Israel in applying the words of Isa. 61:1, 2. John Baptist and Jesus Himself had, in a sense, preached the day of atonement, in saying, Repent ye, etc. (Lev. 25:9,10; 23; 27) It is, then, after the atonement of the jubilee, that is to say, -after the humiliation of repentance, the kingdom with all the blessings which Jesus brings to it in announcing, " This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

But why does the Lord stop, closing the book, before these words, " And the day of vengeance of our God." Just because He brought not vengeance but the blessing. If Israel had received Him then, the promises made through the prophets might have been fulfilled; but we know what reception he met with under those very circumstances. Wrath quickly supplanting, in the inhabitants of Nazareth, the passing feeling of admiration, they sought to cast him down from the height on which their

city was built. Thus, as Israel, not knowing the day of its visitation, has rejected its king, who came to it meek, not breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax; it must see Him coming to it preceded by great and terrible signs - " men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth" (Luke 21:26, read the chapter). " For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (Luke 21:22; Isa. 34:8; 63:4). That will be "the great and the terrible day of the Lord" (Joel 2:31; Mal. 4:5); and then only will it be that the children of Israel having kept the day of atonement (Zech. 12:10-13:1), the true jubilee will come. " And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in " (Isa. 58:12). " But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves" (Isa. 61:6).

In the meanwhile, it is the Church which, having taken the place of the kingdom rejected by Israel, enjoys spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

That which Jesus preached at Nazareth, He preached also from place to place. " And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people " (Matt. 9:35). When He chose the twelve, He gave them power over the unclean spirits to drive them out, and to heal all sorts of sickness and infirmities, power even to raise the dead,-then He bade them not to go unto the Gentiles, nor to enter into any city of the Samaritans, but to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to say to them," The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10.7). A similar commission is given to the seventy, and when they were not received in any city, going out into the streets they were to say, " Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you " (Luke 10:11).

But as Israel had rejected the forerunner of its King, so it rejected its King Himself and His apostles. " But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me" (Psa. 81:11). And Jesus had to say-

"But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of Publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children " (Matt. 11:16-19).

And it is only after this, be it remarked, that Jesus begins to speak of the Church.

" When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it " (Matt. 16:13-18).

Peter had found grace before God to recognize Jesus, not only as the Son of David 'or the Messiah of Israel, but also as the Son of the living God, and having confessed Him as such, Jesus answers that confession by a new revelation, almost as if He had said: It is so true that I am the Son of the living God, that not only the gates of Hades (the unseen world, where are the spirits of men after death, Isa. 38.11), shall not withstand me; not only after having descended thither, I shall come forth conqueror, but I shall cause my Church also to come forth thence; " For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John 5.26); " For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John 5:21); " because I live, ye shall live also " (John 14:19).

Thus we have here, the first notice of the Church and of its participation in the life of its Head, slain, but raised again from the dead. It is very nearly the same truth as the Lord a little later recalls to mind for the consolation and encouragement of His beloved disciple. " Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:17,18). And notice, the Lord does not say, " I have built," but " I will build my Church." Would the Lord have spoken thus if the Church had existed already from the commencement of the world? No: and more than that, at that hour, even the foundation of the Church was not laid, for;hat foundation is Jesus rejected, crucified, raised from the dead, and received up into glory. Also, " From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. 16:21). Thus knitting up the truth of his rejection, death and resurrection inseparably with the Church.

And a little further on:-

" Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Here, in declaring that " Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (ver. 20), the Lord lays down a fundamental principle of the church, which may help us to comprehend its nature; and on which we are happy to be able to lean, in the midst of the wreck of the present day.

True is it, that a little later, Israel seemed for a moment ready to receive its king. The multitude, learning that Jesus was come to the feast, went forth before Him, crying " Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" (Matt. 21:9). And the children cry in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David" (ver. 15). And when certain Greeks, among them that came up to worship at the feast, desire to see Him, a voice from heaven comes from on high and bears witness to Him (John 12:20,21,28). All seems in progress towards His manifestation. But the leaders of the people again succeed in stifling the convictions and suppressing the movement, and thus they hinder the deliverance of Israel and the world. They even call the Lord in question, as to His authority. Then, too, the Lord openly proclaims their rejection. In the parable of the vineyard and husband-men in Matt. 21:33-46, He makes them pronounce judgment on themselves. " They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons" (ver. 41). Then " Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? 'Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them" (Matt. 21:42 - 45).

Thus the stone is first upon the earth. Whosoever shall fall on it shall be broken. This evidently is the Lord Himself, according to the doctrine of His first coming, which was a scandal and a stumbling-block to Israel, and is so still to the world. As Peter speaks, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:10-12). But afterward the stone falls; it has then been lifted up on high, and on whomsoever it falls it grinds him to powder. This is the Lord, according to the doctrine of His coming back in glory to set up His kingdom by the destruction of His enemies; it is the stone "cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron. and clay,

and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:34,35).

For " in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan. 2:44,45). The church is that which is built upon the stone during the time of its rejection; the church, a spiritual house" built upon the living stone, " disallowed, indeed, of men, but chosen of God and precious" (1 Peter 2:5,4).

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it... From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. 16:18, 21). "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the -word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Peter 2:4-10).

The kingdom is that which will be built upon the stone, when come down from heaven and having destroyed its enemies. " Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. 28:16). Psa. 118 is a song for that kingdom; how fitting too.

"I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord" (Psa. 118:21- 22).

Similar truth may be seen in Luke 19:11 - 27, in the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return - instruction which the Lord gave, " because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should

immediately appear" (ver. 11).

After having pronounced the woe of the blind leaders of the blind, Jesus takes sorrowful leave of Jerusalem. " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. 23:37 - 39).

But it is clear it was not a final farewell forever, for "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (ver. 39). As the Lord had said by the prophet, " I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early" (Hos. 5:15). The time, then, will come wherein Israel will return again to its king and its God, and seeing Him again coming to it, will hail Him again with the cry, " Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Psa. 118:26).

" For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hos. 3:4,5). The kingdom is postponed until then, and the church now holds its place, being, in one aspect of it, the kingdom in mystery.

We know what Israel did to its king; it delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles to put Him to death, crying, " Crucify him, crucify him." When Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "we have no king but Caesar." Instead of a diadem they gave Him a crown of thorns; instead of a scepter, a reed; and instead of a throne, a cross; but on that cross the shame of his enemies was plainly set forth in Greek, in Latin, and in Hebrew, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews"; as if to proclaim to the wide world that if thence onward Israel was without a king, it was not the King who had failed His people, but the people who had rejected and crucified its King.

Israel had come, like its forefathers, in Num. 13; 14, though in another sense, to the borders of the land of promise. The kingdom of heaven was at hand, had been offered to it; but by its unbelief, it hindered, as its forefathers had, the fulfillment of the promise, and now, before it can be fulfilled, "the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim" (Hos. 3; 4). " And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face" (Ezek. 20:35).

Nevertheless, Jesus, upon the cross, prayed for His murderers: " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And, as if in answer to this prayer, the kingdom is again offered to them. For if the words of Peter mean anything they imply this.

"And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had spewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution

of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, so many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts hi. 17 - 26).

But if some believed, the mass, alas! hardened themselves against the voice of the apostle, as they had done against the voice of his Master.

Yet once more Stephen makes an appeal to Israel as to the people of God, and charges them not to follow the example - of the patriarchs, who, moved with envy, sold Joseph, whom God had raised up to be a savior of his own family, and of the world - or of the Israelite in Egypt, who said to Moses, " Who made thee a prince or a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday" (Acts 7:27, 28). " This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush" (ver. 35). But more hardened even than their fathers, the Jews stoned Stephen and sent him, in a sense, after the Lord, as the servant in the parable, " We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). From that time onward, the body which the Holy Spirit had formed of the children of Abraham, gathers into itself numbers from among the Samaritans and the Gentiles, as may be seen in the eighth and tenth chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. And, then, that which takes the place here below, which the kingdom held, assumed the characteristics of the new man: where there was neither Jew nor Greek. At the same time, from the midst of the murderers of Stephen, God picks out him who was to be the minister of the church, the minister of the mystery hid from ages and from generations. "Whereof I Paul am made a minister (Col. 1:24,29). And it seems as if, in his very call, he had to learn to know the church as the body here below of Jesus slain but raised again from the dead. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" says the Lord to him; and when Saul replies, "Who art thou, Lord?" the Lord's answer is, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (Acts 9:4,5). The church had, in reality, commenced before Paul, yet without intelligence as to it in those who formed part of it. Peter, for instance, when bade to carry the word to the Gentiles, complied - yet, in some respects, unwillingly, without intelligence; he gave not himself heartily, so to speak, to the work, until he saw the Holy Ghost given to the Gentiles, after that they believed; this fact convinced him that he had no right to refuse the water of baptism. "Who was I that I should withstand God?" Peter clearly understood the fact that Gentiles were saved by faith; but he did not thence deduce the idea of the unity of believers in but one body with Christ. It was reserved to Paul to be the minister of this mystery - which, without a doubt, he means when he speaks of "my gospel" (Rom. 16:25; 2 Tim. 2:8).

And thus we find ourselves again at the point from which we set out - the teaching of Paul as to the nature of the church, which we can now better understand.

4th. Summary of the Doctrine of Paul as to the Special Nature of the Church.

1. The most important of all his instructions, that which in a sense contains all the rest, and to which Paul also most constantly reverts, is that the church is "the body of Christ." "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23; see, also, Eph. 2:15, 16; 3:6; 4:1-16; 5:23-32; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Cor. 12:12-27).

Now, could this body exist before that Jesus had been rejected? No; for we have seen, in various parts of Scripture, that when Jesus came, He came to sit upon the throne of His Father David, to reign over the house of Jacob. Such was the ostensible object of His coming; and not that of forming a body of sinners redeemed from among all nations. Therefore, as we have also seen, he associates the idea of the church with that of His rejection by Israel; the church is the house built in spirit upon the rejected stone, during a parenthesis in which time is not counted. Paul also teaches us that it is by the blood of Christ that they who were afar off were brought nigh, to form together with those that believed of them that were nigh, "one new man"; "for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:15, 16). Caiaphas, prophesying by the Spirit, taught that Jesus was to "die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11:51,52). This gathering together in one of the children of God, in other words, the body of Christ is then a fruit of His death.

But the Church is not the body of a Christ that is dead and gone, or even of a Christ upon earth that may yet die,-it is the body of Him who was dead, but is alive again, being raised from the dead; who consequently cannot die any more, but liveth forever and ever (Rom. 6:9; Rev. 1:17); and let it be distinctly noticed that the Christ who is given as head of His body is a Christ raised from the dead, seated at the right hand of God, "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:20-23). This body of Christ then could not exist before that Christ Himself was raised from the dead, and glorified.

Lastly, the Church being the body of Christ, the Spirit of Christ must needs dwell in it, and animate it as the spirit of a man dwells in a man. And so we are taught in these words: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19). "Ye are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor. 6:16); see also Eph. 2:21,22, and 4:4; 1 Peter 2:4, 5, etc. Now, it was meet that a man-just and glorified, human nature-in the person of the Lord, should be in heaven, in order for the Spirit to be able to come down, and dwell in such poor sinners as in a temple. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)" (John 7:37-39). "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto

you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (Ib. 16:7).

This body of Christ, animated by the Holy Spirit, could not have existed before the Spirit was sent down from on high. This in no wise interferes with the unquestionable truth, that saints of all times were taught, formed and sanctified by the Spirit of God; by Him also men of God have ever been moved to speak: but never of any of them, or of any union of any of them, was it previously said, they are the body of Christ, members of His body, the temple where His Spirit dwells.

2. Again, Paul tells us that the Church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone: in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:20-22). Now are the prophets of whom mention is here found those of the Old, or those of what is called the New Testament? (Acts 13:1 and 1 Cor. 12 and 14) We shall soon be convinced, that it is the latter, and not the former, who are referred to, if we remark that they are always named after the apostles-"built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20).

"Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph. 3:5). "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ib. 4:10, 11, 12). "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?" (1 Cor. 12:28,29).

In this last passage, the apostles and prophets are expressly said to be in the Church. And in Eph. 4:11, it is said they are a result of the ascension of the Lord. And Paul says, speaking of gifts to the Church of Corinth, "Are all apostles? Are all prophets?" Thus we see clearly, that in these passages the allusion is not to prophets of olden times, but to those of the Church. The Church, then, that is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets of a risen and ascended Christ, cannot be the unity of all those who have believed since the foundation of the world, the greater part of these having lived before the said apostles and prophets, and it having been impossible for them to be built upon this foundation. This in some respects tends to confirm and develop what we adverted to in the Word of the Lord to Peter: "Upon this rock will I build my Church." He says, not have built, but will build.

3. According to Paul, the Church is raised as a new man upon the ruins of a middle wall of partition, namely, the law of ordinances, which had previously separated Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-22). But while that middle wall still existed, could the Church exist? In other words, could the Church, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, exist, when, so far from there being no wall of partition, there was a deep and impassable line of demarcation drawn between the Jews and Gentiles? Will it be able to continue hereafter, when that line of demarcation, though less exclusive and less rigid, will still exist, as we have seen will be the case here below in the age to come?

4. Lastly, Paul teaches us: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the

ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11, 12). Now if the Church includes all the saints from the beginning of the world, how comes it to pass that the apostle, when speaking of the gifts which the Lord has made to the Church for its edification, makes no allusion to patriarchs, kings, and prophets of the old covenant? Did not these serve for the profiting of the saints in their times? Most surely: but for Paul the Church is the body of Christ, animated by the Spirit at Pentecost, and which was in existence only from that time. Therefore it is that he speaks only of gifts and ministries communicated by the Spirit since Pentecost, as the context clearly shows.

Yes, there is a Church which is neither the continuation of Israel, nor Israel restored, and the nations blessed in the age to come; but is the complement of those who, during the time Of Israel's rejection, are drawn by the Holy Spirit to the Lord Jesus Christ, seated in heaven- to be His bride, His body, a new man, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, scythian, bond nor free; but Christ all and in all (Gal. 3:27,28; Col. 3:10,11). In that Christ " made Himself of no reputation,". etc. (Phil. 2:7,8), THEREFORE it is, that-

"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).

God has raised Christ-

" from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:20-23).

Thus, that place of glory, which Jesus has, through humiliation and suffering, won for Himself, as Son of Man, at the right hand of God, His, as Son of God, it ever was (John 17:5), is our blessing. His being set at God's own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but in that which is to come, is the security of His body the Church: thus it can be said, " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). " Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:5,6).

As being of His body, members of Him who is now seated at the right hand of God in the heavens-His Spirit uniting us to Him, we are looked at as already in some sort, that is according to the Spirit, in the heavenly places. For such was the place which the Father's love assigned to us when He chose us before the foundation of the world, us, who were but dead as members of the family of the first Adam, that He might unite us in an indissoluble union to Christ, the Prince of life.

'Tis here we find what is our righteousness, peace, and the anchor of our hope, " Our life is hid with Christ in God " (Col. 3:3). Who shall deprive us of it?

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:27-39).

"But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above): Or, who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith, which we preach" (Rom. 10:6-8).

May we feed on these precious truths! In proportion as we do so, we shall be able to live the life of those that are raised from the dead, dead in ourselves, to sin and the world, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Being the body of Christ, His bride, "bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh": we are "His fullness or complement" - "the fullness of Him that fills all in all." For the aggregate of the members, the very least of them not excepted, is necessary to the Head to complete the body. A head is not a body without the members; and a body is not complete, though it have a head, if but one single member be wanting. The bride renders the Bridegroom complete; He is not complete without His bride; She is His glory - "The woman is the glory of the man" (1 Cor. 11:7). Thus is it with the Lord Jesus; in a certain sense, He will not be "the perfect man, will not have come to the measure of the fullness of His stature" (Eph. 4:13), until His body shall be completed by the entrance of the last member of the redeemed. Then will the Second Adam "present it unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish" (ver. 27) and He will find His glory in her, as it is said: "He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thess. 1:10), and with her He will reign over Israel and the nations, and share with her His inheritance.

Is it asked, Why has the Lord called the Church to so high a position far above every other category of the blessed? The primary cause of this vocation, as also of the individual calling of each of us, is found in the good pleasure of God. Why, indeed, have we received the love of the truth that we might be saved, we, who now believe, but because He "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:5).

Well, in vain shall we seek for other reason for the calling of the Church. We must, after all, in the one case as much as in the other, come back to this: "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight " (Matt. 11:26). Yet the Word does reveal to us the end, which God has proposed to Himself herein. This was to be-

"to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:6). "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7). "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:9-11).

And how greatly does this yet magnify the thoughts which we may have of the Church and her calling! To be a monument to the praise of the glory of His grace, to the setting forth to those in the heavenly places His manifold wisdom, to the exceeding riches of His grace, in ages to come.

If the belief in this high calling seem to any to be pride, be it remembered that the ways of God are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts " (Isa. 55:8,9). And be it specially remembered, that true humility does not consist in rejecting, upon the plea of our own utter unworthiness, the free grace of God, though Peter seemed to think so when he said, " Thou shalt never wash my feet" (John 13:8). Of what are we worthy? Humility consists rather in adoringly receiving that which

God says, and in setting it altogether above all our most familiar thoughts, above the oldest and most established traditions, and above the most revered instruction; as, said Mary, " Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38). In this spirit, let us receive the instruction which the Word gives us concerning the Church. Let us humble ourselves, and what more suited to humble us than the contemplation of the immense grace of God, set in contrast with all our wretched misery? How, while so occupied, can we avoid saying, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what East thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. 4:7). Let us humble ourselves then, but let us do so in full faith; let us adore and worship; and by the contemplation of the unsearchable riches of the love of God, may we be strengthened to walk worthy of the calling wherewith we are called.

Appendix

1.-The present evil age is, say we, the time of the absence of the Lord, and that is, at all events, true as to us. But when, precisely, did this age begin? Perhaps at the deluge. It is, then, on this account that the times of our Lord, and of His apostles, are called "the last times, or the last days" (Heb. 1:1).

They would have been, indeed, the last times, or days, of the evil age, if Jesus had been received, since his glorious reign would then have introduced the age to come. [Are the ages, and all time, COUNTED as to earth? The Church is heavenly.-Ed.]

But, enough; if the precise moment of the beginning of this age is not clearly seen, its characteristic traits to us are most definite. It is an "evil age" from which the Christian is delivered (Gal. 1:4); an age of darkness, the prince and god of which is the devil (Eph. 6:12; 2 Cor. 4:4); the children of which are opposed to the children of light (Luke 16:8). Those who love this age abandon God and His children (2 Tim. 4:10); also, we must not be conformed to it (Rom. 12:2).

The age to come evidently begins at the coming of the Lord, and corresponds to the time of His reigning. It is a desirable and a glorious age, since those who will be counted worthy to have part in it, and in the resurrection from among the dead, cannot die any more (Luke 20:35, 36). It is the age of recompence (Mark 10:30); Luke 14:14). It is the age of resurrection, of life, and of glory.

The world and the age have oft been confounded together, which is a great error. The world, or earth, *κοσμος, or οικουμενη* is the earth on which we dwell. The age, *αιων*, is a time appointed for the duration of the world, or a dispensation of God as to the world and its inhabitants; one of those dispensations which he made by the Son (Heb. 1:2). They are as two parallel lines, often even cut at equal distances, by the same events, but always distinct.

If the present age began at the deluge, it corresponds, as to its duration, with that which may be called the present world, in contrast with the old world, or world before the deluge.

The age to come, which is introduced by the coming of the Lord, corresponds also to the world to come, or the habitable earth to come (Psa. 8; Heb. 2:5). That is to say, to the world restored by the Lord, and in which all creatures will be subject to Him.

There is also correspondence between the traits of this world and those of the present age. If this age is evil, the world also lies in the wicked one, and all that is in the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And, therefore, as we may not love the present age, nor conform ourselves to it, neither may we love the world, nor the things that are in the world (1 John 2:15-17; 5:19; James 4:4). If the devil is called the ruler of the darkness of this age (Eph. 2:2; 6:11, 12), he is also called the prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). To walk according to the age of this world (lit.) is to walk according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2); also, now the kingdom of Jesus is neither of this world, nor of this age (John 18:36). That it is not of this age,

the word now proves; that it is not of this world, is proved by the words -from hence; but it will be displayed in the age to come, upon an earth renewed.

Notwithstanding these connections, the world and the age are not the same thing, and must not be confounded together. Matt. 13:39, 40, 49, and 24:3, should be translated " end of the age," and not " end of the world"; end of the world leads the mind to the question of the destruction of the heavens and the earth, and to the judgment which will then take place (Rev. 20); whereas, in these passages, and Matt. 25 (which is but a development of it), the question is not about the end of the world, but about the end of the present evil age, and of the judgment then executed by the Lord, as introductory to the age to come.

2.- This interruption in the ways of God, with regard to His earthly people, agrees with the mystery of the Church, and is as a key to the understanding of prophecy. It quite accounts for the silence of prophecy as to the destiny of the nations of Christendom since the rejection of Israel. Israel being the center of the places of God for the earth, God gives prophecies concerning nations, only according to their connection, or not, with Israel. Now Israel existing not as His people for eighteen hundred years, prophecy is silent also about the nations during all that time. It does not again speak of them until the moment when the nations again gather themselves together around Jerusalem; that is, at the moment when God again turns toward Israel, to purge it by judgment, and then to re-establish it in its glorious privileges.

If this had been apprehended, men would not have searched in Daniel, and the prophets generally, for the Pope, Mahomet, the Goths, the Saracens, Attila, Charlemagne, Napoleon, all the kings, and all the revolutions of modern history. Search for the year of the return of the Lord would not have been made. Nor, lastly, should we have seen all these systems, which, falsified so many times, by passing events, afford the infidel an occasion for mockery, and disincline even pious persons from the study of prophecy.

2.-the Failure of the Church

Israel ought, by its obedience, and the blessings which would thereupon have manifestly resulted, to have shown to all the peoples of the earth, how " Happy is that people, that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord" (Psa. 144.15).

That which God will look for from Israel and the nations of the age to come, is that, in contemplating the glory, then manifested, of the son of David, they shall gladly yield themselves to the true Melchizedek, who will guide them in the path of holiness and peace-and that they abide therein.

The Church, in its walk here below, during the time of the absence of the Lord Jesus, is called to witness to the world, by its spiritual and heavenly walk, that the Jesus of Nazareth whom the world has rejected, yet lives as Son of God on High in heaven, since 'tis He - the Son of man upon the Father's throne - who, by His Spirit, produces and sustains in her spiritual and heavenly affections; and that consequently the world should turn to Him during the time of His long-suffering patience.

If, faithful to its call, the Church had presented the astonishing sight of one united body, gathered from the midst of all nations, by a power till then unknown, kept thus in the unity, love and expectation of its Mead from heaven, doubtless a far greater number would have believed. But it must, to have done that, have waited upon God in spirit, for so only would He have acted. Instead of this, what do we see in Christendom? Romanism refusing to the believer the privilege of being guided by the Spirit, and making a monopoly of it for the clergy. Among Protestants, the Holy Spirit is, for the greater part, little more than a notion and sterile doctrine. Even those who have proved His effectual power in regeneration, and who seek the Spirit for their walk as individuals, oft seem to forget that there is but one Holy Spirit, when the walk of the body collectively, or of the Church, is in question. They ignore the principle, in itself so simple, that as the Church as a whole is the body of Christ, animated by His Spirit, so the Church, in each place, is but the gathering, under the Holy Spirit, of the members of Christ who are in that place; and that, consequently, all that they have to do, is to unite as such in the name of the Lord, to worship in Spirit and in truth; and that such is the Church and her worship.

Instead of this, the liberty to make churches, there where we, according to our own wisdom, may think well that there should be such, is contended for. Schools, indeed, are set up where, with a little learning, a little toil, and, perhaps, what is called the orthodox faith, pastors and doctors, and, in short, ministers for these churches are made; but all this in the entire forgetfulness, that it is the Spirit who, in the church, distributes His gifts to each as He will (1 Cor. 12:4-12).

In Rubrics and Confessions, etc., there is drawn up an order of walk which the Spirit Himself ought rather to produce by His own free and mighty action; for it is not real, and has little value before God, save as it is the fruit of the Spirit. How could the world be won over to the faith, when it sees those who make profession of faith as to the Spirit, to be in reality dependent as much as itself, not upon that Spirit, but upon the wisdom of its rules, on the talent and eloquence of its teachers? And

how can it be but that the Spirit should be grieved and quenched by such a proceeding? 'Tis like Israel despising its privilege of having God as king, and saying: Nay, but make us a king like the other nations.

The Church should have been a witness to the life of its Head, risen from the dead, - by a constant waiting for Him from heaven; and this was the case at the beginning. It is utterly impossible, if we read with simplicity of heart, the letters of the apostles, not to see that the early Christians looked for the Lord in quite another way from what the greater part of Christians do, in our days. They really, and without any figure of speech, waited for Him as if He might come at any moment. This coming was, for them, one of the ends of their conversion, a motive for the fulfillment of every duty, and a consolation under every affliction.

"For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even, Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:9,10). "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy" (Ib. 2:19, 20). See also 4:18; Titus 2.13; Heb. 10:36, 37; James 5:7, 8, etc.

But sentiments now reign which are so far removed from those of the first disciples, that, no longer understanding their language, many of our day have given to the simplest expressions of that day a strange and forced meaning. The coming of the Lord is for many only the destruction of Jerusalem, or death, or perhaps that which is called a spiritual coming, to set up a pretended spiritual reign of which the word knows nothing.

By far the greater part know nothing of the future coming of the Lord, more than that He is coming to judge the world; thus confounding the day of the wrath of the Lamb with the day, peaceful and happy, of His meeting His beloved Bride. And if you call their attention to the instructions of the Word upon this truth, they will tell you, as Festus did Paul, that too much learning has made you mad.

Together with the daily waiting for the Lord has disappeared the union of disciples as such, their separation from the world, and the spiritual and heavenly life which distinguished them at first. When the servant says in his heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming," we know the result. "But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken" (Matt. 24:48, 49). When the Church ceased to look up and wait for the Lord from heaven, she began to look down, and to seek around her for rest, ease, wealth and honor; she has become earthly, and inimical to the cross; joining herself to the world, even so far as to give to it the rights of her citizenship, and to corrupt for it her worship and the supper. She has put her glory in that which is her shame, and has a recognized position, peaceful and honored, in the midst of that world which crucified her Lord.

And not only have Christians united themselves to the world, but they have also sanctioned divisions among themselves. Instead of being a witness of the unity of the Spirit which animated it as one body, the Church is divided into sections innumerable, distinguished by the names of men, of nations, and of various doctrines. Ah, this is not what the Lord asked for, when He said: " That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that

the world may believe that thou has sent me" (John 17.21). Neither is it the sight which the early disciples presented when-

" All that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:44-47). "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold. And laid them down at the apostle's feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need" (1b. 4:32--35).

Great grace was upon them all, and many believed: it is true, that this blessed union had already received some violent shocks at Corinth, when one said: " For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ. divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul" (1 Cor. 11-13). It was the mystery of iniquity which did already work (2 Thess. 2:3-8). Yet the evil was far from having the extent which it now has. With the exception, perhaps, of the Church of Diotrephes (3rd John), I know not that in any one place in the days of the apostles, more than one flock was to be seen. They, doubtless, little thought that the time would come, in which, even in the same city, or the same village, would be seen three, four, five, or six differing congregations, each having its own peculiar faith, organization, supper, and ministry. It is said, notwithstanding these separations, there is at the bottom unity between all these assemblies, if they all rest upon the true foundation; and that it is of that fundamental invisible unity that the Lord meant to speak, when He asked that His disciples might be one. But this invisible unity cannot suffice to lead the world to believe - it needs something which is manifest and visible. And, moreover, if this union really exists, why then all this disunion, and why these separations, which are the occasion of so much sin, and the abiding cause of weakness in the Church? For the gifts bestowed upon the Christians of the various congregations, and which, increased if there were union, would provide them abundance of edification and consolation, subdivided as they are, suffice but to sustain a feeble and languid state of life, even if they are not employed (as is, alas! too oft the case) one against the other. It is like Israel and Judah, whom sin had separated; and who, instead of uniting their forces against common enemies, used them to make war one against the other, who even leant upon Egypt and Assyria.

Thus, to perceive the failure of the Church, it only needs to recall what it is in the intention of God, and then to cast a glance upon that which it is become in Christendom; but, besides this, we have upon this subject declarations of the very clearest and most precise character. Paul, in addressing the Church of Rome, says: " Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11.22). He here then establishes the possibility of the fall; and in such case it is not a restoration, but a cutting off of which he speaks; not, indeed, an immediate cutting off,

because, according to the faithfulness of God, it cannot be that one of His sheep should perish, though they may have to suffer the consequences of that fall. And this fall, of which Paul warned the Christians when he was addressing the Church of Rome, he announces in a manner most positive, in his address to the elders of Ephesus: " For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29, 30). See also 2 Peter 1:12-15, compared with the whole of the second chapter, and more especially with the first verse: " But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." And what, after this, is the apostolic succession and the antiquity of doctrine, upon which so many assemblies lean? Ah! there is no doctrine of necessity true, but that of the Word - and of ministry none worth, according to God, but that of the Spirit.

Moreover, false teachers and damnable heresies did not wait even for the departure of the apostles, ere they insinuated themselves into the churches. There are few of the apostolic churches in which one cannot recognize, in some respects, their presence, from that Church of Ephesus just named, to that of Diotrephes, whence they drove out the apostle John, and those who wish to receive him. See, for instance, 1 Cor. 3:1-4; 5:6; 11:17-22; 15:12, 33; Gal. 1:6, 7; 2:4, 5; 3:1; 5:7-15; 6:12, 13; Col. 2:8,16-23, etc. And far from its being the case, that these disorders were to disappear afterward, the apostles teach us that the corruption will rather go on increasing even to the end.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

" This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Tim. 3.1-5). "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (ver. 12, 13).

"But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them; and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2 Peter 2.1-3). " Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (Ib. 3:3, 4).

What a sad picture of the last days of the age! and yet some think that, in spite of this, they can therein trace the progress of the gospel, and the advancement of the kingdom of God! Ah! that which characterized the latter days in the eyes of the apostles, was not the triumph of the gospel, but the presence of antichrist: " Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John 2.18). Paul also declares to the Thessalonians, that the day of Christ will not come until... What? that truth shall have triumphed over error, and the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord - as so many Christians think? No: but " except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." " And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. 2.3, 8). Jude also teaches us that the corruption which he saw had already glided into the churches, so far from disappearing, would go on increasing until the coming of the Lord; for after having drawn an awful picture of the corruption of his time, he adds:

" For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (ver. 4). He sees, then, the wicked of whom he speaks on the increase, and an uninterrupted chain down to the moment when, the evil being come to the full, the Lord will come to destroy it by His personal presence.

So also the Lord had previously taught, in the parables of Matt. 13, which contain the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

In the first, the Lord shows us the sowing of the kingdom, and even there we see three parts of the seed lost, as to fruit-bearing, for every one that springs up and brings fruit to perfection.

The second shows us the good grain gathered into the garner; but previously to this, it shows us tares sown by the enemy, where the householder had sown good seed; that is to say, in Christendom. The servants express a wish, indeed, as do certain Christians, to pull up the tares and to clear the field; "But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matt. 13:29,30). Now, " the harvest is the end of the world" (ver. 39); that is, the end of the present age, of the existing period, and by no means the end of the world in the sense of the globe which we inhabit, which is the field where the seed is cast. "The field is the world" (ver. 39). " The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear let him hear" (ver. 41-43). Thus we see, that in this world the evil will remain mixed up with the good until the harvest; that is to say, until the end of the age, and till the judgment executed by the Lord, personally present (Joel 3:13; Rev. 14:15,16).

Further be it remarked, that the question here is not about the Church and the discipline by which it puts away the wicked. To use this parable as an argument against discipline, is to set Paul in opposition to the Lord. For the Lord says, " Let both grow together until the harvest " (ver. 30); " children of the kingdom and children of the wicked one" (ver. 39); but Paul, or rather the Holy Spirit

by Paul, on the contrary, says, " Put away from among yourselves that wicked person " (1 Cor. 5:13, read the chapter). If the question in the two cases is about the same persons in similar circumstances, there is a manifest contradiction; but one simple remark explains this, and disperses every appearance of contradiction. The Lord, speaking of the kingdom, says, the wicked are not to be put out of the world or earth, for " the field is the world" (ver. 39). Paul, speaking to members of the Church, says, "put away from among yourselves," that is, put outside the Church the wicked. The two things are both equally true, and perfectly accord one with the other. Paul, indeed, confirms the doctrine of the parable, when he says, "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without?" (ver. 12). "But them that are without God judgeth" (ver. 13). But he also says, " Do not ye judge them that are within... therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Of the last two verses of the chapter, the two first clauses confirm what the Lord had said, and the two last contain the additional doctrine for the new circumstances.

To the Lord alone does it pertain to take out of the world the evil and the wicked, and He will do it when He appears at the end of the age; but till then the Church must exercise discipline in its own precinct and put away the evil.

Matt. 13:31,32. The Church, which should have been a little flock, pilgrims and strangers here below, in the midst of reproach and poverty, like its Master, is become an establishment of this world, a great tree, just like Nebuchadnezzar -" The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth " (Dan. 4:11). In the Church, enriched with wealth and goods, and the glory of this world, one could, as in any other system of the world, satisfy the heart's desire for titles, revenues, etc. There is food and shelter for all who desire to avail

themselves of it. " The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it" (Dan. 4:12). But then it is also said, " Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches" (ver. 14). " Otherwise (if thou continue not in God's goodness) thou shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11:22).

Such is the judgment passed upon the glory and the worldly greatness to which the Church has allied itself in its blindness; and it is only when the Lord shall have brought down the high tree and have dried up the green tree, that He will make the dry tree to flourish, and make it to become a goodly cedar on the mountains of Israel.

"Thus saith the Lord God; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon a high mountain and eminent: In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell. And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the Lord have spoken and have done it" (Ezek. 17:22-24),

" Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Matt. 13:33). Many think

they see here, as in the parable that precedes it, a picture of the progress of the Gospel in the world, that is, to them the meal represents the world, or the children of this world, and the leaven the Gospel. But the Word gives to these figures quite an opposite rendering. The good seed, or the wheat, is the children of the kingdom, and leaven in Scripture always stands for an evil influence. Jesus said to His disciples, "Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees" (Matt. 16:6,11, 12); "the leaven of Herod" (Mark 8:15). Paul said to the Corinthians, in connection with the incestuous person among them,-

"Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

And in writing to the Galatians, on the subject of those who trouble them by another Gospel, which was not another, the apostle says -

"Ye did run well: who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5:7-9).

Thus, it is always, under one form or another, evil which is represented by leaven,. How, then, should the Lord have used it in this parable to represent, on the contrary, that which of all things is the most excellent. Moreover, the very act of HIDING the leaven might alone suffice to show that by leaven something evil is intended. He who preaches the Gospel does not seek to hide it. Oh, it is but too clearly of the leaven of modern Pharisees and Sadducees, of the formality, incredulity, the old leaven of malice and wickedness, of the unconverted heart, that the Lord speaks in this parable. It is this leaven which has leavened the Church, which at first was a new and unleavened lump, and has turned it into Christendom with all its corruptions. 'Tis the mystery of iniquity, which, even in Paul's days, did already work (2 Thess. 2:7), and which we eventually find in full development in the harlot who has written on her forehead - "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 17:5).

Thus the mysteries of the kingdom, presented in these parables, seem to us the mysteries of the corruption of the kingdom by man; or, if you please, the destinies of that kingdom, such as man has made it, by confounding it, contrary to the intention of God, with the Church. These parables are, in some sort, to the kingdom, that which the seven addresses to the seven churches of Asia are to the Church. In these parables we have, as we have just seen, the destinies of the kingdom corrupted by the sin of man, and which will remain so until the King come in person to set all to rights. In the seven addresses, we have the destinies of the Church, not such as it was in the thought and intention of God, but such as the sin of man has made it; till the Lord come to gather together His own out of the midst of disorder and then to judge the people.

Doubtless, the addresses to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 2:3) were written to as many churches really existing at that time, and had in them a first accomplishment; but one cannot question but that, like the whole of the book, they have a prophetic character, and thus present us with a picture of the various phases of the history of the Church here below. Now, looked at in this point of view, what do they show us, if not a gradually increasing declension, accompanied by

partial and passing renewals, from Ephesus, which had lost its first love, to Pergamos, the church of this world's splendor, dwelling where Satan's seat was; and from Thyatira, where a lie was openly taught, and which has only a little remnant left, down to Laodicea, the Church of the people's judgment which is spued out of the Lord's mouth. If thou continue not in His goodness " thou shalt be cut off," says Paul (Rom. 11) " I will spue thee out of my mouth," says the Lord to that which bears still at the end the name of Church upon earth.

And the rest of the Revelation down to chap. 19, what is it but a sad picture of the terrible judgment which falls in the end upon apostate Christendom? There is no longer anything seen upon earth which wears the character of the Bride of Christ. We see, indeed, in the book, saints who render witness to the coming kingdom, and themselves smite the earth with various plagues (Rev. 11:5,6). But that is scarcely the characteristic of the members of Christ -

"And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village" (Luke 9:52-56).

'Tis in heaven that the Church's song is heard (Rev. 5) 'Tis from heaven we see her come forth to form the procession of the Lord, when He comes to take possession of His kingdom. The Church, then, has been previously gathered in. In very deed, the faithfulness of God cannot fail. He has said of His elect - " Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1.5). And, before He left the earth, the Lord said to His disciples-" In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2,3). In spite of the fall and ruin of the Church here below, through the sin of man, the word of the Lord must needs stand good; just as, spite of the loss of the vessel in which he sailed, Paul must needs stand before Caesar.

But when will this reunion of the Church and its Head take place? Is it not traced in Philadelphia, that -Church which has only a little strength, yet does not deny the name of its Lord, but keeps the word of His patience? " Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth " (Rev. 3:10). And what is that hour of temptation, if not the great tribulation described Isa. 2:10-19; Jer. 30: 6-9, 23, 24; Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:14-22; Mark 13:19-24; Rev. 6-19? Doubtless Philadelphia could be kept in the midst of the temptation, as Noah was kept in the midst of the waters of the flood. So will it be with the saints who will then be on the earth, but in that case, Philadelphia would not be kept "from the hour of temptation," but rather brought through it. To make good the promise, it must not only be in a place inaccessible to the temptation, but also in a place where time is not reckoned. It must be in the heaven, as was Enoch, who, taken away to heaven, was thus kept from the deluge. And is not such the open door which is set before her? If it be so-what is that Church-to-come, dreamed of by so many, as about to realize here below the pattern of a Church? Alas! it is all an illusion-the tendency and effect of which is to attach thoughts and hopes to the

earth which ought to be on high. Yes, if you please, there is a Church yet to be; there are, indeed, two; Philadelphia which is now gathering, and to-morrow may be caught up to meet the Lord, and Laodicea, which will then be spued out of his mouth and judged together with those with whom she has committed fornication; but other Church-to-come is there none in this present age.

The ruins which sin had wrought in Israel were not to be completely removed but by the Lord at His coming. An attentive student of the prophets would see this on every page; so those whom the Holy Spirit taught would never have sought themselves to re-establish the kingdom of Israel, or to make an ark to replace that which was lost; but in the feeling of what the real want of their people was, they would humbly wait for " the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25 - 28), the times spoken of by the prophets in which " the Lord" Himself shall act. " Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness" (Jer. 23:5,6). And Jerusalem itself shall be called the throne of the Lord (Jer. 3:16, 17).

Well, it is, in some respects, the same as to the church. Every hope of restoring it to what it was at first is chimerical and baseless, for there is no foundation for hope save a promise of the Lord, and promise to this effect there is none; on the contrary -

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 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 is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, skewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thess. 2:1 - 8).

stands before us. How could any such hope exist in the presence of so positive and distinct a declaration? This need not discourage in the work of edifying the saints; for who shall set limits to the blessing which the Lord is ready to give to the scattered ones, who, amid the general ruin, wait on him in sincerity. We have the word and the Spirit of God to guide and direct us safely to the end of our calling. That, it appears, was what Paul desired to recall to the Elders of Ephesus, when, after having announced to them the terrible fall of their church, he adds, " And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

We have the blessed promise that " Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). Well, let us beware of attempting to do, in our own strength, that to which the Lord does not call us, and for which he has not given us any promise; let us not seek to restore, by organization and rules, which are but barriers raised up between the sheep of Christ, that which cannot be restored. Let us be united together as disciples, as brethren, in the name of the Lord, and in dependence upon His Spirit; let our church-to-come be that of

heaven, and I again repeat, Who shall set limits to the blessings which the Lord may yet give to those that wait upon Him? But the first means of obtaining these blessings, is humility, for God abases that which exalts itself, and lifts up that which humbles itself. We have found this in our individual salvation; we found lifting up, peace and assurance, only as being worthless, condemned, and nothing in ourselves. Why should God depart from this principle, when His church is the question. If any one, satisfied with his own church, his own life, and his own progress, were to say, " Why humble myself for unfaithfulnesses which are not mine?" it would be greatly to be feared that he had somewhat of the Pharisee of the Parable, or at least, of those Jews who said, " The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these" (Jer. 7:4); glorying in a temple in which God had ceased to take pleasure, and in a temple which He was about to abandon. In all such cases, there is defectiveness of sight and great narrowness of heart; great short-sightedness if one cannot see, save in a church of his own, in one's own sect, the members of Christ; and great narrowness of heart if any one does not feel the need of humbling himself for the wretchedness in which the scattered members of the body of Christ groan.

I need not say that Christendom is not the body of Christ; but if, as we cannot question, there are in all the various portions of Christendom, believers, that is to say, fellow members, of our own flesh and blood; we have need to humble ourselves for the scattered, dispersed state of self in which we are; it is contrary to the intentions and the glory of the Lord; we have to humble ourselves for unfaithfulnesses of various kinds, in which our brethren are entangled, and from which they suffer; for when one member suffers, all the rest suffer with it (1 Cor. 12:26,27). When Daniel made intercession for his people in Babylon, he did not hesitate to say, " We have sinned, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly, we have rebelled" (Dan. 9:5.)

And the communion and integral unity of the members of the church - is it to be less strict than that which was found in the people of Israel? Moreover, we carry, each in his own bosom, that which has led to the failure of the church. In this view, we all of us have connection with it; and above all, we all suffer from it; we all suffer from the feebleness of the spiritual gifts, from the little energy of heavenly affections, the result of the Spirit, who produces these fruits, having been grieved in so many ways; we suffer from the divisions; from the weakness, the prejudices, and the waxing cold of the love of many which have followed. The Lord's name has been dishonored in the place in which we are set; His testimony turned to His dishonor. Let those that see the evil, bear it in confession before the Lord. Let us, then, all join in a common act of humiliation, and then let us take comfort and encouragement from the hope of the Lord's speedy return, to deliver us from every evil work, and to introduce us into his heavenly kingdom.

3. the Rapture of the Church to Meet Her Lord

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:14 -18).

Here is the clearest and most complete revelation of the removal of the church; a revelation which presents us with three things to be accomplished by the Lord at His coming.

1. The resurrection of those members of the church who may ere then have died.
2. The transmutation, or translation, of those which shall then be alive in the body.
3. The catching up of the one and the other to meet the Lord.

1. The fact of several distinct acts in resurrection, is proved by the single expression, " the resurrection from [or from among] the dead" (Acts 4:2; Luke 20:35). To which passages we may add, " If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of [better, from among] the dead" (Phil. 3:11).

The truth thereof is confirmed by several distinct declarations; for instance, Luke 14:13,14, where we have a resurrection of the just clearly distinct from that of the wicked - "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." " But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:35,36). Clearly it is not a resurrection of all the dead, since some only are judged worthy of it, even as of that age, the age to come, and consequently of that resurrection, they are like to the angels, and are sons of God, being children of the resurrection; even as Jesus Christ himself was declared to be Son of God with power, by His resurrection from among the dead (Rom. 1:4). If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:11). Paul would not have spoken in this manner, if there were but one resurrection: for in that case, just and unjust would equally, without any question, come there.

The instruction which God gives to the Corinthians, concerning the order which will be observed in the resurrection, agrees perfectly with the idea of a distinct act of resurrection, first, for the church at the coming of the Lord, then of another act at the end for the rest of the dead, as we have just seen. " For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every

[But we will pause a moment on John 5:28,29, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"- as a passage often cited in proof of there being but one only resurrection; and let us endeavor to lay hold of the thought in the mind of the Lord. Accused by the Jews of blasphemy, for having said that he was Son of God, Jesus justified Himself by spewing that whatsoever the Father did, to the Son, also, gave He power to do likewise. Thus, quickening pertains to the Father, as also resurrection and judgment. And the Son does precisely the same things; and, indeed, we find them. " 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). Here is the quickening of those who were spiritually dead, by faith in the word of Jesus. Everything is said upon this subject; nothing is wanting. " Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5.25). Here the Lord repeats the thought expressed in the preceding verse; but does he not go further, and does he not include, also, the resurrection of the bodies of those who have been spiritually quickened by faith in the word? But for this, this verse would add nothing to that which the former presents; but, this granted, the word " shall live" is all the more fitly chosen, in that it points as well to the change of the living saints, in whom mortality shall be swallowed up of life (2 Cor. 5:4), as to the saints that have died, who shall then come forth out of the tomb. It is true, Jesus defines this moment by the words, " the hour cometh, and even now is"; an expression which he used with the Samaritan woman to designate the time of the church (John 4:23). The quickening unto glory of the church is but the full manifestation of the life of Christ, which she already possesses in herself (Col. 3.4); moreover, there is no event, no interval whatsoever, laid down as between her and the moment, or hour, of her passage hence. There is only the last " moment," the last " twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:52). Why should she, then, be separate in the word of the Lord. " The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26). This recalls to mind the word of the Lord to Peter (Matt. 16:18); that is upon " Christ, the Son of the living God." Son of the living God, I have life in myself even as the Father has life in Himself, and as I have life, those that are mine shall have it also. As I come forth victorious out of the unseen world, they shall come forth also. "Because I live, they shall live." " Our life is hid with Christ in God." "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:3,4). " And hath k This would seem to prove that the writer held that we all must die. He does not, however, though he appears to do so. given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5.27). After the quickening to glory of the church by " the Son of God," comes the judgment executed by "the Son of man"; judgment which extends, in some sort, from the judgment of the nations, at His return, to the judgment of the dead, little and great, before the great white throne. " Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28,29). " Be not surprised that the Son of man should judge, for to him also pertains the raising of the dead." "The hour comes." The hour of the church, of the hidden mystery, has already lasted 1,800 years, and we cannot say how long or how short a time it may still last. There is nothing opposed to the hour here spoken of lasting a thousand years; and it is an hour of resurrection, as it is of judgment. There is resurrection at the beginning, on the

arrival of the Son of man; immediately after the great tribulation. It is of that resurrection, or at least, of a part of those that are then raised, of those raised unto life, that the Lord speaks. " But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage" (Luke 20:35); for all here shows a Jewish order of thought. It is this resurrection, and not that of the church, in Dan. 12:2, " And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Since it is placed after the great tribulation.* Moreover, he says "many," and not all of them that sleep in the dust of the earth - shall awake. This is not exactly what the Lord says, "all that are in the grave." Indeed, it is after the thousand years, that there is still resurrection for those who till then remain in the tomb, that they may appear before the great white throne. It is the mass of those that are raised, outside of the church, which that expression of the Lord seems to designate: "All that are in the grave shall hear his voice"- all; no one excepted.]

Many, erroneously as the writer remarks, insist that there is but one resurrection, because John 5:28, says, "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

The common answer to this is, "That the term hour does not mean a definite period of sixty minutes, in this verse, any more than in verse 35, where quickening is spoken of. And that as the quickening power of Christ has been displayed through 1800 years, so may the resurrection-power." This answer leaves the question of how many acts of resurrection there are to be answered by other Scriptures. The author has another thought, and would force "the hour cometh and now is," into a formula for what he calls " the time of the church." He is driven to this by a violence himself offers to the 25th verse; and even then his explanation is lame. The result is, that he holds that " because I live ye shall live also," and such passages, present, not what is true of us in Christ now, but what will be true when we see Him; not what is true in him, but what will be true in vs. This error sadly weakens the foundation. - TRANSLATOR.)

(*** Here, again, the author is a little too quick in his conclusion. The verse is ably discussed elsewhere; most minds have come to a different conclusion to his.-Ed.)

But it is pre-eminently in Rev. 20:4-6-

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

that we have two resurrections clearly distinguished: " the first resurrection" which sets free forever from the power of the second death, and " the resurrection of the rest of the dead." We learn, moreover, here, what is not taught elsewhere, that the interval between these two resurrections (the first resurrection and the general resurrection) is of 1000 years.

Will it be said, the first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection? Then so is the second, which consists of the rest of the dead; for the rest is of the same nature as that which went before (which in this case was the first resurrection); and then, clearly, it results that there will be no resurrection at all. Moreover, we find here, the Church in the first part of ver. 4, " And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them": " Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (1 Cor. 6:2); then, also, there are saints forming part of this first resurrection, who do not form part of the Church, for they have passed through the great tribulation, from which the Church will be kept; " they had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had they received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands." Are not these the same as those spoken of-

" And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Rev. 6:9-11).

As well those who then have been put to death, as those who yet must be.

So that the ordinary notion of one general resurrection for the just and the unjust, taking place at a given moment, before the general judgment; this notion cannot stand before a calm and tranquil examination of the passages which treat of the subject.

If there were but one resurrection at the moment at which the heavens and the earth flee away before the great white throne-

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, • stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. 20:11-13).

How could we account for-

"For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:18-23).

Where the deliverance of this creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, is evidently bound up with the redemption of the bodies of the saints, that is to say, of their resurrection? Or how explain such a passage as -

"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life " (Matt. 19:28,29). "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (1 Cor. 6:2)., "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father" (Rev. 2:26,27).

Or, Isa. 25:8-10 compared with 1 Cor. 15:54. And, remark here, that in Isa. 25, after swallowing up death in victory, the Lord will cause Moab to be trodden down under Him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill. Now, these words are applied (1 Cor. 15:54) to the resurrection of the saints, that is, that, after that resurrection will have taken place, Moab will be destroyed. How is this to be explained according to the system of but one general resurrection?

Not only does the Church rise before the wicked, who are left in the bands of death until the final judgment; but, when the Son of Man comes in his glory to judge the world and to deliver Israel, saints from among that people and from among others who have been in relationship with him, rise in order to have part in the kingdom, as, also, it would seem some of the wicked to be judged. Then a Daniel, an Isaiah shall rise and shall " stand in their lot in the end of the days."

But " some to shame and everlasting contempt." For " the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth " (Rev. 11:18).

Isa. 25:8;26. 19, 21; Dan. 12:2,13; Matt. 12:41, 42; Luke 10:12,14;11. 30-33; 2 Tim. 4.1; 1 Peter 4:5. Then, at length, shall be the redemption of Israel by the Son of Man in His glory, and the resurrection of

the saints who shall be dead (a Daniel, etc.), is but the first act, as the resurrection of the dead of the Church is the first act as to the Church.

These various acts of resurrection, it is true, are sometimes summed up under two heads, as the resurrection of the just and of the unjust (Acts 24:15); or, as the first resurrection and that of the rest of the dead (Rev. 20). And, clearly, when the character of those raised is the point of view in which the question is considered, there are but two classes, the just and the unjust; those who rise unto life and those who are raised for judgment. If we consider the epoch of the resurrections, we can sum them up under two heads; those who rise at the coming of the Lord (this expression, in its most extended sense, includes the coming for the Church and the coming for Israel) form all together the first resurrection; all others are the rest of the dead.

However it may be, as to other difficulties which this subject may present, when we seek to study it a little in detail, it remains clear, and that is the special point which is now sought to be shown, that the resurrection of the Church is altogether distinct from the resurrection of the wicked, both as to time and in principle.

As to time, the wicked, with the exception of those who, having been in relationship with Israel, are judged at the time of the redemption of that people; the wicked remain in the bands of death, until the Lord calls them, in judgment, to stand before the great white throne. The Church, as the first-fruits of the new creation, rises before the end of the age, at the coming of the Lord, to meet Him. " Every one in his own order, Christ the first-fruits," the germ of the new creation, or the first of the first-fruits, " then those that are Christ's at His coming " (1 Cor. 15:23).

In principle. 1. The wicked are raised by the irresistible power of the Lord, who calls them up to judgment. The Church, already justified and partaking the spiritual life of her Head, rises by the power of the coming of that glorious Head, whose life communicates itself then to the bodies of His members sleeping in the dust of the earth.

2. " Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:17). If the glorifying of the bodies of those living is not here distinctly mentioned, it is, at least, fully implied; for it is not with these heavy and infirm bodies that we can be received up into the clouds, before the Lord in the air, to inhabit heaven and taste its joys. As Paul says elsewhere -" Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. 15:50). And he immediately adds " Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (ver.51--54). "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is " (1 John 3:2). " For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20, 21).

It was for this, transmutation and not death, that Paul waited; as he says, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4).

Yet his will was in subjection, and he was willing to die if God called him. " 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 " (Phil. 1:21-24).

But, instead of retaining that expectation of Paul, and saying with him, " We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;" men have not feared to contradict him and to say, " One thing is quite sure, viz., that we must all die," and thus, they have separated both mind and heart from waiting for the Lord, which, according to grace, is the most mighty principle of all true devotedness, of all joyful obedience; in order to turn them upon death, which is the wages of sin, which, by itself, can produce only constrained and servile obedience. Yet, it is oft said, with the thought, too, of merely citing a scripture - it is appointed unto all men once to die. No. The Word says not so: if it did, it would contradict itself.

It says, " And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:27, 28). Thus, while telling us it is appointed UNTO MEN, to the mass, once to die, it recalls to our minds that Christ will be seen, a second time, without sin; by some who, therefore, will not die at all, by those who wait for Him, unto salvation, and shall be alive at His coming.

3. In that self-same moment, in that twinkling of the eye, the raised and the changed " shall be caught up together with the Lord in the clouds." Enoch and Elias had already had this privilege of quitting the earth for heaven, without passing by death. Enoch had no witness, it would seem, of his translation, about which we have no details. Elias, prophet of the covenant, given from the midst of tempest and lightning, was carried up, in the midst of a whirlwind, in a chariot of fire and by horses of fire. Jesus, the mediator of a better covenant, of a covenant of grace, went up, and a cloud received Him out of sight. The Church, His Body, is taken up in like manner as Himself.

It will not be, then, a transformation slow and painful as that of the chrysalis, the produce of which needs long to feel its way into the use of listless and unexercised wings, before it can joyously rise into the air.

It will not be even as the resurrection of Lazarus, who came forth out of the grave bound hand and foot, and who needed to be set free from the clothes ere he could walk. It will be in a moment, in the twinkling of the eye, that the resurrection of the dead saints will take place, and without a doubt, also, the catching up of the one and of the other to meet the Lord.

Such is the accomplishment of the good promise which the Lord made to His disciples before He left them, " In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2,3).

Such is the completing of the work of God in His elect, the fullness, and, as it were, the last word of our heavenly calling, without which, indeed, we shall never have a full and complete knowledge of it.

It is the heavenly Eve, who, after having been taken out of the side of her husband, while he rests upon the throne of the Father, is presented to Him at His coming forth in action again, a glorious Church. "That he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

God having chosen us in Christ, from before the foundation of the world, has also accordingly " quickened us together with his Son," "raised us up together with Him," and "made us sit together with Him in heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3;2. 5, 6). "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren " (Rom. 8:29).

And the purpose of the free and gratuitous love of the Father to usward is now in progress. The Son has drawn us to Himself, and united us to Himself through faith. Set thus in communion with Him, we have, in some measure, had His sentiments and likeness communicated to us. But the work begun He will perfect, quickening our bodies and transforming them to the likeness of His

glorious body. The Lord has separated us in principle and spirit entirely from the world, and makes us feel the nothingness and the corruption of it, and draws to Himself our affections and thoughts. This, also, He will perfect in us, drawing us to Himself upon the clouds outside of this world.

And the means employed by the Lord, for this admirable work, is always the same - His Word. It is His Word, in the mouth, perhaps, of some feeble and despised sinner, which quickened us, and separated us from the world by uniting us to Him. His word also it will be, but a word of command, sounding through the heavens with the voice of the archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God, which will quicken the last particle of our perishable bodies, and will re-unite us to Him forever. Those who shall have heard His voice calling them to faith and conversion, and who have obeyed Him, shall hear His glorious voice to the bottom of their tombs, and shall come forth thence; or, if still alive, shall hear it in the body of infirmity and mortality, and shall be changed. Those who shall have refused to hear it, and to obey Him, when they were called by that word to conversion, shall abide in the bands of death, until they shall be raised for judgment.

Thus Thy word, Lord Jesus! Thy blessed voice is that which works everything in Thy people; as Thou hast said, " My sheep hear my voice, and follow me!"

Oh! how yet far more attractive and more precious would the attractive voice of the Lord seem to us, if we were in the constant habit of thinking, that it is about soon to sound from the cloud to quicken our mortal bodies, and to draw us to Him in the heavens, that there where He is we may be also!

Yes! if the unbeliever could but believe that the voice which now speaks to him in the gospel, and which seems to him but weakness and folly, is the only one which can, not only give him peace in his own soul, but also quicken his body! If he could believe that that voice which now speaks of grace and pardon is about to become as a double-edged sword, to smite the nations with a flame of fire, to execute vengeance upon those that know not God, and obey not the gospel! If he could but think that it is the almighty voice of Him to whom man must yield obedience, when it cites the dead, small and great, to appear before Him to be judged according to their works! But these are things which the Spirit alone can reveal to the heart.

Ours then be it, brethren, beloved of the Lord, and partakers of the heavenly calling - ours be it to render thanks without ceasing to God, that He has chosen us: " But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2.13, 14).

May that blessed hope, more and more laid hold of by faith, become more and more our comfort, and the power of practical holiness, according as it is written, " Comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4.18); "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3.3).

Do we weep over friends, beloved in the Lord? Soon He shall appear Himself in the heavens, and at His word the beloved ones shall rise first; then we who are alive shall be caught up together with them in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord. Then there will be an end to all the separations produced by the circumstances and the dire necessities of life; to the separations too often yet more afflictive' which sin has brought in between those, who being but one body, should

also have but one and the same heart. In the house of the Father all the children. will be united around him, the firstborn from among many brethren, who has not been ashamed to call them brethren; not one shall be wanting - not a fear even remain of any further separation. If then we weep, let us not weep as those who are without hope, but let us comfort one another with the thought, " so shall we be forever with the Lord."

The infirmities of this body of sin, do they render it like to a heavy burden which we have to drag with difficulty about with us? Do they hinder us from glorifying the Lord with all the diligence which we should desire? The Lord, when He comes, will change our vile bodies, and will render them like unto His own glorious body. As we bear now the image of the earthly Adam - full of pains and groans - we shall then bear the image of the Heavenly Man - full of glory and happiness. When shall we see the Lord face to face -- then shall we serve Him without fatigue and without infirmity. Patience, then, and courage for a little time, that we may be able to glorify Him, if He call us thereunto in the midst of suffering and infirmity. He will come quickly, and will not tarry.

Are we suffering from poverty, under the injustice of men, or from persecution at their hands? 'Tis to the coming of the Lord that the Word sends us for our consolation. " Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain!' (James 5:7). Thus are we taught that acts of violence, injustice, and oppression, shall reign on the earth. until the Lord come to destroy those that corrupt it, and to renew all things by His presence in glory; but before that day we shall be gathered up to Him, away from the world and the wicked.

Oh! how should we be comforted in all our suffering, if we had ever before our eyes that blessed moment in which the Lord will unite us to Himself forever! For which of our sorrows will not then disappear, as a dream in the morning! And how would that consolation ever contribute to our practical sanctification? For whence come murmurings, irritation, envy, avarice, and so many lusts, which war against our souls, if not from this, that the hope of our speedy meeting with the Lord is not lively in us? Then our poor hearts, which like the ivy have need of something to which to cling, no longer able to cling to heaven, cling to earth. But when that hope animates us, then irritation and murmuring 'will give place to a peaceful and patient waiting, even to Joy and thanksgiving; earthly affections will yield to heavenly; then, even while our feet tread this nether earth, our hearts will already be in heaven.

'Tis thus that the Lord sanctifies His people; first by His grace, and then by the hope of His glory, which is the perfecting of it. When He has said to us, " Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee," He has taken from our hearts the burden which oppressed them; He has brought us to Himself, confounded both at the thought of our own wickedness and of His love. We then feel the need of no longer living to ourselves, but to Him that loved us, and gave Himself for us. In saying to us, " I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also," he transfers our hope, our treasure, our life into heaven; He makes of us heavenly citizens,- strangers and pilgrims for a little while here below. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation path appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works"

(Titus 2.11-14). May the Lord deign to direct our hearts to the love of God, and to the patient waiting for Christ! (2 Thess. 3.5).

The Rapture of the Saints

The rapture of the saints to meet the Lord in the air, before His manifestation to the earth, and the existence of a Jewish remnant, in whom the Spirit of God is graciously working, before the Lord manifests Himself to them for their deliverance, is happily attracting the attention of Christians. It has made sufficient way to be the occasion of a renewed opposition, which can only do good by urging serious Christians to examine the Scriptures on the subject; an examination which will, under grace, spiritually enlarge their apprehensions on many most important points, full of blessing and interest for their souls. The true character of the Church of God will appear, and the nature of its connection with Christ on one hand, and the ways of God in the government of the world on the other, - the two great topics of which the Scriptures treat; besides that first of all concerns, the reconciling of the soul with God. On this last, also, indeed, a right intelligence of the other two casts abundant light. The rapture of the saints before the appearing of Christ has, strange as it may appear to some, nothing to say to the Church, directly or exclusively; but as we form part of those caught up, it, of course, interests us in the highest degree. The rapture is in connection with the glory of the kingdom; and the saints in general, who are to reign in the kingdom, have part in this rapture. Still, indirectly, the inquiry leads to the question, What is the Church? 'because the doctrine of the rapture of the saints, before the appearing of Christ, connect: itself with the existence of a Jewish remnant waiting for deliverance after the rapture and before the appearing; and the position of this remnant connects itself, more or less, with the spiritual condition of the saints before the manifestation of the Church on the earth.

Those who believe in the rapture of the Church before the appearing of Christ, hold that the Church has a special and peculiar character and connection with Christ, in virtue of its being formed into one body by the descent of the Holy Ghost from heaven; and that while salvation is always necessarily the same, the relative condition of the saints previously was a distinct one. They are convinced that in the Psalms a Jewish remnant is found, and that thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears, into which the Spirit of Christ enters prophetically with and for them, are there expressed in their behalf. This remnant is believed to be continually spoken of in the prophets, as existing before the appearing of the Lord, and waiting for that appearing and delivered by it. But, farther, the Lord Himself being a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, as well as a Savior, presented Himself necessarily to Israel according to these promises, and became associated with, and the leader of, the remnant, as far as it was awakened to know Him. Hence the interpretation of many passages of the New Testament also became involved in this question; and, indeed, the whole order of the dispensations of God, but above all, the question of the Church and its privileges, as formed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is important and essential in this matter, and a right understanding of it a key to the interpretation of the word of God.

On the other hand, the denial of the existence of a Jewish remnant, such as is above spoken of, involves the most grave and, indeed, fatal consequences; because it connects, especially through the contents of the Psalms, the Spirit of Christ, which speaks in them, with the ungodly and unconverted Jews, and makes the declarations of integrity and uprightness, not the breathings of

a righteous soul pleading with God, - yea, its pleadings furnished to it by the Spirit of Christ,-but the pride of self-righteousness presenting itself to God. It is hard to suppose that any could allege that the Lord should give all this self-righteousness by revelation in connection with - yea, identified with -- the breathings of Christ's Spirit and the piety flowing from it; but such is the theory of those who deny the rapture of the saints before Christ's appearing, and, consequently, the existence of a Jewish remnant, in which the Spirit of Christ is at work in connection with the hopes proper to Israel.

A point connected with this has been insisted on by the adversaries of the truth, to which I advert here only to leave it aside, as not touching the main point, even if true, and used only to obscure the great and vital truth of the rapture of the Church. I mean the secrecy of the rapture. The two points on which it is important to have the clear testimony of Scripture are - first, that there will be a Jewish remnant at the end, with a place belonging to itself as such; secondly, the true character of the Church of God.

That there will be a Jewish remnant at the close, delivered and blessed by the Lord at His coming, blessed on earth, is, beyond all controversy, the doctrine of Scripture. This remnant has neither the Church's heavenly blessings nor the Church's hope. It ought not to be necessary to quote, for those who have inquired into these subjects, passages of Scripture to prove this. Still, as it is in its consequences a very important point, I will reproduce here some of the principal passages which prove the fact, that there is a remnant, and show the state in which that remnant is. First, as regards the Jews. Zech. 13:8,9: " And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: and they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

As regards the ten tribes of Israel, the case is somewhat different; the rebels will not enter into the land. Ezekiel 20:33-38, I quote a part: "And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you under the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not come into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord." Still they will be united in the land. See Ezek. 37:11-28. In ver. 19: " Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. 24: And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: and they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt;...my tabernacle also shall be with them."

As regards Judah, Daniel tells us: " And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of my people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." I have no doubt ver. 2 refers to those scattered in the countries; but on this point I do not dwell here. Only let the reader remark that the wise, and

those that instruct the many in righteousness are distinguished from the rest (ver. 3, see 11:32-35). The general blessing and promise to Israel may be seen at the close of Hos. 3 and 4. I do not quote in detail here, because these passages do not touch the question of a remnant. For the great day of trouble the reader may compare Jer. 30:4-9, and, for the certainty of their blessing in general, that chapter, and 31, 32, and 33. I might refer to a multitude of chapters besides, but this may suffice. What I have quoted also shows that it is the remnant of Israel which is blessed with Israel's blessings. As it is said in Isa. 10 " For though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall return"; and ver. 21, " the remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God." The points thus made clear are, that it is the remnant which is blessed, and blessed with Israel's blessings, according to promise, in the land with Jehovah as their God. The next and capital point, for what precedes is generally admitted, is their previous state. Is it a Christian or Church state? And now I pray the reader to mark one most important consequence of any supposition that this remnant of Israel is previously in a Christian or Church standing. Their blessings are the earthly glory, under Christ, in the land according to the promises made to them. Now, if their hopes have been church hopes, and their spiritual condition the same as ours, their hopes are not fulfilled, they are disappointed in them; or, and it is this I pray the reader especially to remark, if they are not, our hopes are reduced to the level of Jewish earthly and temporal ones. Now this is the great object of the enemy in all this scheme, for that it is the positive work of the enemy I have no doubt at all. In denying a distinct Jewish remnant, having Jewish faith, Jewish hopes, and resting on Jewish promises, it reduces the Church to the level of these; and the value and power of spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, and the place of Christ's body in union with Him, is denied and lost. It is this which makes the question vital for Christians themselves. The great object of the enemy in denying the rapture of the saints before the appearing of the Lord, and in the consequent rejection of a distinct Jewish remnant, with Jewish hopes and Jewish piety, is to deny and destroy the proper faith of the Church of God, and to set the Church itself aside. Far be it from me to say, that all who have fallen into this system have any such purpose, or are even aware of the effect; but the effect is nothing the less produced, and the loss theirs, though the intention be not. They are deceived by the enemy, though far from intending to deceive with him.

But our business now is to show from Scripture that this honored and glorified remnant are previously under... the influence of God's Spirit- a people waiting on the Lord; I repeat-that those who are blessed as Israel by the Lord are previously waiting on the Lord, and that the Lord recognizes them in this character.

There are two classes of texts referring to Israel in the latter day, to one of which I only refer here, and leave aside, though full of interest, as not bearing on our present subject. I speak of the texts which speak only of the intervention of God in power, whether to deliver or gather Israel, blessing the nation in contrast with their previous depression and misery, without touching on the question of a remnant, or the state in which that remnant is found. I refer to such passages as Amos 9, Jer. 30-33, and many like passages.

The other class refers explicitly to the despised remnant and its state previous to Jehovah's intervention in power to deliver. Texts of this character are what we would now lay before the reader, quoting as many as are needed, to show the existence of a godly though oppressed remnant, which is under the influence and working of the Spirit of God. This truth rests not on a

few casual texts, but on the constant teaching of the Scriptures. For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself concerning His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and that there is none shut up nor left. Not only this, but it will be found that these Scriptures connect this remnant of the latter day with those who had ears to hear when the prophets spoke. This connection of "the day," or "that day," with the testimony delivered by the prophet at the time, and without supposed interruption or interval, is characteristic of prophetic Scriptures. But we shall find that this is applicable to the testimony of Christ, viewed as the great Prophet of Israel, by whose Spirit alone the prophets prophesied; and that thus the prophetic witness is continued in connection with a waiting remnant during his life, and even after his lifetime, in connection with God's government of Israel, and as long as God dealt with that people as such; and that the doctrine of the Church alone took the witness of God entirely out of this connection. The doctrine of a heavenly calling paved the way for this, though not the same thing as the Church, though this had surely a heavenly calling; while the destruction of Jerusalem, and the judgment of the nation connected with this event, and the warnings which refer to it, closed and broke all connection of God's testimony with the nation, and left the Church and the Gentiles the only acknowledged place of witness, as such, until that of the Jews is resumed, according to the clear testimony of the prophets.

Our first duty will be to produce this testimony as to a godly Jewish remnant in the latter day, with Jewish hopes, even of God. This once distinctly shown, the whole question as to the state of things in the latter day is really solved, and the modified or transitional state of the remnant becomes easy to discern. God would not deprive the Jews of the hopes of Israel till they deprived themselves; meanwhile he introduced the Church, and their hopes gradually died down, giving place to exclusively heavenly ones, till judgment closed all other relationship between God and them.

I shall begin by a very plain and strong testimony, which will set the state of the Jewish remnant in the latter day in the clearest light, and then quote passages to show it was a constant theme of prophecy; some showing the fact that a remnant will exist, others its character.

Mal. 3.16: " Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon His name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not." 4. "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and feed as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; and they shall be for ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and the judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth [land] with a curse." Such are the last solemn words uttered by the prophetic Spirit to Israel before the coming of the Messiah and His

precursor. The provisional application to Christ and John the Baptist will be noticed, and is most important, to show the way in which the testimony of that day took a Jewish character and application; but the last days are definitely here in view. A godly Jewish remnant is the very subject of the prophecy; they are contrasted with the wicked, they fear Jehovah's name, and unto them the Sun of righteousness arises, with healing in His wings; they triumph judicially over their wicked oppressors in that day. They are identified with the godly in Israel in the prophet's time; they speak often one to another; God will spare them when He makes up His jewels, and they will be His in that day. They are called on to remember Moses and the law given to him for all Israel. Nothing can be more distinct and plain, more specific and positive in its character; and it has all the peculiar weight of a final and closing testimony, the last words of prophecy to Israel.

Let us now see if this doctrine of a remnant is constantly recognized in the prophetic testimony, and in what way. Isaiah, a prophet who unfolds to us the ways of God with Israel as a whole, will abundantly instruct us on this point. The general principle which connects the remnant with all God's moral dealings with Israel, is found in the very first chapter, vers. 18, 19.

Before I proceed to quote the passages in detail, let me here state the great principles which this first citation suggests. I have already noticed, that after the question of personal salvation or relationship to God, two great subjects present themselves to us in Scripture. "The Church, that sovereign grace which gives us a place along with Christ Himself in glory and blessing, and God's government of the world, of which Israel forms the center and the immediate sphere; only we have to remember that in this government grace must have a part, or it would not be the government of God. It would be simple judicial condemnation, and impossibility of blessing. These ways of God are revealed in Ex. 32; 33; 34, and Deut. 32. The prophets, founding themselves on the law given in Horeb, are sent in grace to seek the fruit which the vine of the Lord's planting ought to have borne. They reproach Israel with not producing it; and solemnly warn the people of the consequences in judgment. But as God, and, therefore, grace were at work, there were the purposes and will of that grace to be revealed, only that it was not in simple sovereign gift to the divine glory in a new creation, but displaying God's ways in divine government in connection with the responsibility of man. This grace must be in Christ, for He is the center of all God's ways; He is the Messiah, then, of the Jews, the King that is to reign in righteousness, and to display fully and in perfection God's immediate government (see Psa. 101). Hence there is a double aspect of the ways of God in government in Israel. Have they profited by and glorified God in the privileges in the enjoyment of which they were originally placed? Are they in a condition to meet Jehovah in glory, coming in the person of Christ? These two questions may be seen treated in Isa. 5 and vi. The question of the remnant is treated, let the reader remark, entirely in connection with the second of these subjects, i.e., in connection with Christ. It is the same nation of course, the residue have the law necessarily before their consciences, and this fully maintained; but it is, after all, the presenting of Christ, the dealing of God in grace, which brought the state of the nation to an issue, separated the remnant, and brought judgment on the body. After sending the prophets, speaking by the Spirit of Christ which was in them, to seek fruit, the Lord of the vineyard said, I have yet one Son, it may be they will reverence my Son when they see Him. We all know the result. Judgment came upon the nation, a remnant clung to Him through grace. But this necessarily raised another point, "the kingdom," as well as the law. The kingdom was not set up, but the King was there, and the kingdom in that sense among them; and, moreover, since John the Baptist, it was preached as

at hand. It passed, on the rejection of the King, into its mysteries, as unfolded in Matt. 13. It will be established on the earth; but on the return of the King from heaven, where He is gone to receive it. The reader may see that in Isa. 5 the remnant is not brought into view; in chap. 6 it is, while the people's hearts are made fat.

Now, the whole of this process of government is unfolded in Isaiah:-in the early part, before the history of Hezekiah, in judgment, and connected with all God's ways, and the national condition ending in the millennial glory and blessing, in connection with Emmanuel the King-in the second part, after the history of Hezekiah, in grace, showing that Israel had failed in maintaining Jehovah's glory, as His servant; that Jehovah had substituted Christ come in humiliation as His servant, " the true Vine"; and that He, rejected and despised of men, would inherit the Gentiles also. The restoration of Israel was a small thing; but still God would, in and with the remnant, bring in the final glory of Jerusalem and His people. Thus the whole of the ways of God in government, in connection with Israel, are unfolded in this prophet. The question which exercises many saints, connects itself with this whole in this way. Christ having been rejected, and having gone on high, has become the Head of the body, the Church; but how far can we, admitting this great and blessed truth, consider the disciples, viewed as associated with Christ during His life, or even in some respects for a time, through God's patience, after His death, as entering (though, in result, then merged in the Church) into the scheme and course of God's ways with Israel? Are they ever, whatever higher privileges God may have granted to them, viewed and treated as the remnant of Israel according to promise? How far did Christ act and speak in this character, or did He at all? And will not a remnant be found in the latter days, associated, according to God's will, with the hopes of, and promises to, Israel; taking up the links where it was suspended and broken off, a remnant to whom Jehovah (Jesus) will show Himself in glory, to bless them on earth, as having waited on Him and for Him, the Lord Jehovah, for their help in their trouble? Or, is it the Church which will continue to the appearing of Christ? And will there be no remnant of Israel waiting, with a right Jewish faith, owned of God, for the accomplishment of the promises?

This is the point at issue.

Let us now examine the testimony of Isaiah as to the remnant. First, we get the fact stated. The prophet (i.e. the Spirit of Christ), representing the testimony of judgment against sin, and God's grace pointing faith to Jehovah's faithfulness and a Messiah to come, thus lays down the state of Judah: " Why should ye be stricken any more? Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and made like unto Gomorrah." This is the general prophetic view of the condition of Israel. At the prophet's point of view, such is Israel. Further, the nation must be restored by judgment (chap. 1:24-31). But there shall be a remnant left, and full glory and holiness with Christ for their escaped (chap. 4:2-6).

Judgment having been used to purify them, the glory is connected with Jerusalem on earth. We have already noticed the judgments of chaps. v. and vi.; the former in respect of conferred privileges, the second of expected glory. In this second case, as the glory is necessarily connected with Messiah, the doctrine of the Jewish remnant is fully brought out. First, in general desolation and forsaking, the people's heart being made fat. This, we know, carries us on to the time of Christ, connecting Israel's state under the prophets with their state under Christ, in whose time this judgment was accomplished (Matt. 13:14,15). And let the reader remark Acts 28:26,27, shelving

that there was a dealing with Israel, as such, in patience, after the Lord's rejection and departure.

But the same passage spews us that there is a remnant (Isa. 6:13), a holy seed, which is the substance of the old and seemingly withered tree. It shall return and be eaten. Chapters 7 and 8 unfold this fully in connection with Emmanuel.

The local enemies of Judah are set aside; and through the inroad of the Assyrian, the circumstances of the Jews connected with the latter day; for the enemy who then overran Judah is the often-named enemy of the latter day, of whom the prophet speaks continually as the overflowing scourge. At the same time, the sign of the virgin's Son, Emmanuel, is given to them. Assyria will overflow Judah. But this is not all; there is a confederacy of nations against Judah. Now, we get the resource of the faithful, connecting this history with our particular point.

In presence of Judah's dangers from the confederacy of her enemies, they were not to lean on human sources of strength, and confederate as men would. The Lord of hosts was to be the sanctuary. Where found? Here it is Christ comes in. He separates the remnant of the nation, being a stone of stumbling to the nation; for He is the Lord of hosts (compare chap. 1.). He is a sanctuary for those that look to Him as such; for there is no question of atonement here. However needed it may be, it is not the subject. The person of Christ is before us. The testimony is bound up and the law sealed among His disciples; and He teaches them, in the spirit of prophecy, to wait on Jehovah, who hides His face from the house of Jacob, and look for Him. In a word, He maintains by faith the connection of Jehovah with Israel in the remnant. He and the children which God has given Him, are for signs and wonders to both the houses of Israel, from the Lord of hosts who dwells in Mount Zion. Trouble and judgment are then announced, and the full deliverance of Israel through Messiah by victory and judgment. He shall reign upon the throne of David with judgment (chap. 9:3-7). (Verse 3, read to it increased, instead of not.)

What is so important in this passage is, that while the Church's position, undoubtedly assumed subsequently by the remnant who adhered to Christ, is passed over, their connection with Israel's hopes, and the accomplishment of Israel's hopes are fully established through Him who teaches them to look to Him who hides His face from the house of Jacob, and wait for Him; for. Church blessings and grace they had not to wait. The Church still waits for the accomplishment of this also; its own proper hopes are different, as we shall show in due time. Here the remnant connected with Christ, are connected with a proper and exclusively Jewish national hope.

The prophecy that follows (chap. 9:8), takes up the general history of Israel, its chastisements and hardness of heart, till the inroad of the Assyrian, the final instrument of God's anger; and in whose destruction His indignation is to cease. Here Israel, in Zion at least, is encouraged not to be afraid when the Assyrian is there; for God's indignation shall soon cease in his destruction. That is, God owns and warns, in that day, His people -has to say to them as such, and counsels and encourages them. Be it that the mass will not have heard, will have joined, as I believe they will have done, with antichrist, to ward off the inroad (see chap. 28), still the remnant will hear, and will reap the fruit of this grace. All I insist on here is, that there is a Jewish remnant who will have Jewish blessings, and who have Jehovah's witness and testimony for them to rely on, before He comes to deliver. In this general history, the ultimate result is more in view for the nation, than the previous detail as to the remnant. Still, necessarily, general principles are maintained. Hence we find, in the following chapter, where the rod out of the stem of Jesse is introduced, that while in the

main the millennial blessing is introduced, yet He reproves with equity for the meek of the earth. That is, He introduces a new order of things, in which pride is put down, and the poor and meek, that is, the remnant, vindicated. The Lord, when He was here, refused to judge thus; but the connection of this passage with those whom He owned in His testimony, and owned as those that should inherit the earth, is too evident to every reader of Scripture, for me to insist on. There is, therefore, a remnant who are blessed with Jewish blessings, and who have previously a character suited to them, and who are owned in this character even by the Lord, and as heirs of this blessing.

That in the new establishment of the kingdom in power at that time they succeeded-and sometimes with very slow and reluctant faith-to other and higher blessings is quite true; but this did not affect the truth suspended in its effectuation by Israel's unbelief for a time, but to be accomplished yet by Him who hides his face from the house of Jacob, and for whom, and whose time of mercy, they must now wait. When we examine the psalms and gospels, all this will come out with the clearest evidence. The 13th and 14th chapters I only note as showing the way in which prophecy passes over from present judgments to the last day. The same remark applies to chap. 17: while there we find, ver. 6, 7, the remnant and its moral state in the last days. In chap. 24 the remnant are again found (ver. 13, 14, 16) the righteous are owned. Judgment then comes in to establish the glory and blessing; but we find therein (chap. 25:4) the character of the delivered remnant very plainly recognized. Jehovah has been a strength to the poor and needy. Not only so, but this pious expectation is clearly stated (ver. 9), and it shall be said in that day,-" Lo! this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad, and, rejoice in His salvation." This is very clear; hut the whole of the 26th chapter sets this position of the remnant in the strongest possible point of view.

" In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength: For He bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, He layeth it low; He layeth it low, even to the ground; He bringeth it even to the dust. The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy. The way of the just is uprightness: Thou, most upright, lost weigh the path of the just. Yea, in the way of Thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for Thee: the desire of our soul is to Thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee. With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early: for when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of Thine enemies shall devour them. Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for us for Thou also hast wrought all our works in us. O Lord our God, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us: but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast Thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, Thou hast increased the nation: Thou art glorified: Thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth. Lord, in trouble have they visited Thee, they poured out a prayer when Thy

chastening was upon them. Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in Thy sight, O Lord. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

Here the true state and character of these poor and needy are the special subject of the Spirit's teaching. God " most upright weighs the path of the just." They have waited for God in the way of His judgments. Their prayer was to Jehovah when His chastenings were upon them; " with my soul," says the righteous, speaking by the Spirit of Christ, " have I desired thee in the night." Jehovah will ordain peace for them, and finally desires them to enter into their doors and hide themselves for a little moment, till the indignation be overpast, for He was coming out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth. This passage needs no comment; its whole object is to own and show the character of the remnant of Israel in connection with Israel's peace and glory, and before the judgment is executed: they waiting for and desiring the Lord. I pass rapidly over chap. 28:5; 29:9; 30:18; 31:6; and cite them merely as confirming the same truth, which they do, however, very clearly. The 33rd chapter furnishes a testimony to the point which I must not pass over. " The sinners," says the Lord, speaking of the last days of Zion, " in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings. He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing, of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high; his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure; thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty."...Here the righteous remnant in Zion, in her last day of trouble, are brought under view as definitely as can possibly be, and their security announced on this very ground, that they walk righteously (chap. 35:3, 4). The feeble remnant are encouraged while waiting for the Lord, who will surely come with vengeance. The ransomed of the Lord come to Zion with songs. It is a Jewish deliverance.

That part of Isaiah which extends from chap. 40 to the end has quite another character. It is a series of reasonings with God's people, first mainly on the point of idols in contrast with Babylon introducing Cyrus by name; and, secondly, on the rejection of Christ. In the former part (chap. 40-48), the general restoration of the nation, taking the Babylonish captivity for its point of departure, is prophesied; so that a remnant previously in Jerusalem could evidently have little or no place. In chap. 49 Christ, who has labored in vain in Israel, takes the place of Israel as servant; He is the true vine.

Here the remnant at once comes in view (chap. 49:6); but after the rejection of Christ (chap. 1) their character in the last days (ver. 10) is distinctly and definitely brought out: " they fear the Lord, and listen to the voice of his servant." In chap. 51:1, they follow after righteousness; and they know righteousness -have the law in their heart. Yet the Comfort of Zion is not yet come, nor has His

arm put on strength. But it does; and the redeemed of the Lord return to Zion with singing. The whole chapter follows out the progressive development of the appeals of Jehovah to the righteous remnant, and their deliverance by Him, in the most remarkable manner, with the remnant's appeal also to Jehovah, bringing in that deliverance.

Remark, that in these appeals, righteousness, the circumstance of the grace shown to Abraham, and the law in the heart, are spoken of as characterizing or called for in the remnant who follow after righteousness; and their deliverance is wrought, and Jerusalem called to stand up. Afterward (chap. 53) the exalted servant is introduced when the Lord has made bare His arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth see the salvation of the God of Israel; and the spared remnant recognize that the despised and defiled one had been bruised for their iniquities. Then comes out the full blessedness of Jerusalem. Her Maker is her husband. The call of chap. 55:6, 7, confirms the great principle; but I do not insist further upon it. Chapter 57, some of the righteous ones perish, have the lot of the righteous one. The wicked will never have peace. Chapter 58 commences anew with warnings, showing the spirit in which the godly Jew should walk; the result of which will be walking on the high places of the earth, and being fed with the heritage of God's servant Jacob. Yet he that departed from evil made himself a prey. Here was a suffering, godly remnant, in the midst of an ungodly nation; and Jehovah comes in in righteousness. Chapter 61 is remarkable in this, that the Lord quotes the early part of the statement, to apply it to Himself, but stops before the part which speaks of the day of vengeance, which is a part of the same sentence in the prophecy. Yet that day of vengeance comes to comfort all that mourn, to give those that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified: and they shall build up the old wastes, and raise up the former desolations; and then all the blessing and glory of God's people is entered on. Now here we get the Jewish remnant in the latter day, clearly connected with Christ's personal service on the earth when He first came, and all Christian or Church blessing dropped out; the link of the latterday blessings of Zion, with His ministry being immediate, and the blessing being earthly, Jewish, and millennial, just indeed as in chaps. 8, 9. It is hardly possible to have anything clearer to prove not only the existence of a Jewish remnant in the last day, owned of God as such, and blessed with Israel's blessing on the earth, but the connection of this with Christ's ministry as the great prophet on the earth, to whom Israel was to hearken, the minister of the circumcision, the character withal of the remnant being in terms such as He owned in that ministry, though in order to the introduction of the Church all was, for a time, suspended. This introduction of the Gentiles is explained in chap. 65, quoted by the apostle for this purpose, as well as to prove God's patience with Israel. In this chapter the remnant is again very distinctly and prominently introduced, declaring that because of these His servants He will not destroy all Israel, they are the elect of Jehovah, who shall inherit His mountains. His servants contrasted with those who forsake Him. They shall sing for joy of heart when misery and judgment shall come upon the rest. These (chap. 66) had hated those who trembled at Jehovah's word, and cast them out for His name's sake, and said, Let Jehovah be glorified: but He will appear to the joy of the poor, despised, but faithful remnant, and they shall be ashamed. They are righteous in heart and spirit before He comes; and, therefore, He appears, and gives them the earthly blessing.

I have gone through these prophecies that the reader may clearly see that the doctrine of a Jewish remnant, owned in this character by Jehovah, with Jewish hopes pressed on them by God's word, by Jehovah Himself, hopes to be fulfilled in the possession of earthly blessings in Zion, the holy land—a remnant pious, and waiting on Jehovah before His appearing to deliver them, and whose piety and confidence are owned by Him, is not a matter of speculation, or of the interpretation of some difficult or obscure text, but the clear, constant, impressive, and prominent testimony of the Spirit of God. He may have seen, too, that this remnant is directly and immediately connected in character, and in the divine testimony, with the position and character of the remnant at the time of Christ's presence on the earth, though meanwhile, for other purposes, the Lord may hide His face from the house of Jacob. The Psalms will afford us the thoughts and feelings of this remnant in the double aspect of the righteous in connection with Jehovah; and the purposes of God as to His anointed Christ, respectively the subjects of the 1st and 2nd Psalms. The Gospels will afford us (only that John's from its very nature treats the Jews from the first chapter as reprobate) the transition to the previously hidden counsels of God as to the Church—which last forms the second subject we have to treat of.

The Psalms begin (Psa. 1) with distinguishing the righteous man from the nation; that is, marking out the remnant morally. The ungodly are not so. They shall not stand in the judgment, nor in the congregation which the righteous will form. As Isaiah had said in what we have examined,—"There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked." Not only this, but the godly man is promised the present temporal blessings of the righteous Jew; and, further, the law is the measure of righteousness, in which he delights.

Thus the first thing the Psalms do, is to give the position of the remnant, and the results of that position in the government of God: while the blessing of God is pronounced upon the godly remnant itself.

The next thing is to present to us, the heathen and Jewish rulers being in rebellion against Jehovah and His anointed, the sure decree which sets Him, as Son of God, upon the throne of Zion, and calls upon the kings and judges of the earth to submit to Him lest they perish. Such are the thoughts of God, the effect of His government.

But another scene is opened out before it is accomplished. The godly man and Christ, as such, finds himself a prey to the relentless hostilities of the ungodly. In the Psalms (3-7) we have the various relative feelings of faith in this position, faith, in spite of the taunts of enemies as to apparent desertion, calling upon God in peaceful confidence, appeal to God in contrast with the wicked, the distress so strong, that God's chastening in displeasure is deprecated, and appeal against the wicked in this distress, looking to God's bringing it to an end as the righteous Judge. Then, in Ps. yin., the remnant own Jehovah their Lord as having made His name excellent in all the earth, while the Son of man, rejected when He came as Messiah, is set over all the works of His hands. That is, the full universal dominion of Christ is owned. Now we have the remnant here very distinctly, and Jehovah their Lord—but we have the godly man. In the first Psalm, the righteous is plural in verse 6. But what is undoubtedly specially presented is Christ's entering in spirit, as the true godly one, into all the sorrows of the righteous remnant, which, though stated in principle, and specially in principle from Christ's first coming (when the position of the godly remnant, and the rebellion of the nation, were definitely and in their full character brought out), reach on to the final

destruction of his enemies, as indeed stated in the two introductory Psalms. That it is stated in principle, is evident from the first Psalm; that it is true in principle of Christ, the application of Psa. 2 by the apostles to the circumstances of Christ's death, and of Christ Himself of Psa. 8 on the same occasion, are ample proof. That it runs on to the close, and gives the sufferings of the remnant, and the judgment of the wicked then, is shown by Psa. 1:5; 2:8-12, 3:7, 8, 7:6, and following; while Psa. 8 gives the result in blessing when the Son of man takes His place in the glory. Thus the general character of the books—more correctly of the five books of Psalms, in which there is much more method than is supposed, is clearly given. It is the position of the godly remnant in Israel, and Christ entering in spirit wholly and fully into the position of this remnant, sometimes animating their feelings according to His mind in them in it, while sometimes the Spirit rises up to the expression of His own, as entered personally into it, so that what is there said becomes direct prophecy as to Christ Himself. The Lord entering fully in grace (for in all their affliction He was afflicted) into their trial, appropriates more than once language, which is also true and applicable in the mouth of the remnant, though sometimes, as we have seen, it is exclusively Himself. In all, it is His Spirit graciously the expression of sorrows and desires in it by His perfect sympathy, or of which He is the source—sorrows and desires into which He has so personally entered, that often the terms employed belong prophetically to Him.

To proceed (Psa. 9 and 10), the trial and judgment of the last days are definitively gone into, and the state of the remnant very plainly set forth; the needy expectations of the poor would not always be forgotten. The connection of the Lord with the remnant, and their praise for deliverance, is unfolded in Psa. 9; the extensive power of wickedness and distress of the remnant in Psa. 10; but the general subject and result is the same. Psa. 11-15 the various thoughts, feelings, and apprehensions of the remnant in these circumstances are developed, Psa. 15, shewing the Jewish character of godliness, which shall find its place in God's holy hill. All this, and its unquestionable carrying on of the subject to the last days (for we have in Psa. 8 the full final exaltation of Christ and blessing of Israel under the glory of Jehovah's name; and in Psa. 10 the heathen perished out of the land, and the Lord king forever and ever), spews the existence and character of the remnant in that day, and its connection with the remnant in the time of Christ's personal presence in humiliation here on earth, in the very clearest possible way. This is completed in Psa. 16 and 17, especially the first, by Christ's definitely taking this place of association with the godly remnant, as He -did historically when He was baptized with John's baptism, the submission to which, on the part of the remnant, was the first expression of the action of the Spirit of God in their separating in view of the thoroughly purging the Jewish floor. In the path of that action, Christ, who surely needed no repentance, at once goes with them. The beginning of this Psalm is quoted by the Epistle to the Hebrews, to spew that both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one. In the Psalm, Christ says, I take the place of a servant to Jehovah, not my divine place. He says to Jehovah, Thou art my lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee. He says, for that is the connection, to the saints on earth, the excellent, In them is all my delight. Having taken this path, and owning, leaning on, and desiring none but Jehovah, He follows the path of life, does not see corruption, and finds His eternal joy as man in the presence and at the right hand of Jehovah. As Psa. 16 was his trust in God, so Psa. 17 is his appeal to His righteousness. He will behold His face in righteousness and be satisfied, awaking up in His likeness, the true eternal image of the invisible God. But here he brings in the remnant as associated with Him in His sorrow (Psa. 16:2). It is absolutely Himself passing through death in the power of life. Mainly so in Psa. 17; only He

associates the rest of the godly with Himself. Psa. 18 is, I doubt not, the application of Christ's death backwards and forwards to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and their final deliverance when, under the figure of David, all is subdued under Him.

The Psalms which follow are remarkably interesting. In Psa. 19 we have the testimony of the creation, and the law. Psa. 20 Messiah; but now it is the sympathy of the remnant with Him, as suggested by the prophetic Spirit. Psa. 21 the full result of his sorrows and desires recognized in His glory. Compare Psa. 20:4 and Psa. 21:2. The result is length of days forever and ever as man, and glory laid on him. In result, his right hand finds out all His enemies. In Psa. 22 we have not his sorrows from man merely, but the forsaking of God. He mentions these sorrows, and appeals to God not to forsake him, but is forsaken as none other had been. The result is all grace, which he exercises on his full deliverance, in making known the deliverer's name to his brethren, and associating the remnant in praise with him -then all Israel, for he has been heard as the poor man (so that they may trust in their cry), and then all the ends of the earth bow to him in millennial fullness; and generations born learn what He has done as the source of their blessedness.

I will close this rapid review of the early Psalms with noticing Psa. 23 and 24. Psa. 23, as sheaving Jehovah's faithful shepherd-care through every difficulty, now exercised in our favor by Christ, is, in principle, the portion of every believer; but as he knows his sheep and is known of them, so he has walked in the path in which the sheep had to walk, and when He put them forth, went before them; and though the place of sheep was properly still theirs, yet he has really walked in it: and, in that sense, this Psalm is the expression of his own confidence. Restoring is not exclusively from sin -though He does that for us-but from sorrow and oppression of heart, as, "now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say, Father, save me from this hour." In Psa. 24 we find, that He who has walked in the path of the sheep themselves in grace, is the Lord of Hosts Himself; and in the last day will take His place in glory on the hill and in the house of the glory of the Lord: the character of him who shall have a place there, and blessing and righteousness from the God of his salvation is found (ver. 3-6). For the righteous remnant are not forgotten; only here, I apprehend, it goes out to Gentiles, so the first and sixth verses seem to imply, for they shall rejoice in that day with His people. From this to Psa. 41, which closes the book (Psa. 40 giving the source of all the blessings in the counsels of God, and the willingness of Christ to undertake the accomplishment of His will), the various exercises of heart in confidence, joy, and sorrow, with exhortations and warnings suited to the godly in such circumstances, and Christ's entering into them given as a ground of confidence, (" This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him"), though in principle true of many a saint, are largely and blessedly unfolded. In this part, consequently, for it is never the case before (Psa. 25), sins are referred to, and the blessedness of forgiveness; for, after all, the remnant had sins, and Christ took them. But the true godly character of the remnant, as under the influence of Christ's Spirit, is what is put forward in the first place as the true essential characteristic of the book, and of the position of those who are its immediate subjects. Even in Psa. 22, where the fact of God's forsaking is spoken of, the " Why?" shows the perfectly righteous man. Through grace we can answer the "Why?" but in the Psalm itself Christ is the righteous sufferer forsaken of God. Of Psa. 6 we can say, that the occasion of such fear to us would be our sins; but sins are not spoken of there; it was grief: but the wicked who pressed him he sends away, as apart from them. In a word, sins are not spoken of before Psa. 25 This is after the whole introductory part of the connection of Christ with the remnant. Thence to the end of Psa. 41 every

kind of practical exercise is gone through, to which the remnant will be in fact subject, of which they need the exposition from God; but it is always of the godly these Psalms speak, even when forgiveness is sought or sins confessed. They acquaint us with the circumstances of the godly remnant in the latter day, though often in principles which all, by grace, can use. See Psa. 35 and xxxvii. Remark also the essential difference between the sufferings of Christ from man and from God; the first were for righteousness, the second for sin. The consequence of the first (Psa. 21) is, that He will make His enemies as a fiery oven in the day of His wrath. In the second He was bearing wrath; the consequence is all unmingled blessing, and nothing else, as its fruit (see Ps: 22:21-23).

Now, the reader has only to take up these Psalms, and he will see the remnant recognized as a godly Jewish remnant, and their deliverance wrought by judgment (which is not the case of the raised or heaven-borne saints in any case); their blessings, Jewish blessings, the character of their righteousness Jewish, they wait on God, are owned, their cry is heard, they are exhorted to perseverance and dependence, the earth is their portion in many exhortations. Yet they go back to the place Christ held on the earth, and she w Him buried-not seeing corruption-and ascended on high. For their piety and waiting on the Lord for earthly deliverance, see Psa. 27:4, 13, 14, and indeed the whole Psalm; their separation from the ungodly, Psa. 26; their trial and appeal, Psa. 31; the positive reassuring of the saints, and confidence founded on Jehovah's ways with the poor man, Psa. 37; Psa. 38, the full heart-guidance and encouragement of God, the inheritance of the earth promised to those blessed of Jehovah. The whole Psalm should be read.

In Psa. 40, we have Christ's example to encourage. He waited patiently for the Lord. Then His whole work, from His first undertaking it, is shown, and His taking the place Himself of the poor and needy. I only notice Psa. 41, as an example of a statement fulfilled in the case of Christ, but not properly a prophecy of him. He was, above all, that poor man so often spoken of in the Psalms; but his brethren will tread in the same path, however feebly, and meet similar treachery, and what is done to one of the least of them is done to Him. The Lord God of Israel would accomplish His purposes in blessing. I need not go into the same detail with the remaining four books. This gives the position of the remnant in the midst of Israel, all its great principles, and the place Christ has taken in their sorrows, Jehovah delivering, though, in the end, He is proved to be Jehovah. In the second book, Ps. 40-72, They are cast out, the power of Anti-Christ established; but (Psa. 45) Messiah appears, and full deliverance celebrated to the end of Psa. 48 Psa. 49 the world's instruction by the judgment. Psa. 50 the general judgment of Israel. Psa. 51 their confession of Christ's death, now He has appeared; then the various relative exercises of heart under these circumstances. Psa. 65; 66; 67. that praise which only waits for God's deliverance to burst forth in Zion is sounded out, and thus the nations are to be made glad. Psa. 68 an ascended Christ is the real secret of all this. Psa. 69 a suffering Christ the basis of that ascended glory, and the security of the poor and needy in Zion. Psa. 70 and 71 apply it in the remnant and against the wicked, in the person of David, I doubt not to Israel seemingly past hope; and Psa. 72 describes the full reign of peace. But take the end even of Psa. 69, which, applies to Christ's sufferings; you will find the poor and needy owned in Zion, and the earthly Jewish types recognized and opened by God. The seed of his servants shall inherit it, and they that love His name shall dwell therein. The third book, Psa. 73-89, goes out to all Israel, not simply the Jews, and gives God's government and dealing with them from the beginning, their fuller history in the latter days, the glory and blessing of Zion.

The judgment of Israel under law, but election brought out, and the certainty of mercy by infallible promises to David's seed. The fourth book is the bringing in the first begotten into the world directly connected with God's faithfulness to Israel, but reaching out to all nations. It shows how the suffering Christ could have a share in the restoration of Zion. He is the Eternal Creator (Psa. 102) In Psa. 101, we have His government as man. In the closing book, we have various consequences and effects on the bringing back of Israel. Explanatory Psalms of the scheme of God, as Psa. 110 The law, written on Israel's heart (Psa. 119) The Psalms of degrees commenting on God's ways, and then the praises of God, with their various grounds, and pursued in view of millennial blessedness.

I have just thus rapidly run through the whole book, to give a general idea of its connection with Christ and Israel. It would evidently be impossible to enter into the detail of the 150 Psalms here. I think, if the reader looks at them, he will see the leading ideas borne out. What he cannot fail to see, if anything can impress the truth, as I would trust it may, on his mind,

is that there is a godly pious Jewish remnant-ever true in principle-tried, oppressed, all but overwhelmed in the latter day; whose piety Jehovah owns and encourages before their deliverance; which He rewards with Jewish blessings, according to promise; with which Christ identifies Himself in spirit, as He did, in fact, when on earth with those of the like spirit; into all whose sorrows He enters, His own having given Him the tongue of the learned; whose sins he has borne; and that in this state of things the case is supposed of dying (Psa. 16;17), and heavenly joy provided in that case, but the hopes held out Jewish blessings, the earth, the holy hill, and deliverance wrought by judgment, that they may enjoy it, which we learn in the second and fourth books. That the ascension and sitting at God's right hand precede these blessings, Christ returning to judgment to bring them in, returning withal as Jehovah, and entering into the temple as such. Assuring all things to Israel as David's seed, having all things under His feet as Son of Man, and while King in Zion subjecting all the nations as Son of God, born in this world. The name of the Father, and the thought of the Church do not appear, room is left for one after His resurrection, when He calls the saints brethren, and some figure of the other in Psa. 139, but no direct reference to either. The Holy Ghost's work, as come down from heaven, is intimated in the form of gifts in man, but so as Israel also will have them in the latter day, " Yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell among them." Only so far, however, intimated, as to say, that Christ has received gifts for men.

Such is the testimony of the Psalms. While ministering to piety at all times, though often with imperfect intelligence; their subject is the remnant of Israel, and the blessings of that remnant as such, of course through Christ, the ministrations of His Spirit, preparing them to enjoy it with earthly, though divinely given hopes, and in an earthly way.

Note here, too, that all this connects itself, with God's government of this world, and in no way with that sovereign grace, which sets a sinner in heavenly glory as one with Christ Himself, and a member of His body. But a heavenly calling is shown in Him, and the possibility of passing to it by death; but it is only stated as to the person of Christ directly, or in the general expression, the heavens shall declare his righteousness. What we have now to inquire into, is the extent to which the New Testament seals these hopes and promises to Israel, while introducing higher and heavenly hopes. For it is absolutely impossible that it can set them aside. It does not undo what

God had before promised and assured to His people; that is certain and evident. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance, it is said, in speaking of Israel. Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God to confirm the promises made to the fathers. Has His rejection and death set them aside? Far from it. It is just that the apostle insists on in Rom. 11. It has made their accomplishment to be of pure grace, and has secured that accomplishment. Our only research, then, is as to this point: Was the remnant owned in connection with the kingdom then? Is this connection carried on to the latter days, so as to link the future restoration with the remnant then owned of and owning Christ, so as to show that there will be a pious godly remnant owned of God, such as the Psalms speak of, before the manifestation of the Lord, and waiting for Him? The beginning of the Gospel of Luke announces Christ fully as thus coming in connection with Israel, before entering on the wider moral ground connected with the Gentiles, which Luke more especially does, and I think we may say because he does. The Spirit of God, at the commencement of this Gospel, has put His seal on all the promises to and hopes of the godly remnant, that is of Israel. The pious remnant were looking for redemption in Jerusalem, and knew one another thus (Luke 2:38). There were just and devout ones waiting for the consolation of Israel, and saw in Christ a light, indeed, to reveal the Gentiles, but the glory of God's people, Israel. The angels brought good tidings to the shepherds, which were such to all the people (not all people). In the city of David a Savior was born to them, which was Christ the Lord. The angels of the heavenly chorus alone, in this part of the Gospel, celebrate the full result of Christ's coming to the earth, a result not yet produced, but as the Lord Himself states for the present the contrary, but which will be produced fully on the earth hereafter. Prophetically, it was declared, that many of Israel should be turned to the Lord their God, through Him who came in the spirit and power of Elias, he was to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Note the last expression, for it gives the divine intention as to any Elias service, and what the essential character of the remnant is. It is not sovereign grace visiting a sinner of the Gentiles in his sins, but a people prepared for the Lord before He comes. To Mary it is announced, that the child born of her on the earth should be called the Son of the Highest, and that the throne of His father David should be given Him -He was Jesus, i.e., Jehovah the Savior. Help to His servant Israel is the final subject of praise with Mary in the touching and beautiful interview between her and Elizabeth. And the Song of Zacharias (Luke 1:67-79) is wholly composed of the divinely given celebration of God's having visited and redeemed His people, and raised up a horn of salvation for them in the house of his servant David - temporal salvation afforded -promises to Abraham in favor of his earthly seed to be fulfilled. The whole is too clear and definite to need any comment. A remnant already waiting, a people prepared for Jehovah full earthly deliverance from Him. These are the topics divinely given by inspiration on the occasion of the birth of Christ. That they were interrupted for the accomplishment of brighter and more blessed purposes by His rejection is quite true -but to suppose that He was to invalidate them would be to subvert divine testimonies and destroy divine faithfulness. That it is only a remnant is clearly shown. He was for the fall, as well as for the raising up, of many in Israel. Further, all that passes, Mary's purification and the whole scene, places us on Jewish ground.

Matthew's whole gospel reveals to us the presentation of Christ to the Jews, and the substitution of the new divine order for the Jewish on His rejection. Hence it becomes particularly important to see how far it assures us, that, notwithstanding this new divine order, the old is still, according to the mind of God, to be accomplished in its time. We shall find that it is expressly linked up with the

service of Christ's disciples in His lifetime, passing over, as the prophets are wont to do, the whole intervening Church period unnoticed. This evangelist, from the outset, introduces Christ as the accomplishment of prophecy and promise. The very genealogy, itself, is this; and Matt. 1:22 and 2:5, 15, suffice to point out this; the last showing that Israel's history is taken up afresh in Christ, the true vine, according to the principle of Isa. 49:5.

In the sermon on the mount, the remnant are morally distinguished; the qualities of those who should have part in the kingdom, clearly and fully stated, in contrast with the current self-righteousness of the Jews. Two great principles characterize this teaching of the Lord; the spiritual character of the law, and the revelation of the Father's name. It is to be remarked, that persecution is supposed, and reward 'in heaven presented as the fruit of it. Thus we have the Lord's teaching in Israel clearly and fully brought before us. Obedience to His teaching, was like a man building his house on the rock; while Israel was -warned he was in the way with God, and if he did not come to agreement with Him, he would be cast into prison till all were paid (comp. Isa. 40:2). It will be remarked, that all this is Divine government, not Divine salvation. I pass by a multitude of indications of the same relationship of God with Israel, accompanied with warnings of the introduction of the new order of things, to draw my reader's attention to a chapter which brings the point which occupies us, out into the fullest light. In chap. x., Christ sends out the twelve. They were not to go in the way of the Gentiles, nor enter into a city of the Samaritans; but to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and declare the kingdom of heaven at hand; inquire who was worthy, i.e., seek the righteous remnant, not poor sinners; and repel with fullest condemnation, shaking off the dust of their feet, those that did not receive them. Though, in " Israel, they were as sheep in the midst of wolves;" it was an ungodly nation, they were to seek the worthy ones in it, speaking peace everywhere, but that peace resting only on the sons of peace. But, in v. 18, this goes on to circumstances out of the Lord's lifetime. They were to be brought before Gentiles, and the Spirit of their Father to speak in them; not only so, but they would be hated of all men for Christ's name sake, and when persecuted in one city, go to another; for they would not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man was come. Now, here we have a mission exclusively to Israel, carried on during the Lord's lifetime, carried on by the Spirit afterward, in which they were to endure to the end; a ministry which would not be closed nor completed, and still confined to the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man came. How often do we see the prophets passing on from some notable circumstances in their day, to "that day." Here we find the Lord establishing a ministry exclusively to Israel, drawing out the remnant; carried on after Him by the Spirit, and carried on with the same objects, incomplete even when He comes as Son of Man. They have only to do with Gentiles as enemies, along with the wicked and hostile nation of the Jews. Nothing can be plainer in all its parts. They were, according to Jewish hopes and prospects, to gather out a remnant, and prepare a people for the kingdom which was at hand. Such is the direct teaching of the Lord. I note, in passing, that, besides the history of the mysteries of the kingdom to its close, consequent on His rejection, the Church itself (16), and the glory of the kingdom (17), are announced in connection respectively with his title of Son of the living God, and Son of Man. He and His disciples are (17:24-27) the children of the kingdom. The judgment of the nation, viewed in their own responsibility, is clearly announced in divers parables, under law, and under the grace of Christ's mission at that time. But in the 23, we come again to positive instructions on this point. The multitude and the disciples are both put on distinct Jewish ground, subjected to Moses' seat; yet they who filled it all the teachers and the righteous of the nation-put under awful condemnation:

further, the Apostolic mission (34-36), is presented as prophets, and wise men, and scribes, sent to the nation, as the prophets rejected of old had been, their rejection bringing present temporal judgment on that generation. Often would Jesus Jehovah have gathered Jerusalem's children together-that Jerusalem, who thus, in all times, stoned the prophets, and killed those sent to her; but she never would listen. Now her house was left desolate to her; she would not see her Lord till she repented. When, through grace, she was in the spirit of that which God had perfected praise by, in putting it into the mouths of babes and sucklings - when Christ was rejected by the nation - namely, the confessions of Psa. 118, then, and not before, would she see Christ again. In a word, there must be a prepared people; a people prepared to receive Him, saying, " Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord," before the Lord would appear to them. Nothing, I apprehend, can be clearer than this, as to the position in which the Lord sets the multitude and the disciples; the character He gives to the witness of these last in Israel, after His, decease, and the desolation of Jerusalem and the house, till repentance and a prepared heart, had made them ready to receive the Lord, ready for the home here on earth, being no more desolate. The Lord then proceeds to announce the judgment of Jerusalem, and the circumstances of his disciples in connection with the end of the age. The disciples inquire when the temple should be destroyed, what the sign of Christ's coming, and of the end of the age. That the questions here relate to the Jewish people, is perfectly evident; the end of the age (it is well known that world is a mistake) has no sense or application out of the sphere of Jewish thought.

That it referred to this, in the mind of the disciples, is most clear; that the other question, when the temple should be destroyed, had this reference, it is not needed to say. Does the Lord's answer continue on this ground? His answer is divided into two parts; a general warning to the end of v. 14, and particular circumstances from the 15th. As to the first part, to whom do persons come, saying, I am the Christ; not to Christians, as such, I suppose. It was an expectation that the Christ might appear, into which the disciples, with Jewish expectations, might be seduced. The scene, sphere, and character of deception are Jewish. Many troubles and wars would arise; but the end of which they inquired, was not yet. Before that arrived, the Gospel of the kingdom, which Jesus, and even John the Baptist had announced, would be sent to all the Gentiles, and then the end come. Why even this difference, if the previous part were not Jewish in its sphere? The latter part, from the 15th verse, demonstrates as clearly as any language can do, that the Lord was referring to what was Jewish. The abomination of desolation, of which Daniel spoke, in a prophecy specifically referring to his (Daniel's) people, is the point of departure: it would stand in the holy place. Those which were in Judaea were to flee to the mountains; they were to pray that their flight should not be on the sabbath-day. What language can be plainer, to spew the place, and people, and circumstances, which occupy the Savior's thoughts; the rather because we get the saints, and the nations, and their judgment, in the 25th chapter. That is; to resume the evidence this gospel affords us, it takes up the ministry in Christ's time (10), and pursues it to the close the coming of the Son of Man, in an exclusively Jewish character. The Lord takes up the disciples and the multitude (23) on definitely Jewish ground, subjecting them to Moses' chair, while rejecting those that sat there; and declares at the close, that repentance must characterize the remnant before they would see Him again: and then showing the judgment on the house, shows the nation guilty; iniquity abounding; the testimony of the remnant in the midst of this iniquity - the true witness of the kingdom - and extending before the end to all nations; and, finally, returns to the last great tribulation, and occupies Himself with the godly remnant in Judaea and Jerusalem, previous to His

own appearing; warning them that new pretenses would arise of His being there, a suggestion having no application whatever to Christians, properly so called; because they are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. A person must have renounced Christian hopes, before such a pretense could be a snare to him. To an earthly remnant, the presence of Christ upon earth, is the sum of all their rightful hopes.

As regards the subsequent continuation of this testimony in the midst of Jerusalem, the Lord on the Cross (Luke 23:34) intercedes for them, saying, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." To this, the Holy Ghost, in witness, responds, saying, by the mouth of Peter (Acts 3:17), "Now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that [not when] the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus, whom the heavens must receive, till the time of the restitution of all things, of which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Now, this gracious continuation of the testimony to Israel, as such (see ver. 25, 26 -the remnant is distinguished by the reception of the testimony, ver. 23), shows that repentance was called for in order to Christ's return. Those would be cut off who did not receive his prophetic testimony. Stephen bears witness to their always resisting the Holy Ghost; and to Saul, the most active resister of the Spirit amongst them, the willing help of the slayers of the witness, the full doctrine of the Church is revealed. The persecuted witnesses are owned to be members of Christ Himself; yet, though the Church be set up, (and we have it, in fact Acts 2, before Peter's testimony), and Paul be made a minister of it, he preaches first to the Jews, only; when they count themselves unworthy of eternal life, he turns to the Gentiles, and pronounces as witness of this Church ministry, as the Lord in His living one, that the judgment pronounced by Isaiah must soon fall upon them; but it is only in Acts 28 that this is finally said-the last scriptural witness that we have historically.

The general doctrine of a remnant in Israel, is clearly stated in the Epistle to the Romans; an elect remnant spared, who, not continuing in unbelief, will be grafted in again, and that into their own olive tree; not into the Christian assembly, which was not their own olive tree. They had been never broken out of that, nor had the believing branches continued in it. There is an elect remnant of Israel which shall be brought to believe, and be grafted into their own olive tree, and become the nation-the all Israel. There are many passages in the prophets, as Joel 2, Zech. 9, to which it may suffice thus to refer.

We will now proceed to take up the other capital point of which we desired to speak, that in which God shows the sovereign fullness of His grace. The historical development of the doctrine we have hinted at; and we will briefly state it here. We have the largest and fullest warrant for saying, that it was entirely unrevealed in the Old Testament. Speaking of the mystery, the admission of the Gentiles to be of the one body in the assembly of God, Paul says (Rom. 16:25,26), " The preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by prophetic Scriptures (not the Scriptures of the prophets), according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith," etc. In Eph. 3:4,5, " The mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body"; and (ver. 9) " the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world was hid in God." " To the intent that now unto

the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus." So (Col. 1:24) " for His body's sake, the Church, whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to the saints." This doctrine, of which Paul, as he states in the Colossians, was a minister as well as of the Gospel, in order to complete the word of God, was thus wholly unknown to the saints of the Old Testament. Much more, was utterly obscure; but this was hid in God. Other things they might have were for an age to come, not for themselves, as the promise of the Spirit and the Messiah's glory and redemption; but this they knew not at all. When the Father had revealed to Simon Bar Jonas the truth of the person of Christ, that He was the Son of the living God, not merely the Christ, Christ could then speak of the Church; for it was to be founded on that. But He spoke of it only prophetically, and as a future thing, " on this rock I will build my Church." it was by resurrection He was declared Son of God with power; so that Satan's power was of no avail; and His death was needed to gather together in one the children of God, wherever scattered abroad - His departure, that the Comforter might come.

Except the corn of wheat fell into the ground and died, it abode alone. When Christ had died and gone up on high, the great foundation was laid for all blessings; and in particular for the Church. And the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, came down according to promise; and the assembly, the Church, was formed; and the Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved (the residue, the σωζομενους). That was the way He now disposed of them, though His promises to Israel remained sure. The doctrine of the Church, however, was not taught as far as Scripture informs us. The Christians remained strictly attached to Judaism, zealous of the law; priests were obedient to the faith, nor seem to have ceased to be priests. Peter never even teaches that Jesus is the Son of God; his doctrine is, " Him whom you have crucified, God has exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins." " God had made Him both Lord and Christ".

What will, perhaps, surprise the reader, the Church is never named in the Epistles but by Paul. A particular assembly is named by John, but the assembly or Church as a whole, the body of Christ, is spoken of by Paul only. Nor, consequently, I may add, the rapture of the saints before the appearing of Christ. God raised up, we learn in the Acts, a free ministry outside the, college of the apostles. This brought out the fullest, hatred of the Jews; and Stephen, an innocent instrument of God in this ministry, is put to death. Heaven receives its first fruits of the power of the Holy Ghost, of the Church; heaven itself is opened, and a, heavenly Christ seen - a man in glory is seen. Conformed to Christ, the spirit of Stephen joins him on high, and the final tale of Judaism was told in blood: they always resisted the Holy Ghost. God did not dwell in a house made by hands. This changed every- thing; a heavenly gathering before Christ's return was actually begun. This, however, was individual, but the enmity of the Jew was to assume a yet more active and violent character. Not content with making havoc of the Church at Jerusalem, Saul must persecute them to strange cities; but while occupied with this, and close to Damascus for the purpose, he is arrested by the Lord's revealing Himself in glory to him, and telling him that those he was persecuting were Himself " I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; why persecutest thou me?" Here, then, sovereign grace abounded over final resistance to the Holy Ghost Himself. The foundation:

for the Gospel of the glory of Christ Was laid, and the identification of all the saints on earth with their glorified Head in heaven, was made the starting-point for Paul's testimony as to what His Church was. Of this he became minister. For a heavenly glorious Christ, Jew or Gentile, were all one; they were all one in Him. The reception of Cornelius was entrusted to Peter, that the new truth might not be a separate one; but unity below continues with a new element: the unity of Jew or Gentile, as one body in Christ, was entrusted as a testimony to Paul. He was minister of the Church to complete the Word of God. He who alone verbally speaks of the Church, what does he teach? God " hath put all things under His [Christ's, exalted on high] feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, [assembly] which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." Such, then, is the Church. It is an assembly which, when Christ is exalted on high, and fills all in all, is His body, the fullness or completion of the Head.

So in Col. 1, He is the Head of the body, the Church, the first-born from the dead. So in detail (Rom. 12), " We being many are one body in Christ, and members one of another." Another character as to the formal existence of the Church on earth is, that we, Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2), are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. So 1 Cor. 12, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit... Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." The manner of its building is the breaking down the middle wall of partition, and to make of twain one new man; or, as is expressed in a passage already quoted, the mystery is, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of one body. The baptism of the Holy Ghost, by which it was formed, took place on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8), which it was the distinctive title of Christ to confer (John 1:33,34), and which for the saints He ascended up on high to receive (Acts 2:33; comp. John 16:7). In a word, the Church, or assembly, is the body of Christ formed, when the Head was exalted, by the Holy Ghost which He then sent down to gather together the saints into unity. Before Israel's being owned as a nation, the saints walked in individual faith: when Israel was owned, they were individual members of a nation, owned as such, as God's people, but of which the vast mass were unconverted, the unity of which, such as it was, was in the flesh, a unity with which the Spirit had nothing to do, and which, consequently, excluded Gentiles. After the death and exaltation of Christ, who gave Himself not for that nation only, but to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad, all was changed in this respect; the distinction of Jew and Gentile effaced; both alike (through faith), reconciled to God, and gathered into the unity of one assembly by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which assembly is the Church, i.e., the assembly of God, the body of Christ, the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost on earth. We are not inquiring here how far it could be corrupted or ruined, but what it is in the primitive scriptural view of it. Nothing is that but itself. This assembly is, as may be seen (Eph. 5), the bride of Christ. The word is applied to the particular assemblies of Christians in different places, because they formed the assembly of God in that place, but if the word be taken as scripture uses it, it is not possible to attach any equivocal sense to it. It is God's assembly, formed by the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven when the Head had been exalted as man on high. It is His body and His bride. Translate the Greek work by the natural English one, and no-one would have a moment's hesitation as to what it meant. The assembly, or the assembly of God. The Lord added daily to the assembly. He set some in the assembly; first, apostles; secondly, prophets.

It is called to participate in the sufferings of Christ, and He will present it to, Himself as His bride, as Eve to Adam, a glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. When the Lord added to the assembly such as should be saved, it is quite clear that it was not to that to which they belonged already; and their adding to it, an act which showed they did not belong to it as members of the Jewish nation, not even if they were previously pious. It was a newly-instituted body, formed in unity by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and united to the Head, Christ, who was there.

We have now to inquire what the testimony of God is as to its joining Him there. The Church's joining Christ has nothing to do with Christ's appearing or coming to earth. Her place is elsewhere. She sits in Him already in heavenly places. She has to be brought there as to bodily presence. Christ could not remain with His disciples here, and tells them, " I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am there ye may be also." The thing she has to expect for herself, then, is not, though sure of that also, Christ's appearing, but her being taken up there where He is. And so the apostle, speaking of it in detail - " The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." We go up to meet Christ in the air. Nothing clearer, then, than that we are to go up to meet Him, and not await His coming to earth; but that this coming to receive us to Himself is not His appearing, is still clearer, if we pay attention to the Colossians, chap. iii., which shows that we are already with Him when He shall appear - " When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." This identification of the Church's hope and glory with Christ Himself is of the essence of the Church's blessing. He is our life, our righteousness; the glory given to Him He has given us; we are members of His body, we are of His flesh and of His bones. We reign with Him, suffer with Him, are glorified together, being like Him - conformed to His image. He is hid in God; our life is hid with Him in God. He appears - we appear with Him in glory; but for this we must be caught up to meet Him, and that before He appears at all. When He does we are already with Him, and appear with Him. This does not state the epoch of the rapture of the Church, but what is far more important, it does clearly show the entire difference of relationship of the heavenly saints with Christ, and those who only see Him when He appears. The one are blessed under His reign, and are connected with the earth; the others are identified with Himself, with Him who reigns, appear and reign with Him Wherever this is enfeebled, Satan is at work. There are truths common to all, such as being manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ. There are those which are the prerogative of faith; and such is our association with Christ, the firstborn among many brethren, the being His bride and His body. He who waits Christ's appearing as the time in which he is to go to be with Him, has denied the proper hope and proper relationship of the Church with Christ. On this point there can be no compromise. Ignorance of privilege is one thing - it is our lot, all of us, in one shape or other - the denial of it another. When once we have seen that we are to appear with Christ, and that, consequently, our hope of Christ's coming for us is not properly His appearing, all our habits of thought and our spiritual affections are changed. Our proper hope is not even the glory in which we appear with Him, wonderful as that is, but this: " I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am ye may be also." " So shall we ever be with the Lord."

Three several ways of presenting the return of Christ are found in Scripture. The general fact. We do not expect things to go on to an unknown end of dissolution; we are converted to wait for God's Son from heaven. Nothing precise and distinctive is here presented. We do not think that things go on as they were from the creation of the world. Christ will come again, and we wait for Him. This is the abiding thought in every instructed Christian, whatever degree of light he may have as to details. He expects Christ, so that, morally, the fashion of this world is closed for him; the object of his hope is elsewhere. Next, the scene of this world is confusion and evil to his spirit; he knows that it will ripen up into rebellion, and that God will judge this world by that Man whom He hath ordained-that Christ will therefore judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom - that He will set up His earthly kingdom by judgment -further, that the effect of His governmental judgment will be manifested in the saints at that time-that if it be the day of the Lord for this world, it is the time when the responsibility of the saints will be brought to its manifested issue or result. He will return and take account with His servants, and set one over ten cities, another over five. He knows that the appearing of Christ is naturally and necessarily connected with manifested judgment; hence he finds responsibility always referred to this in Scripture. Thirdly, besides the facts of Christ's coming and manifested righteousness, there is, through grace, special privilege, the proper associations of the saints with Christ, which must have their accomplishment also. No doubt the saints will be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, to give an account of themselves to God; but even this is not separated from privilege, for they arrive there, already like Himself. Yea, He has come Himself to fetch them there. This special association with Christ is made good, not by Christ's appearing, as we have seen (though manifested there), but by His coming to receive them to Himself where He is; His introducing them into His Father's house, and in the kingdom placing them in the heavenly seat of government with Himself. This is effectuated by His coming, and causing them, raised or changed, to come up and meet Him in the air. This is the rapture of the saints, preceding their and Christ's appearing: at that they appear with Him. So that at their rapture He has not appeared yet.

Such is the general doctrine of the rapture of the Church, a doctrine of the last importance; because it is immediately connected with the relationship of the Church to Christ, its entire separation from the world and its portion. It is the act which crowns its perfect justification. This rapture before the appearing of Christ is a matter of express revelation, as we have seen from Col. 3:4.

As to the time of this rapture, no one, of course, knows it. But the difference, in this respect, between it and the appearing is very marked, in what is most important. At the appearing comes the judgment of this world, hence it connects itself with and closes its history; and before it that history must have run on to its revealed result, revealed events must have occurred, and the objects of judgment must have appeared on the scene and accomplished what is predicted of them. The Church is associated with Christ already gone, is not of the world as He was not, is risen with Him, has its life hid with Him in God. There is no earthly event between it and heaven. It must have been gathered, and Christ rise up from the Father's throne to receive it. That is all. It is this conviction, that the Church is properly heavenly, forming no part, in its calling and relationship with Christ, of the course of events of the earth, which makes its rapture so simple and clear; and, on the other hand, shows how the denial of its rapture brings down the Church to an earthly position, and destroys its whole, spiritual character and position. Our calling is on high. Events are

on earth. Prophecy does not relate to heaven. The Christian's hope is not a prophetic subject at all. It is the promise that Christ will come and receive him to Himself, that where He is the Christian may be also.

Although the question be already answered in principle, it may be well to put it formally here, When is the Christian to expect the Lord? I answer always. It is his right spiritual character. His always doing it is that by which his right spiritual state is characterized. Be ye " as men that wait for their Lord when He shall return from the wedding, that they may open to Him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and come forth and serve them Be ye therefore ready also, for at such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." And, after speaking of service to the saints, the Lord adds, " Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, He will make him ruler over all that He hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming, and begin to beat the men-servants and maid-servants.... He will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." Here, as a general principle, the constant waiting for the Lord as a present thing, is given as characterizing those who are blessed when the Lord comes, and who reign over all things. That which leads the wicked servant into-all mischief is, not the denial of the Lord's coming, but the loss of the sense and present expectation of it.

This was the origin of the Church's departure from simplicity, and its fall into clerical authority and worldliness-the cause of the loss of its spiritual authority. The saints went out, left the world and worldly religion, by going out to meet the Bridegroom. It characterized them as a present thing. It was recalled to its primitive position and liveliness by the renewal of the immediate expectation of Him. He did tarry, in fact, and the sense of His coming was lost. " Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" was what roused and prepared them. No events, no earthly circumstances, intervene or modify the direct summons. They go out to meet Him. There is no other thought, no confusion with the government of this world, none of any previous dealing in respect of the marriage-feast (His union with the Jews). They go back with Him to it. That the apostle lived in and taught this immediate expectation, as the proper primitive doctrine of the Spirit of God, is evident, whatever degree of light as to detail may have been possessed. The Thessalonians were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven, with very little clearness of light; but they had been so taught, and Paul approves of their expectation as a Divine witness to the world, of which the world itself spake. It was his manner of entering in-they were waiting for Him. It was not a prophetic explanation of events they possessed; there is no event, I repeat, between us and heaven.' God's Son was coming from heaven, and they were waiting for Him as the fruit of Paul's entering in, owned and delighted in by himself. They drew certain conclusions from it, in which they erred, which Paul corrected, as he did another mistake, induced by false teachers, in the second epistle; but their constant expectation was right. The word even is used only here, and speaks of awaiting; but Paul was doing as much. He speaks to them of we which are alive, and remain to the coming of the Lord." We are told, this is a class. Be it so. But it is a class in which Paul reckons himself; showing that that class could and ought so to await the coming of the Lord. Why not we?

But there were, as we have seen, errors. The Thessalonians were distressed about those who perished for Jesus' sake; fearing, as it appears (so much did they expect Christ in their life-time), that they would not be there to enjoy His coming. Paul corrects this error, by showing that the dead

would be raised, and then the living go up to meet Christ with them. But he is so far from weakening the Thessalonians' present expectation of Christ during their life-time, that he confirms it by associating himself with them in this expectation. The circumstance that it was a conclusion drawn from this expectation which misled the Thessalonians, so that they were troubled about the saints' dying, gives uncommon force to the statement of the apostle. How anxiously would he have set them right, had they been wrong on this, and shown them that he never had led them, no meant to have led them, to such an expectation; that it was an excited and erroneous way of looking at the Lord's coming! How would he have shown them (the occasion and need of correcting error being thus offered), as do many now, that there were many events to occur, much history of the Church and world to be accomplished, before the Lord could come! But, quite the contrary, he corrects the mistake they did make as to the dead, showing them that they should first rise; and they, being changed, all go up together on high; and confirms, in the strongest way, their own present expectation by, as I have said, associating himself with it. Was he deceived, as rationalists allege, in having and confirming in others this thought? Surely not. The moment was not revealed, as we know: the constant expectation was right. It produced a liveliness of expectation, a courage in persecution, a brightness of heart-association with the Lord's person and personal approval, of which Paul will reap the blessed fruits when the moment does come-of which the Thessalonians did reap the fruits every day, in the liveliness of their faith, and the brightness of their hope, and the labor of their love-and of which we do: in a witness of liveliness of affection and liberty of heart, and superiority to circumstances, of which no epistle in Scripture affords a like example. Would there were a little more enthusiasm in Christians, if it be founded on a hope sanctioned by the apostle himself But those circumstances to which the Thessalonians were exposed, were very trying; and if lively, they were young in the faith. They had heard that the day of the Lord would come-a terrible day, of trouble and of judgment. False teachers came, and sought to upset their minds; alleging even a letter of Paul, and declarations of the Spirit, that that day was there. If hope was somewhat enfeebled by their sufferings, as perhaps was the case (as the apostle speaks only of their faith and love here), this unsettling of their minds is not difficult to conceive, entirely inexperienced as they were, and subjected to trial. But the Lord was there to help them; as the wicked one to trouble them. It is to be remarked, that the verse translated (2 Thess. 2), " as that the day of the Lord is at hand," should be, beyond all controversy or question, " as that the day of the Lord were present." It is the word translated elsewhere present, in contrast with things to come. They were troubled and upset by the impression, that the day of the Lord, that great and terrible day, was actually come. No wonder the apostle could not speak of their hope. Before the apostle touches on their mistake, and unfolds the true order of events, with heavenly skill he sets their minds at ease. This he does in the first chapter. He glories in their patience and faith in their persecutions. It was a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to those that troubled them, and to them that were troubled rest with Paul and others (he was associated in the sorrow and the rest too), when the Lord Jesus should be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in (not,," to receive to Himself") all them that believe (for the Thessalonians had believed) in that day.

Here all is set in its place. It was Christ's appearing in glory, which would bring in the day. If that day had been present, it was without Christ. If His appearing brought it in, He was not going to trouble those that were His, but surely those who troubled them. That was a righteous 'matter with

God; so that the terrible persecution the Thessalonians were undergoing, was but a pledge, with a righteous God, that when the kingdom came, they would have rest and glory. They would not have trouble when Christ appeared, and the kingdom was established by judgment. In that day, their portion would be ease and delight; nay, indeed, more than that—they would be the admiration of the world, or rather Christ in them, in that day. Thus, by introducing Christ and God's righteous ways, all was as clear as possible, and the delusion dispelled; the Thessalonians' minds were re-established. It is ever so: introduce Christ and God's ways, and all is, clear and peace. They can now calmly and with a restored soul, in which known truths had their place, receive fresh and satisfying light on the point which troubled them. The moment we see that they thought the day of the Lord was there, all is perfectly simple and clear. It has been supposed that "rest... when," means the moment of relief. Nothing is more unfounded. The reasoning of the apostle is, that Christ introducing the day, it was not when He had the upper hand that His people would be troubled and ill-treated. Was He going to treat them so? In the day, exactly the contrary would be the case: they would enjoy rest and blessing; the persecutors would be troubled. The word *ἀνεσις* by no means conveys always the meaning of a moment of relaxation arriving; it is never so used in Scripture. The other passages are Acts 24:23; 2 Cor. 2:12; 7:5; 8:13. It is used in the same sense here. In 2 Cor. 8:13, it is in a similar opposition with *θλιψις*. We come now to the very easy understanding of 2 Thess. in which to the relieved Thessalonians, the apostle unfolds, by fresh instructions, the order in which events will really take place. I only remark, before turning to it, that if "rest" with us meant relief at the moment of the revealing of Christ, it would prove that the Thessalonians and Paul were to expect Christ's appearing in their life-time, as the term of their trials, and the moment of their rest. This reply would be complete and absolute to those who allege this; but it would not be the truth, nor scriptural. It is not the force of *ἀνεσις* here, nor is it the meaning of the passage, nor would such an expectation, using *ἀνεσις* in this way, be a scripturally enlightened one, such as an inspired apostle would give. It proves the absurdity of their reasoning as an argumentum ad hominem, but no more.

As regards 2 Thess. 2, as I have said, the apostle unfolds additional truth. He had already told the Thessalonians, that they would be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Hence their being under the day of Christ on the earth was an absolute impossibility, since they would be in heaven, with the executor of the wrath of it, before it arrived. This motive he now pleads. They fancied, or at least were unsettled as to it by the false teachers, that the day was actually come. Consequently, without Christ's coming. Hence he says, "I beseech you, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor troubled.... as that the day of Christ was come." Both facts, and both together, proved that the day of Christ was not there; already evident by the moral absurdity of the day of the Lord being against the Lord's people; but here he leads them on to positive ground. Christ must come for it, and their portion was to be gathered up to Him before the day arrived. Another thing which showed the day was not then (this supposition being the groundwork of all the apostle's reasoning, and, indeed, the occasion of the whole epistle) was, that the day would not come till an apostasy came, and the man of sin was revealed.

Before the day of Christ could be present on the earth, events must occur - the objects of judgment must be there. Thus the mistakes of the Thessalonians only gave occasion to clearer and surer light. And here I must remark, that confounding the day of Christ and His coming to

receive the Church, is not a mere mistake in terms, but a subversion of the whole nature of the relationship between Christ and the Church, or Christ and the world, an apostate world, and a losing sight wholly of the great moral bearing of a day coming on the world, of which the Old Testament is full, as well as the New. To mix this up with " I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also," is to confound the whole bearing of Christ's affections towards His own, with the terror of an apparition which every eye shall see; a confounding the flaming fire of destructive judgment with the dearest confidences of perfect grace, and bringing down the hopes of the saints, founded on the all-perfect grace and truth of Christ to the level of an event common to all, and terrible in its glory. It is the practical establishment of the error, to correct which the 2 Thessalonians was written. It not only sets aside the distinctive revelation of our being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and the distinctive existence and position of the Church with it; but it denies the position which (it is here, as elsewhere, revealed), we shall have with Christ when He appears; when He appears, we shall appear with Him; He will come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe, not to receive them up to Himself. The Scripture is as plain as possible: he who confounds the day of Christ with His coming to receive the Church, knows neither what His day is, nor His coming, nor the Church.

Do the saints not await His coming to earth, and His appearing? undoubtedly: but not as the time of their joining Him; for, I repeat, they will appear with Him; as walking on earth, they await this event. They await it as the great eventful act of God's government, in which Christ is glorified as that- which will set the earth right, as that in which all responsibility will be brought to its manifest result. It is the grand act of that display of power which sets everything in its place according to the Divine judgment, and by which evil power is set aside. But they do not expect it as that which is to fulfill and accomplish their own personal blessedness, according to sovereign grace in their own relationship with Christ, that is in the Father's house. Christ's appearing will be the full establishment of Divine power in government, and the result of responsibility; the rapture of the Church, and its entrance into the Father's house, the accomplishment of sovereign grace towards the saints in their full individual blessedness of the hopes, which communion with the Father and the Son has given them. Another special result will follow for the Church - the marriage of the Lamb. But this is distinctive and peculiar, not the completing of individual grace.

The moment of the rapture none can know. Its distinctive character is vital for him before whom the truth is set. I will now cite some passages of detail, which shew our exemption from the tribulation predicted, a position in which the world will find itself, and in an especial manner the Jewish people restored to their land.

In the address of the Philadelphian Church, and in reference to the near coming of the Lord, and giving as the ground of the promise, that they had kept the word of Christ's patience, for He waits also, it is declared, that they shall be kept from the hour of temptation, which shall come on all the world, to try them which dwell upon the earth. This last description of persons is frequently so designated in the Revelation, and expresses surely much more than the fact that they live on earth. They are characterized by having their dwelling-place there. In Rev. 12:10-12, it is said, " And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice,

ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea!" Now I do not take this as the rapture, because I believe it had taken place before, and is pointed out in the timeless rapture of the man-child, for the Church is one with Christ, and shall rule the nations as He; but I find a positive revelation, that three years and a half before the close (that is the last half-week of Daniel), Satan is cast down, the accuser of the brethren is no longer in heaven, the triumph of those accused is come-their trial passed; they had been in trial and conflict, and had overcome, and conflict is ended for dwellers in heaven. It begins, and with great wrath of Satan for the inhabitants of earth; there had been persecution, there had been death. For one class it had now ceased, and for another it was just going to begin. And note, this is exactly the epoch spoken of by Daniel, which the Lord refers to as the tribulation, such as never was since there was a nation; nor have I the smallest doubt that the woman represents the Jews. I am aware, as to the remnant of her seed, difficulty has been raised from the expression, " the testimony of Jesus Christ." But the answer is in the book itself. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. It will be a prophetic, not a Church testimony; a very different thing. Compare with this the end of Isa. 50, where the remnant are expressly declared to hear the voice of God's servant, that is of Christ as prophet. I only notice these as accessory and explanatory, as my object is not controversial, but to bring out plainly the testimony of Scripture on the Jewish remnant, and on the Church. Renewed opposition to these truths has come recently under my eye, but what is alleged was only proof to me how, when men are not taught of God on any subject, little difficulties hide and obliterate immense and fundamental truths, which a child, learning of God in simplicity, could not go astray upon. Indeed, wherever the connection between Christ and the Church is not seen, reasoning on these subjects can only bring into deeper darkness.

But, as I have said, my object is not controversy here, and I do not pursue my impressions on this point further here, however clear and strong they may be. If the reader has laid hold of the truth, clearly proved from Scripture, that there is a distinct Jewish remnant at the end, with Jewish hopes given of God, and a Jewish character, that the Church has its own and peculiar association with Christ, as the body with its head, called into union by the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven; if we have seen that, we shall not abide down here till Christ appears, since it is positively declared, revealed, that we shall appear with Him when He appears, he will have got hold of clear land-marks which will guide him safely through details, in the discovery and order of which, patience will surely be needed; but the details through the knowledge of these land-marks, will not take him out of the main-road, will never enfeeble Divine relationship, upon which the holiest and most precious affections are necessarily dependent, and in which, indeed, they have their origin. It is, indeed, this last consideration which makes these subjects so vital and important to my mind. All right affections depend on divinely-constituted relationships, and cannot exist out of them. If I know not the relationship of the Church to Christ, and the position in which He has set us along with Himself in reference to the Father, none of the affections suited to these positions can have any place in my soul; and my spiritual discernment and judgment as to everything will suffer in proportion. The recrudescence of opposition to the truths on these points, shows that it is making progress. What I have seen written against it, only seems to me to mark deeper darkness and more ignorance of the great outlines of scripture than earlier opposition, though the general spirit and character be the same.

As regards passing through the tribulation, a question which every one knows is that which always arises on this matter, the Scripture seems to me to make it very simple. How can I tell there will be a tribulation? I shall be answered - " Passages of Scripture positively declare there will be such." I admit it: but there are no passages which reveal it, which do not also show that the Church will not be in it. As far as I am aware, they are these: Jer. 30:7; Dan. 12:1; Matt. 14:21; Mark 13:19; to which we may add, Rev. 3:10; 7:14. I am not aware of any other which can be applied to this subject. Now who are in this tribulation in the passages which speak of it in Scripture? Rev. 7:14 could alone leave open the smallest question. Of that I will speak. Of all the rest, the positive evidence is, that the Jews are in it, the Church not. Jeremiah tells us, " It is the time of Jacob's trouble," the day which none is like. That shows to whom it belongs. Daniel shows 'us, that-in that day of " trouble, such as there never was since there was a nation." It was the day of indignation upon Israel. Daniel's people, as the whole prophecy declares, are there in question, and they will be delivered, that is, those written in the book.

The Savior, who applies this passage in Matt. 24, leaves not the smallest doubt that it applies to those of Israel, and, even exclusively, to Palestine, or, still narrower as to locality, Judaea and Jerusalem. They are to flee to the mountains; the abomination of desolation is in the holy place; those in the countries are not to return. They are the days of vengeance to accomplish what is written. They are to desire their flight should not be on a Sabbath-day. In a word, the tribulation is in Jerusalem, in Judaea, and among Jews. Mark, I need not comment on, it is evidently the same event. Thus Jeremiah, Daniel, the Lord Himself in Matt. and Mark, citing and applying Daniel, declare that the tribulation regards the Jews. It is the time of Jacob's trouble. But Rev. 3 speaks of a time of temptation; and here it is said that it shall come on all the world, to try them who dwell on the earth. This, therefore, is more general; it is not the great tribulation of Jeremiah, Daniel, and Matthew, which is exclusively Jewish. Here we have the Church. But what is said of, this time of temptation as regards the Church who await Christ? They shall be kept out of it. That is, the passages which speak of the tribulation " which none is like" (and from which alone we know there is one) declare unanimously, it is for the Jews, and not for the Church. The passage which, addressed to the Church, refers to an hour of temptation; declares in a precious promise, that having kept the word of Christ's patience, she shall be kept out of that hour. If I turn to Rev. 12 which, in effect, speaks of the three years and a half trial, I am told the conflict of the heavenly saints is over before it begins. The woe is for others, that is, for Jews. Christ was not born of the Church; nor is it the Church who has to say " to us a Son is born."

The positive witness is as clear as clear can be. The statement that there is a tribulation, declares the Jews will be in it, the Church kept out of it. But there is a passage obscure to most (Rev. 7). It is one of the signs of error and the enemy's work, that he takes an obscure passage to trouble the minds of saints, and unsettle them by this means in great and plain truths. This passage may be employed so, and hence I notice it also. That it is not the Church which is spoken of here, is clear from the promise to Philadelphia. All confirms this. It is a different class from the elders who represent the heavenly kings and priests to God. One of the elders explains who they are. (I would remark that the expression (ver. 15) "dwell among them," is a wholly false translation. It is "shall tabernacle," or "dwell," over them. The word is used for "dwelling with," with other prepositions, as εν, μετα, ενμεσω; but not with επι; whereas this is the preposition used for overshadowing, as in Num. 9:18,22, with the word οκιαζω, it is true; but οκηνωω is not used in LXX. (unless once in

some MSS., where it has nothing to do with this). There can hardly be a doubt of the allusion, I think, to the cloud which was a shelter over Israel. Hence the only conferred blessing spoken of as the result, is this protection, nourishment, refreshment, and the cessation of sorrow. They come in after the sealing of the elect of the twelve tribes of Israel, as a distinct class from all before. A new and distinct class from the elders; one of whom has to give an account who they are, as such. Hence their position is as different as possible from those in chap. 5:10.

They are talked about, and it is explained who they are; but, save as to owning their own salvation through God and the Lamb, they are silent. They are sheltered, refreshed, fed, blessed, but take no part with others; indeed the elders do not praise here. They have the privilege of serving God continually in his temple; but they are no part of the scene above, who celebrate and unfold the acts of God: on the contrary, as we have seen, those who are, are presented as a separate class, capable of explaining the enigma of this additional class of persons who are found standing before the throne and before the Lamb. There is no praising for others; no intercessional language; one has only to compare the passage above cited, to see the difference, to see that they are another class. To use this passage, certainly obscure in its application (in which those who have been in the great tribulation are definitely distinguished from the heavenly company of crowned and enthroned elders, their whole position being different) to destroy the force of one, expressly declaring that those who have kept the word of Christ's patience will be kept out of it, is certainly the opposite of a sound interpretation of Scripture. In result, what is the evidence of Scripture on this point. There are six passages which speak of tribulation: and by which we know there will be tribulation; four are clear and positive, in applying it to the Jews; one declares that the faithful Church saints will be kept out of it; and the last, speaking of Gentiles, distinguishes them, in the most marked way, from those who represent the Church, and saints in heaven, the crowned and enthroned elders. Thus direct Scripture is as clear as clear can be. We have seen that, indirectly, Rev. 2 confirms this view. What remains? General principles. Hence the attempt to bring the Church into the tribulation; and this is the SECRET OF THE WHOLE MATTER-the confounding the Church of God with the Jews and with the world, their hopes, and the trials that come upon them.

(One tract I have seen goes so far (skewing the utter destruction of all spiritual discernment, which is the result of these views), that it speaks of the loss to the Church in not going through this tribulation; thus confounding suffering for Christ with the terrible chastening of God for sin and unbelief; the temptation which the disciples were taught to pray to be kept from.)

Revelation 22:20

" Come, Lord Jesus." Meditating lately on this word, which is a bold word for mortal's mouth, I was struck with the flow of truth which runs through this same book, and shows that which constitutes at once John's liberty to say it, and made it meet and natural that he should do so; and that we also, who have like faith with him, should do so likewise.

I will briefly pass through some of the passages.

It was to this same Lord Jesus that he owed complete deliverance from guilt, and the certainty of glory.

Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (Rev. 1:5, 6.) To such an one, how well could John say, Come!

It was in this same Jesus, when displayed in glory, that John, in his weakness and feebleness, had found the fountain of sympathy and help.

The glory in which He showed Himself to John was great. " His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." (verses 14-16). And the effect on John was overpowering. " And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead " (v. 17). But sympathy and aid were near, for they were in the Lord who was there. " And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (v. 17 and 18). What grace in this act, stooping to lay his right hand upon His prostrate servant! What graciousness in the words, " Fear not!" And mark how all about Him showed His competency to sympathize. Himself, personally, was the First and the Last; - His experience was thus marked. " I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen." And the insignia he carried were the keys of hell and of death.

The glory of the person, His experiences, this emblem of His present power -how do they all suit the prostrate state of the feeble though true servant.

There were traits, too, shown by the Lord in the addresses to the Seven Churches, most attractive, as well as most glorious. Has He to take forth the precious from the midst of the vile? Zealous He must be, and is, for God and the glory of the services which rest upon Him; but how desirous to praise all in His servants which he can praise; and where there is no good in connection with them to praise, then, how does His own divine goodness show itself in His readiness_ to bring forth the rich stores of his own wealth for man's encouragement:-

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (2:7).

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life... He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (2:11).

" To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (2:17).

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star" (2:26-28).

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels" (3:5).

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and my new name " (3:12).

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne " (3:21).

Sweet to hear these words- sweet to record them for others - but sweeter still to the hearer's and to the recorder's mind the thought of their sweetness to the speaker of them. God is God - and divine fullness, and pleasure, and praise are natural to His presence, and are attractive to those that are His, just as emptiness, sorrow and discontentment are natural to fallen man and repulsive to the redeemed.

See, too, the rich uncovering which the Lord made of His titles and glories in these addresses to the heart that loved him (1:5, 6, and 17, 18); these were precious in themselves, and the uncovering of them to faith was of the grace that made Himself to be loved.

" These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks " (2:1).

"These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead, and is alive" (2:8).

"These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges" (2:12).

These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass" (2:18).

"These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (3:1).

"These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (3:7).

" These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God " (3:14). All these titles show His own connection in grace with the churches which had failed, just as His large promises to the overcomer show His grace to provide for taking forth the precious from the vile. What a study, too, of His graciousness of ways and thoughts had those seven addresses opened and furnished to him that said, Come, Lord Jesus.

4. But the Lamb had His own place upon the throne of the Lord God Almighty. Blessings and privileges enjoyed by His people in the wilderness; His service to God in connection with them there, with all sympathy and large-hearted liberality, were surely true; but these were things connected with circumstances which could be shaken - He had His own place on the throne which could not be shaken, and there, Himself was the over of His people - the securer for them of the knowledge of things to come.

The believer's peace, amid trial, consists very much in his being able to trace that his path is according to God. "Ye shall know," has a peculiar force in connection with the blessing of the people of God since Pentecost. Of what inestimable value, then, is the breaking of the seals of the book of futurity by the Lord - from how many sorrows does attention to the truth there found save us? If it were only the general truth that the church's path through the desert has been looked over by the Lord, that would be sweet; but where the heart has been taught of God, there is, beside the general truth, many an individual one which, while it may draw the soul into watching, and occupy its energy with examinations of the word, forms in it. both humility and dependence. And could not John say " Come " to Him whose grace had traced the path through the stormy ocean of man's apostasy for that people of whom John was one? If they had to pass it apparently alone and without Him, how welcome the sight of Him whose love had given them the outline of their voyage and its sorrows.

There is in chap. 8:2-5 another truth to be noticed:- " And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

In chap. 5, the Lamb was the channel by which light divine flowed down from the throne of God to man on earth, about the contents of the sealed book. Here He, as an Angel, is the channel by which prayers and groans ascend to God. Yes, every sigh, every groan of His people in the wilderness will sooner or later reach God; and the same God who listens to the sighs of His prisoners, will vindicate their trust in Him, and will destroy their oppressors. It is the Lord Jesus to whom John says, chap. xxii., " Come, Lord Jesus," who in the fixedness of His own glory as Mediator between God and man, at once hands up the prayers in this eighth chapter to God, and shows that His office of Mediator stays judicial acting from God towards the earth.

6. Let me turn now to chap. 10: -" And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and he cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that

therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and on the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

There is in nature a foolishness of love which leads the heart and mind into movement whenever the object of affection passes before us. This is true in grace also, though here the wisdom is justified of its action, for He is worthy who is loved; more worthy than mind can think or heart can measure - and we love Him because He first loved us. He may have roused our attention, may have sought our love, may have shown and made good His love to us by solitary acts, and by innumerable benefits conferred; but it is Himself we love. The glory and the majesty of His person who is here present, employing and directing His servant what to retain and what to communicate of things shown to him; letting him into light, and giving him intimations of what the experiences that light would lead into is very attractive and very expressive of the personal love which the Lord bears to His servant.

7. When I read chaps. 11-15, and contemplate in them the various scenes through which the Lord made His servant John to pass - Jerusalem remembered on the earth; its connection with heaven's, plans about Messiah; the heavenly man purger of the heavens for the Church; head of an outcast suffering race amid Jews and Gentiles -part of which should be concealed to become an earthly seed when the power of the world, the flesh and Satan, was put down, and another part of which should fall in testimony, but rise and reign with Christ: when I see also this vision of His own triumphs shown to and tasted by John, surely I say it must have had a kindling, stirring effect upon his affections towards his Master.

Just as, 8thly, chaps. 16-18, as containing the downfall of all the strength of that world from which John was at once separated and suffering, must have given, as from the Lord, the confirmation to his soul of the blessedness of the position into which Christ had brought him. That which oppressed him could and would be shaken; but he, as not being of it but in the secret of the Shaker of it all, knew and could anticipate the shaking with quietness.

9. Heaven's breathing forth of joy at the triumph of God now come - and the preparation for the marriage of the Lamb on high - had ushered the Lord into the earth as putter-down for a time of all adverse powers, in chap. 19.

10. And in chap. 20 John had seen the kingdom and the fellowship of it; and

11. How even that, in the wondrous height and depth of Divine grace, was but a means to a final end. All enemies put down; - God could be all in all. But who is the bringer-in of the eternal state, in which God's tabernacle shall be with men, who, save this same loved, and loving Lord Jesus?

12. But as though all this were not enough, we find the blessed Lord turning back from 21:9 to the Church as the bride, the Lamb's wife.

" Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). Yes! He nourisheth and cherisheth the Church.

The way that we see in this wondrous description of the Church's millennial glory -the fulfillment of "Thou in me and I in them " of John 17 is blessed. Expression of the Lord's own perfect beauty -sharer of the glory given to Him -the bride which He Himself will come to fetch - which He will present to Himself a Church in glory, " without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." These were the rich expressions which characterized the love of the Lord Jesus Christ -- which led Him to say, "Surely I come quickly;" which were the liberty and the power of the heart of John to say in reply- "EVEN so, COME, LORD JESUS."

This paper shows how the heart finds sweetness in Revelation, where the understanding (p. 92) has found light.

Romans

In the epistles we find the exposition of the result of that glorious work of grace by which man is placed on entirely new ground with God, in reconciliation with Him; as well as the development of the counsels of God in Christ, according to which this new world is established and ordered. In giving this exposition of the ways of God, in connection with the work which is their basis, the perfect efficacy of the work itself, and the order of our relations with God, are plainly set forth; so that the whole system, the whole plan of God, and the way in which it was put in execution, are presented. And in doing this, that which man is, that which God is, that which eternal life is, are clearly put before us.

The death and resurrection of Christ, as well as His exaltation to the right hand of God, form the center of all this instruction.

There are three great divisions in this instruction, which are connected in general with the instrument used of God in the communication of each part. 1st. The counsels of God, which are developed by Paul in connection with the revelation of true righteousness before God, the ground on which a man can be truly righteous before God. 2nd. The life of God, eternal life, manifested and imparted. This is John's epistle. 3rd. Christian life on the earth, in following a risen Christ. This we find in the epistles of Peter, in connection with God's government of the world, as such: the Christian is a pilgrim. There are also James and Jude.

The first presents moral life-the life of virtue on earth, as the true demonstration to man, of faith, and in particular of practical faith in Christ, as well as in God, who answers our --requests and our wants. On this account, while clearly and distinctly recognizing faith in Christ and regeneration by the mighty grace of God, this epistle scarcely rises, in fact, above such life as could have manifested and developed itself at any period whatsoever in a believer; only that it was the Christian, born of God, who now exemplified it. Thus the epistle of James is linked with the synagogue, and with Christians still in connection with Judaism, as we have seen them historically at Jerusalem, with James at their head. The epistle does not go beyond that position. It is the last testimony rendered to Israel looked at as the people of God, while at the same time distinguishing the regenerate remnant, although they were not yet separated from the nation. Our habits of thought, founded with reason upon a much more complete development of Christianity (a development which was the manifestation of counsels much more ancient than the Jewish nation, for they were the eternal counsels of God) make it difficult for us to apprehend this form of the truth - a form in which it is connected with that which, because of the promises made to Israel, was, historically, its cradle here below.

If we have rightly understood the history of the Acts, it will make the position of believers, as we find it in the epistle of James, much more intelligible to us.

Jude has a very different character. It is not the cradle of Christianity or of the Church on earth; it is its decay and its death here below. It does not keep its first estate. This epistle resembles a part of

the second by Peter; but the latter speaks of the judgment brought in by the general government of God; Jude, of the fall of that which has had its existence since Pentecost under the eye of God, as responsible for the maintenance of the glory of His grace on the earth—a fall which, with regard to the present state of things, brings on the judgment of which Peter speaks, and which he carries on even to the dissolution of the earth and its elements.

The evil that had already begun in its earliest germs, gave rise to this development in Jude, and to the distinction of the true Church, or at least of its members, who should be presented in glory before the presence of the Lord in heaven.

A more complete and more precise development will be found in studying the epistles themselves.

We will begin with the epistles of Paul. In the historical character of their doctrine James and Peter should precede them; that is to say, in the progress of the manifestation of God's counsels in their whole extent. But as developing the foundations of truth, and laying open its range as a whole, the epistles of Paul have evidently the first place, and throw light on that of the others. The epistle to the Romans, especially, establishes the grand foundations of divine truth in the most plain and complete manner, so that we have no motive for deviating from the order in which we find them habitually placed; there is nothing in that order which, as to its details, is connected with any moral or chronological reason; it differs also in different countries and in different versions; but it is most convenient to take that order which the reader will find in his ordinary Bible. We may notice that which will be interesting in this respect as we study each epistle. It is probable, that among the epistles of Paul, that to the Thessalonians was the first. The date of the epistle to the Galatians is less certain, but it was written after several years of labor. The two to the Corinthians, and that to the Romans, at Ephesus, Macedonia, and Corinth, respectively, during his journey round the Archipelago after his long sojourn at Ephesus. Those to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, during his captivity. I reserve the others—Hebrews included—for the study of those epistles, pointing out only that which it may be useful to know in those of which the date is pretty certain. The epistle of John, we may add, hardly belongs to any particular period, save that in setting forth the nature and the character of the life of God, the touchstone of all profession, and safeguard against all error, against all that does not bear its stamp, and against all the pretensions which, being devoid of it, betray themselves by that very fact, this epistle supposes the entrance of these errors, and thus the latter days of the apostolic age.

Let us now consider a little the epistles of Paul himself. They have more than one character, whilst all displaying that spirit gifted from on high, which expatiates in the wide range of the thoughts of God, and in its wonderful energy can enter at the same time into every detail, even into those of individual life; that knows how to place itself exactly in the relations of a fugitive slave with his master, in view of grace, and to set forth with divine clearness all the counsels by which the Father glorifies His Son, by making Him the center of all His purposes, of the system which results from the exercise of all His power.

The care of the Church, the development of the counsels of God, the exercise of brotherly affection, have each their place in his thoughts and his labors; and while he is often forced to develop the truth in striving against errors which rend his heart, whether he thinks of the Christ whom they dishonor, and of the truth—the instrument of salvation—which they undermine; or whether he remembers the dear redeemed ones of Christ, who are troubled by these errors, perhaps

turned aside from the true path by them.

The epistle to the Romans is well placed at the head of all the others, as laying the foundations, in a systematic way, of the relations of man with God; reconciling at the same time this universal truth of man's position, first in responsibility, and second in grace, with the special promises made to the Jews. It also establishes the great principles of Christian practice, the morality, not of man, but that which is the fruit of the light and revelation given by Christianity.

The following is, I believe, the arrangement of the epistle. After some introductory verses which lay open his subject, the apostle, to the end of verse 20* in the third chapter, shows man to be utterly corrupt and lost, in all the circumstances in which he stands. Without law, it was unbridled sin; with philosophy, it was judging evil and committing it; under law, it was breaking the law, while boasting of its possession and dishonoring the name of Him with whose glory they were, so to say, identified by having received from Him that law as His people. In ch. 3:21, to the end of the eighth, we find the remedy plainly set forth in two parts; 3:21, to the end, in a general way, by faith; the blood of Christ is the answer to all the sin which the apostle had just been describing. Afterward, 4-8 resurrection, as placing him who had part in it (i.e. every believer) in a new position before God, in Christ, who thus gave him liberty and life; the liberty in which Christ Himself was, and the life which He Himself lived. It is this which inseparably unites justification and holiness of life. In chaps. 9-11 he reconciles these truths of the salvation common to every believing man without distinction, with the promises made to the Jews, bringing out the marvelous wisdom of God, and the way in which these things were foreseen and revealed in the word. He afterward sets forth the practical Christian spirit. In this last part, he alludes to the Church, as a body; otherwise, it is, in general, man, the individual, before a God of righteousness; and the work of Christ, which places him there individually, in peace.

(* If any one prefers saying, that after the introduction till the end of ch. 3 we find the evil and the remedy which God has granted in the blood of Jesus Christ; and afterward, 4-8, the new state of resurrection, I have nothing to object. It is a question of clearness in the division of the epistle, and the reader can choose that which suits him best.)

Let us now examine the line of thought given by the Holy Ghost in this epistle. We find in it the answer to the solemn question of Job, angry at finding himself without resource when in the presence of the judgment of God. "I know it is so of a truth, but how should man be just with God?" Nevertheless, it is not the first thought that presents itself. That is man's necessity; but the Gospel comes, revealing and bringing Christ. It is grace and Jesus which it brings in its hands; it speaks 1, of God in love. This awakens the sense of need, while bringing that which meets it; and gives its measure in the grace that sets before us all the fullness of the love of God in Christ. It is a revelation of God in the person of Christ. It puts man in his place before God, in the presence of Him who is revealed; both as to himself, and in grace in Christ. All the promises are also accomplished in the person of him who is revealed. There is no epistle in which the apostle places his apostleship on more positive and formal ground than in this; for at Rome he had no claim in virtue of his labors. He had never seen the Romans. He was none the less their apostle; for he was that of the Gentiles. He was a debtor to the Gentiles. He writes to them because he had received a mission from the Lord Himself towards all the Gentiles. They were in his allotted sphere of service as being Gentiles. It was his office to present them as an offering sanctified by the Holy

Ghost; xv. 16. This was his commission. God was mighty in Peter towards the Jews; the mission of Paul was to the Gentiles. It was to him this mission was entrusted. The twelve, moreover, had acknowledged him. If God had ordained that Paul should accomplish his mission in direct connection with Heaven and outside the secular influence of the capital, and if Rome was to be a persecutor of the Gospel, that city was not the less Gentile on this account. It belonged to Paul, with reference to the Gospel. According to the Holy Ghost, Peter addresses the Jews in the exercise of his apostleship; Paul, the Gentiles.

This was the administrative order according to God: let us now come to the substance of his position. Paul was the servant of Christ, that was his character, his life. But others were, more or less, that. He was more than that. He was an apostle by the call of the Lord. A "called apostle"; and not only that, and laborious as occasion presented itself; he was nothing but that, in life here below. He was set apart for the good news of God.

These two last characters are very definitively warranted by the revelation of the Lord to Paul in the way to Damascus, His call and His mission to the Gentiles on that occasion; and by his setting apart by the Holy Ghost at Antioch, when he went forth to fulfill his mission. He calls the gospel to which he was set apart, the Gospel of God. It is also called the Gospel of Christ, He being its subject: but here the Holy Ghost presents it in its source. It is not that which man ought to be for God, nor yet the means merely by which man can approach Him on His throne. It is the thoughts of God, and His acts we may add, towards man—His thoughts in goodness. He approaches man, according to that which He is, and that which He wills in grace. God comes to him; it is the Gospel of God. This is the true aspect, the Gospel is never rightly understood until it is to us the Gospel of God; the activity and revelation of His nature, and of His will in grace towards man.

Having pointed out the source, the author of the Gospel, the One whom it thus reveals in His purposes, the apostle presents the connection between this Gospel and the dealings of God which, historically, preceded it; its promulgation here below, and at the same time, its own proper subject: that is to say, its subject properly so called, and the place held with regard to it by that which preceded it, the order of things which those to whom they belonged sought to maintain as a substantive and independent system, by rejecting the Gospel. He here introduces that which preceded, not as a subject of controversy, but in its true character, to enforce the testimony of the Gospel; anticipating objections, which are thus solved beforehand.

To the Gentile, it was the revelation of the truth, and of God; to the Jew it was indeed that, while also putting everything that regarded him in its right place. This is the connection of the Old Testament with the Gospel; this Gospel of God had been announced beforehand by His prophets in holy writings. Observe here, that in these Holy Scriptures the Gospel of God was not come, nor was it then addressed to men; but promised, or announced beforehand, as to be sent. The Church was not even announced: the Gospel was announced, but as being yet to come.

Moreover, the subject of this Gospel is the Son of God. He has accomplished a work; but it is Himself who is the true subject of the Gospel. Now He is presented in a two-fold aspect. 1st. The object of the promises, son of David according to the flesh. 2nd. The Son of God in power, who in the midst of sin walked, by the Spirit, in divine and absolute holiness: resurrection being its illustrious and victorious proof. That is to say, resurrection is a public manifestation of that power by which He walked in absolute holiness during His life - a manifestation that He is the Son of God

in power. He is clearly shown forth as Son of God in power, by this means. Here, it was no question of promise, but of power, of Him who could enter into conflict with the death in which man lay, and overcome it completely, and that, in connection with the holiness which bore testimony during His life to the power of that Spirit by which He walked, guarding Him from being touched by sin,

In the ways of God on the earth, He was the object and the fulfillment of the promises. With regard to the condition of man under sin and death, He was completely conqueror, whether living or risen. It was the Son of God who was there, known in resurrection according to the power that was in Him, a power that displayed itself according to the Spirit by the holiness in Which He lived.

What marvelous grace to see the whole power of evil -that dreadful door which closed upon the sinful life of man, leaving him to the inevitable judgment that he deserved,-broken, destroyed by Him who was willing to enter into the gloomy chamber it shut in, and take upon Himself all the weakness of man in death, and thus completely and absolutely deliver him whose penalty He had borne by submitting to death. This victory over death, this deliverance of man from its dominion, by the power of the Son of God become man, is the only ground of hope for mortal and sinful man. It sets aside all that sin and death have to say. It destroys the seal of judgment upon sin, which is in death; and a new man, a new life, begins for him who had been held under it, outside the whole scene, the whole effect of his former misery; a life founded on all the value of that which the Son of God had there accomplished.

In fine, we have, as the subject of the Gospel, the Son of God, made of the seed of David after the flesh; and in the bosom of humanity and of death, declared to be the Son of God in power by resurrection, Jesus Christ our Lord. The Gospel was the Gospel of God Himself; but it is by Jesus Christ the Lord that the apostle received his mission. He was the head of the work, and sent forth the laborers into the harvest which they were to reap in the world. The object of his mission - and its extent - was the obedience of faith (not obedience to the law) among all nations, establishing the authority and the value of the name of Christ. It was this name which should prevail and be acknowledged.

The apostle's mission was not only his service, the being trusted with it was at the same time the personal grace and favor of Him whose testimony he bore. I am not speaking of salvation, although in Paul's case the two things were identified, a fact that gave a remarkable color and energy to his mission; but there was grace and favor in the commission itself, and it is important to remember it. It gives character to the mission and to its execution. An angel performs a providential mission, a Moses details a law in the spirit of the law, a Jonah, a John the Baptist, preaches repentance, withdraws from the grace that appeared to falsify his threatenings against the wicked Gentiles, or in the wilderness lays the ax to the root of the unfruitful trees of God's planting. But, by Jesus, Paul the bearer of the glad tidings of God, receives grace and apostleship. He carries, by grace and as grace, the message of grace to men wherever they may be, the grace which comes in all the largeness of the rights of God over men, and in which He exercises His rights. Among these Gentiles, the believing Romans also were the called of Jesus Christ. Paul therefore addresses all the believers in that great city. They were beloved of God, and saints by calling. He wishes them (as in all his epistles) grace and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, on whose part he delivered his message. The perfect grace of God by Christ,

the perfect peace of man, and that, with God; it was this which he brought in the Gospel and in his heart. These are the true conditions of God's relationship with man, and that of man with God, by the Gospel; the ground on which Christianity places man. When an individual is addressed, another consideration comes in, namely, that of his own weaknesses and infirmities, therefore, "mercy" is added to the wish of the sacred writers, in the case of individuals (See Timothy and Titus, and the 2nd Epistle of John)."

(* The Epistle to Philemon might appear at first sight to be an exception; but it confirms this remark, for it will be seen that the assembly in his house is included in the wish.)

If the love of God is in the heart, it is before God that one is occupied with the objects of grace; and then, the work of God in them, the grace that has been displayed, is the first thing that comes into the mind, whether in love or in thankfulness. The faith of the Romans ascends in thanksgivings from the heart of the apostle, whom the report of it had reached. He then expresses his desire to see them, a desire that often occupied his mind. Here he brings out his apostolic relationship towards them, with all the tenderness and all the delicacy that belong to the grace and the love which had formed this relationship, and which constituted its strength. He is apostle by right, to all the Gentiles, even although he may not have seen them; but in heart he is their servant; and with the most true and ardent brotherly love, flowing from the grace that had made him apostle, he desires to see them, that he might impart to them some spiritual gift, which his apostleship put him in a position to communicate; and thus that he might enjoy the faith which was common to him and to them; faith strengthened by these gifts for their mutual comfort. Often he had purposed coming, that he might have some fruit in this part also of the field which God had committed to him; but he had been hindered until now. He then declares himself a debtor to all the Gentiles, and ready, as far as in him lay, to preach the Gospel to those of Rome also. The way in which the apostle claims the whole field of the Gentiles as his own, and in which he was prevented by God from going to Rome until he arrived there at the end of his career (and then, only as a prisoner), is worthy of all attention. However it might be, he was ready, and that, because of the value of the Gospel—a point of view which leads him to state both the value and the character of this Gospel. For, he says, he was not ashamed of it. It was the power of God in salvation. Observe here, the way in which the apostle presents everything as coming from God. It is the Gospel of God, the power of God in salvation, the righteousness of God, and even the wrath of God, and that from heaven—a different thing from earthly chastisement. It is the key to everything; the apostle lays stress upon it, putting it forward from the commencement of the epistle, for man ever inclines to have some confidence in himself, to boast of himself, to seek for some merit, some righteousness in himself, to Judaize, to be occupied with himself, as though he could do something. It was the apostle's joy to put his God forward.

Thus, in the Gospel, God intervened, accomplishing a salvation which was entirely His own work; a salvation of which He was the source and the power, and which He had wrought Himself. Man came into it by faith, it was the believer who shared it; but to have part in it by faith was exactly the way to share it without adding anything whatsoever to it, and to leave it wholly the salvation of God. God be praised that it is so, whether for righteousness, or for power, or for the whole result; for it is perfect, divine. God has come in, in His almighty power and in His love, to deliver the wretched, according to His own might. The Gospel is the expression of this, one believes it and one shares it. But there is an especial reason why it is the power of God in salvation. Man had

departed from God by sin. Righteousness alone could bring him back into the presence of God, and make him such that he could be there in peace. A sinner, he had no righteousness but quite the contrary-and if man were to come before God as a sinner, judgment necessarily awaits him. But, in the Gospel, God reveals a positive righteousness on His part. If man has none, God has a righteousness which belongs to Him, which is His own, perfect like Himself, according to His own heart. Such a righteousness as this is revealed in the Gospel. Human righteousness there was none: the righteousness of God is revealed. It is all-perfect in itself, divine and complete. To be revealed, it must be so. The Gospel proclaims it to us. The principle on which it is announced is faith; because it exists, and it is divine. If man wrought at it, or performed a part of it, or if his heart had any share in carrying it out, it would not be the righteousness of God; but it is entirely and absolutely His. We believe in the Gospel that reveals it. But if it is the believer who participates in it, every one who has faith has part in it. This righteousness is on the principle of faith. It is revealed, and, consequently, to faith, wherever that faith exists. This is the force of the expression which is translated, " from faith to faith," on the principle of faith, unto faith. Now, the importance of this principle is evident here. It admits every believing Gentile on the same footing as the Jew, who has no other right of entrance than he. They both have faith: the Gospel recognizes no other means of participating in it. The righteousness is that of God; the Jew is nothing more in it than the Gentile. As it is written, " the just shall live by faith." The Scriptures of the Jews testified to the truth of the apostle's principle.

This is what the Gospel announced on God's part to man. The apostle had indeed reason not to be ashamed of it, despised as it was by men.

But this doctrine was confirmed by another consideration, and was founded on the great truth contained in it. God, in presenting Himself, could not look at things according to the partial communications adapted to the ignorance of men, and to the temporary dispensations by which He governed them. The essential opposition of His nature to evil wherever it was found, must be manifested. Now God manifested Himself in the Gospel; thus, divine wrath does not break forth indeed (for grace proclaimed the righteousness of God in salvation, for sinners who should believe), but it is revealed; not in the Gospel-it is the revelation of righteousness- but it is revealed from heaven against ungodliness, all that does not respect the presence of God, against all that does not comport with the presence of God; and against all unrighteousness or iniquity in those who possessed the truth, but still dishonored God: that is to say, against all men, Gentile or otherwise, and particularly the Jews, who had the knowledge of God according to the law. And again - for the principle is universal, and flows from that which God is, when He reveals Himself - against every one who professes Christianity, when he walks in the evil that God hates.

From ver. 19 to the end of the 20th in ch. 3, the condition of men, Jews and Gentiles, to whom this truth applies, is given in detail, in order to show in what way this wrath was deserved, and all were shut up in sin. From ver. 21 to 31, the answer in grace by the righteousness of God and by the blood of Christ, is briefly but powerfully declared.

The apostle begins with the Gentiles-" all ungodliness of men." I say the Gentiles-it is evident that if a Jew falls into it, this guilt attaches to him; but the condition described, as far as 2:17, is that of Gentiles; afterward, that of the Jews, to 3:20.

The 18th ver. of ch. 1 is the thesis of the whole, from ver. 19 to ch. 3:20.

The Gentiles are without excuse on two accounts. 1st, That which may be known of God, has been manifested..by creation; His power and His Godhead. This proof has existed since the creation of the world. 2nd, That having the knowledge of God, as Noah had it, they have not glorified Him as God, but in the vanity of their imaginations, reasoning upon their own thoughts on this subject, and the ideas it produced in their own minds, they became fools while professing themselves to be wise; and fell into idolatry, and that of the grossest kind. Now God has judged this. If they would not retain a just thought of the glory of God, they should not even retain a just idea of the natural honor of man. They should dishonor themselves as they had dishonored God. It is the exact description in a few strong and energetic words of the whole pagan mythology. They had not discernment, moral taste, to retain God in their knowledge; God gave them up to a spirit void of discernment, to boast themselves in depraved tastes, in things unbecoming to nature itself. The natural conscience knew that God judged such things to be worthy of death, according to the just exigencies of His nature, nevertheless, they not only did them, but they took pleasure in those who did them, when their own lusts did not carry them away. And this left no excuse for those who judged the evil (and there were such) for they committed it while judging it. Man then by judging condemned himself doubly, for by judging he showed that he knew it to be evil, and yet he did it. But the judgment of God is according to truth against those who commit such things; they who acquired credit by judging them, should not escape it.

Two things are presented here with respect to God. His judgment against evil - the evil-doer shall not escape; and His mercy, patience, and long-suffering with regard to the evil-doer-His goodness inviting him to repentance. He who continued in evil, deceived himself by trying to forget the sure judgment of God and by despising His goodness. The consequences both of a life opposed to God and to His truth on the one hand, and of the search after that which is pleasing to Him, and thereby for eternal life on the other, were sure -tribulation and anguish in the one case, in the other glory and honor: and that, without more respect to the Jew than to the Gentile. God judged things according to their true moral character, and according to the advantages which the guilty one had enjoyed. Those who had sinned without law, should perish without law; and those who had sinned under the law, should be judged according to the law; in the day when God should judge the secrets of the heart according to the Gospel which Paul preached. This character of the judgment is very important. It is not the government of the world by an earthly and outward judgment, as the Jew understood it, but that of the individual according to God's knowledge of the heart. Also, God would have realities. The Gentile who fulfilled the law was better than a Jew who broke it. If he called himself a Jew and acted ill (2:17), he only dishonored God, and caused His name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles, while boasting in his privileges. He then enlarges on the point that God requires moral reality, and that a Gentile who did that which the law demanded was better worth than a Jew who disobeyed it, and that the real Jew was he who had the law in his heart, also being circumcised in the spirit, and not he who had only outward circumcision. This was a condition which God could praise, and not man only.

Chapter 3. Having established this great truth that God required real moral goodness, he considers the position of the Jews. Was there no advantage in Judaism? Surely there was, especially in that they possessed the oracles of God. The ways of God were full of blessing in themselves, although that did not change the immutable truths of His nature. And if many among them had been unbelieving, that did not alter the faithfulness of God, and the fact that the unbelief

of many did but the more demonstrate the faithfulness of God who remained the same, whatever they might be, took nothing from the claims of His righteousness. Unbelievers should be punished according to what they were; it would but magnify the unfailing faithfulness of God, which never failed, however unavailing it might be for the mass of the nation. Otherwise, He could judge no one, not even the world (which the Jew was willing to see judged), for the condition of the world also enhanced the faithfulness of God towards His people. If then the Jew had advantages, was he therefore better? In no wise: all were shut up under sin, whether Jew or Gentile, as God had already declared.

The apostle now cites the Old Testament to prove this with regard to the Jews, who did not deny it with regard to the Gentiles. The law, saith he, belongs to you-hear what it says of the people, of yourselves; It speaks to you, as you acknowledge. There is not then one righteous man among you on whom God can look down from Heaven. He quotes Psa. 14:2,3, and Isa. 59:7,8 to set forth the judgment pronounced on them by those oracles of which they boasted. Thus every mouth was shut, and all the world guilty before God. Therefore it is that no flesh can be justified before God by the law, for if the world in the midst of darkness wallowed in sin, by means of the law sin was known.

But now, without law, apart from all law, a righteousness that is of God has been manifested; the law and the prophets bearing witness to it.

Here then we find not only the condition of the Gentiles and of the Jews set forth, together with the great immutable principles of good and evil, whatever might be the dealings of God, but the effect of the law itself, and that-with regard to righteousness-which was introduced by Christianity, altogether outside the law; although the law and the prophets bore witness to it. In a word, the eternal truth as to sin and as to the responsibility of man, the effect of the law, the connection of the Old Testament with Christianity, the true character of the latter in that which relates to righteousness, namely, that it is a thing entirely new and independent, the righteousness of God Himself. The whole question between man and God, with regard to sin and righteousness, is settled, as to its foundation, in these few words. The manner of its accomplishment is now to be treated of.

It is the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Man has not accomplished it, man has not procured it. It is of God, it is His righteousness; by believing in Jesus Christ participation in it is obtained. Had it been a human righteousness, it would have been by the law, which is the rule of that righteousness-a law given to the Jews only. But, being the righteousness of God

Himself, it had reference to all; its range embraced not the one more than the other. It was the righteousness of God "unto all." A Jew was not more in relation with the righteousness of God than a Gentile. It was, in fact, universal in its aspect and in its applicability. A righteousness of God for man, because no man had any for God. It was applied to all those who believe in Jesus. Wherever there was faith, there it was applied. The believer possessed it. It was towards all, and upon all those who believed in Jesus. For there was no difference, all had sinned, and, outside the glory of God, deprived of that glory, were justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Whether a Jew or a Gentile, it was a sinful man: the righteousness was the righteousness of God; the goodness of God was that which bestowed it, redemption in Christ Jesus the divine means of having part in it.

Before the accomplishment of this redemption, God, in view of it, had borne in His patience with the faithful; but now the righteousness itself was manifested, we come to Christ as to a propitiatory that God has set forth before men, and we find on it the blood which gives us free access to God in righteousness. God whose glory is satisfied in the work that Christ Jesus has accomplished, His blood upon the mercy-seat bearing witness thereof. It is no longer "forbearance"- righteousness is manifested, so that God is seen to be righteous and just in justifying him who is of faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? for the Jews boasted much in reference to the Gentiles -self-righteousness always boasts. It is not a law of works that can shut it out: man justifying himself by his works would have something to boast in. It is this law of faith, this divine principle on which we are placed, which shuts it out, for it is by the work of another, without works of law, that we through grace have part in divine righteousness.

And is God a limited God the God of the Jews only? No, He is also the God of the Gentiles. And how? In grace: in that it is one God who justifies the Jews (who seek after righteousness) on the principle of faith, and - since justification is on the principle of faith-the believing Gentile also by faith. Men are justified by faith, the believing Gentile then is justified. With regard to the Jew, it is the principle which is established (for they were seeking the thing itself). With regard to the Gentile, since faith existed in the case supposed, he was justified, for justification was on that principle. Is it then that faith overturned the authority of the law? By no means. It established completely the authority of law, but it made man participate in divine righteousness while acknowledging his just and total condemnation by the law; a condemnation which made another righteousness necessary, since according to the law man had none, had none of his own. The law demanded righteousness, but it showed what sin was. If the righteousness which it demanded had not been necessary, there was no need of another: now, faith affirmed this need and the validity of man's condemnation under law, by making the believer participate in this other righteousness, which is that of God. That which the law demanded, it did not give-and, even because it demanded it, man failed to produce it. To have given it, would have effaced the obligation. God acts in grace, when the obligation of the law is fully maintained in condemnation. He gives righteousness, because it must be had. He does not efface the obligation of the law, according to which man is totally condemned; but, while recognizing and affirming the justice of that condemnation, He glorifies Himself in grace by granting a divine righteousness to man when he had no human righteousness to present before God, in connection with the obligations imposed on him by the law. Faith does not then annul law, it fully establishes its authority.

Chapter 4. But there was another consideration of great weight with the Jews and in the dealings of God: Abraham, called of God to be the parent-stock, the father of the faithful. The apostle, therefore, after having set forth the relation in which faith stood towards the law by the introduction of the righteousness of God, takes up the question of the ground on which Abraham was placed as well-pleasing to God in righteousness. If we consider him thus according to the flesh, i.e., in connection with the privileges that descended from him as inheritance for his children, and take our place under him in the line of succession, to enjoy those privileges, on what principle does that set us? On this same principle of faith. He would have had something to boast of if he was justified by works; but before God it was not so. For the Scriptures say, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not counted of grace but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is

counted for righteousness." For thereby, in fact, he glorifies God in the way that God desires to be glorified, and according to the revelation He has made of Himself in Christ.

Thus, the testimony borne by Abraham's case is to justification by faith. David also supports this testimony, and speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom righteousness is imputed without works. He whose iniquities are pardoned, whose sins are covered, to whom the Lord does not impute sin, he is the man whom David calls blessed. But this supposed man to be a sinner and not righteous in himself. It was a question of what God was, in grace, to such a one, and not of what he was to God. His blessedness was that God did not impute to him the sins he had committed, not that he was righteous in himself before God. Righteousness for man was found in the grace of God.

Was then this righteousness for the circumcision only? Now, our thesis is, that God counted Abraham to be righteous by faith. But was he circumcised when this took place? Not so; he was uncircumcised. Righteousness, then, is by faith, and for the uncircumcised through faith. A testimony that was overwhelming to a Jew, because Abraham was the beau ideal to which all his ideas of excellence and of privilege referred. Circumcision was only a seal to the righteousness by faith which Abraham possessed in uncircumcision, that he might be the father of all believers who were in the same state of uncircumcision, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision-i.e. the first model of a people truly set apart for God, -not only with regard to the circumcised, but to all those who should walk in the steps of his faith when uncircumcised. For, after all, the promise that he should be heir of the world, was not made to Abraham, nor to his seed, in connection with the law, but with righteousness by faith. For if they who are on the principle of law are heirs, the faith by which Abraham received it is vain, and the promise made of none effect; because the law produces wrath-and that is a very different thing from bringing into the enjoyment of a promise-for where there is no law there is no transgression. Observe, he does not say, there is no sin; but where there is no commandment, there is none to violate. Now, the law being given to a sinner, wrath is necessarily the consequence of its imposition.

This is the negative side of the subject. The apostle shows that with regard to the Jews themselves, the inheritance could not be on the principle of law without setting Abraham aside, for to him the inheritance had been given by promise, and this implied that it was by faith; for we believe in a promise, we do not ourselves fulfill a promise that has been made to us. Accordingly, the righteousness of Abraham was - according to Scripture - through this same faith. It was imputed to him for righteousness.

This principle admitted the Gentiles; but here it is established with regard to the Jews themselves, or rather, with regard to the ways of God, in such a manner as to exclude the law as a means of obtaining the inheritance of God. The consequence, with regard to Gentiles believing in the Gospel, is stated in the 16th verse, " Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to, the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed of Abraham to whom the promise was made; not to that only which was under the law, but to all that had the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all before God, as it is written, " I have made thee a father of many nations."

Thus we have the great principle established. It is by faith, before and without the law; and the promise is made to a man in uncircumcision, and he is justified by believing it.

Another element is now introduced. Humanly speaking, the fulfillment of the promise was impossible, for in that respect both Abraham and Sarah were as dead, and the promise must be believed in against all hope, resting on the almighty power of Him who raises the dead, and calls things that are not as though they were. This was Abraham's faith. He believed the promise that he should be the father of many nations, because God had spoken, counting on the power of God, thus glorifying Him, without calling in question anything that He had said, by looking at circumstances; therefore, this also was counted to him for righteousness. He glorified God according to what God was. Now, this was not written for his sake alone: the same faith shall be imputed to us also for righteousness,-faith in God, as having raised up Jesus from the dead. It is not here faith in Jesus, but in Him who came in power into the domain of death, where Jesus lay because of our sins, and brought Him forth by His power, the mighty activity of the love of, God who brought Him - who had already borne all the punishment of our sins - out from under all their consequences; so that by believing God who has done this, we embrace the whole extent of His work, the grace and the power displayed in it; and we thus know God. Our God is the God who has done this. He has Himself raised up from among the dead, Jesus who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. The consequences of sin were already upon Him. The active intervention of God delivered Him who lay in death, because He had borne them. It is not only a resurrection from the dead, but from among the dead -the intervention of God to bring forth in righteousness the One who had glorified Him. By believing in such a God, we understand that it is Himself who, in giving us a new life, has delivered us Himself from all that sin must bring in, because it had brought it in; and He has brought back, by His deliverance, Him who underwent it. Thus, being justified by faith, we have peace with God. Remark here also, the difference of Abraham's faith and ours. He believed God could perform what He promised. We are called to believe He has performed. Faith in God's word, believing God, and this faith laying hold on his power in resurrection, is that it lifted out of the whole effect of sin, and reposed in God's power.

The apostle had established the great principles - he comes now to the application; that is to say, their application to the condition of the soul in its own feelings. He sets before us the effect of these truths when received by the power of the Holy Ghost. The work is done, and Christ is before God for us, according to the efficacy of that work. The believer has part in it, and is justified. Having been justified, we have peace with God. We believe in a God who has intervened in power to raise Him from the dead who had borne our offenses, and who, being raised, is the eternal witness that our sins are put away, and that the only true God is He who has done it in love. I have then peace with Him, all my sin is blotted out, annulled, by the work of Christ, my unburdened heart knows the Savior God. I have no longer an idea of vengeance in Him. It is He who has set me free from that which would have been the just cause for vengeance. But through Christ entered into His presence, I am even now in the enjoyment of His favor, in present grace. All that was connected with the old man is canceled before God by the death of Christ. There cannot be a single question between me and God. He has nothing to impute to me - that has been all done in Christ. As to the present time, I am brought into His presence in the enjoyment of His favor. Grace characterizes my present relationship with God. Further entering in spirit into the presence of God in the power of the resurrection of Christ, I rejoice in hope of the glory of God. All is connected with God Himself, with and according to His perfections, the favor of God, and His glory for our hope. All is connected with His power in resurrection - peace with God already settled, the present favor of God, and the hope of glory. Remark here that justification is distinct from peace. "Having been

justified, - we have peace." Justification is my true state before God, by virtue of the work of Christ, of His death, and of resurrection. Faith, thus knowing God, is at peace with God; but this is a result, like the present enjoyment of the grace wherein we stand. Faith believes in the God who has done this; but it is a God who has loved us, and who - exercising His power in love and in righteousness - has raised from the dead the One who bore my sins, bringing Him into His own presence, as having entirely abolished them, and as having perfectly glorified God in so doing. For the same reason, "by Him," we are in fact in the full favor of God before whom we stand. It is the God of love who, having loved us, has saved us. And what is the result? We are brought by Jesus into the place to which He Himself is gone. It is glory; we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. It is God who is the root and the accomplisher of all. It is the Gospel of God, the power of God in salvation, the righteousness of God, and it is into the glory of God that we are introduced in hope. Such is the efficacy of this grace with regard to us, it is peace, grace, glory. One would say, This is all we can have, the past, present, and future are provided for. Nevertheless, there is more. First practical experience. We pass, in fact, through tribulations: God appoints them to us. But we rejoice in this, because it exercises the heart, detaches us from the world, makes us feel how little Satan can do, - nothing, indeed, to separate us from the love of God. On the contrary, it subdues the will, the natural working of the heart, in order that we may refer more to God in all things, which after all, are entirely directed by Him. We learn better that the scene in which we move passes away and changes, and is but a place of exercise, and not the proper sphere of life. Thus hope, founded on the work and the position of Christ on high, becomes more clear, more disentangled from the mixture of that which is of man here below; we discern more clearly that which is unseen and eternal, and the links of the soul are more complete and entire with that which is on before us. Experience, which might have discouraged nature, works hope, because, come what may, the love of God who has given us this hope, is in our hearts, not only demonstrated by the gift and the work and the resurrection of Christ, but by the presence of the Holy Ghost, who sheds it abroad in our hearts, who is the God of love in us. Nevertheless, while giving this inward foundation of joy, the Spirit is careful to refer the thing to God, in order that the soul may be built upon that which is in Him, and not on that which is in ourselves. This love is indeed in us; but the love which is there through the presence of the Holy Ghost, is the love of God, namely, that when we were destitute of all strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. The due time was when man had been demonstrated to be ungodly, and without strength to come out of this condition, although God, under the law she wed him the way. Man can devote himself when he has an adequate motive; God has displayed the love that was peculiar to Himself, in that when there was no motive, when we were nothing but sinners, Christ died for us. The source was in Himself, or rather was Himself. What joy to know that it is in Him and of Him that we have all these things! God then having reconciled us to Himself according to the prompting of His own heart, when we were enemies, will much more, now that we are justified, go on to the end; and we shall be saved from wrath through Him. Accordingly, he adds, speaking of the means, "If we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son," by that which was, so to speak, His weakness, "much more shall we be saved by His life," the mighty energy in which He lives eternally. Thus the love of God makes peace with regard to that which we were, and gives us security with regard to our future, making us happy withal in the present. And it is that which God is, that secures to us all these blessings. He is love - full of consideration for us, full of wisdom. We glory in Him. This is the second part of the Christian's blessed experience of the power which results from our position in Christ. The first was that he

gloried in tribulation because of its effect, divine love being known; the second, is the God of love Himself in man thus know we glory, not, only in our own salvation, but, knowing such a Savior God, a God who has raised up Jesus from the dead, and has saved us, in His love, - we glory in Him. Higher joy than this we cannot have.

Having given the foundation and the source of salvation, and the confidence and enjoyment that flow from it, having based all on God, who had to do with those that were nothing but sinners devoid of all strength, and that by the death of Christ, - the ground was cleared of legal pretensions. It was a question of sin, of grace, of sinful man; the Jew had no privilege here, he had nothing to boast of. He could not say, sin came in by us and the law. It is man, sin, and grace, that are in question. The apostle takes up this fundamental and essential question. Man had nothing to boast of either. The God of grace is before our eyes, acting with regard to sin, when there was nothing else. Now, in came in by one man, and by sin, death. And thus death passed upon all men, through the sin of all. For sin was in the world before the law, and the law did not add much to the advantage of man's condition, it definitively imputed his sin to him by giving him knowledge of it and forbidding it. Nevertheless, although there had been no imputation, according to the government of God, in virtue of an imposed and known rule, yet death reigned, a constant proof of sin (moreover, the history of Genesis made all this incontestable, even to the Jew), over those who had not broken a covenant founded on a known commandment, as Adam had done; and the Jews also, after the law was given. Men, between Adam and Moses, when there was no question of a law, as there was both before and after that interval, died just the same, -sin reigned. We must observe here, that from the end of verse 12 to that of 17, is a parenthesis, only the idea is developed, as in similar cases. In the parenthesis, the apostle, after having presented Adam as the figure of Him who was to come - of Christ, - argues that the character of the gift cannot be inferior to that of the evil. If the sin of the one first man, was not confined in its effects to him who committed it, but extended to all those who, as a race, were connected with him, with much greater reason shall the grace which is by one Christ Jesus, not end in Him but embrace many also. And with regard to the thing, as well as to the person, one single offense brought in death, but grace remits a multitude of offenses. Thus, it could suffice for that which the law had made necessary; and as to the effect, death has. reigned, but, by grace, not only shall life reign, but we shall reign in life by One, according to the abundance of grace, by Jesus Christ.

In verse 18, the general argument is resumed in a very abstract way. "By one offense," he says, "towards all in condemnation, even so by one accomplished righteousness, or act of righteousness, towards all men for justification of life. One offense bore, in its effect, so to speak, on all; and so it was with the one act of righteousness. This is the scope of the action in itself. Now for the application - for as by the disobedience of one man only many are constituted sinners, so by the obedience of one only, many are made righteous. It is always the thought that the act of the individual is not confined, as to its effects, within the limits of his own person. It affects many others, bringing them under the consequences of that act. It is said, "All," when the scope of the action is spoken of; " many," when it is the definitive effect with regard to men.

This, then, was outside the law. It was a question of the effect of the acts of Adam and of Christ, and not of the conduct of individuals, to which, evidently, the law related. Of what use then was the law? It came in, as it were, exceptionally, and as accessory to the chief fact, "that the offense might abound." But, not only where the offense, but where sin abounded-for under the law and

without the law-it has abounded-grace has superabounded; in order that as sin has reigned in death, grace should reign through righteousness in eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. If where sin reigns, righteousness had reigned, it would have been to condemn the whole world. It is grace that reigns-the sovereign love of God. Righteousness is on a level with the evil, by the fact that it is righteousness; but God is above it, and acts, and can act, has a right to act, according to His own nature, and He is love. Is it that He sanctions unrighteousness and sin? No. In His love, He makes righteousness by Jesus Christ. He has accomplished in Him a righteousness that He bestows. It is love -which taking the character of grace when sin is in question'-reigns, and gives eternal life above and beyond death, life that comes from above and ascends thither again; and that by means of divine righteousness, and in connection with that righteousness, magnifying it and manifesting it by the work of Jesus Christ, in whom we have this life, when He had wrought out righteousness in order that we might possess it. If grace reigns, it is God who reigns. That righteousness should be maintained, is that which His nature required. But now it is righteousness in salvation, given by grace to those who possessed none; given in Jesus, who by His work accomplished it in glorifying God with regard even to sin, in the place where, in this respect, all that God is has been displayed.

The fulfillment of the law, would have been man's righteousness: man might have gloried in it. Christ has glorified God. And grace imparts this to the sinner-introducing him into the glory which Christ merited by His work-the glory in which He was, as Son, before the world began.

But, alas! in this glorious redemption accomplished by grace, which substitutes the righteousness and the person of the second Adam, for the sin and the person of the first-the perversity of the flesh can find occasion for the sin which it loves. If it is by the obedience of One that I am constituted righteous, and because grace superabounds, let us sin that it may abound; that does not touch this righteousness, and only glorifies this superabundance of grace. Is this the apostle's doctrine? or a legitimate consequence of his doctrine? In no wise. The doctrine is that we are brought into God's presence by death and resurrection, in virtue of the work which Christ therein accomplished. We believe in Him who raised up Christ from among the dead. Can we live in the sin to which we are dead? It is to contradict one's self in one's own words. But, being baptized into Christ (in His name, to have part with Him, according to the truth contained in the revelation we have of Him), I am baptized to have part in His death (for there it is that I have this righteousness in which He appears before God, and I in Him). But it is to sin that He is dead. He has done with it forever. When He died, He mile out of that condition of life to which, even as a substitute, sin attached. We have, then, been buried with Him by baptism for death, ver. 4, having part in it, entering into it by baptism which represents it, in order that as Christ was raised up from among the dead by the glory of the Father, we also should walk in newness of life. In a word, I am brought into the participation of this divine and perfect righteousness, by having part in death unto sin: it is impossible, therefore, that it should be to live in it. Here it is not duty that is spoken of, but the nature of the thing. I cannot die to a thing in order to live in it. The doctrine itself refutes as absolute nonsense, the argument of the flesh, which under the pretense of righteousness will not recognize our need of grace.

The character of this new life into which resurrection has brought us, is presented here in a striking way. Christ had perfectly glorified God in dying: also even in dying was He the Son of the living God. His resurrection, therefore, was a necessity of the glory of God. All that was in God was

compelled to it by His glory itself (even as Christ had glorified all), His justice, His love, His truth, His power; His glory, in that He could not allow death to have the victory over the One who was faithful; His relationship as Father, who ought not to leave His Son in bondage to the fruit of sin and to the power of the enemy. It was due to Christ on the part of God, due to His own glory as God and Father, necessary also in order to show the reflex of His own glory, to manifest it according to His counsels, and that, in man. Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. All that the Father is came into it, engaged to give Jesus the triumph of resurrection, of victory over death, and to give resurrection the brightness of His own glory. Having entered, as the fruit of the operation of His glory, into this new position, this is the model, the character of that life in which we live before God.

Without this manifestation in Christ, God, although acting and giving testimonies of His power and of His goodness, remained veiled and hidden. In Christ glorified, the center of all the counsels of God, we see the 'glory of the Lord with unveiled face, and every mouth confesses Him Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Our life ought to be the practical reflection of this glory of the Lord in Heaven. The power that carries it into effect is shown at the end of the first chapter of the Ephesians. But there it is to introduce our resurrection with Christ. Here it is Christ's own resurrection, the doctrine, or the thing in itself, and its consequences and moral import with regard to the individual living here below, in view of his relationship with God as a responsible man. It is an altogether new life.

Entering thus like Him into the likeness of His death, 'we shall also enter into that of His resurrection. We see here that resurrection is a consequence which he deduces as a fact, not a mystical participation in the thing. Knowing this first, as the great foundation of everything, that our old man, that in us which pleads for sin as the fruit of the perfect grace of God, is crucified with Christ, in order that the whole body of sin should be destroyed so that we should no more serve sin. He takes the totality and the system of sin in a man, as a body by which death is nullified; its will is judged and no longer masters us. For he who is dead is freed from sin. Sin can no longer be laid to his charge as a thing that exists in a living and responsible man. Therefore, being thus dead with Christ by entering in reality into this life of faith, we believe that we shall live with Him, we belong to that other world where He lives in resurrection. The energy of the life of which He lives, is our portion; we believe this, knowing that Christ being raised from among the dead, dieth no more. His victory over death is complete and final: death has no more dominion over Him. Therefore it is that we are sure of resurrection, namely, on account of this complete victory over death, into which He entered for us in grace. By faith we have entered into it with Him, having our part in it according to His therein. It is the power of the life of love that brought Him there. Dying, He died unto sin. He went down even to death rather than fail in maintaining the glory of God. Until death, and even in death, He had to do with sin and with temptation; but there He has done with it all forever. We die unto sin by participating in His death. The consequence-by the glory of the Father -is resurrection. Now, therefore, in that He died, He is dead unto sin, once for all; in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Thus He has nothing more to do with sin. He lives only, perfectly, without reference in His life to anything else, unto God. In that He lives, His life is in relationship to God only. We also, then, ought to reckon-for it is by faith-that we are dead to sin and alive to God, having no other object of life than God, in Christ Jesus. I ought then to consider myself as dead; I have a right to do so, because Christ has died for me; and being alive now forever unto God, I

ought to consider myself as come out, by resurrection, from the sin to which I died. For this is the Christ whom I know, not a Christ living on the earth who is in connection with me according to the nature in which I live here below. In that nature I am proved to be a sinner, and incapable of true relationship with Him. He has died for me as living of that life, and has entered, through resurrection into a new life, outside the former. It is there then, that, as a believer, I know Him. I have part in death and in resurrection. I have righteousness by faith, but righteousness as having part with Christ dead and raised, again; as being dead, therefore, by faith, unto sin. The apostle deduces the evident consequence: " Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body," do not yield your members as instruments to the sin unto which you are yourselves dead by Christ, but as alive, as awaked up from amongst the dead, yield your members as instruments of righteousness to God unto whom you live. For, in fact, sin shall not have dominion over us, because we are not under the law but under grace. Here it is not the principle, but the power, that is spoken of. In principle, we are dead to sin according to faith; in practice, it has no power over us. Observe, that the source of practical power to conquer sin, is not in the law, but in grace.

Now, it is true that not being under the law, the rule under which we are placed is not that of imputation, but of non-imputation. Is this a reason why we should sin? No! there is a reality in these things. We are slaves to that which we obey. Sin leads to death; obedience to practical righteousness. And, in truth, having been in the former case, the disciples in Rome had given proof of the justice of the apostle's argument, by walking in the truth. Set free from the slavery of sin, they had become (to use human language) the slaves of righteousness. And this did not end in itself, practical righteousness developed itself by the setting apart of the whole being for God with ever-growing intelligence. They were obedient in such and such things, but the fruit was sanctification, a spiritual capacity, in that they were separated from evil unto a deeper knowledge of God. Sin produced no fruit, it ended in death: but, set free from sin and become servants to God-the true righteousness of obedience, like that of Christ Himself.,-they had their fruit already in holiness, and the end should be eternal life. For the wages of sin was death, the gift of God was eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now this life was living unto God, and that is not sin; nevertheless, it is grace. Here the apostle, whose subject is judicial righteousness before God, approximates to John, and connects his doctrine with that of the first Epistle of John, who there, on the other hand, borders upon the doctrine of justification, when speaking of the impartation of life.

(Chapter 7) We have considered the effect of the death and resurrection of Christ, with reference to justification, and to practical life. Another point remained to be treated of by the apostle, - the effect of this doctrine upon the question of the law. The Christian, or, to say better, the believer, has part in Christ as a dead Christ, and lives, in that Christ is raised from the dead. What is the force of this truth with regard to the law, for the law has only power over a man so long as he lives? Being then dead, it has no longer any hold upon him. This is our position with regard to the law. Does that weaken its authority? No. For we say that Christ has died; but the law no longer applies to one that is dead. In bringing out the effect of this truth, the apostle uses the example of the law of marriage. The woman would be an adulteress if she were married to another while her husband was alive: but when her husband is dead, she is free. The application of this rule changes the form of the thing. It is certain that one cannot be under the authority of two husbands at once. The one excludes the other. The law, and Christ risen, cannot be associated in their authority over the soul. But in our case, the law does not lose its force, its rights by dying, but by our dying. It only

reigns while we live. Now it is with this destruction of the bond by death the apostle began. The husband died, but in application it is annulled by our dying. We are then dead to the law by the body of Christ (for we have to do with a Christ risen after His death), that we should be married to Him who is raised from the dead, in order that we should bear fruit for God; but we cannot belong to the two at once.

When we were in the flesh; when, as man, any one was held to be walking in the responsibility of a man living in the life of nature, the law was to him the rule of that responsibility, and the representative of the authority of God. The passions which impelled to sin, acted in that nature; and meeting with this barrier of the law, formed in it that which, by resisting it, excited the will, and suggested, even by the prohibition itself, the evil which the flesh loved, and which the law forbade; and thus these passions acted in the members to produce fruit, which brought in death. But now he was outside its authority, he had disappeared from its pursuit, being dead in that law to the authority of which he had been subjected. Now, to be dead under the law, would have been condemnation; but it is Christ who went through that, so that it is our deliverance to die to the law. It did but condemn us, but its authority ends with the life of him who was under that authority. And being dead in Christ, the law can no longer reach those who had been under it: we belong to the new husband, to Christ risen, in order that we should serve, in newness of spirit, the good-will of grace in our new life, and-as the apostle will afterward explain, by the Holy Ghost*- not in the bondage of the letter.

This is the doctrine. Now for the conclusions that may be deduced from it. Is the law, then, sin, that we are withdrawn from its authority? By no means. But it gave the knowledge of sin, and imputed it. For the apostle says, that he would not have understood that the mere impulse of his nature 'was sin, if the law had not said, Thou shalt not covet. But the commandment gave sin occasion to attack the soul. Sin, that evil principle of our nature, making use of the commandment to pro., yoke the soul to the sin that is forbidden (but which it took occasion to suggest by the interdiction itself, acting also on the will which resisted the interdiction), produced all manner of concupiscence. For, without the law, sin could not plunge the soul into this conflict, and give the sentence of death in it, by making it responsible, in conscience, for the sin which, without this law, it would not have known. Lust acted, with the conscience of sin in the heart, and the result was death in the conscience, without any deliverance for the heart from the power of concupiscence.

Without the law, sin did not thus agitate a will which refused submission to that which checked it. For a barrier to the will awakens and excites the will; and the conscience of sin, in the presence of God's prohibition, is a conscience under sentence of death. Thus the commandment, which, in itself, was unto life, became, in fact, unto death. " Do this and live," became death, by showing the exigencies of God to a sinful nature, whose will rejected them, and to a conscience which could but accept the just condemnation.

A man walks in quiet indifference, doing his own will, without knowledge of God, or, consequently, any sense of sin or rebellion. The law comes, and he dies under its just judgment, which forbids everything that he desires. Lust was an evil thing, but it did not reveal the judgment of God; on the contrary, it forgot it. But when the law was come, sin (it is looked at here as an enemy that attacks some person or place), knowing that the will would persist and the conscience condemn, seized the opportunity of the law, impelled the man in the direction contrary to the law, and slew him in the

con, science of sin which the law forbade, on the part of God. Death to the man, on God's part, in judgment, was the result. The law then was good and holy, since it forbade the sin, but in condemning the sinners.

Was death, then, brought in by that which was good? No. But sin, in order that it might be seen in its true light, employed that which was good to bring death upon the soul; and thus, by the commandment, became exceedingly sinful. In all this, sin is personified as some one who seeks to kill the soul.

Such, then, was the effect of the law, that first husband - sin existing in man. To bring this out more plainly, the apostle communicates the experience of a soul under the law.

We must remark here, that the subject treated of is not the fact of the conflict between the two natures, but the effect of the law, supposing the will to be renewed, and the law to have obtained the suffrage of the conscience, and to be the object of the heart's affections - a heart which recognizes the spirituality of the law. This is neither the knowledge of grace, nor of the Savior Christ, nor of the Spirit. The chief point here, is not condemnation (although the law does, indeed, leave the soul under judgment), but the entire want of strength to fulfill it, that it may not condemn us. The law is spiritual, but I, as man, am carnal, the slave of sin, whatever my thoughts may be: for I allow not that which I do; that which I would, I do not; and that which I hate, I practice. Thus loving and thus hating, I consent to the law that it is good. It is not I, as to the moral intent of the will, for I would not the evil which I do; on the contrary, I hate it. It is the sin then that dwells in me, for, in fact, in me, i.e. in my flesh - the whole natural man as he is - there exists no good, for even where there is the will, I do not find the way to perform any good. Power is totally wanting.

In verse 20, the apostle, having given this explanation, lays stress upon the I and me. " If that which I myself would" (we should read), and, " It is no longer myself that does it, but the sin that dwells in me." I find then evil present with the myself which would do good; for, as to the inward man, I delight in the law of God. But there is in me another constant principle which wars against the law of my mind, which brings me into captivity to this law of sin in my members. So that whatever my desires may be, the better even 'that they are, I am myself a miserable man. Being man, and such a man, I cannot but be miserable. But having come to this, an immense step has been taken.

The evil here spoken of; is the want of power; not guilt a point already discussed. But he is come to the discovery and to the confession that he has no power. He throws himself upon another. He does not say, How can I? or, How shall I? but "Who shall deliver me?" Now, it was when we were devoid of all strength that Christ died for the ungodly. The ungodliness is forgiven, the want of strength is discovered, and we find grace at the end, when with regard to what we are, and to all hope of amelioration in ourselves, grace is our only resource. But, happily, when we cast ourselves upon grace, there is nothing but grace before us. Deliverance is accomplished by this resurrection of Christ, of which we are speaking; and as soon as the distressed soul has said, " Who shall deliver me," the answer is ready, " I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The answer is not, will deliver, deliverance is already accomplished: he gives thanks.

The man is wretched - he has quite done with himself. The deliverance of God is complete. The two natures are still opposed to each other, but the deliverance is not imperfect. This deliverance

wrought of God, and the progress of its manifestation, are developed in the next chapter. We may here remark, that the apostle does not say, " we know that the law is spiritual, and we are carnal." Had he done so, it would have been to speak of Christians, as such, in their proper and normal condition. It is the personal experience of what the flesh is, and not the state of a Christian, as such, before God. Observe also, that the law is looked at from the point of view of Christian knowledge, -" we know "- when we are no longer under it, and when we are capable of judging concerning its whole import, according to the spirituality of him who judges; and who sees also, being spiritual, what the flesh is; because he is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

Literally, this passage is not the condition of any one at all; but principles, opposed to each other, the result of which is laid open, by supposing a man under the law. The will always right, but good never done, evil always. Nevertheless, to the conscience, this is the practical condition of every renewed man under the law. We may remark one other important principle. Man, in this condition, is entirely taken up with himself; he desires good, he does not perform it, he does that which he would not. Neither Christ nor the Holy Ghost is named. In the normal condition of a Christian, he is occupied with Christ. But what is expressed in this seventh chapter is the natural and necessary result of the law, when the conscience is awakened. The sense of unanswered responsibility, and the absence of peace, cause the soul necessarily to turn in upon itself. It is taken up entirely with self, which is spoken of nearly forty times from the 14th verse. It is well to be so, rather than to be insensible. It is not peace.

This peace is found elsewhere, and it is in this; when reduced to the consciousness of one's own inability to do good towards God, one finds that God has done the good which we need, for us.

The conflict goes on, the opposition between the two natures continues, but we give thanks to God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Remark here that deliverance is only found when there is the full conviction of our incapacity and want of power, as well as of our sin. It is much more difficult to arrive at this conviction of incapacity, than at that of having sinned. But the sin of our nature, its irremediable perversity, its resistance to good, the law of sin in our members, is only known in its legal gravity, by experience of the uselessness of our efforts to do well. Under the law, the uselessness of these efforts leaves the result as guilt upon the conscience, and produces the sense of its being impossible to reach God. Under grace, the efforts are not useless, and the evil nature shows itself to us (either in communion with God or by downfalls, if we neglect communion) in all its deformity in presence of that grace. But in this chapter, the experience of sin in the nature is presented as acquired under the law, in order that man may know himself in this position, may know what he is as regards his flesh, and that, in fact, he cannot succeed in this way in coming before God with a good conscience.

We must now remember that this experience of the soul under the law, is introduced parenthetically, in order to show the sinful condition to which grace applies, and the effect of the law. Our subject is that the believer has part in the death and resurrection of Christ, that Christ, having, by grace, gone under death, having been made sin, has forever done with that state in which He was connected with sin and death; and that, having forever done with all that was connected with it, He has entered by resurrection into a new order of things, into a new condition before God, totally beyond the reach of all that to which He had subjected Himself for us, and all that which in us was connected with our natural life, and beyond reach of the law which bound sin

upon the conscience on God's part. In Christ, we are in this new order of things. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. He does not here speak of the efficacy of the blood (all-essential as it is, and the basis of all the rest), but of the new position, entirely beyond the reach of everything to which the judgment of God applied. Christ had, indeed, been under the effect of the condemnation, in our stead; but, when risen, He appears before God. Could there be a question of sin, or of wrath, or of condemnation, or of imputation, there? Impossible! It was all settled before He ascended thither. He was there because it was settled. And that is the position of the Christian, in Christ. Still, inasmuch as it is by resurrection, it is a real deliverance. It is the power of a new life, in which Christ is raised from the dead, and of which we live in Him. It is-as to this life of the saint-the efficacious and continued power by which Christ was raised from the dead, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, and it has delivered me from the law of sin and death which previously reigned in my members, producing fruit unto death. It is resurrection which links the "no condemnation" with the energy of a new life in which we are no longer subject to the law of sin, any more than to its imputation which ended by His death, or to the law, whose claims ceased also, necessarily, with regard to Him when He died under its power. We see at the end of Eph. 1, that it is the power of God Himself; and assuredly it had need be so, that power which wrought this glorious change, to us this new creation. This deliverance from the law of sin and death, is not a mere experience (it will produce precious experiences), it is a divine operation, known by faith in His operation who raised up Christ from the dead, known in all its power by its accomplishment in Jesus; in the efficacy of which, we participate by faith. This is evident, according to verse 3. God has done it in Christ the apostle says; he does not say "in us." The result, in us, is found in verse 4. The efficacious operation in Christ, verse 3. God has done it, for it is always God, and God who has wrought, whom he brings forward in order to develop the Gospel of God. The thing to condemn is indeed in us: the work which put an end to it, has been accomplished in Christ, who has been pleased in grace, as we shall see, to put Himself into the position necessary for its accomplishment. Nevertheless, through participation in the life that is in Him, it becomes a practical reality to us, only this realization has to contend with the opposition of the flesh; but not so as that we should walk in it.

The key to all this doctrine of the apostle's, and that which unites holy practice, the Christian life, with absolute grace and eternal deliverance from condemnation, is the new position entirely apart from sin, which resurrection gives. The power of God, the glory of the Father, the operation of the Spirit, are found acting in the resurrection of Christ, and placing Him who had borne sin in a new position, beyond sin and death, before God. And, by faith, I have part in His death, I participate in this life.

It is not only a satisfaction for sin - the basis, indeed, of all - but the deliverance of the person who was in sin, even as when Israel was brought out of Egypt. The blood had stayed the hand of God in judgment, the hand of God in power delivered them forever at the Red Sea. Whatever they may have been, they were from that time with God, who had guided them to His holy habitation.

Moreover, the first verses of this chapter sum up the result of God's work with regard to this subject, in chapters 5, 6, and 7. No condemnation for those who are in Christ, the law of the Spirit of life in Him, delivering from this law of sin and death, and that, which the law could not do, God has done.

It will be remarked, that the deliverance is from the law of sin and death: in this respect, the deliverance is absolute and complete. Sin is no longer at all a law. This deliverance, to one who loves holiness, who loves God, is a profound and immense subject of joy. The passage does not say that the nature is changed, quite the contrary, one would not speak of the law of a thing which no longer existed. We have to contend with it, but it is no more a law; neither can it bring us any more under death, in our conscience.

The law could not work this deliverance. It could condemn the sinner, but not the sin while delivering the sinner. But that which the law could not - inasmuch as it required strength in man, while, on the contrary, he had only strength for sin- God has done. Now, it is here that Christ's coming down among us and even unto death, is set before us in all its importance - His coming down, without sin, unto us and unto death.

This is the secret of our deliverance. God, the God of all grace and of glory, has sent Him who was the object of His delight, His own Son, in whom was all the energy and divine power of the Son of God Himself, even into the position in which we were; even in Himself without sin, but as to His position - into our state of humiliation, " in the likeness of sinful flesh," in order that the whole question of sin with God should be decided in the person of Christ, He being considered as in that position. He undertook to glorify God by suffering, for that which man was. He accomplished it making Himself a sacrifice for sin; and thus sin in the flesh (it was the state of man, the state of his being, and Christ was treated on the cross as though He were in it) has been condemned, in that which was a sacrifice of propitiation for the sinner. The Son of God - sent of God in love has come, and not only has He borne our sins, but placed Himself, ever without sin (in Him it was grace and obedience), in our responsibility here below, made in the likeness of men, to glorify God in respect of sin, so that we are discharged by the cross from the burden on the conscience, of the sin that dwells in us. He takes on Himself, before God, the whole charge of sin (but according to the power of eternal life that was in Him); thus placed, He is made sin, and in His death, which he undergoes in grace, sin in the flesh is totally condemned by the just judgment of God, and the condemnation itself is the abolition of that sin by His act of Sacrifice - an act which is valid for every one that believes in Jesus who accomplished it. What a marvelous deliverance! What a work for the glory of God! The moral import of the cross for the glory of God, is a subject which, as we study it, becomes ever more and more magnificent-a never ending study. It is, by its moral perfection, a motive for the love of the Father Himself, with regard to Jesus. " Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again."

What a perfect work for putting away sin from the sight of God (setting before Him in its stead that perfect work itself which removed the sin) and for delivering the sinner, placing him before God according to the perfect abolition of the sin and the value of that work in His sight.

The practical result is stated in verse 4; "in order that the righteousness of the law," its just requirements, "might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." We are perfect before God in Christ, according to the law; but, walking according to the Spirit, the law is fulfilled in us, although we are not subject to it. He who loves, has fulfilled the law.

In this new nature, in the life of resurrection and of faith, that which the law demands is accomplished in us because we are not under it, for we walk according to the Spirit, and not according to the flesh. The things now in opposition are the flesh and the Spirit. In fact, the rule,

from the yoke of which, as a system, we are set free, is accomplished in us. Under the law, sin had the mastery; being set free from the law, that law is fulfilled in us. But it is the Spirit working in us and leading us, which characterizes our position. Now, this character, for it is thus the apostle presents it, is the result of the presence, the indwelling, of the Holy Ghost in us. The apostle supposes this great truth here. That is to say, writing to Christians, the fact (for it was a fact that is in question here) of the presence of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is treated as a well-known fact. It publicly distinguished the Christian, as the seal and mark of his profession. The individual knew it for himself-he knew it with regard to the Church. In the latter aspect, we leave it aside here, for Christians individually are the subject. They had the Spirit; the apostle everywhere appeals to their consciousness of this fact. "After that ye believed, ye were sealed." "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith," etc. It is the individual moral effect, extending, however, to the resurrection of the body, which is here spoken of. The two things are connected; the acknowledged fact of the presence of the Holy Ghost; and, the development of his energy in the life, and afterward in the resurrection, of the believer. This had been seen in Christ; resurrection itself was according to the Spirit of holiness.

We come then, now, into the practical effect in the Christian on earth, of the doctrine of death and resurrection, realized by the dwelling in us of the Holy Ghost who has been given us. He is distinct, for He is the Spirit, the Spirit of God, nevertheless, He acts in the life, so that it is practically ourselves in that which is of the life of Christ in us.

We will examine briefly the apostle's teaching on this subject.

He introduces it abruptly, as characterizing the Christian, "us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Those who are after the flesh, desire the things of the flesh; those after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit: It is not a question here of duty, but of the sure action of the nature according to which a person subsists; and this tendency, this affection of the nature, has its unailing result - that of the flesh is death, that of the Spirit is life and peace. Because the affection of the flesh is enmity against God. It has its own will, its own lusts, and the fact that it has them, makes it not subject to the law of God - which, on the contrary, has its own authority-and the flesh cannot, indeed, be subject, it would cease to exist if it could be so, for it has a will of its own which seeks independency, not the authority of God over it; will, which does not delight either in what the law requires; therefore, those who are in the flesh, and who have their relationship with God as living of this nature, of this natural life, cannot please God. Such is the verdict on man, living his natural life, according to the very nature of that life. The law did not bring him out thence, he was still in the flesh as before. It had a rule for man, such as he is as man before God, which gave the measure of his responsibility in that position, but which evidently did not bring him out of the position to which it applied. So that man, being in the flesh, the workings of sin were, by means of the law itself, acting to produce death.

But the principle of the believer's relationship with God, is not the flesh, but the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in us. It is that which characterizes our position before God. In His sight, and before Him, we are not in the flesh. This, indeed, supposes the existence of the flesh, but, having received the Holy Ghost, and having life of the Holy Ghost, it is He who constitutes our link with God. Our moral existence before God is in the Spirit, not in the flesh or natural man.

Observe here, that the apostle is not speaking of gifts or manifestations of power, acting outside us upon others, but of the vital energy of the Spirit, as it was manifested in the resurrection of Jesus, and even in His life in holiness. Our old man is reckoned dead - we live unto God by the Spirit. Accordingly, this presence of the Spirit - all real as it is - is spoken of in a manner which has the force rather of character than of distinct and personal presence: although that character could not exist unless He were personally there. "Ye are in Spirit, if so be that Spirit of God dwell in you." The emphasis is on the word God, and in the Greek there is no article before Spirit. Nevertheless, it plainly refers to the Spirit personally, for it is said, "dwell in you," so that He is distinct from the person He dwells in. But the force of the thing is this - there is nothing in man that can resist the flesh or bring man out of it; it is himself. The law cannot go beyond this boundary, namely, that of man to whom it is addressed, nor ought not, for it deals with his responsibility. There must be something which is not man, and yet which acts in man, that he may be delivered. No creature could do anything in this: he is responsible in his own place.

It must be God. The Spirit of God coming into man, does not cease to be God, and does not make the man cease to be man; but He produces divinely in the man a life, a character, a moral condition of being, a new man; in this sense, a new being. We are no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us. There is no other means. And it is indeed the Spirit of Christ. He, in the power of which Christ acted, lived, offered Himself; by whom also He was raised from the dead. His whole life was the expression of the operation of the Spirit - of the Spirit in man. " Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." It is the true and only link, the eternal reality, of the new life in which we live to God.

We have to do with reality. Christianity has its realization in us, in a conformity of nature to God, with which God cannot dispense, and without which we cannot enjoy or be in communion with Him. He Himself gives it. How, indeed, can we be born of God, unless God acts to communicate life to us? We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. But it is the Spirit who is its source and its strength. If any one has not the Spirit of Christ, if the energy of this spiritual life which was manifested in Him, which is by the power of the Spirit, is not in us, we are not of Him, we have no part in Christ, for it is thus that one participates in Him. But if Christ is in us, the energy of this spiritual life is in Him who is our life, and the body is reckoned dead; for if it have a will as being alive, it is nothing but sin. The Spirit is life, the Spirit by whom Christ lived, Christ in Spirit in us is life-the source of thought, action, judgment, everything that constitutes the man, speaking morally, in order that there may be righteousness, for that is the only practical righteousness possible - the flesh cannot produce any - we live only as having Christ as our life; for righteousness is in Him, and in Him only, before God. Elsewhere, there is nothing but sin. Therefore, to live is Christ. There is no other life; everything else is death.

But the Spirit has yet another character. He is the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from among the dead. This God did with regard to Christ. If the Spirit dwells in us, God will accomplish in us that which He accomplished in Christ, because of the perfection of this same Spirit. He will raise up our mortal bodies. That is the final deliverance, the full answer to the question, " Who shall deliver me from this body of death."

Observe here, that the Spirit is designated in three ways. The Spirit of God, in contrast with sinful flesh, with the natural man. The Spirit of Christ, the formal character of the life which is the

expression of His power; this is the Spirit acting in man according to the perfection of the divine thoughts. The Spirit of Him that raised up the man Christ from among the dead. Here it is the perfect and final deliverance of the body itself, by the power of God acting through His Spirit. Thus then we have got the full answer to the question, " Who shall deliver me"? We see that Christian life in its true character, that of the Spirit, depends on redemption. It is by virtue of redemption that the Spirit is present with us.

In verses 10 and 11, we have death and resurrection; only, since there is nothing but sin if we live of our own natural life (Christ being in us, our life); we reckon even now, while still living, our body to be dead. This being the case, we have that which was seen in Christ, chap. i. 4, the Spirit of holiness, and resurrection from the dead. We shall observe how, according to the force of the expression, the Spirit is life," the person of the Spirit is linked with the state of the soul here, with the real life of the Christian. Lower down we find Him distinct from it. We understand this; for the Spirit is truly the divine person, but He acts in us, in the life which He has imparted. " That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." Thus, it is, indeed, the Spirit who produces practical righteousness, good thoughts, but He produces them in me, so that they are mine; nevertheless, I am entirely dependent, and indebted to God for these things. The life is of the same nature as its source, according to John 3, but it is dependent, the whole power is in the Spirit. Through Him we are dependent on God. Christ Himself lived thus. Only, the life was in Him; whereas, if God has given us life, it remains always true that this life is in His Son. " He that has the Son has life."

But to proceed with our chapter. The apostle concludes this exposition of the spiritual life which gives liberty to the soul, by presenting the Christian as being thus a debtor, not to the flesh, which has now no longer any right over us. Yet he will not say directly that we are debtors to the Spirit - it is, indeed, our duty to live after the Spirit, but if we said that we are debtors, it would be putting man under a higher law, the fulfillment of which would thereby be yet more impossible to him. The Spirit was the strength to live, and that, through the affections which He imparts, not the obligation to have them. If we live after the flesh, we are going to die: but if by the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live. The evil is there, but strength is there to overcome it. This is the effect, according to the nature of God and of the flesh. But there is another side of the subject - the relationship which this presence and operation of the Spirit gives us towards God. Instead, then, of saying, " legal debtors to the Spirit," the Spirit Himself is our power by which we mortify the flesh, and thus are sure of living with God; and we are the sons of God, being led of the Spirit. For we have not received a spirit of bondage to be again in fear (that was the condition of the faithful under the law), but a Spirit that answers to our adoption to be sons of God, and that is its power. A Spirit by which we cry " Abba, Father."

The apostle again connects the Spirit of God in the closest union with the character, the spirit, which He produces in us, according to the relationship in which we are placed by His grace in Christ, and of which we are conscious, and which, in fact, we realize by the presence of the Holy Ghost in us. He is in us a Spirit of adoption, for He sets us in the truth, according to the mind of God. Now, as to the power for this, as to its moral reality in us, it is by the presence of the Holy Ghost alone, that it takes place; we are only delivered from the law and the spirit of bondage, in that the Spirit dwells in us, - although the work and the position of Christ are the cause. This position is neither known nor realized, except by the Spirit, whom Jesus sent down when He had Himself entered into it on high as man. But this Spirit dwells in us, acts in us, and brings us, in

effect, into this relationship which has been acquired for us by Christ, through entering into it Himself, i.e., as man risen. The apostle, we have seen, speaks of the Spirit in us as of a certain character, a condition in which we are, because He instills Himself into our whole moral being - our thoughts, affections, object, action; or, rather, He creates them, He is their source, He acts by producing them. Thus He is practically a Spirit of adoption, because He produces in our souls all that appertains to this relationship. If He acts, our thoughts, our affections act also; we are in the enjoyment of this relationship by virtue of this action. But having thus identified (and it could not be otherwise) the Holy Ghost with all that He produces in us-for it is thus the Christian knows Him, - the world do not receive Him, because they do not see Him, or know Him; but ye know Him, because He is with you, and dwells in you. Precious state when the Holy Ghost Himself is the source of our being and of our thoughts, according to the counsels of God in Christ, and the position which Christ has acquired for us. The apostle, I repeat, having spoken of the Spirit as characterizing our moral existence, is careful to distinguish Him as a person, a really distinct existence. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. The two things are equally precious-participation in the Spirit, as the power of life by which we are capable of enjoying God and the relationship of children to Him -and the presence and authority of the Spirit to assure us of it. Our position is that of sons, our proper relationship that of children. The word son is in contrast with the position under the law, which was that of servants; it is the state of privilege in its widest extent. To say, the child of such a one, implies the intimacy and the reality of the relationship. Now there are two things which the apostle lays open: the position of child and its consequences, and the condition of the creature in connection with which the child is found. This gives occasion for two operations of the Spirit: the communication of the assurance of being children, with all its glorious consequences, and His work of sympathy and grace in connection with the sorrows and infirmities in which the child is found here below.

Having thus completed the exposition of the child's condition, he ends this account of his position in Christ with a statement of the certainty of the grace - outside himself- in God, which secures him in this position, and guards him, by the power of God in grace, from everything that could rob him of his blessing - his happiness. It is God who gives it him, and who is its Author. It is God who will bring to a good end the one whom He has placed in it. This last point is treated ver. 31-33.

The first point, then, we have to touch on is, that the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of the family of God. That is to say, the Holy Ghost acting in us in life, as we have seen, has produced the affections of a child, and, by these affections, the consciousness of being a child of God. But He does not separate Himself from this; and by His powerful presence, He bears witness Himself that we are children. We have this testimony in our hearts, in our relationship with God; but the Holy Ghost Himself, as distinct from us, bears this testimony to us, in whom He dwells. The true, freed Christian knows that his heart recognizes God as Father; but he knows, also, that the Holy Ghost Himself bears His testimony to him. That which is founded on the Word, is realized and verified in the heart.

And if we are children, we are heirs - heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. Glorious position in which we are placed with Christ! and the witness of this is the first part of the Spirit's personal office; but this has its consequences here - it has its character here. If the Spirit of Christ is in us, He will be the source in us of the sentiments of Christ. Now, in this world of sin and of misery, Christ necessarily suffered; suffered, also, because of righteousness, and because of His love.

Morally, this feeling of sorrow is the necessary consequence of possessing a moral nature, totally opposed to everything that is in this world. Love, holiness, veneration for God, love for man, everything is essential suffering here below: an active testimony leads to outward suffering. Co-heirs, co-sufferers, co-glorified, that is the order of Christian life and hope. And, observe, inasmuch as possessors of the whole inheritance of God, this suffering is by virtue of the glorious position into which we are brought, and of our participation in the life of Christ Himself. And the sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

For the creature waits for the manifestation of the Sons of God. Then shall its deliverance come. For if we suffer, it is in love, because all is suffering around us. The apostle, then, explains it. It is our connection with the creature which brings us into this suffering; for the creature is subjected to misery and vanity. We know it, 'we who have the Spirit, that all creation groans its estrangement from God, as in travail, yet in hope. When the glory shall set the children free, the creature 'will share their liberty - it cannot participate in the grace; that is a thing which concerns the soul. But glory being the fruit of God's power in outward things, even the creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and partake in the liberty of the glory. For it is not the will of the creature which made it subject has none, in that respect; but it was on account of him who subjected it - on account of man.

Now, the Spirit who makes us know that we are children and heirs of glory, teaches us, by the same means, to understand all the misery of the creature; and through our bodies we are in connection with it, so that there is sympathy. Thus we also wait for the adoption, i.e., the redemption of the body. For as to possession of the full result, it is in hope that we are saved; so that, meanwhile, we groan, as well as understand, according to the Spirit and our new nature, that all creation groans. There is the intelligence of the Spirit, and the affections of the divine nature, on the one side; and the link with fallen creation, by the body, on the other: Here, then, also, the operation of the Holy Ghost has its place, as well as in bearing witness that we are children and heirs of God with Christ.

It is not, therefore, creation only which groans, being in bondage to corruption in consequence of the sin of man; but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit - which God has given in anticipation of the accomplishment of His promises in the last days, and which connects us with Heaven - we also groan, while waiting for the redemption of our body to take possession of the glory prepared for us. But it is because the Holy Ghost, who is in us, takes part in our sorrow, and helps us in our infirmities; dwelling in us, He pleads in the midst of this misery by groans, which do not express themselves in words. The sense of the evil that oppresses us, and all around us, is there; and the more conscious we are of the blessing and of the liberty of the glory, the more sensible we are of the weight of the misery brought in by sin. We do not know what to ask for as a remedy, but the heart expresses its sorrow as Jesus did at the grave of Lazarus; at least, in our little measure. Now, this is not the selfishness of the flesh which does not like to suffer, it is the affection of the Spirit. We have here a striking proof of the way in which the Spirit and the life in us are identified in practice: God searches the hearts-ours- He finds the affection of the Spirit; for He, the Spirit, intercedes. So that it is my heart - it is a spiritual affection, it is the Spirit Himself who intercedes. United to the creature by the body, to Heaven by the Spirit, the sense which I have of the affliction is not the selfishness of the flesh, but the sympathy of the Spirit, who feels it according to God.

What a sweet and strengthening thought, that when God searches the heart, even if we are burdened with a sense of the misery in the midst of which the heart is working, He finds there, not the flesh, but the affection of the Spirit; and that the Spirit Himself is occupied in us, in grace, with all our infirmities. What an attentive ear must God lend to such groans!

The Spirit, then, is the witness in us that we are children, and, thereby, heirs; and He takes part in the sorrowful experience that we are linked with creation by our bodies, and becomes the source of affections in us, which express themselves in groans that are divine in their character as well as human, and which have the value of His own intercession. And this grace shows itself in connection with our ignorance and weakness.

Moreover, if, after all, we know not what to ask for, we know that everything works together, under God's own hand, for our greatest good (Rom. 8:28).

This brings in another side of the truth-that which God does, and that which God is, for us, outside ourselves, to assure us of all blessing. The Holy Ghost is life in us-He bears witness to our glorious position-He acts in divine sympathy in us, according to our actual position of infirmity in this poor body and this suffering creation-He becomes, and makes us, the voice of this suffering before God. All this takes place in us; but God maintains all our privileges by that which He is in Himself. This is the last part of the chapter, from ver. 28 or 31 to the end. God orders all things in favor of those who are called according to His purpose. For that is the source of all good and of all happiness, in us and for us. Therefore it is, that in this beautiful and precious climax, sanctification and the life in us are omitted. The Spirit had instructed our souls on these points at the beginning of the chapter. The Spirit is life, the body dead, if Christ be in us; and now He presents the counsels, the purposes, the acts, the operation of God Himself, which bless and secure us, but are not the life in us. The inward reality has been developed in the previous part; here, the certainty, the security, in virtue of what God is, and of His counsels. He has foreknown His children, He has predestined them to a certain glory, a certain marvelous blessing, namely, to be conformed to the image of His Son. He has called them, He has justified them, He has glorified them. God has done all this. It is perfect and stable, as He is who willed it, and who has done it. No link in the chain is wanting, of all that was needful in order to bind their souls to glory, according to the counsels of God. And what a glory! What a position poor creatures as the saved are - to be conformed to the image of the Son of God Himself. This, in fact, is the thought of grace, not to bless us by Jesus, but to bless us with Him. He came down even to us, sinless, in love and in righteousness, to associate us with Himself in the fruit of His glorious work. It was this which His love determined, that we should have one and the same portion with Himself; and this the counsels of the Father, blessed be His name for it! had determined also. The result of all is, that God is for us. Sweet and glorious conclusion, which gives the heart a peace that is ineffable, a rest that depends on the power and stability of God-a rest that shuts out all anxiety as to anything that could trouble it; for if God be for us, who can be against us? and all anxiety as to any limit to the liberality of God. He who had given His Son, how should He not with Him give us all things. Moreover, with regard to our righteousness before God, or to charges which might be brought against the saints, as well as with regard to all the difficulties of the way, God Himself has justified, who shall condemn? Christ has died,

He has risen again, and is at the right hand of God, and intercedes for us; who shall separate us from His love? The enemies He has conquered? Height? He is there for us. Depth? He has been there; it is the proof of His love. Difficulties? we are more than conquerors-they are the immediate occasion of the display of His love and faithfulness, making us feel where our portion, is, what our strength is. Trial does but assure the heart which knows His love, that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus. Everything else is the creature, and cannot separate us from the love of God. A love of God, who has entered, also, into this misery of the creature, and gained the victory for us over all. Thus the deliverance, and liberty, and security of the saints by grace and power is fully brought out.

There remained one important question to be considered, namely, How this salvation, common to Jew and Gentile, both alienated from God -this doctrine that there was no difference was to be reconciled with the special promises made to the Jews? They did not fail, also, to accuse the apostle of having despised his nation and its privileges. Chaps. 9, 10, and 11 reply to this question; and with rare and admirable perfection, set forth the position of Israel with respect to God and to the gospel. This reply opens, in itself, a wide door to intelligence in the ways of God.

The apostle begins by affirming his deep interest in the blessing of Israel. Their condition was a source of constant grief to him. Far from despising them, he loved them as much as Moses had done. He had wished to be anathema from Christ for them. He acknowledges that all the privileges granted by God until then, belonged to them. But he does not allow that the word of God had failed; and he develops proofs of the free sovereignty of God, conformably to which, without trenching upon the promises made to the Jews, He could admit the Gentiles according to His election.

In the first place, this truth displayed itself in the bosom of Abraham's own family; and the Jews alleged their exclusive right of descent from him, and to have the promises by right, and exclusively, because they were descended from him. They are not all Israel which are of Israel. Neither because they were of the seed of Abraham were they, therefore, children. For in that case, Ishmael and Esau must have been received; and the Jews would by no means hear of that. Moreover, it was on the principle of • sovereignty and election that God had decided that the seed should be called in the family of Isaac. And before Esau and Jacob were born, God declared that the elder should serve the younger. The Jews must, then, admit God's sovereignty on this point. Was God, then, unrighteous? He plainly declared His sovereignty to Moses as a principle. It is the first of all rights. But in what case had he exercised. this right? in a case that concerned the rights of Israel - of which the Jews sought to avail themselves all Israel would have been cut off, if God had dealt in righteousness; there was nothing but the sovereignty of God which could be a door of escape. God retreated into His sovereignty, in order to spare whom He would. Justice would have condemned them all alike, gathered round the golden calf which they had set up to worship. This, on the side of mercy. On that of judgment, Pharaoh served for an example. The enemy of God and of His people, he had treated the claims of God with contempt, exalting himself proudly against Him -"Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him? I will not let His people go." Pharaoh being in this state, the Lord uses him to give an example of His wrath and judgment. So that He shows mercy to whom He will, and hardens whom He will. Man complains of it, as he does of the grace that justifies freely. As to rights, compare those of God and those of the creature who has sinned against Him. How can man, who is made of clay, dare to reply against God? The potter has power

to do as He will with the lump. No one can say to God, What doest Thou? Sovereignty is the first of all rights, the foundation of all morality. If God is not God, what will He be? The root of the question is this, Is God to judge man, or man God? God can do whatsoever He pleases. He is not the object for judgment. Such is His title; but when, in fact, the apostle presents the two cases, wrath and grace, He puts the case of God showing long-suffering towards one already fitted for wrath, in order to give, at last, an example to men of His wrath in the execution of His justice; and then of God displaying His glory in vessels of mercy whom He has prepared for glory. There are, then, these three points established here with marvelous exactitude: the power to do all things, no one having the right to say a word; wonderful endurance with the wicked, in whom, at length, His wrath is manifested; demonstration of His glory in vessels, whom He has Himself prepared by mercy for glory, and whom He has called, whether from among the Jews or Gentiles, according to the declaration of Hosea.

The doctrine established, then, is the sovereignty of God, in derogation of the pretensions of the Jews to the exclusive enjoyment of all the promises, as being descended from Abraham; for, among his descendants, more than one had been excluded by the exercise of this sovereignty; and it was nothing less than its exercise which, on the occasion of the golden calf, had spared those who pretended to the right of descent. It was necessary, therefore, that the Jew should recognize it, or else that he should admit the Idumeans in full right, as well as the Ishmaelites, and renounce it himself, the families of Moses and Joshua alone, perhaps, excepted. But if such was the sovereignty of God, He would now exercise it in favor of the Gentiles, as well as Jews. He called whom He would.

If we look closely into these quotations from Hosea, we shall find that Peter, who writes to converted Jews alone, takes only the passage at the end of chap. 2, where Lo-ammi and Lo-ruhamah become Ammi and Ruhamah. Paul quotes that, also, which is at the end of chap. 1, where it is written: "In the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called - not "my people," but -"the children of the living God." It is this last passage which he applies to the Gentiles called by grace.

But further passages from the prophets amply confirm the judgment which the apostle pronounces, by the Spirit, on the Jews. Isaiah declared formally, that if God had not left them a little remnant, they would have been as Sodom and Gomorrah: numerous as the people were, a little remnant only should be saved; for God was cutting the work short, in judgment, on the earth. And here was the state of things morally; the Gentiles had obtained the righteousness which they had not sought, had obtained it by faith; and Israel, seeking to obtain it by the fulfillment of a law, had not attained to righteousness. Why? Because they sought it not by faith, but by works of law. For they had stumbled at the stumbling-stone, i.e. at Christ, as it is written, " I lay in Sion a stumbling stone; but whosoever believeth in Him shall not be ashamed."

Having touched on this subject, the apostle, who deeply loved his nation as the people of God, pours out his heart with respect to the doctrine which was a stumbling-stone to them. His desire, the aim of his heart's affection, was their salvation. The object of his affections, they were clothed, in his eyes, with their zeal for God, ignorant as it was; ignorant, alas! on the side of that which God 'taught. Being ignorant of God's righteousness, they sought in their zeal to establish their own righteousness, and did not submit themselves to that of God. For Christ is the end of law for

righteousness to every believer. There was found the righteousness of God; there the stumbling-stone to Israel. Nevertheless, the apostle establishes his argument clearly and firmly. He establishes it on his own part; but Deuteronomy supplies him with an unexpected proof of the great principle. He quotes a passage from that book which speaks on the subject of Israel's condition when they should have broken the law, and be suffering its consequences. " Secret things," the lawgiver had said, " belong to our God; but those that are revealed, are for the people." That is to say, the law was given as a condition to the enjoyment of the blessing, plainly and positively; what God might do in grace when Israel should be under the consequences of the broken law, remained in the secrecy of His supreme will. Upon this, however, another principle is distinctly revealed, namely, that when the fulfillment of the law was impossible, and when Israel had been driven out of their land for having broken it, that if then their heart turned to God in that far country, He would accept them. It was all over with the law as a condition of relationship with God. Israel was driven out, according to the chapter we are looking at (Deut. 30), was Loammi, no longer the people of God. The testimony of God was, nevertheless, addressed to them; they might turn to Him in spirit, and by faith. It was no longer the law, it was faith. " But," says the apostle, " if so, it is Christ who is its object." No Jew would have denied that the testimony of God was the hope of every true Israelite when all was ruined. This passage, then, in Deuteronomy-when Moses has done with the law, and has supposed other counsels of God, and on them founds the principle of turning in heart to God when all is over with regard to the law, and Israel is in a place where it would be impossible to keep it, being in captivity among the Gentiles - this passage has remarkable significance in the argument of the apostle; and its being quoted is an extraordinary proof, that in his reasonings it is the Holy Ghost who acts. It is the apostle who introduces Christ; but the combination of the truths of the different positions of Israel, of the law, and of the return in heart when they were lost under the law a combination of which Christ was the key-stone, and alone could be -exhibits a comprehensive view of the oneness of all God's ways, morally and in his dispensations, of which the Spirit of God alone is capable, and which evidently expresses His thoughts. See Deut. 29 (at the end) and 30.

The word of faith, then, set forth as being the hope of Israel, was that which the apostle announced, that if any one confessed with his mouth the Lord Jesus, and believed in his heart that God had raised Him from the dead, he should be saved. Precious, simple, and positive assertion and borne out, if that were needed, by the testimony of the Old Testament: " Whosoever believes in Him shall not be ashamed." The words heart and mouth are in contrast with the law. In the case Deuteronomy supposes, Israel could not fulfill the law: the word of their God, Moses told them, could be in their heart and in their mouth. Thus, now for the Jew (as for every one), it was the belief of the heart. Observe, it does not say, If you love in your heart, or, If your heart is what it ought to be towards God; but, If you believe in your heart. A man believes with his heart, when he really believes with a heart interested in the thing. His affections being engaged in the truth, he desires that that which is told him should be the truth. He desires the thing, and at the same time he does not doubt it. It is not in his having part in it that he believes, but in the truth of the thing itself, being concerned in it as important to himself. It is not the state of his affections (a very serious consideration, however, in its place) that is the subject here, but the importance and the truth of that which is presented by the Word,- its importance to himself, as needing it for his salvation, a salvation that he is conscious of needing, that he cannot do without,- a truth, of which lie is assured, as a testimony from God Himself. God affirms to such a one, that salvation belongs

to him, but it is not that which he has to believe in as the object of faith; it is that of which God assures every one who believes. Moreover, this faith is manifested by the proof it gives of its sincerity, by confession of the name of Christ. If some one was convinced that Jesus is the Christ, and refused to confess Him, his conviction would evidently be his greatest condemnation. The faith of the heart produces the confession of the mouth; the confession of the mouth is the counter-proof of the sincerity of the faith. It is the testimony which God requires at the outset. It is to sound the trumpet on earth in face of the enemy. It is to say that Christ has conquered, and that everything belongs in right to Him. It is a confession which brings in God, in answer to the name of Jesus. It is not that which gives righteousness, but it is the public acknowledgment of Christ, and thus gives expression to the faith by which there is participation in the righteousness of God, so that it may be said, "He believes in Christ unto salvation; he has the faith that justifies."

I have entered here a little more into detail, because this is a point on which the human heart perplexes itself; and perplexes itself so much the more because it is sincere, as long as there is any unbelief and self-righteousness remaining. It is impossible, that an awakened soul should not feel the necessity of having the heart set right and turned to God; and hence, not submitting to the righteousness of God, he thinks to make the favor of God depend on the state of his own affections, whereas God loves us while we are yet sinners. The state of our affections is of all importance; but it supposes a relationship already existing, according to which we love. We love because we are loved of God. Now, His love has done something; has done something according to our necessities. It has given Jesus, and Jesus has accomplished what was required, in order that we might participate in divine righteousness; and thus he has placed every one who (acknowledging that he is a lost sinner) believes in Him, in the secure relationship of a child, and of a justified soul before God, according to the perfection of the work of Christ. Salvation belongs to this soul, according to the declaration of God Himself. Loved with such love, saved by such grace, enjoying such favor, let it cultivate affections suitable to the gift of Jesus, and to the knowledge it has of Him, and of His goodness.

It is evident, that if it is "whosoever" believes in Jesus, the Gentile comes in as well as the Jew. There is no difference; the same Lord is rich unto all that call upon Him. It is beautiful to see this form of expression, "There is no difference," repeated here. The apostle had used it before, with the addition "for all have sinned." Sin puts all men on a level in ruin before God. But there is also no ' difference, " for the same Lord is rich unto all, for every one who calls upon His name shall be saved."

On this declaration, the apostle founds another argument; and by it he justifies the ways of God that were accomplished in his ministry. The Jewish Scriptures declared that every one who called upon the name of the Lord should be saved. Now, the Jews acknowledged that the Gentiles did not know the name of the true and living God. It was needful, therefore, to proclaim Him, in order that they might call upon Him, and the whole ministry of the apostle was justified. Accordingly, it was written, " How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace." For, in dealing with these questions among the Jews, he naturally rests on the authority of their own Scriptures.

But he applies this principle for evangelization to the Jews as well as to the Gentiles (for the law was not the announcement of good news). He quotes Isaiah to the same purpose. It was in a proclamation, a truth thus publicly preached, that Israel had not believed: so that there ought to be

faith in a truth thus preached, in the Word proclaimed. Verse 18 presents some difficulty. It is certain that the apostle intends to explain, that this proclamation of the truth on God's part had taken place. Israel was without excuse, for the report had even gone out everywhere, the words which announced God unto the ends of the earth. Even the Gentiles had heard it everywhere. This is plain. But does the apostle merely borrow the words-which in the passage quoted apply to the testimony of creation - or does he mean to speak of the testimony of nature itself? I believe that he uses the passage to show that God had the Gentiles in view in His testimonies; that he wishes quietly to suggest this to the Jews by a quotation from their own Scriptures, that not only have they, the Jews, heard; but that the testimony has gone everywhere, and that this was in the mind of God. Paul does not quote the passage as a prophecy of that which was taking place; he borrows the words without that form of speech, to show that this universal testimony was in the mind of God, whatever might be the means employed. And then, stating the thing with more precision for the Jew, he adds, Did not Israel know? was not the nation apprised of this extension to the Gentiles, of the testimony of this proclamation of grace to them, of the reception of the testimony by the Gentiles, so as to bring them into relationship with God? Yes; Moses had already said, that God would provoke Israel to jealousy by a people without knowledge. And Isaiah had spoken boldly, formally declaring that God should be found by a nation that sought Him not; and to Israel, that all day long He had stretched forth His hands to a rebellious and gainsaying people. In a word, that the Gentiles should find Him; and Israel be perverse and disobedient. Thus, the testimony borne to their relative positions - although the apostle approaches it gradually and quietly - is distinct and formal. The Gentiles received; Israel at enmity.

Hereupon, the question is immediately raised, Has God then rejected his people? To this the eleventh chapter is the answer. The apostle gives three proofs that it is by no means the case. 1st, He is himself an Israelite; there is a remnant whom God has reserved, as in the days of Elias, a proof of the constant favor of the Lord, of the interest He takes in His people, even when they are unfaithful; so that when the prophet, the most faithful and energetic among them knew not where to find one who was true to God besides himself, God had His eyes upon the remnant who had not bowed the knee to Baal. 2nd. The call of the Gentiles, and their substitution for Israel, was not the definitive rejection of the latter in the counsels of God; for God had done it to provoke Israel to jealousy - it was not, then, for their rejection. 3rd. The Lord would come forth out of Sion, and turn away the iniquities of Jacob.

That which the apostle, or rather which the Holy Ghost, says on this point, requires to be looked at in more detail.

The apostle, in quoting the case of Elias, shows that when Israel was in such a state that even Elias pleaded against them, yet God had not rejected them. He had reserved for Himself seven thousand men. This was the election of sovereign grace. It was the same thing now. But it was by grace, and not by works. The election, then, has obtained the blessing, and the rest were blinded. Even as it was written, " God hath given them the spirit of slumber," etc.

Had they then stumbled that they should fall? No But through their fall, salvation is come to the Gentiles, to provoke Israel to jealousy. A second proof that it was not for their rejection. But if their diminishing and fall was a blessing to the Gentiles, what should not the fruit be of their restoration? If the first-fruits are holy, so is the lump if the root, the tree also. Now, as to the continued chain of

those who enjoy the promises in this world, Israel was the root (or rather, Abraham), and not the Gentiles. And here is that which happened in the good olive-tree of promise in this world, of which Abraham was the root (God Himself the source of leaf and fruit), and Israel the stem and the tree. There had been some bad branches, and they had been cut off; and others from the Gentiles grafted in, in their place, who thus enjoyed the richness natural to the tree of promise. But it was on the principle of faith that they, being of the wild olive tree, had been grafted in. Many of the Israelite branches, the natural heirs of the promises, had been cut off because of their unbelief; for when the fulfillment of the promises was offered them, they rejected it. They rested on their own righteousness, and despised the goodness the partakers of the promises, stood on the principle of faith. But if they abandoned this principle, they should lose their place in the tree of promise, even as the unbelieving Jews had lost theirs. Goodness was to be their portion in this dispensation of God's government, with regard to those who had part in the enjoyment of His promises, if they continued in this goodness; if not, cutting off. This had happened to the Jews; it should be the same with the Gentiles if they did not continue in that goodness. Such is the government of God, with regard to that which stood as His tree on the earth. But there was a positive counsel of God accomplished in that which took place, namely, the partial blinding of Israel (for they were not rejected), until all the Gentiles who were to have part in the blessings of these days, should have come in. After this, Israel should be saved as a whole; it should not be individuals spared and added to the Church, in which Israel had no longer any place as a nation. They should be saved as a whole, as Israel. Christ shall come forth from Sion as the seat of His power, and shall turn away iniquity from Jacob: God pardoning them all their transgressions.

This is the third proof that Israel was not rejected.

For while enemies, as concerning the Gospel, at the present time, they are still beloved for the fathers' sakes. For that which God has once chosen and called, He never casts off. He does not repent of his counsels, nor of the call which gives them effect. But if the counsel of God remains unchangeable, the way in which it is accomplished brings out the marvelous wisdom of God. The Gentiles had long continued in the disobedience of unbelief. God comes in, in grace. The Jews opposed themselves to the actings of grace. They lose all right to the promises through this unbelief, so that they must receive the effect of the promise on the footing of pure mercy and the sovereign grace of God,* in the same way as the poor Gentile. For He had shut them all up in unbelief, that it might be pure mercy to all. Therefore it is that the apostle exclaims, O depths of wisdom and knowledge! The promises are fulfilled, and the pretension to human righteousness annihilated, the Jews who have lost everything, receive all on the true ground of the goodness of God. Their apparent loss of all, is but the means of their receiving all from sovereign grace, instead of having it by virtue of human righteousness. All is grace; yet God is ever faithful, and that, in spite of man's unfaithfulness. Man is blessed; the Jew receives the effect of the promise; but both the one and the other have to attribute it to the pure mercy of God. There is nothing about the Church here - it is the tree of promise, and those who in virtue of their position have right, successively, to the enjoyment of the promises on earth. The unbelieving Jews were never cut off from the Church, they were never in it. They had been in the position of natural heirs of the right to the promises. The Church is not the Jews' own olive tree, according to nature, so that they should be grafted into it again. Nothing can be plainer the chain of those who had a right to the promises from Abraham, was Israel; some of the branches were then cut off, the tree of promise remains on the earth, the

Gentiles are grafted into it, in place of the Jews, they also become unfaithful, that is to say, the case is supposed, and they would in their turn be cut off, and the Jews be reinstated in the old olive tree, according to the promises, and in order to enjoy them; but it is in pure mercy.

These communications of the mind of God, end this portion of the book, namely, that in which the apostle reconciles sovereign grace shown to sinners (putting all on a level in the common ruin of sin) with the especial privileges of the people of Israel, founded on the faithfulness of God. They had lost everything, as to right. God would fulfill his promises in grace and by mercy.

The apostle resumes the thread of his instructions, by taking up - as he does in all his epistles- the moral consequences of his doctrine. He places the believer, at the outset, on the ground of God's mercy, which he had fully developed already. The principle of grace that saves, had been established as the basis of salvation. The ground of all Christian morality is now laid in this fundamental principle. To present our bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, acceptable to God; an intelligent service, not that of the hands, nor consisting in ceremonies which the body could perform. This, for man personally. As to his outward relationships, he was not to be conformed to the world. Neither was this to be an outside, mechanical, non-conformity; but the result of being renewed in mind, so as to seek for and discern the will of God, good and acceptable and perfect; the life being thus transformed.

Thus the Christian walk was characterized by devotedness and obedience. It was a life subjected to the will of another, namely, to the will of God; and, therefore, stamped with humility and dependence. For there was a danger, flowing from the power that acted in it, of the flesh coming in and availing itself of it. With regard to this, every one was to have a spirit of wisdom and moderation and to act within the limits of the gift which God had dispensed to him, occupying himself with it according to the will of God; even as each member has its own place in the body, and should accomplish the function which God has ascribed to it. The apostle passes on insensibly to all the forms which duty assumes in the Christian, according to the various positions in which he stands, and to the spirit in which he ought to walk in every relationship.

It is in this twelfth chapter only, that the idea of the Church, as a body, is thus found in this epistle; and that, in connection with the duties of the members individually duties that flowed from their position as such. Otherwise, it is the position of man, in his individual responsibility before God, that is set before us in the Epistle to the Romans. The directions given by the apostle extend to the Christian's relationship with the authorities under which he is placed. He recognizes them as accomplishing the service of God, and as armed with authority from Him, so that resisting them would be resisting that which God had established. Conscience, therefore, and not merely force, constrained the Christian to obey. In fine, he was to render to every man that which was due to him in virtue of his position; to leave nothing owing to any one, be it of whatever character it might - excepting love - a debt which never can be liquidated.

Among themselves, Christians are exhorted not to seek the high things of this world, but to walk as brethren with those of low degree. A precept too much forgotten in the Church - to her loss. If the Christian of high degree requires that honor according to the flesh should be paid him, let it be done with good will. Happy he, who according to the example of the King of kings, and to the precept of our apostle, knows how to walk in company with those of low degree, in their journey through the wilderness. Now, love is the fulfilling of the law; for love works no ill to his neighbor,

and so fulfills the law. Another principle acts also on the spirit of the Christian. It is time to awake. The deliverance from this present evil age, which the Lord will accomplish for us, draws nigh. The night is far spent, the day is at hand - God knows the moment. The characteristics which marked its approach in the days of the apostle, have ripened in a very different way since then, although God, with a view to those whom He is gathering in, is still even now restraining them. Let us then walk as children of the day, casting off the works of darkness. We belong to the day - of which Christ Himself will be the light. Let our walk be in accordance with that day, putting on Christ Himself, and not being studious of that which is in accordance with the will and the lusts of the flesh.

From the beginning of chapter fourteen, to the end of verse 7 in chapter fifteen, another point is taken up, to which the different positions of the Jew and Gentile gave rise. It was difficult for a Jew to rid himself of the sense of difference between days, and between meats. A Gentile, having abandoned his whole religious system as idolatrous, held to nothing. Human nature is liable, in this respect, to sin on both sides - a want of conscience, an unbridled will - and a ceremonial conscience. Christianity recognizes neither of these things. It delivers from the question of days and meats, by making us heavenly with Christ. But it teaches us to bear with conscientious weakness, and to be conscientious ourselves. Conscience cannot - has not a right to - prescribe a new thing to us as a duty, but it may, through ignorance, hold to a traditional thing as obligatory. In reality, we have entire liberty, but we ought to bear with weakness of faith in another, and not put a stumblingblock in his way. The apostle gives three directions in this respect. 1st. To receive the weak, but not for the discussion of questions that have to be settled. 2nd. Not to judge our brother, since he is Christ's servant, not ours; and every one must give account of himself to God. 3rd. To bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves; to walk in the spirit of love, and if we are in a higher state, to show it by receiving one another as Christ has received us, to the glory of God which eclipses man and his petty superiorities, and which kindles charity and makes it ardent, earnest in seeking the good of others, taking us so out of self, and beyond little things, that we are able to adapt ourselves to others, where the will of God and His glory are not in question.

Many important principles are brought forward in these exhortations. Every one shall give account of himself to God. Every one, in these cases, should be fully persuaded in his own mind, and should not judge another. If any one has faith, that delivers him from traditional observances, and he sees them to be absolutely nothing - as indeed they are- let him have his faith for God, and not cause his brother to stumble.

No one lives to himself; and no one dies to himself; we are the Lord's. The weak, then, regard the day for the Lord's sake; the others do not regard it, because of the Lord. This is the reason, therefore, for not judging. He whom I judge is the Lord's. Therefore, also, I should seek to please my brother for his edification, he is the Lord's; and I should receive him as I have been received, to share in the glory of God which has been conferred on him. We serve Christ in these things by thinking of the good of our brother. As to the energy of a man's faith, let him have it between himself and God. Love is the rule for the use of his liberty, if it is liberty, and not the bondage of disregarding. For the inverse of this principle, when these observances are used to destroy liberty in Christ, see Gal. 4, where the apostle shows, that if the observance is taught as a principle, it is really turning back to Paganism.

These instructions close the epistle. From chap. 15: 8, it is the exordium, the personal circumstances of the apostle, and salutations.

Ver. 8, et seq. He sums up his thought respecting God's dealings with the Jew and the Gentile in the advent of Jesus. He was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to accomplish the promises made to the fathers. For to the Jews God had made promises; but none to the Gentiles. To the latter, it was not truth that was in question; but by grace they might, through Jesus, glorify God for His mercy. For them, the apostle quotes passages from Deuteronomy (that is to say, from the law), from the Psalms, and from the Prophets.

In ver.-13, he turns affectionately to the Romans, to express his desires for them, and his confidence in the blessing they had received from God, which enabled them mutually to exhort one another; while, at the same time, expressing his boldness in some sort, because of the grace God had given him, to be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, by fulfilling a public function with regard to them; being, as it were, a priest to offer up the Gentiles as an offering acceptable to God, because sanctified by the Holy Ghost (see Num. 8:11). This was his glory before God. This sanctification by the Holy Ghost was that which took the place of sanctification by birth, and it was well worth it.

Moreover, he had accomplished his task, from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum. Not where Christ had been preached before, but where they had not yet heard of Him. This had prevented his coming to Rome. But now that there was no more place- for him, according to the Holy Ghost - nothing more in those parts for him to do and having long desired to see them, he thought to visit them on his way to Spain. For the moment, he was going to Jerusalem, with the collection made in Macedonia and Achaia for the saints.

We see that his heart turns to the Jews - they occupied his thoughts; and while desiring to put the seal of performance on the grace which this collection betokened, he was pre-occupied with them as Jews, as those who had a claim. A mingled feeling, perhaps, of one who was anxious to show that he did not forget them; for, in fact, he loved his nation. We have to learn whether, in executing this service (properly that of a deacon), pleasing as it might be, he was at the height of his mission as apostle. However that might be, the hand of God was in it, to make all things work for the good of His beloved servant and child, as well as for His own glory. Paul had a presentiment that it would not, perhaps, turn out well, and he asks the prayers of the saints at Rome, that he might be delivered from the hands of the wicked, and see their face with joy. We know how it ended; the subject was spoken of when we were considering the Acts, He saw them, indeed, at Rome; he was delivered, but as a prisoner; and we do not know if he ever went to Spain. The ways of God are according to His eternal counsels, and according to His grace, and according to His perfect wisdom.

Never having known the Roman Christians as a Church, Paul sends many personal salutations. That was the link which subsisted. We see how touchingly his heart dwells upon all the details of service which attached him to those who had rendered it. He who by grace had searched into all the counsels of God -who had been admitted to see that which could not be made known to man here below - remembered all that these humble Christians - these devoted women - had done for him and for the Lord. This is love; it is the real proof of the power of the Spirit of God - it is the bond of charity.

We have, also, here a precious and most perfect rule for our walk, namely, to be simple concerning evil, and wise unto that which is good. Christianity alone could have given such a rule, for it provides a walk that is positively good, and wisdom to walk in it. As Christians, we may be simple concerning evil. What a deliverance! While the man of the world must needs acquaint himself with evil, in order to avoid it in this world of snares and of artifice; he must corrupt his mind, accustom himself to think of evil, in order not to be entrapped by it.

But soon there should be entire deliverance soon should Satan be trodden under their feet.

We see, also, that the apostle did not write his letters himself; but employed a brother to do it. Here, it was one named Tertius (ver. 22). Deeply concerned at the condition of the Galatians, he wrote himself the letter addressed to them, and had to write in very large letters; but the salutation at the end of this, as of other epistles, was in his own hand, in order to verify the contents of the epistle. 1 Cor. 16:21, 2 Thess. 3:17, in which the feigned epistle, alluded to in 2 Thess. 2, gave occasion to state this proof, which he always gave, that an epistle was truly his. We see, likewise, by this little circumstance; that he attached a solemn and authoritative character to his epistles, that they were not merely the effusions of a spiritual heart, but that in writing them, he knew, and would have others understand, that they were worthy of consideration, and of being preserved as authorities, as the expression and exercise of his apostolic mission, and were to be received as such; that is to say, as possessing the Lord's authority, with which he was furnished by the power of the Holy Ghost. They were letters from the Lord by his means, even as his words had also been (1 Thess. 2:13, and 1 Cor. 14:37).

We have yet to observe, with regard to the three verses at the end of the epistle, that they are, as it were, detached from all the rest, introducing, in the form of a doxology, the suggestion of a truth, the communication of which distinguished the apostle's teaching. He does not develop it °here. The task which the Holy Ghost accomplished in this epistle was the presentation of the. soul individually before God, according to the divine thoughts. Nevertheless, this connects itself immediately with the position of the body; and the doctrine respecting the body, the Church, cannot be separated from it. Now, the us distinctly, that the mystery, the Church, and the gathering together in one of all things under Christ, had been entirely unknown; God had been silent on that subject in the times which were defined by the word ages, the Church not forming a part of that course of events, and of ways of God on earth. But the mystery was now revealed, and communicated to the Gentiles by prophetic writings-not "the writings of the prophets." The epistles addressed to the Gentiles possessed this character, they were prophetic writings. A fresh proof of the character of the epistles in the New Testament.

He who has understood the doctrine of this epistle, and of the writings of Paul in general, will readily apprehend the significance of this postscript.

The Skelton Record

"How bright, there above, is the mercy of God!"-

"And void of all guilt, and clear of all sin,

Is my conscience and heart, through my Savior's blood."-

"Not a cloud above:" - "not a spot within."

Christ died! then I 'm clean: -"Not a spot within."

God's mercy and love! - "Not a cloud above."

'Tis the Spirit, through faith, which thus triumphs o'er sin:

"Not a cloud above:" - "not a spot within."

The Good of Being Under God's Hand

"But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel" (Phil. 1:12).

In the circumstances to which the apostle here alludes, we get the result of the overruling hand of God in His power and ways toward us in the Church. There is nothing so good for us as the hand of God coming in and leading us, as He did Paul, in a path altogether contrary to our will. But the flesh always tears away from the hand of God; and even the renewed will dislikes to be thus under it. There is nothing that we more shrink from than from the hand of God. When Paul wrote this epistle, it was exactly his case. For if the things which happened to him fell out for the furtherance of the Gospel (as he says), nothing at this time happened to him, according to his prayers; but there was the hand of God upon him, keeping him from his longed-for service. But this very thing is used of God to set the saint in Christ far above the service he is occupied in - precious in its place as that may be - and to give the greater blessedness of the enjoyment of Christ Himself. Paul, at Tarsus, for a while rested from service; afterward he labored more abundantly than they all. The early part of his course sent him into activity, and he "conferred not with flesh and blood"; but on he went in the power of the Spirit in him; but here we see him the subject of another process in his soul. In Romans we find him saying, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea" (Rom. 15:30,31). There he prayed to be delivered from ungodly men, yet they put his feet in the stocks. While there was service to be done, there was another matter with Paul. He was idle two whole years at Caesarea from service. He was a prisoner; but as a prisoner was able to teach them all. All this time the hand of God was upon him. The Lord was meeting the remainder of self-will in his servant. The value of being with the Lord alone is, that he himself gets more thoroughly into the presence of God; and then he knows what the saints are before God, from being in the presence of God Himself. Paul advances in the joy of being with the Lord, that he might know the difference of the joy of being with the Lord, and in service here. He uses the joy of being here or there, as, "far better"; and so dwelt in God's love, that when he saw service to the Church, he says, "I know I shall stay here." Though in a strait, yet he had no doubt -because he knew what was in God. It was "far better to depart and be with him"; but-in seeing the other principle of God's active love---"to abide in the flesh is more needful for them." God is ever acting in love; therefore, we should never be disturbed at anything which can happen to us, as though some strange thing had happened to us. The things which happen to us, always happen of God, and are all perfect, being of God.

Never a time when God more deferred acting in Paul than the two years at Caesarea. Paul was entirely and painfully set aside by these circumstances. If your soul is in communion with God, you will know God's mind about the saints. But you are not to be content unless "changed into the same image." That which is well pleasing to God, SHOULD BE WROUGHT IN US.

Fellowship With Christ: 2. and 3. Crucified and Buried Together With Christ

2.-Crucified together with Christ.

Though I have spoken, first of all, of association with Christ, as in His death-there is the association with Him, as on the cross; which, according to the order of the subjects, should naturally come before the other. Following, however, the order which the needs of conscience seemed to suggest, I have taken that first, which, as Scripture presents truth, ministers most directly to the soul's liberty and peace.

The being, through the grace which identifies us with Him in death, "dead to sin," -"baptized into His death," -"buried with Him into death," and as " dead -free from sin," etc., changes the whole standing of a soul. It takes it clean off one foundation, and sets it upon altogether another; takes it out of one place which has a character, judgment, and experiences proper to it, and sets it in an altogether other place, having a character, judgment, and experiences, which are in contrast with those of the former place, and which are peculiar to itself.

Israel in Egypt, and Israel out of Egypt, were strongly in contrast. Egypt was the iron furnace, the house of bondage, the land of captivity,- a doomed place, under God's judgment; and though it might have its leeks and melons, and cucumbers, it had, also, its tale of bricks, and its treasure cities to be built by Israel's toil. There, too, Israel was a nation of slaves, thrust aside as unfit to associate with the lords of the earth - the murderers of their male children. Outside of Egypt, they were the Lord's freed ones,- bound for a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of rest, and a place of blessing. And they pitched their tents around the tent of Jehovah of hosts, the king of the whole earth, possessor of heaven and earth. The purpose of the Lord concerning them, had ever been the same; but the positions are two, and contrasted. First, the providence of God lets them sink down to the standing of a nation in slavery, in Egypt; but then the God of providence takes that same people to be as His own firstborn Son, and overthrows the power of their oppressor. It was their passage through the Red Sea which definitively marked the redemption of the chosen ones; for the return of the waters which destroyed the pursuer, shut them effectually out of Egypt, and with God in the wilderness. The positions are two, and easily distinguished, the one from the other.

The positions, also, are two, and contra-distinguished, of a man when trying to bring a clean thing out of himself, who is unclean, and of the same party when the death of Christ has been made his. He was an outcast from Eden; member of a race under judgment; himself so far wrecked and ruined, as that he thought himself competent to find out God; and, as a sinner, to stand in His presence, and to settle matters with Him for death and judgment to come, and to bring life, by his own power, where death reigned. His standing ground was human nature as a creature. But he has heard that Christ died, the just One for the unjust; and that faith identifies the sinner with Him who died under the penalty due to sinners. All that he had, and all that he was, has found its

answer, and its end, in the death of Christ. Divine, indissoluble association of the old Me and all that it had or was, with the death of Christ, the Son of Man under judgment for me, is the goal, the end of that Me. "I [yet not I (that ended in the death of the Son of Man under judgment)], yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me - 'live.' "

The unbelieving believers of this day, know little of the death of Christ in this way, as the Red Sea between God's Israel in the wilderness and Egypt. They have forgotten that it was " when He had by Himself purged our sins," that, then (and not till then), He " sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." They have let slip that " we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;" that this One, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever (as to sacrificial offering), " sat down on the right hand of God;"-he rested from all further offering, and sat down: -" For by one offering, He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Surely, if, instead of looking to the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man; and judging themselves and their feelings, according to what is found in God's display of mercy in the heavens, if I say any are absorbed in what passes within themselves, and so let slip the display of mercy in the heavens; substituting for God's dealings in mercy, God's conduct with His saved people in government, there is great danger and just cause for us to stand in doubt of them. However unintentionally on their parts, they yet do, practically, use the death of Christ as the means to get themselves into a place of judgment, and out of the place of liberty and peace on the other side of the judgment.

As to the bearing upon the believer, through grace, of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have it explained in Rom. 6:6, and Gal. 2:20.

As we shall see, the thought presented is not that of our bearing the cross to-day (though that, in another connection, as saved people, may elsewhere be taught), but that which is presented to us, is God's estimate of "our old man;" God's treatment of it, once for all, when the Just One once stood before Him as representing the many unjust, and bore our judgment for us.

" Knowing this, that our old man is crucified (or has been crucified) with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin " (Rom. 6:6).

" I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

The cross was a wantonly cruel punishment; and when God gave laws to His people Israel, He appointed another mode of putting a sinner to death, and branded the cross by saying, " Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree " (Deut. 21:23). How marvelously had He, in grace, thus anticipated a way for His own mercy to flow forth in to a rebellious people. We may see this in Gal. 3:10-13: " For as many 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. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." All that are of law are under the curse, because it curses all that keep it not, and none can keep it: but Christ bore the curse in His own body on the tree. But then, if He who merited everything good when He was our substitute in the judgment was so treated, we -the

old man -(i.e. what we were, and what our body is), got there expressed upon it God's estimate of it He treated it, when we were represented by His Son, in a way to mark His estimate of it, that is, of us according to our Adam connection. Crucifixion and death are not necessarily identical; a man might be saved from death, though he had been put to open shame before God and man, and been nailed to a cross; so, Christ was not only nailed to the cross, and had experiences when there, as if, instead of being the faithful Prophet, Priest and King whom God delighted to honor, He had been one whose sins and iniquities were more in number than the hairs of His head, and that He could not look up - His cry before He died was, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"-but, besides this, He gave His life a ransom for us.

God's estimate of our old man, of the "I" that was crucified together with Christ is pretty plain; and it is a good thing for those whose tastes and minds are being formed in their communion with God, to see His estimate of what they were when He found them. A little more disgust and nausea with our own old selves, and with man in himself, would not be at all an evil thing in us. God's treatment of our representative, in spite of all His personal perfectness, shewed His estimate of me, and that may suffice to form and fix mine.

There is a needs be that a believer should have the same thoughts as God has about his old man his former self. God has presented His thoughts in no ambiguous mode of expression; they have been strongly expressed: but, if strongly expressed, what considerateness is found in God's mode of expressing them. God's own Son crucified, that on Him, when bearing the judgment due to us, in self-devoted love to us, those thoughts of God concerning what we were by nature might be seen. And let it be observed, that as God does, to our comfort and salvation reckon, that our old man was crucified with Christ, so He calls upon us also to reckon it so.

" Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin "(Rom. 6:6,11).

Paul knew the power of this taking God at His, word; and what strength the faith by which he said, I am crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20), gave him!

Instead of this simplicity and firmness of faith, which in Paul reckoned that to be true which God declared, and in spite of experience and feelings, accredited God's declaration, and, therefore, acted upon it, we are apt to change everything. Paul took God's view of things and acted upon it-upon God's view of things-that "our old man is crucified together with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Paul reckoned that God was true in this and acted thereupon. He reckoned himself to have been "crucified" and "to be dead, indeed, unto sin," and acted accordingly: for he knew who had said: "For sin shall not have dominion over you." Instead of like faith hereunto, we find that but few receive and hold fast what God has said about the old man having been crucified, and being dead even so far as it bears upon justification of themselves; and still fewer hold it as to the principle of sin in them.

Now the hard thing is not for the results of faith to flow from faith; for the results of faith flowed from faith as naturally in Paul's case as the results of unbelief, nowadays, naturally flow from unbelief. Paul reckoned himself as crucified and dead, because God said that He reckoned him, through Christ, to be so - and sin had not dominion over Paul. Christians, now-a-days, own the cross and

death of Christ as the alone portal of rest, but they do not reckon that as to the penalty due and the power of sin in them they are dead through Christ's crucifixion and death, and so they go on in doubt and sinning. The difficulty is not in the connection between faith and good works, or between unbelief and bad works; that is natural and easy enough in both cases. No: the difficulties are here rather, to let God be true and every man a liar; to believe God and trust ourselves implicitly to Him and His hand.

What a difference between the being crucified with Christ [as (in Matt. 27:44; Mark 13:32; John 19:32) we read of two thieves who were crucified on Calvary, when the Lord was crucified], and this being crucified together with Christ, through grace (Rom. 6:6, Gal. 2:20).

In the former case (just as in the crucifixions of the Romanist, and other carnal religions, which propose to punish men's bodies for the sins of their souls) all the pain falls upon sinful flesh; in the latter case, it all fell, and fell in times that are past-the reward justly due to us upon the sinless Jesus, who bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

So far on Rom. 6:6, and Gal. 2:20; and on the believer being one, who is to reckon that his old man and former self, are reckoned by God as crucified together with Christ Jesus.

The cross of Christ has branded me (in all that I was as a fallen man) as with a stigma; but then His death has freed me, at once, from the penalty due to sin, and from the liberty to go on sinning. May we act accordingly!

3.-Buried together with Him. Rom. 2:4; and Col. 2:12.

Therefore we are buried together with Him, by baptism into death.

Buried together with Him in baptism.

That which is buried, is put away out of sight. God has, in His grace, revealed, and faith has received, the testimony, that all that we were has been put away out of sight, through association with the Lord who died. I, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me, was Paul's word when he was speaking of the energy that was active in him as Apostle. But, previously to this being true of him, as Paul, the case of Saul had had to be met. He had had to say, previously, as speaking of that, " I am (or have been) crucified with Christ:"- that was the fate and end of him as Saul. The light of a living Christ, risen and ascended, had broken in upon his soul, and he learned that grace looked upon all that had been Saul, all that was of Saul, as so identified with that Christ, that the end of it, in death and judgment, was reckoned of God to be therein Christ crucified. If God reckoned it so, so would he; and so, " I am (or have been) crucified together with Christ." But if the chapter about Saul contained that blessed truth, the chapter about Paul went on with a " nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." But there was this one most gracious provision to be noted, as to the Saul, not moribund, but defunct to be noticed, to the praise of the grace that saw that God's glory required it, and for the comfort of the party thus found and blessed,- the dead was buried also out of sight, through God's grace through Christ - buried together with Him by baptism. " To bury our dead out of our sight," is perfect in its own needed time and place.

Abram and Isaac, and Jacob and Joseph, felt this; and, by faith, saw God in connection with their burial- place. God foresaw the tomb where the body of our Lord should lay, as we see in Isa. 53. Devout men also carried Stephen to his burial; and Divine wisdom and grace had provided a grave

for the "I" who was Saul the persecutor, and for the "I" wheresoever found dead in trespasses and sins, that finds grace unto eternal life. The law could curse such an one - could pierce through with its thunderbolts - could show that there was life in no one who stood at the foot of Mount Sinai, and that moral death reigned in each and in all of them;-but Moses could neither kill nor bring to an end the life of such a one as Saul, nor give him a new life. Christ secured to him the full benefits of death - made over His own death in all its fullness to him - shared with him the cross in all its fruit - and declares Himself the burial-place. Buried together with Him by baptism into death; buried together with Him in baptism.

All these things are of faith; and, therefore, are made rood to individuals by faith, and enjoyed by individuals, through faith. It may be true of each individual member of a family, or of a community, whether the family have but three members, as a man, his wife, and a child, or whether the community be as numerous as is the church of God; - But these things are not true of the family, or of any community, as such. Of no family, of no community, as such, can it be said, it is " crucified, dead, and buried in Christ." To say that the Church is dead, crucified, and buried with Christ, would be senseless as a statement; and, if it meant anything, must mean something very wide of what would be truth. Of every member in the church, it is true, however, as to what he was; and God reckons each one that believes, to be, as to the old man, crucified, dead, and buried, together with Christ; and the Word bids us, also, to reckon that His measure and estimate of the self in us, as thus formed in Christ Jesus - the crucified.

" To be as God, knowing good and evil," is the practical folly of our fallen selves; the cross for His Christ, the equivalent, according to God, of this folly in us. So, when He dealt to Christ, according to His estimate of us, did He act; -so has He branded, as with a stigma, ourselves and our self-complacent wisdom, and love of power.

So much then as to the "I," which was, and was looked upon as standing upon its own foundation as a creature, upon the merits and being of what is and is found in and of ourselves before God. Through grace God has said of all that, " crucified together with Christ; dead together with him; buried together with him." God's estimate of what each of us was, God's judgment of it, and God's putting of it, as it were, out of sight, are presented to us in the crucifixion, death, and burial of the Lord. What was true of us morally, was visited on Him penally. God so identifies, so reckons us (in all that we were and had of our own) one together with Christ in His crucifixion, death, and burial, that we can and are bound, as believers, to reckon that it is finished. God, who calleth those things which be not as though they were (Rom. 4.17), is He with whom we have to do. He has reckoned it thus. Who will say unto Him, What doest thou? or, What hast thou done? Are His rights limited? Is His power straitened, that He should have no title to do as seemeth Him good, no power to make good what He wills? Nay: rather hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? But for His grace in reckoning each one that believes one, according to all that he had or is, one with Christ, Christ would never have been crucified, never have died, or been buried. But He has been crucified, dead, and buried; and faith says, " And I am crucified, dead, and buried together with Him."

Divine grace is wondrous in power and in wisdom. It has made death and judgment, which are in prospect before man in the avenue of human life, to be in retrospect behind the believer in the course of grace. Grace, too, has known how to substitute the death of the only sinless and the only just one, and His judgment on the cross, who is to be judge of quick and dead, in the place of the

death of the sinner that believeth, and in place of the judgment of the self-accused culprit. Grace, too, has not only thus met the anticipations of the sinner that believes, but it has also, in the one same deliverance through the crucifixion, death, and burial together with Christ, cleared out all old family scores and debts. There was a reckoning to come in judgment, because of the rebellion of the ancestral head of the family; another, because of a nature in corruption come down from him,-tried, as it has been, in every varied way by God since Adam fell, and always yet showing itself rebellious. Grace has met and canceled all that: for if the penalty borne by the Son of Man on the cross, was borne because He was identified with some whose case challenged judgment, substituted for those in the judgment, all has been met; and faith can say, "I reckon myself (all that I was, as a mere creature, descended from Adam) crucified, dead, and buried; and there is an end of the whole matter, for me, at least, among men, because God has said it is the end of the whole matter with Him for whosoever believeth."

Unless a man reckon himself crucified, dead, and buried together with Christ, where is his faith-where is his apprehension of what God reckons as to every one that believeth? I press this, 1st, because I know, from Scripture, and from experience too, the needs of the soul and of conscience of the poor sinner before God. There is no measure of self-that is, no divine and perfect measure-such as can satisfy the soul in God's presence, because it has satisfied God Himself-save the cross of Christ Jesus; no end of self save His death; no burial-place for self unless it be Himself: and, 2ndly, because unless a man has said "dead," how can he say, "I am alive again"? This brings us to the close of the first part of our subject.

I would desire to challenge my own conscience, and that of my reader, with the question-How far does conscience, in the secret solitude of God's presence-there, where it is thinking of righteousness, temperance, and eternal judgment to come-know these things to be real and existent, according to God's thoughts of us and our own thoughts of ourselves?

Crucified,

Dead, and

Buried,

Together with Christ.

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