

WRITINGS OF J E BATTEN

by J.E. Batten

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by J.E. Batten, compiled for study and devotional reading.

28 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. S. A well of springing water.
2. S. All Things are of God.
3. S. Centralization
4. S. Church Establishment and Church Endowment.
5. S. Church Membership, and Gifts.
6. S. Church Ministry, or "The Epistle of Christ
7. S. Councils, Congress, and Social Science.
8. S. Death is Gain
9. S. Jesus, led of the Spirit
10. S. Joshua and Caleb
11. S. Mr. R. P. Smith's "Farewell
12. S. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work
13. S. Our Exodus
14. S. Our Genesis.
15. S. Saul's Declension.
16. S. Some Notice of the Rev. F. Bourdillon's Tract
17. S. The Book of Joshua," and "The Epistle to the Hebrews
18. S. The Eirenicon
19. S. The Glory of the Son, the Valley of Dry Bones, and the Mount of Olives
20. S. The Promises to the Seven Churches.
21. S. The Smoking Furnace and the Burning Lamp.
22. S. The Spirit of God," and "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost
23. S. The Testimony of our Lord
24. S. The Throne of God and the Son of Man
25. S. The cross of Christ
26. S. Thoughts on Joh_3:1-36
27. S. To Mr. R. P. Smith on "Consecration, Etc
28. S. Watchman, what of the night?

S. A well of springing water.

"A well of springing water."

Genesis 26:1-35.

1867 377 Every reader of the scripture knows, and every child of God accepts, the great cardinal principle announced in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "without faith it is impossible to please God." And each one acquainted with the gospels will remember the words, "if ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed ye should say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it should obey you." Moreover, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." God is not only good in Himself, but supremely good in the exercise of His goodness to the objects of His grace; and this is the mainstay and guarantee to faith, in its deepest trials, or in its largest expectations.

It is with faith in the patriarchal age that we shall have more particularly to do in this chapter (Genesis 26:1-35 :), and with Isaac as affording us an example of its earlier exercises, by which he obtained a "good report," and won a place in the chronicles of the illustrious dead, who still speak in Hebrews 11:1-40 :, "of whom the world was not worthy." This is God's epitaph on the tombstones of His departed. In the walk with God, which His people are called to take, faith will not only be rejoiced to keep close to Him, but will surely be tested by the contrariety of things around us, springing either from the flesh in us, or the corruptions that are in the world, or else from Satan. Besides these, God will try the faith of His people on their way, that He may be honoured; and so we read, "Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God." In the patriarchal days, a famine was the test oft-times which God providentially, in the way of His government of the world, allowed to come in between faith and Himself. "And there was a famine in the land beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham." What will Isaac do now? where will he turn in this dilemma? Will his faith in God use this famine as putting the all-sufficiency of God to the proof? or, will he, by taking thought for himself, allow God to prove to Isaac that the famine is too much for his faith? What a moment is this in our history as well as in Isaac's! "He went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines." The eye and heart of God are ever toward the child of faith, even when we are looking away from Him; so we read, "The Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: sojourn in the land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee."

What can be so encouraging to the felt weakness, which quails before a great difficulty, as this reassuring love of God? To know that the Lord takes such an interest in His people as to make everything that concerns us His own concern, if we will but give glory to Him, by leaving Him to show that He needs the famine to prove how superior He is to it! God is thus seen not only coming down into the little circle of Isaac's misgivings and fears to sustain him, but leading out the expectations of this resurrection heir of promise into the breadth and length of God's own purposes touching Isaac's seed, and the possession of all the countries round him, and in the sure covenant that "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." What was the famine in the presence of such a God, and in the face of almighty power and faithfulness, which would secure

this wide-spread blessing, and through this very Isaac too? What joy to a believer when he can thus read his own present safety, even to the very hairs of his head, in the light of the coming glory of God, with which He has associated us as "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ!"

"And Isaac dwelt in Gerar" as a stranger, though in the land of promise; and Abimelech and the Philistines will be, in the future day of Canaan's glory, only what the famine really was to Isaac in Gerar — an opportunity for God to make a way for Himself, and, in doing this, to make a high-road for the faith that follows Him; for faith travelled in those days with God Almighty! No wonder "faith should be the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" to the holy brethren of today, the partakers of the heavenly calling. But to proceed with our chapter, the resurrection heir of promise, dwelling in the land upon this warrant from God, thinks it no liberty, and certainly asks no leave from the king of the Philistines, to sow in the land. "Then Isaac sowed and received in the same year an hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him." What grace on the part of God, and what joy springs up in the soul, whether then or now, under the consciousness of doing the things that please God, and receiving blessing in our individual path and work "an hundredfold," and in the same year. How like the God we know! True, the conditions of our service now as disciples are somewhat changed, but what of that? Discipleship will be content and glad to be as the Master and Lord; and should they be given out to us under the terms of following a rejected Christ in the world which has cast Him out, accompanied by "leaving father, or mother, wife, or houses, or lands," still the covenanted promise is, "he shall receive an hundredfold more now in this time, with persecutions, and in the world to come, life everlasting."

"And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great." No, we are not called to serve a "hard master, reaping where he has not sown, nor gathering where he has not strawed." The man waxed great, though here again the change in dispensation has made a corresponding difference in what true greatness consists. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many." And Isaac "had possession of flocks and herds, and a great store of husbandry: and the Philistines envied him." The contrast must be always after this pattern between the man with whom God is and the men who, though they be in present occupation, are to be driven out, whether then or by and by, when the Lord — who is now "heir of all things" by resurrection title — comes into actual possession by righteous power. In the meanwhile we are content with the same holding as taught us in the first Corinthian epistle, "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Was there ever such a conveyance as this and held on such security?

"And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us, for thou art much mightier than we. And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there." It is of great consequence when the Abimelechs can discover the difference which God has put between flesh and spirit, between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial, and make that the ground of their separation, or of our departure. "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" and again "thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together." The children of God will do well to hold what Isaac held so firmly (viz., God takes care of His own promises and covenants with His people), for He "will not give his glory to another;" and they must take heed to dig their wells, and to uncover those which the craft or power of the enemy

may have stopped. Of what use was the increase of flocks and herds (when God's blessing was reckoned by cattle) if the Abrahams and Isaacs did not acquit themselves on their part by digging the wells of water for them to drink? This is their responsibility. "And Isaac digged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham, and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them." Faith reproduces itself; and how precious when faith got its title from God to do the strongest things like Isaac with his father's wells, and to reiterate his right by establishing their original names! Nor will be forgotten the faith of a later day, when it "uncovered the roof where Jesus was, and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay, and when Jesus saw their faith he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." What a lesson are we here taught by the Philistines at Gerar, or the Scribes at Capernaum; and what a stopping of the wells in either case, and what an unstopping! "Why doth this man speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?"

"And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water." How in keeping is Isaac with the double character in which he typically stood as the heir of all promise, and the heir in resurrection too (for Abraham received this son from the dead in a figure) as he finds this well of living water! And in truth we may say that it is only as we realise and take the place of union with Christ in resurrection-life and power, that there can be any good well-diggings on our parts, as having received the Holy Ghost, and maintaining our title in redemption to go through the length and breadth of the promised land. All other springs are dry. At this point shall we not remind one another of Him who once rested upon the patriarchal well (of which Jacob drank, and his children, and his cattle), and, sitting thereon, superseded it, and took the place of it? What a well of living water He presented to the woman of Samaria, as He offered Himself to her faith, and said, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." "The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man, that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Oh, to have been at this well with the Lord and to have settled everything between the conscience and God with Jesus as she did; to have come thirsty, and found the water which springeth up into everlasting life; to have come with her water-pot, but only to leave it, and be detained at the well by Christ Himself: what an exchange! — what gain!

"And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with the herdmen of Isaac, saying, The water is ours, and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him." Of all the controversies perhaps those are the hottest which break out between herdmen and herdmen, amongst the flock of God. The title by digging was indisputably Isaac's, for his servants found the well of springing water. But right by tenure of the country was still with Abimelech. From this arose the confusion and strife of that day, and from the selfsame thing are continued the strivings among the herdmen of the present time.

"And they digged another well, and strove for that also, and he called the name of it Sitnah or hatred," nor does the contention cease until the distinct separation of the heir of promise and resurrection-title takes place, from the herdmen of Gerar. Abraham the patriarch of faith, had adopted the same course in earlier days with Lot. "And Abraham said unto Lot, Let there be no strife I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be

brethren: is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." Lot in Sodom, and Abraham in Canaan, measured their distances, and the respective histories of one and the other tell their own tale, and have a tongue for the opened ear of this day.

What instructive lessons are set us in these two wells of Esek and Sitnah, and how many of the Lord's people, shrinking from separation as from a viper, go on with the contentions and strifes, till the disputants, weary of all that stamped a character originally on their conflict, give in, and say when fainting, "What advantage shall the birthright be to me?" and sell it like Esau for a mess of pottage! The acceptance of this principle has produced, between the Church and the world, that monster system of iniquity pointed out in the Apocalypse, "Upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth!"

"And Isaac removed from thence and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." It is in this well of Rehoboth that faith will always find its fingerpost, and secure resting-place. And how many thousands in this century alone have proved the blessedness of following the Lord fully and leaving the herdmen of Gerar, and their wrath, at the same moment!

Separation from evil, when in fellowship with the Spirit, is separation unto God in true holiness, and in the title of Christ the appointed heir in resurrection-life and glory. What is this but real strength in the power of the Holy Ghost? This is to the Church of God what in type we read in the Book of Numbers, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; say ye unto it: The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves." We must follow where God leads on His people, or be ruined by committing whoredom over again with the daughters of Moab, "when they called the people of Israel unto the sacrifices of their gods."

"And Isaac went up from thence [Rehoboth] unto Beersheba. And the Lord appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake." How precious to the soul, when the brightest hopes of covenanted blessing are written out to the full upon the sure ground of the Lord's own faithfulness to His own promises and to Himself! What safety and peace do the heavenly people realize now, as we read in the progressive steps of a Father's love towards ourselves, "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." "And Isaac builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well." Near the heart of Jehovah for blessing, and under the shadow of the Almighty for security, were "the pillar and the cloud" of patriarchal days; and what a green spot for the altar, and the tent, and the springing well of bygone times! All that the pilgrim worshipper needs is found in the very place where Jehovah manifests Himself, and proclaims His name as the God of Abraham, or as the God of Israel; or as now, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How truly, we may say, is the break down in worship, in these failing and faulty days, to be accounted for by the independency which will erect its "altar" where it pleases, and pitch its "tent" towards the well-watered plains of Sodom, and call upon "the name of the Lord" anyhow and

anywhere! How this departure from the true character of worship is deepened when the worshipper has lost the perception morally of the perfectness which the presence of the Lord with the heir of resurrection, under the fulness of covenanted blessing (like Isaac), brings into the picture; as also that the correspondence on our part, whether then or now, must needs be "the altar," "the tent," and the "living well," and then the outbreakings of heart and soul by "calling on the name of the Lord." "The Father seeketh such to worship him, as worship him in spirit and in truth." May the Lord lead His people back to Himself by giving them to unite these things together once more.

Little does Abimelech know of the value and meaning of these pledges and blessings between the Lord and His typical heir, of all the promises in resurrection-title; but the outward eye can see who the man is upon whom the favour of God rests. So "Abimelech went to Isaac from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee; and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee, that thou wilt do us no hurt." This part of the history is of great prophetic interest, inasmuch as the Gentiles are to be blessed through Israel, and will be so in the coming millennial times. "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people;" or, as in Zechariah, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saving, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." The order of God for the earth is, "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the earth with fruit." And Abimelech, and his friend, and his captain, pay suit and do homage to the incoming heir of promise, and make a covenant that Isaac and the nation will do them no hurt in the season of their greatness and renown. Of course, the Church — the body and bride of Christ, the mystery kept secret till Paul — is not in this picture; and it is of great importance not to confound the earthly people, and the Gentiles in their blessings below, with the heavenly people and their calling by a risen and ascended Christ to all spiritual blessings above; who in the meantime, while waiting for the Lord's coming, are put into the place of separation from all else. "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, circumcision nor uncircumcision, male nor female, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all" — a precious and peculiar portion of the Church. And Abimelech said unto "Isaac, Thou art now the blessed of the Lord." The Gentiles shall come bending unto thee; "kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers," and great shall be the peace of my people. How blessed to turn the burdened heart away from all that now groans and languishes under the bondage of corruption, and the penalties righteously inflicted on man for sin, to that bright prophetic morning which shall arise without a cloud, and reveal the Lord Himself as the second Adam and the true Israel, the securer and unfold of every promise to the nation and to the Gentiles; holding all things, as He then will, in the double title of redemption by His own blood and of maintaining it in the power of resurrection life and glory; the digging of wells superseded and gone to give place to rivers of pleasures. "Thy peace shall flow like a river, and righteousness be multiplied like the waves of the sea." "Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee: and thou shalt tread upon their high places." "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!"

J. E. Batten. (On the testimony of T. B. Baines.)

S. All Things are of God.

All Things are of God.

2 Corinthians 5:18. The coming in of Christ by incarnation laid the foundation for a new course of action between God and mankind, according to what Christ was in the glory of His person and the perfection of His ways and work. The objects too for which He came opened out in their accomplishment on earth two new centres of operation for God in grace and government; and these were at the mount of transfiguration by personal glory and righteousness, finally at the cross by His substitution for the guilty. On the mount of His transfiguration He shone resplendent in a light above the glory of the sun; and was invested with honour and majesty, when there came to Him such a voice from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." He clad Himself with righteousness, as a cloke; and stood the accredited possessor of far more than man had ever received and forfeited. How different afterwards was the garden of Gethsemane, where this same man of sorrows sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground! Still more different was mount Calvary, when Jesus was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and His visage was more marred than any man's, and His form more than the sons of men. His majesty and kingly power were also denied Him, and the soldiers stripped Him and put on Him a scarlet robe, and platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him saying, "Hail king of the Jews." But between Himself and mankind there yet lay outside all this the fierce wrath of God against sin; and into this deep suffering and woe He passed, when, as the sacrifice offered up to God without a spot, He was the substituted One, and cried, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" This is what these two centres were to the Lord — on the mount of His transfiguration, the voice from the cloud claimed Him as worthy to receive honour and majesty — on the mount of His crucifixion, when under the judgment of God for our sins, and the sword awoke against the man who was Jehovah's fellow, He cried with a loud voice as the forsaken One and gave up the ghost. If these two mountains, in their varied characters, were all this to Christ; what must they have been as the new centres of operation between God in His holiness and sinners in their sins, and between the throne of God's righteous government and the world? They became indeed the great turning-points of another history, and got their answer from God in the rent veil which till then had concealed Him; and in the resurrection of the second man into the heavens which received Him. The glory of the Father took Him from the cross (the place of His own victory in divine counsels and foreknowledge) and from the sepulchre, where He overcame him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and he was carried up in the cloud crowned with glory and honour. The second Man has gone from the cross to the right hand of the throne of God and become the head of a new creation; nor is there any other but this representative man in the heavens where God is. A believer in Christ must therefore look out of himself to Christ, and if he would know the present truth about himself, "this truth is in Jesus."

It is a wonderful thing (when understood) to see how by the cross of Christ we pass out of our old relationship and standing in Adam with the penalties and consequences of sin which rested upon us as connected with the man who fell. Death has done this. By the death of the last Adam we are

for ever separated from the condemnation and judgment inflicted on the first. It is as wonderful to see how through the risen and exalted Son of man we pass into our new standing of acceptance and completeness before God, and enter upon our relationships as sons of the Father, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. The ascension of Christ has done this. By His exaltation we know ourselves made the righteousness of God in Him. Again, how blessed it is to be made conscious that the Holy Ghost has come down from the Father and the Son to dwell in us as the temples of the living God, and to make true in us that which is true of us in Christ. Only thus can such verities become our most familiar thoughts, our daily bread, and source of supply to us as new creatures in Christ. We are kept in this nearness to God by a power equal to that which quickened us and set us in these relationships with our glorified Head and Lord. How else can communion and enjoyment with the Father and the Son be maintained in us against all the contradictions of the flesh, the world, and the devil, unless the fact of our new creation can be displayed to faith in Christ at the right hand of God, as well as what we are by grace as in Him? An important scripture for the establishment of the Lord's people in the truth about themselves is shown in Ephesians 4:1-32 :: "But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth." The Holy Ghost, true in His operations in us, cannot therefore accept the experiences we naturally have of ourselves, as ruined and in the flesh (before we heard or learned Christ) as the ground of that work which He is come down to carry on in us, as redeemed out of the Adam state in which we were by nature. The Holy Ghost testifies of Christ to us, and witnesses that "as Christ is, so are we in this world." He therefore judges and keeps the sentence of death upon every motion in the flesh, which if followed out would make us unlike Christ. Working mightily in the inner man, He produces in us as new creatures the affections which are suited to the Father and the Son for the fellowship into which we are called. Moreover, the Spirit of God is true in divine operation to the work of Christ at the cross, keeping the old man in us under death, which was there judicially put to death in Christ, "knowing this that our old man has been crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." The motives also which are supplied to us for practical conduct, necessarily spring from the truth between God and ourselves, as to what we are by the death and resurrection of Christ, namely, How shall we that have died to sin, live any longer therein? And again, "Know ye not that so many as have been baptized unto Christ Jesus, have been baptized unto his death?" It is important to see that Christ is the rule of the Spirit's testimony to us and work in us, both as to life and death; and that Christ must therefore be the object and rule of our faith and intercourse with God. Equally important is it to get our hearts and consciences assured that God Himself owns none other than Christ as the ground of His present and future actings towards us. It is evident that all steadfastness and growth in a believer in Christ, as regards himself and his intercourse with God, about sin and holiness, the flesh and the Spirit, grace and righteousness, heaven and hell, depend upon the person and work of Christ, as the established and unchangeable basis of all communion between us, as redeemed unto God, by the blood of His Son. With a view of bringing these precious realities nearer to our souls, and ourselves more under their power, we may consider a little in detail, and perhaps in application, the blessed facts already stated. These are, that God is unalterably true to Christ and His work, that the truth about ourselves is now in Jesus and nowhere else, that the Holy Ghost both by

testimony and operation in us is true to the person and work of Christ on earth and in heaven, and that we are called out in faith and in fact to be true to the truth, by learning Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life. Such are the gracious lessons which the Father's love has given us to know, as eternal realities between Himself and the children of His adopting grace. The soul that is not learning them in communion with God, under the anointing of the Spirit in the peace which passeth all understanding, must be thrown back from Christ upon self, and the bitter experiences of what the flesh is; and thus be tossed to and fro by its deficiencies one day, or the hope of attainment the next. Consequently there will be conflicts with evil and disappointment every day. Multitudes find busy occupation on this ground of self-seeking, making their being something the object instead of Christ. But building ourselves up in our most holy faith is building up one another in Christ; and to this we will now turn. A great question upon the matter before us is, What do we understand by "as the truth is in Jesus?" One way of reply, and helpful as introductory, may be to ask what the truth was about us in Adam, by his fall. The first half of the epistle to the Romans is largely occupied with an answer to this question. Measured by the righteousness of God there was none righteous, no not one; measured by the glory of God all have sinned and come short of the glory of it. Further, "by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." Thus judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Besides this, as children of Adam, Romans 7:1-25 : speaks of the indwelling sin and imparted corruption; and as a consequence of these actual transgressions and guilt, so that our state as under condemnation and our alienation from God by nature are summed up in these words, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

Into the midst of this ruin and misery, this scene of God's dishonour and of Satan's triumph, Jesus came to glorify the Father, to deliver man, and to destroy the works of the devil. He who alone could work redemption such as the sinner needed endured the righteous judgments of God (which else were powerless to Him) by which to deliver us. He wrought by means of the penalties which God had inflicted upon men, and so wrought by them as to put away for ever the offences and sins, on account of which they had been pronounced. Prophecy had pointed to this wonder-working Redeemer, "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Consistently with this prophecy and after all that had been foretold was accomplished, He laid His right hand upon John in the Apocalypse, saying, "Fear not: I am the first and the last, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and hell." The penalties were endured by Him who could work out deliverance by nothing else. They were employed to glorify God, to put our sins away, and to defeat Satan who held them in his power. Penalties are now gone and sin is put away by the sacrifice of Himself, and God will finally cast death and hell into the lake of fire. When nothing further remained for Christ to do, and not till then, He said, "It is finished, and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost."

It is necessary to take this survey of the work of our blessed Lord, in order to pursue our inquiry, whether God is invariably true to Christ and His work on the cross, as the only rule of His action towards us. The last act of Christ in laying down His life, and the first new action of God in raising Him up from the dead, ought never to be separated in our souls any more than the last loud cry and God's answer by the rent veil. Otherwise we separate redemption and resurrection. But before a believer can get happily into this position as one with Christ, it is of immense moment to see that God does more than rend the veil that hid Him from the earth and shut us out from heaven. The

place and relations of God, consequent upon the finished work of His Son, are as completely changed towards us, through redemption, as they were previous to the fall, when God walked with Adam in the garden of Eden, and after it when He drove out the man. So that our question is really twofold: not merely is God true to the work of Christ on the cross and at His right hand in heaven? but will God be true to Himself and His relations to the crucified Saviour in death, and to the exalted Son of man in glory? After the resurrection of the second man what place can Adam have with God? Properly this ceases to be even a matter of inquiry, since God has made it the whole subject of a new revelation to us in the gospel of His grace, "All things are become new." As truly also another history has commenced with man in the heavens, and between God the Father and His redeemed people on earth, concerning all His purposes and counsels, made yea and amen in righteous title by Him who has gone up to God. It is that same work, which has put away our sins and by which we are saved, that has glorified God; and on account of which the Christ who did it now sits on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. Further, and as regards ourselves and the altered relations of God towards us, having accepted the blood of Christ as the propitiation for our sins, God correspondingly takes His place upon the mercy-seat and proclaims a gospel of salvation. Having judged our transgressions on Christ, and divine righteousness having found its answer in the death of the substitute, God takes another place at the cross, no longer as a judge, but as "the just God and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." The One who was delivered for our offences being raised from the dead, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. The cross has thus been the place of judgment, of blood-shedding, and of death. Christ has suffered, the just one for the unjust, to bring us to God. This is what the cross is to the believer, to Christ as the victim, to God the judge of all. Death is there where Christ bowed His head and gave up the ghost. Life is beyond it where Christ now is with God, crowned with glory and honour. Is God true to these two centres — the cross below where Christ was, and the throne above where Christ is; and does He make these the unchanging rule of His actings towards us? Let us take our stand at the cross as believers, to see our sins and iniquities on Jesus; yea all that we were as in the flesh brought under the hand of God for judgment on Christ. By means of righteous condemnation on Him, the guiltless One, all that was against us has been brought down by death into the place of ashes, where all has been consumed by the fire of God's holiness and wrath. Can God deny Himself in what He condemned and judged upon Christ and reduced to ashes under divine wrath? Can He deny Christ in His sufferings, death, and atoning blood? Nay, His own glory was wrought out here by these means, and Satan overcome. What does He say to us, and what must He do for Christ but declare, "I am he that blotteth out your transgressions as a cloud, and your iniquities as a thick cloud?" God is true to the work of Christ and to His own judgment of sin and the flesh at the cross. All has been carried down to death, and by means of death left in the silence of the grave. Christ is risen out of it, and we in Him. Nothing else has gone up. The blood is before God, sprinkled in the holiest where He dwells, and a new and living way opened which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. The blood of Christ which shuts out all fear of judgment (since it is the abiding answer to judgment) has opened the heavens to us, and we come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. This is what God is towards us.

Again, will God be equally true to Himself, to Christ, and to believers, as regards life and righteousness and glory in the risen Christ on the throne? Surely, for it is He who says, "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and

redemption," that in the enjoyment of this oneness with Christ we might glory in the Lord. It is God who has wrought this for us. It is He who made Christ to be sin for us, that has made us to be the righteousness of God in Him, and we are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power. No, there is no other rule which God accepts as the ground of His actings towards us but what He has declared Christ to be at his right hand in glory. "God who hath commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Moreover, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." The unvarying testimony of the apostles in their epistles is to establish the saints before God in Christ. Peter writes to them as "scattered strangers," and "obedient children," but "begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Further, he says, "God hath raised up Christ from the dead and given him glory, that your faith and hope may be in God." Indeed we may ask, What could the Holy Ghost do by the apostles but glorify Christ, and in this way? Such is His present ministry, as Jesus declared of Him, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he shall show you things to come." The passages already quoted show as to redemption, righteousness, and resurrection, that Christ is made of God all these to us, and that we have the full effects of them in Christ, proving that God has no other ground of acting towards us. Further, as regards life, Paul writing to the Colossians addresses them as associated with Christ. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," and "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Once more as respects "life," the apostle writes to the Ephesians, "But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Nothing can be plainer than this, "that as He is, so are we in this world." Throughout John's epistles also the same blessed truth is insisted on.

Again, as to glory and the coming of the Lord, we shall find the same great fact holds good, which we have been examining as to our justification and redemption, both in life and righteousness. Indeed the coming of the Lord is the very point at which all is consummated. Then we drop forever the image of the earthy man and put on the image of the heavenly. Then we shall be presented faultless, before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. Our Lord's own words are decisive: "If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." So John affirms: "Beloved, we are 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." The consideration of facts like these, between ourselves and the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, cannot fail to bring our souls under the power of that blessed hope of the Lord's coming, and our rapture into the air to meet Him, which will in truth close up all between us and the earth that is earthy. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain [unto the coming of the Lord] shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Lastly, another kind of proof and an equally important one may be found in the fact of the Spirit dwelling in us and the Spirit being with us as the Spirit of truth and the glorifier of Jesus. This

"promise of the Father," fulfilled at Pentecost by the descent of the Holy Ghost, is what our Lord referred to on the last day, the great day of the feast of tabernacles: "Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink:" and it is added, "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." So also in the Galatians: "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." In either of these instances, how could such an unspeakable gift reach us as the indwelling Spirit, were it not that God has no other ground of action towards us than the worthiness of Christ? Observe, further, how truly God acts in us upon this truth: "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?" These scriptures are quoted to show that the Spirit not only testifies of Christ but dwells in us, because we are Christ's, owning us as bought with a price and working in us accordingly, that we may "glorify God in our body [and spirit which are God's]." The title and claim over us, by sovereign grace and the Father's love, are thus complete upon all points, and founded upon the perfection of the finished work of Christ. Sealed and indwelt by the Holy Ghost as we are, there is no room left for uncertainty, much less for misgivings and fears. On the contrary, the soul passes on into its own proper blessedness in Christ, as well as out of its own conscious wretchedness, as once connected with a body of sin and death, rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Christ has made it free. Once outside ourselves, we reach the power that has carried us out, and are free to take part with it against the flesh in ourselves that it has been against, and to use it in favour of what it has created and formed in us that is new. As was said at first, it is a wonderful thing to realize that "all things are of God," that "old things are passed away, and all things are become new." We are therefore among those in whom these great facts are to be manifested, by that mighty power of God, both now and hereafter. In conclusion, it may be well to call attention to the contrast between this love of God, which is the spring and source of all the blessedness connected with our present and eternal relations, and the impotency of every existing institution and human organization, which only contemplate the improvement of man as he is and where he is: in other words, the difference between divine and human philanthropy is in question. And the difference is nothing less than this, that the kindness and love of God towards man lies appeared, in that He has not spared His only begotten Son, but has given Him up for us all. By the ways and means which have occupied us in this paper, God has brought back man to Himself by nothing less than a self-sacrificing love, which gave the Son who is in His bosom.

Man can do nothing like this, even in his own circle — he has no such resources. Man has nothing better than himself and his schemes for his fellow, and is reduced therefore to confederacies, organizations, etc. These are all powerless as to conforming men even to the benevolence which has instituted them. The philanthropist cannot by these means create benevolence between man and his fellow, so that he should love his neighbour as himself, much less love God with all his heart and soul and strength. Mere institutions and their endowments do not even secure the attendance of those for whose benefit they were established, nor is it by church extension that the inhabitants of a country can be made true Christians. The best of these may perhaps embrace the idea of drawing man nearer to God, but the necessity of his being brought by substitution and sacrifice is yielded up: otherwise the scriptures and testimony to Christ would be prominent, and Christ Himself be everything. But the love of God in sending forth His Son (the Man whom He had in reserve) has formed the way, by redemption through the blood of the slain Lamb, to make us

new creatures in Christ and thus unite us by the Spirit to Himself as born of God — one in the Father and the Son. In the world's alienation from the love of God and its growing departure from truth and from light, under the delusion and sleight of Satan and of men, all things are of men. But where the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has shined into the heart, all things are of God; who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. Old things have passed away, and all things are become new. J. E. Batten.

S. Centralization

Centralization.

"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

Things which once existed in their own abstract significations between God and man, and which maintained their distinctiveness, revolving so to speak round their own centres, have been marvellously brought together in Christ, and inseparably connected by His work on the cross, with the counsels of God before the world was, and our blessing. Take as an example the great fact, that "mercy and truth have sect together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." It is not that truth has ceased to be truth, or merged itself into mercy, so that the native character of each is destroyed, any more than the possibility that righteousness could change itself into peace; but, on the contrary, a new foundation has been formed between God and His creatures in and through the cross by which "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." So with the attributes of God, such as His holiness and justice; or rather what He is as light and love. How could they cease to be what they are in themselves? Nor can they admit of any changes in their exercise towards mankind, else they would fail to be perfect as displaying the character of God. Each is in its nature what each was, but each finds in the blood of atonement what each needs for its vindication, in the fullest exercise towards us. Moreover, each is further bound up with the Lord's own perfectness henceforth. But that new action of God towards Him in raising Him up from out of the dead! All that God is, as well as all that we were in our sins, have not only been concentrated in Him — in His life and death — but by means of death and judgment He has separated the evil from the good for ever, by putting away sin through the sacrifice of Himself. Thus He has left nothing but the good and what God is in unspotted holiness, with the blood of His Son our Lord and Saviour before Him, and sprinkled upon us as His rule. So as regards life and death, death and redemption, redemption and resurrection between God and ourselves. Not only has each got another and a new meaning in Christ to what they had in themselves, as viewed in the light of promise or by Levitical type, but they are brought together in the person and work of Christ; so that the distance which naturally existed between them is done away. For example, at the cross and sepulchre, three days serve to measure the distance between death and life, death to the old man and life in the new. And these same three days now close the once vast space of His incarnation, when it stood in promise and type between our redemption and His resurrection. Forty days serve to mark the period of time when the last Adam was born out of death, and the hour when He was carried up into heaven in a cloud as the ascended Lord — the glorified man — head over all things to the church which is His body.

Again, if days and years are brought away from their ordinary computation by time, and put in connection with the Lord and His coming, or with the day of God and the final dissolution of the heavens and the earth, faith's reckonings become like His and we readily believe that "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." It is this new method of calculation which enables us to declare as to this apparently long interval which measures His

absence, "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise as men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward." The difference between these standards (which are either divine or human) makes the difference which we are contemplating.

Indeed everything between God and ourselves is thus brought into new and close connection through Christ the Second Man, both as to facts and times: and, when learnt in their existing order and meaning, by acquaintance with His person and work, gives another character to the ways of God with men, and their thoughts of Him. The cross and the sepulchre here, and the Son of man at the right hand of the throne above, are now become the only established centres of God's everlasting operations in grace towards us, and in righteousness to Christ, and for His glory. These same centres are the resting places of our faith as regards sin put away and righteousness brought in, and sustain the soul in a known peace with God that passeth all understanding, keeping the heart and mind through Christ Jesus. These centres are also the birthplace of our brightest hopes and expectations, for Christ is the alone object between God and ourselves. He will accept no other rule of action toward us, in redemption or resurrection for Himself, and we disown every other as the ground of our confidence and hope before Him. It is by Christ — this Christ — that we believe in God who raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. J. E. Batten.

S. Church Establishment and Church Endowment.

Church Establishment and Church Endowment.

See 1 Corinthians. The attention of the Lord's people has been largely directed of late to the Epistle to the Romans, with a view of showing the summary it contains of the responsibilities of Jew and Gentile before God, and yet the common level upon which they both stood. "They are all under sin." Besides this, there is a further judgment pronounced by the righteous God upon the great fact of man's enmity, as expressed by the cross and the betrayal of Christ, by which "every mouth is stopped and the whole world brought in guilty before God." Moreover, when tested by the standard of what was due from the creature to the Creator, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Nothing but the grace of God could take advantage of a crisis like this, and make it the opportunity of introducing righteousness in its new association with Christ in grace, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood," to declare at this time His righteousness, "that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

God Himself is here seen in the new circle of His own delights, saving the lost, pardoning the sinner, justifying the guilty, because of the work of Christ on the cross, and His having been "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." With what delight do the redeemed listen to the voice of the Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, as He challenges the whole universe around Him: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? "" It is God that justifieth," silences every fear. "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," is the ground of our largest confidence and the guarantee for our boldest hopes! We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be firstborn among many brethren. The God who suits us for Himself and for His Son in the eternal glory also fashions us for a correspondingly suited place while we are in this world: and this is the second part of the Epistle to the Romans. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." A Christian must in this way be modelled both for the heavens and for the earth, both for time and for eternity. He is called out by grace to take no other place than with Christ above and with a rejected Lord below; but how far short of this vocation in its two-fold character the Christians of today have fallen, each heart alas! knows for itself. The immediate purpose of this paper is not however with the Romans but with the Corinthians: only it was necessary to preface the subject with these remarks, since Paul throws open the church doors at Corinth to the beloved of God and the called saints of Rome. A comparison of the opening verses of these epistles will show the difference now pointed at, and in application we shall discover that it requires a first-rate Roman Christian to make a really good Corinthian churchman. To the first Paul writes, not as a gathered body, but "to all that be in Rome," etc.; whereas, to the last he writes "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are

sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." These are recognized as worshippers, and their first act of christian faith is, as gathered round the person of the living and risen Lord, the Head of the church, to call upon His name, etc. The Romans were instructed in their epistle how they were called and made saints and sanctified in Christ Jesus, so that they were prepared individually to be gathered on the very threshold of 1 Corinthians for church employment upon proper church ground, "with all in every place who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." This platform is wide enough to embrace all the sanctified in Christ Jesus, and yet exclusive enough to shut out all who are not redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. In pursuing our examination of this 1 Corinthians, we shall find that the first eleven chapters are occupied with the important subject of true church Establishment, and the remaining part with the engrossing question of real church Endowment; but closing all up by the glorious chapter 15: of resurrection as the only and proper hope of the church of God on earth. How important a matter this is, in all its parts, at a time like this, and for Christendom generally, need not be insisted on.

Let us now follow this 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, as the successive chapters lead us; and first of all notice, yea, and associate ourselves with, that new source and measure of church blessing and benediction, "grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ," as the only proper standing of called saints, and of the sanctified in Christ Jesus. Should there be a doubt on the heart of any worshipper, as to his title to take this place before God, let every such misgiving be reproved, as he reads in this same chapter, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." What a new object has the Father's grace found for us in this Son of His own love, and our Saviour Jesus Christ! may we not fail in our part, to "glory in the Lord," by an unreserved acknowledgment of all that God has made Him to be by resurrection from the dead. But connected with this encouraging exhortation there is likewise a stern prohibition, "that no flesh should glory in his presence;" and may the Holy Ghost, who dwells in us, keep us as mindful of one as the other, in our new church relations, which are thus opening out to us In 1 Corinthians 2:1-16 : we are instructed respecting "a wisdom of this world, and of the princes of this world, that come to naught," and "the wisdom of God which he ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew," etc. Let us connect these important facts together. In the first chapter "man in the flesh" is cast out of God's presence, and the Second man, the Lord, is the only object of glory. Here we get as a consequence of this, the wisdom of the world, and its powers set aside; and another wisdom connected with Christ introduced, "which God ordained before the world to our glory." This wisdom (which was once a mystery) is now revealed by the Spirit of God, that Spirit which searcheth the deep things of God; and this Spirit we (the redeemed) have received, "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," etc. Had the princes of this world known the ordained wisdom of God, and Jesus the Lord, in whom this mystery was embodied, and developed, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Here we are taught the distinction between the Church of God, and the world; and what it is which really constitutes and measures the distance between the two in time and eternally, a solemn fact in the government of God and for the consciences of His saints.

Everybody admits the interest which attaches to laying a foundation stone and the ceremonials which are attendant thereon. Be it so: 1 Corinthians 3:1-23 : calls us to witness such a thing, but infinitely more grand since God lays it; and the apostles and the master builders are gathered round this new foundation, "the pillar and ground of the truth." As we approach we hear it said, "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And see inscribed upon Him, "a sure stone, a tried stone, a precious stone, and the chief corner stone," and the top stone to be brought out with shootings in that day when He fills all earth and heaven with His praise. In the meanwhile we add, "this is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes." Let us further examine this church architecture, and the designs, and hear from the lips of Paul "according to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." And again, "if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire: and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." What a solemn and searching word, for a day when church extension is on everybody's lips, and commended on all sides! What must that church be which is no longer the city set upon a hill which cannot be hid? and where is that church of which the Lord says, "because thou art neither cold nor hot I will spue thee out of my mouth?" Over the entablature of the true church at Corinth was written, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." Sharp cuttings and inscriptions follow, "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise." And again, "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, he taketh the wise in their own craftiness." We will only take a glance at our church bequests and then pass on to 1 Corinthians 4:1-21 : "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's; whether Paul, or Apollos, Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." These are our church benefactions.

We are now led to the offices in the church and to church dignitaries, but only to receive our new lessons as to these also. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." Astonishing as it is to see men brought into this nearness to God, put into the church as the new vessel of witness and testimony on the earth, yet how plainly does the world show itself to be the self-same world as regards this church and its ministers, as it was before, when its princes crucified the Lord of glory! "For I think," Paul says, "that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake; we are made as the filth of the earth and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." There is not only a church and a world in this epistle, but each is true to itself and the distinction as obvious as between Christ and Belial. These ministers could say, "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat." In the next chapter we are taught what church discipline is, and why it is to be exercised and how. "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." The Lord will not suffer us to be inconsistent even with ourselves as "unleavened;" and this is very wonderful, though all such acts get the authority and sanction of His name. Here let me observe that, as on our entrance upon church standing and true christian worship we were seen "calling on the name of Jesus Christ and our Lord," so here, when in the

church and exercised in church discipline, it is "when ye are gathered together," and "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," the only but all-sufficient source of blessing and of power. From these our responsibilities in the church of God flow. "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." After this, will any plead for the allowance, much less the admission, of "a little leaven," whether in corrupt doctrine or in loose practice?

1 Corinthians 6:1-20 : instructs us in our new behaviour as regards the exaction of our natural rights. "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" It is important to observe the contrast between the Holy Ghost's teaching in the church and the teaching of Moses under the law. If an injured man puts himself in connection with the last named, he will be justified in exacting "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;" but if he puts himself at the feet of Christ, he will be taught another lesson. "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil;" or, as we have it in our chapter, "Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" Our separation unto "the kingdom of God" is likewise intended here, and our connection with it is made the motive for actions which correspond therewith "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived . . . neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." The liberty is equal to the subjection. "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." The bondage of self and the body, with the thousand claims it makes, are set aside, and true christian liberty affirmed in our new allegiance to Christ in life. "The body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." If any enquire by what methods such an emancipation has been effected, our chapter supplies the answer. "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." Again, if self is no longer to be the object, nor the body our rule, to whom do we belong, and whose are we? "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? for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body [and in your spirit, which are God's]." Such are "the members of Christ," and these new "temples of the Holy Ghost" on the earth, both. engaged and possessed!

1 Corinthians 7:1-40 : treats mainly of the states and condition of life in which a man or woman may be living when called of God to the knowledge of His Christ and our Lord. For example, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy;" as also, "He that is called in the Lord being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: and he that is called, being free, is the Lord's servant." So as regards marriage, if any step out of the place in which he was called, and marry, "he hath not sinned," nor she: only let them marry in the Lord. In 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 : we are taught how to conduct ourselves in reference to the knowledge that puffs up, and the charity that edifies, as applied to meats and drinks, and days and seasons, and things offered to idols. The governing and absorbing fact for Christianity is, "To us there is but one God, the Father, by whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." So that charity may pass into its own region, and delight itself in seeking an object upon which to spend

itself for its good and edification. Mere knowledge on diversities, such as are in question, puffs up. "If any man love God, the same is known of him."

1 Corinthians 9:1-27 : gives the proofs of Paul's apostleship, not by succession nor by human appointment; but as he says, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." As to reward, "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel." And again, "What is my reward then? Verily, that when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my power in the gospel, and this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you." His service and labour are disconnected from all human and secondary considerations: "For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." He puts himself under responsibility to the Lord by a deeper self-judgment than ever, "that he might be temperate in all things, even when striving for the mastery." Moreover, this responsibility becomes now a prominent feature of this epistle, and is extended to these Corinthians by the verse, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain." Personally he closes with the solemn warning, "But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest by any means that when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast away."

Let us recapitulate a few of the important points which have passed before us in these nine chapters. We saw first, as regards man himself, that he was put aside as in the flesh, with all his pretensions, "that no flesh should glory in His presence;" secondly, that the wisdom of the world and its princes were set at naught; and thirdly, that the world itself was a worthless world, because it had lost the one chief treasure which God in grace had sent into it, and was given over to its prince. Consequent upon this rejection of Christ (but in fulfilment of the purposes of God) this Second man, the Son of God, has been exalted to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, and has become the centre around whom the "called saints and the sanctified in Christ Jesus" gather together as one body, and on whose name they call, as the true worshippers, who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. The church of God below has properly begun its life and history from the glorified Head above, an entirely new standing before the Father, through redemption by the blood of the Lamb, and called by the God of our Lord Jesus Christ to a portion with Him, and that we are quickened, raised, and seated in the heavenly places in our Lord and Head, to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air when He comes with a shout. But to return. 1 Corinthians 10:1-33 : introduces us to church ordinances and a responsible people who take that ground before God as Israel did. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed under the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," etc. Professing Christendom has found at this point an entrance of ordinances and sacramentalism, the only points within the reach of man in the flesh and the craft of Satan, for who could touch Christ in the glory, or the real church of God, as one with Him there? But baptism and the Lord's table and the supper, with all their varied and significant meaning in truth, by the Holy Ghost, could be corrupted and turned round to suit mere human ideas of self-importance, and the subtlety of the enemy, who always revives and works by that which God has judged and set aside in Christ at the cross. Who knew better than Satan that death had closed up all the relations between God and the creature, and by man's own act too, by which he had been not only the betrayer, but the murderer of Christ?

Baptism was the great outward expression of this solemn fact, the end of man in the flesh. "Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized unto his death?" The enemy would not suffer such a testimony as this to proclaim to the conscience of Christendom the fact of death, and soon turned it round to suit his own ends, and by ways and means with which all are familiar declared baptism to express life, and thus affirmed that the baptized were regenerate by that ordinance, children of God, members of Christ, and heirs of the kingdom. Could there have been such a Christendom as this nineteenth century presents, if the scriptural meaning of baptism, and the Lord's table, and the supper had been kept before the heart in testimony as representing death, the death we had deserved, but judicially borne by the Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered in our stead, the Just One for the unjust? How significant are the warnings of this chapter 10: to people who still "sit down to eat and drink, but rise up to play." With many of them God was not well pleased, but they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our figures or types. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted and were destroyed of serpents."

There is a difference, at least so I judge, between 1 Corinthians 10:1-33 and 1 Corinthians 11:1-34, though both are alike sacrificial. Nevertheless, I take chapter 10: to be characteristically "the table of the Lord," and therefore separative in its claims (as representing His title) from everything antagonistic to the Lord in the world around us; "Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils." What little weight has Paul's challenge — "do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" — upon the professing Christians of our day! Further, the table of the Lord is not only separating but uniting as respects the believers. "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one loaf." We are many members, but only one body, of which the one bread which we break is the symbol. So the "cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" The body and blood of Christ are the only basis of assurance before God, and our communion one with another is on the common ground of the shedding of His blood. The claims of the Lord upon us, founded on His rights and titles, extend from the table, as a new centre, known by us in redemption, to "the whole earth and the fulness thereof." All this is the Lord's, not asserted in creative title (though that be true too) but like Boaz who not merely had his Ruth but purchased the inheritance besides. We, believers, own the Lord's title to it all by resurrection, a title to be made good in divine power, when He comes a second time. Man in a state of nature, since Adam was driven out from Eden, is a trespasser, or at least an intruder in this creation, and is only in it by sufferance of God; but we are redeemed creatures, and owning the right and title of our risen Lord to the inheritance by redemption purchase, ask leave of no one to walk through the length and breadth of it, though we have not in fact so much as to set our foot upon. Whatsoever therefore "is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." our privileges as redeemed are new, so are our responsibilities; for this same Lord does not suffer us to do any longer the commonest things in an ordinary way, but says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." What an elevation, and what a motive is this! So also as to the style of our behaviour in the Lord's inheritance, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." God had put aside man in the flesh, judicially in Christ on the cross; but now we see the redeemed putting self aside in the power of resurrection life, and in the Holy Ghost, so that we anticipate the day of our perfect blessing, and begin while on earth to sacrifice self for the profit of others, and for the glory of God.

This redemption of the inheritance, and the Lord's title and claims, introduce us to 1 Corinthians 11:1-34 :, where we get the new creation order, when all will be manifestly established in blessing according to God. The old creation order was God and the man and the woman; and this standing upon creature responsibility failed; but only failed to make room for the reserve of God and the introduction of Christ into a new creation-order; "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." In this new order of headship, where the head of man is Christ, there is an end of all fear, for the head of Christ is God. The supper follows this, and puts us into our places to feed upon the broken body and shed blood of Christ; or rather to be in that scene of judgment where in the understanding of our souls, in perfect peace with God, we are set to judge ourselves for the allowance or existence of anything in us, which Christ died to deliver us from, and which the judgment of God has condemned and put to death. It is a wonderful place to be set in, and to be told to judge ourselves, and that "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" of the Lord; and that even "when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." But besides, and beyond these matters of self-judgment, we are gathered round the Christ Himself who died for us, and to remember Him in His death — not the living, risen, and ascended One — the object of our worship, and on whose name we called in the opening chapter of this epistle — but the night of His betrayal, when He took bread, and broke it, and said, This is my body broken for you — likewise the cup — only now given out to us from the Lord in heaven by our apostle. It is necessarily with this addition, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." The church fulfilments of the death of Christ will be in our rapture into the heavens, and our being changed into His likeness, and our being presented in the presence of the Father's glory faultless and with exceeding joy.

Having considered in these eleven chapters the scriptural nature of the church's establishment, we now come to 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 : to the remaining subject of the church's endowment. Such a church as this epistle describes where (Christ is everything from the foundation stone, to the top stone; and where the truth of the person, and work, and death of Christ is taught doctrinally under the anointing of the Holy One, and sacramentally set forth by baptism, and the table, and the supper) could only be endowed by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Therefore we read, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant;" and then follows the surprising catalogue, or enrolment of what divine love could bestow on this new vessel of testimony on earth — the body of Christ. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are differences of ministries, but the same Lord; there are diversities of operations but the same God, which worketh all in all." What must the gifts be that spring forth from sources such as these, and how entirely independent and separate from any power under heaven, is this "church of the living God!"

Besides these diversities, which are necessary to the existence of a divine unity — there is the person of the Holy Ghost, which is beyond all His operations and gifts; "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." We are all conversant with the diversities that make up and constitute the unity of the human body; and this is taken as a figure of the church in 1 Corinthians 12:12, "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." Scripture only recognizes one body, the body of Christ, not a congregational or a nonconformist body of Christians — much less an evangelical

alliance — or a baptist, or a methodist body, but "ye being many are one." As we saw just now, there are not many suppers but only one Lord's supper, and not many tables but only one table of the Lord. "For we being many are one bread and one body;" nor are there many churches such as Popish, Greek, or Anglican; but we are all one in Christ Jesus. "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels . . . and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, maketh increase with the increase of God." As regards gifts, God has set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Such are some of the church's endowments. The purpose of this bestowment next follows in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, 1 Corinthians 14:1-40, which contain yet further direction as to their use for "the edification of the body." In brief, it may be said that the gifts enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 : need be baptized in the element of love, or the charity of 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 ; in order to be rightly exercised for the edification and growth of the body, as described in 1 Corinthians 14:1-40 : The presence of a plurality of gifts in the assembly is recognized, and consequently directions are given for their exercise, affirming that "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets," and that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints, adding, "Let all things be done decently and in order." How generally an ordained minister and his flock or congregation has been substituted for God's order in the church, it is not here my purpose to expose. Nor do I think, where human rules have introduced such a flagrant contradiction as is generally admitted in what is called "the faith and order" of established and dissenting communities, anything is wanted but an exercised conscience before God to find the sure way of relief, and an "open door, which no man can shut."

We come now to the magnificent 1 Corinthians 15:1-58 : or "the resurrection" chapter, the proper close to such an epistle, because the church's translation into the heavens to meet her Lord is her present and blessed hope. Satan knew this right well, and turned this chapter round into a burial service, and rung over it the funeral knell of the departed, changing a resurrection out of death into a burial service unto death and the grave and corruption. Let us examine one or two leading objects; and in the first place, what was in question at Corinth? Not whether any died, but if there was any resurrection. "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" The chapter is to prove a resurrection out of corruption, out of the grave, and out of death, and not a burial into them, which no one ever doubted. "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" are the key notes of this new chapter of our Christianity, which brings life and incorruptibility to light. Can it be called a burial service which introduces that great fact, "But now is Christ risen from the dead," and affirms, "if Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins?" The enemy, who so successfully changed the meaning of baptism from death to "regeneration," was equally skilful in turning this great revelation of Christ, and our resurrection into the heavens, into a funeral service and a requiem over the dead.

Further, this rising from among the dead on the part of the Second man by the glory of the Father — this rainbow which spans the horizon of our faith — puts the Lord by ascension into connection with His kingdom, in which He is yet to reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." The grand and distinguishing part of Christianity is the risen Son of man, the guarantee of the church's resurrection or translation to meet her Lord; the assurance too "that God has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness,

by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." How necessary it was for Satan that he should blind the minds of people to this twofold character of the resurrection is obvious to any exercised soul. An ascended Lord is the pledge to a believer that he can never come into judgment; whereas a risen Christ is the proof to an unbeliever that he cannot escape it. It is resurrection from the dead which has put the Son of man in his proper place of supremacy and headship of a new creation. It is by the future reign of the ascended One, as Christ and Lord that the kingdom shall hereafter be given up to God, even the Father, "that God may be all in all." Henceforth let this chapter be owned as the record of our victories, for such in truth it is, since we can say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And again, "Then shall be brought to pass the saying, Death is swallowed up in victory." What becomes us to do, as we quit this triumphant arena of our conquered enemies, but to bow our heads and say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ?" If things were with a saint according to the old law of nature, he might and would still prepare for death, and pay this debt, as some say; but with the sanctified in Christ Jesus all debts and liabilities have been cancelled long ago at the cross, and we are brought by Paul into connection with the blessed hope of the Lord's coming. "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." Henceforth, there can be nothing common in the pathway of a saint. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Is there anything common in the pathway of our Lord? "As Christ is, so are we in this world." Our epistle closes with church commendations upon a new footing, so that "if Timotheus come, see that he be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do." Likewise with proper church salutations, "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." Finally, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha The Lord encourage His beloved people to step out of every system that will not bear the light and test of this epistle, and to accept the word which says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58.) J. E. Batten.

S. Church Membership, and Gifts.

Church Membership, and Gifts. In reading the Epistle to the Ephesians it is of the greatest consequence, doubtless, to notice the various subjects of which the Holy Ghost is treating, seeing it is God Himself, and "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory," whom it reveals, as come forth in the fulness of all blessing to the Son of His own love, and to those who are His.

It is however only one of these subjects which I desire to follow in this paper, and in the simplest way; so that I shall almost confine myself to the manner in which it is unfolded in each successive chapter by the apostle Paul. Let us then consider what this scripture teaches respecting the Church — the Church's Head and its members — the source of gifts for its edification and growth — and the Lord's care over it till He comes "to present it to himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."

Ephesians 1:19-23 treats of the Head and the body, and speak only of Christ, as raised up into His place of Headship, by "the working of the mighty power 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." It is of great moment, in these last days of establishing or disestablishing the national churches (so-called) of Christendom, to see that this Head of the Church which is His body can never be touched or tarnished by the wisdom or wickedness of men. Moreover, this scripture tells us that God "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 fulness of him that filleth all in all." The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, of whom alone these wondrous actings of God are true, is therefore the Head of the Church, which is His body, and there can be consequently no joint or second head. The acknowledgment of this fact will be found to clear the minds of the simple of all difficulty and doubt as to the true and only Head of the assembly (or Church) of the living God.

Ephesians 2:1-22 as plainly teaches how the body and its members are formed. "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The members of this Christ, as Head, and therefore the members of the Church which is His body, are quickened persons, who were once "dead in trespasses and sins, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others;" but they have been born again, born of the Spirit, born of God, have life in the Second man, and are raised and seated in Him as the Head in the heavenlies. When the Lord comes, the members will be manifestly with Christ the Head, and be glorified together with Him. The mighty power, which wrought in Christ and raised Him from the dead, has been also put forth "to usward who believe," and has quickened us out of the death in trespasses and sins where we once lay, and will be displayed a second time in raising or changing us into the image and likeness of the heavenly man presently.

These persons are members of Christ, the mystic man, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. None else are members, nor is there any other membership; and to own or sustain any other is therefore to be false to the truth. There are not two memberships, nor two bodies, any

more than two heads. What a deliverance would the Lord's people get if they were simple enough to give up every membership but this one which God alone can give, for it is He who has quickened us together with Christ as our Head, one as much as another!

Ephesians 4:1-32 declares to us that the source of all gifts to the Church is in the Lord Himself as Head of the body, and flows from His love, which passeth knowledge. As regards the members of Christ "unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ," and as regards the gifts to the body, "he gave some apostles, 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 fulness of Christ." The Lord is thus the only source of gift, in the heavenlies, though the Holy Ghost on earth, and especially in the Church, acts according to the Head, in carrying out these purposes, and in agreement with His own love. Besides this, it is "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." A fact of great moment may come in here, though the record of it is found at the close of Ephesians 2:1-22 which is, that the Church on earth is "the habitation of God through the Spirit," nor is there any other. Thus we learn from the scriptures, that the source of life and power and gift to the members of Christ is in the Lord, and that no one can make a pastor or a teacher, any more than an apostle; and that the members of the body in every locality are responsible for disowning any and all pretensions or assumptions from whatever quarter they may come. Nor is it enough to disown the false thing; but our privilege is to be maintained by owning the right, this one body, and one Spirit, as well as the sufficiency of the Lord's loving care to give all gifts that are needed, in order that the Church which is His body, may not fail in one particular on which He has expressed His mind and purpose. If the Lord's people saw how they were thwarting the action of the Holy Ghost in the Church by human arrangements and systems, and by parochial divisions of the sheep and the shepherds, through authoritative appointments of clergy, or the commoner forms of congregational elections, and ordinations; they would waken up to the discovery of the sad and general departure of the saints in the present day from every true idea of what the Church of God really is.

Ephesians 5:1-33 declares the unchanging love of the Lord to the Church, for which He gave Himself "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." This is what the Church is to the Lord, and He is the Saviour of the body. He is coming to fetch His Bride away — His Eve — in the day when "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Were the Lord's people looking for such a presentation, and such a marriage, or such a Bride, or the coming forth of the Lamb who is to "present her to himself a glorious church," how many a stirring thought would spring up in the mind, and how many searchings of heart would there be among them, as to whether each could not, by association with such a scene, get more into correspondence with the Lord's wishes respecting His Bride! He says, "behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me." "I am the root and the off-spring of David, and the bright and morning star." Would not a consciousness of His own deep love lead us on our part to reply, "the Spirit and the Bride say, Come?" And if He yet adds "he which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly," may it only find this answer from the longing affections of our souls "even so, come Lord Jesus!" "The grace of our Lord Jesus

Christ be with you all. Amen." J. E. Batten.

S. Church Ministry, or "The Epistle of Christ"

Church Ministry, or "The Epistle of Christ."

See 2 Corinthians. The object of the paper inserted in your recent number upon "Church Establishment and Church Endowment" was to bring forward from the First Epistle to the Corinthians the teaching by the Holy Ghost on those two important subjects, and to present them to the hearts and consciences of "the sanctified in Christ Jesus," as a word in season for the perplexed, and to show the Lord's claim on their obedience. It yet remains to examine what the purposes were, on account of which "the church of the living God" was thus established and endowed; and these I desire now to trace, from the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

Let me observe at the outset that the professing church has long separated in practice the necessary connection of these two epistles: necessary I mean if the Church was to be "the Epistle of Christ," known and read of all men.

Gifts, and ministries, and endowments by the Holy Ghost, such as miracles and tongues, distinguished the Church as the vessel of display in the earth, and was the new proof how God could accredit and enrich this mystic Eve, the body and the bride of Christ.

Jehovah had bestowed much upon the beloved nation of Israel, and upon her prophets, priests, and kings; but it is to "the great salvation," which began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; that God Himself bears witness, "both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." Never was there such an opportunity for Satan to turn all these endowments against God as now, for God had never before put such things into the hands of man as His servants. As a consequence we are told by Paul in this epistle, "such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light," etc. To the beloved Corinthians Paul said, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us, and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." Gifts, moreover, and ministries, were the proofs from the risen and ascended Lord of His love to the Church, for He gave them; and they were "enriched by him in all utterance and in all knowledge . . . so that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coining of our Lord Jesus Christ." But besides the ascension and the coming of the Lord, there is the great, but forgotten, fact of a rejected Christ and the Christian's present association with his Lord and Master in that rejection by the world. This identification with Christ in suffering is what the apostle brings out in this second epistle and puts in the foreground. A mere glance at Christendom will show any thoughtful mind how its churches have contended for establishments and endowments, and gifts and ministries, though never reaching them according to the divine order of 1 Corinthians, and have entirely abandoned the idea of present participation with a rejected Lord, by their avowed union with the state and the world, which cast Him out and crucified Him. With these introductory remarks let us now proceed with the Epistle itself; and observe how differently it is cast in all respects from the previous one. God Himself is presented as "the Father" of our Lord Jesus Christ,

and "the Father" of mercies, and the "God of all comfort," who comforteth us in all our tribulation, etc. Let it be observed too that this" form of presentation is peculiar to this epistle and is necessary for the objects proposed, "that we might be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." The purpose of the Holy Ghost therefore is to show the church of God at Corinth that they were called out into association with Christ their Lord on the earth as well as in the heavens. They were not only "to come behind in no gift" from the ascended One, but to come behind in nothing that faithful allegiance would bring them into with the rejected One, knowing "that as the sufferings of Christ abound, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ." Human nature could thrive, and vaunt itself, and even make a gift of the Holy Ghost the pedestal for self-exaltation in the first epistle; but human nature can never connect itself with the pathway of our Lord, in the descending steps which brought Him down to the obedience of death.

Paul could say here of these Corinthians, "Our hope of you is stedfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation." Such a path can have no attraction except for a new creature in Christ, as led by the Spirit into real discipleship with our Lord. It is only as our steps follow on in the footprints He made for Himself and left for us that we descend into the region where He once was, and lived, and glorified God. Let us ever remember that the consequences of our obedience are not our care, but the consideration of Him whose will we follow. It is at this point that the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort meets us; and it is here too that, as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ. Paul could say, as to the trouble which came on them in Asia, "We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life; but we had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." The two positions are remarkable into which the Spirit leads these believers. Here they are united in life and obedience with the bumbled, rejected, and suffering Christ as their example; whereas in the first epistle they were gathered upon the confession of their standing, as the sanctified in Christ Jesus, calling upon the name of the living, risen, and ascended Lord, as worshippers with all in every place — both theirs and ours. The enemy knows if he can separate these two parts of a whole Christ in the life of a believer (as he has done, by separating these two epistles in the history and ways of the Church on earth), he has spoiled all testimony for the Lord below; and consequently we look in vain for anything collective, anywhere, that stands unmistakably, as "the Epistle of Christ" known and read of all men. The former paper treated mainly of Church Establishment, as connected with 1 Corinthians; but there is a very full and precious scripture in this, which speaks of Christ establishment and is its counterpart: "for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." This is the circle of our present and eternal blessing, where God and Christ and the Holy Ghost are alike interested and occupied with us, till all things "shall be to the glory of God by us." The brightness of this eternal blessedness opens itself out to the faith of all, and links itself peculiarly with the sufferings of Christ and with the sentence of death in ourselves.

Another grand subject of this epistle is "the ministration of the Spirit," which is taught in the central chapters, from 2 Corinthians 3:1-18; 2 Corinthians 4:1-18; 2 Corinthians 5:1-21; 2 Corinthians 6:1-18; 2 Corinthians 7:1-16 and is properly introduced by the verses just quoted, as to our anointing and sealing. Before passing on it may be well to observe that this same scripture, which

finishes with "the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," should be taken as a companion picture to that with which the first epistle opens, "of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who from God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption," that he who glorieth, "should glory in the Lord." In this last instance, it is what God has made Christ to be unto us, that we might glory in the Lord; whereas in the other it is what we are as established by that same God in Christ, and of which the Holy Ghost is the witness to us and seal and earnest. The soul will readily feel how necessary these two descriptions of our blessing are if we would understand who the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is; and how He has suited us to Himself by the work of Christ for us, and by the work of the Spirit in us, for His own present joy and the delight of His Son, and "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."

Here comes very fairly the question, What ministry has God in reserve for this new race of people — "the sanctified in Christ Jesus?" and in whom is it to be opened out to them? and in what power can it be wrought out and ministered as the faith of God's elect? The chapters which now lie in order before us, supply the answers to these important queries. Historically there have been two ministries, with their respective ministers, and their ministrations; the first was introduced upon the earth, at Mount Sinai, by Moses, by bringing in the law, under which the nation of Israel bound itself by a covenant of works, "all that the Lord hath commanded us, we will do." Whatever the outward glory was, with which this giving of the law was accompanied (so that even the mountain and Moses quaked) it was a ministry which claimed righteousness from man and was formally written and engraven in stones. In effect the law brought in the knowledge of sin. "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet;" and consequently it became "a ministration of condemnation" to all who were under it, and had thus accepted its conditions on the footing of their own responsibility. Rewards and promises to the obedient were out of the question, and in fact forfeited by the transgressors of the law of Moses; and its threatenings and curses were earned instead, so that this ministry became further (as stated in our chapter) a "ministration of death." The law and its demands upon the people, expressed by the words "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not," and accepted by them upon the old covenant of works "do this, and thou shalt live, or do this, and thou shalt die," has brought out the great fact that, if there "had been a law which could have given life, then verily righteousness should have come by the law." The ministry engraven in stones consequently brought the knowledge of sin and condemnation and death; and equally proved that unless "the Spirit, and the water, and the blood," found their way in by the grace of God, all were cursed, and under the curse. The present ministry is from the heavens, and is founded upon the finished work of Christ upon the cross below, where He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. God has raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and has crowned Him with glory and honour. Moreover, He has founded a new ministry, upon the worthiness of this Christ and Lord, "not of the letter which killeth, but of the Spirit which giveth life." It is this ministry which Paul contrasts here, with the former, and which he characterizes as a ministration of the Spirit, a ministration moreover of life and righteousness and glory, from the living and exalted Son of man, at the right hand of God, by which we are brought into liberty, and are changed from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord. This ministry by the Holy Ghost, from the heavens now — or when applied prophetically to the nation, and the Gentiles, and to the ends of the earth in the millennium — is based upon the blood of Christ — the blood of the New Testament; but this may, and does open itself out, as to the kind of blessing, to the heavenly and earthly people, according to the manifold counsels of God, and the place in

which Christ is; whether as now hidden with God, or as by and by displayed in power and glory in the midst of the sons of men.

Promises, covenants, and types, and also prophecies had announced the Lord as the seed of Abraham, and indeed as the Son of David, and heir of all that God had bestowed upon his progenitors, to be substantiated when the Messiah comes again, "and his people made willing, in the day of His power. In the meanwhile Jesus has been rejected, and all this earthly order is therefore in abeyance. Moreover, the veil is upon the heart of that people, until they shall turn to the Lord, and then shall the veil be taken away.

What can God connect, during this interval, with Him who has been declared worthy to receive all honour, and blessing, and glory, and power? It is here that Paul says, in our chapter: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God; who hath made us competent ministers of the new covenant." Paul was himself arrested by this glorified Son of man, "to be a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear to thee." In the wisdom of God there were purposes and counsels which lay hidden, as Moses testified, "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." It is these secret things, Paul says, which, "according to the revelation of the mystery, were kept silent since the world began, but now are made manifest and by the scriptures," etc.

God had given away the earth, and had lighted up the path, which He was taking with His people through it, with types and promises connected with "the seed" and founded on the blood of the New Testament, which by and by will be ordained in the hands of the true Mediator, when the people of Israel shall be established under its blessings in Immanuel's land. God had nevertheless the heavens in reserve, and to give away to another and an entirely new race of people, when their Lord and Head had first taken His own place in them on the right hand of the throne of God. The Lord Jesus is thus to fill the earth and the heavens with His praise, and to lead not only His brethren after the flesh, and put them (as the true antitypical Joseph) into the land of Goshen; but likewise to carry the people of another standing and calling, into the Father's house which He is gone to prepare for them! God has made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated," etc.

Though our chapters in 2 Corinthians do not stretch out to such a circle as the Ephesians, yet they open to us the fact that, under this present ministry of the New Testament, we have a ministration from life, in the risen and ascended Christ, to life in us by the Spirit — as well as a ministration of righteousness from the Lord where and as He now is, who is our righteousness, and by which we are made the righteousness of God in Him. This ministry is personal, and essential to us as individual believers, that we may know how suited we are by our new creation for all that is prepared for us, as our portion with the Lord, according to the Father's purposes and counsels, in the eternal glory for which we wait, and of which the Spirit is the seal. In the meanwhile this personal ministration of life is to produce by the Spirit of the living God, in the fleshy tables of the heart, "an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men" — moreover, an epistle (as Paul says to

these Corinthians) written in our hearts. Here we may pause and put a question to our souls: Is this the ministry I recognize — a ministration of life, righteousness, and glory, from the risen and ascended Lord in heaven, and written not with ink, nor on a table of stone, but with the Spirit of the living God on the very heart itself? Or am I still entangled with the former ministry of Moses and the voice of words on Sinai and the claims of a law which rightly demanded righteousness and said, This do and thou shalt live? How different are these two ministries, and how lamentable to see thousands of the Lord's people wandering back into the old house of Moses, instead of accepting with joy this present ministration of life and righteousness as the only existing ministry between God and His beloved people! When will they take their proper places in the Church of the living God, and in the conscious liberty whereby Christ has made His members free, by redemption through His blood?

What other ministration can there be for those who understand what the assembly of God is on the earth, and what else could the craft of the enemy do than blind people to it, and get them back into the house of bondage, to lean upon ritualistic observances, of which, when at their best, God said, "I have no pleasure?"

Never let it be forgotten that the First Epistle to the Corinthians gives the present pattern of true church establishment and church endowment, and that this Second issues the only true church epistle, known and read of all men, and the only ministry that can produce it; that is, a ministration of life and righteousness by the Spirit of God, written on the fleshy table of the heart! May God emancipate His own people and bring them out from responsibilities and disappointments as under the law, to stand in the privileges of His own grace and calling and the accomplished work of Christ, by which they are put in a complete acceptance with the Father! But to return. There is every now and then to be found in the epistles (especially when some new or extraordinary subject is introduced, like "this ministry of life" of which we are now speaking) a further revelation of God and of Christ, suited to the occasion, and which becomes the testimony of the Holy Ghost. If God acts in grace towards men in their sins, and to plant them in His own righteousness, it must be from Himself. In this 2 Corinthians 2:1-17, for instance, there is consequent upon this ministry such a change as carries us beyond the mere natural relations of God and man, for another person, the Word made flesh, has come in, "the daysman who has laid his hand upon both." The preaching of what He did in redemption upon the cross, ascends up before God as a sweet savour.

Paul, as the apostle and witness to this gospel of the glory of Christ, "thanks God who led him about as in triumph, and made manifest the savour of his knowledge in every place." Moreover, he and his fellow-workers "were unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish." The relations and responsibilities of men spring out of this new ground likewise; for "to the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life." This is what the acceptance or rejection of this ministry of "the gospel of the glory" involved. Adam, and the fall of man, are no longer the exclusive subjects, but the grace of God, through Christ, brought to such an one as Saul, "the very chief of sinners," and presented to any like him! But if God in grace, through Christ, is thus active in love towards sinners in their sins, "the god of this world" can also use this ministry of the new covenant for his own objects against mankind. "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." No power would be equal to such a scene of ruin and wretchedness as the wickedness of Satan has produced, unless the Creator-God, who commanded the light to

shine out of darkness upon creation's chaotic confusion, had done a far greater thing and given by almighty power "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God," to shine unto sinners dead in trespasses and sins.

Adam was created in the image of God in the Genesis of human life; but by this first man came sin, and death, and the long catalogue of mortal woes. The last Adam has since come in, and by His atoning sufferings and death, has laid a new foundation for the operations of God in grace and righteousness. Redemption is become the new ground upon which God is displayed, and the second man in the heavens has taken His place as "the image of God" in them. It is from thence that Paul says, "God hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ."

How little is this gospel of the grace founded on the blood of Christ on the cross, below — or this gospel of the glory, from the right hand of God above, presented to the acceptance of the lost and the undone!

Man is either left to struggle with himself and his own corruptions in a state of nature; or handed up to Moses and the law, instead of to the cross where the old man has been crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed. In such a case there is no ground left for a believer to take as a standing before God than redemption, and none but the Second Man to whom he can be conformed now or hereafter. Besides "the epistle of Christ" which the Corinthians were, and this "gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God," there is yet the fashioning power of this life upon us, whilst in the mortal body, and this I would desire to trace a little. In 2 Corinthians 4:1-18, this life, ministered from the ascended Christ, put the ministers into the same place as the only true Servant took, when amongst His disciples on earth: "for we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." How entirely the place of the minister in our times varies from, and indeed, contradicts the character of our Lord's service, and that of the apostle's is plain, if we remember the way in which the Master quelled the strife that arose among His disciples, which of them should be accounted the greatest. It is the Lord Himself that gives the true glory to christian service. Was He ever so great as when "the hour was come, that he should depart out of this world to the Father," and He rose from supper and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded Himself, and poured water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet? How great was He in the eyes of all in heaven throughout the three and thirty years of His humiliation; when He emptied Himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross! We are not living in the power of this life, and enough in the company of Him in whom it was seen to perfection, to be charmed by its grandeur in the midst of a world, whose "kings exercise lordship." The first thing for "a new creature in Christ" is to understand how this fact has necessarily changed his relation and standing to the heavens and the earth, and that his relatively new position to each is precisely what Christ's is. We must be truly one with Him, where He now is, in conscious exaltation as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, in order to get into our true place of service in the Church, where to be great is to be little, "less than the least of all saints." Next in importance to our getting into position upon earth, into the place now that corresponds with the mind of God (like the Master found in His day) is the conscious dependence upon God, with which this ministration of life connects us: "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

Again, outward circumstances in a world like this only call out this life from the risen Christ in greater brilliancy where it dwells. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." What a divine life and what a ministry "the Spirit of the living God" is working in the new creature, "for we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake!" The resources and confidence of this ministration of life are not only outside ourselves, but outside the world, and are found in the history and ways of the Christ who is our life, "knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." Again, as to afflictions, do they stumble the man in Christ, or clog the divine life, or make it shine the brighter as it stretches itself away to its own height for relief? "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." The real strength of a soul will be in what it is consciously connected with. If it be far more with things unseen than with things seen, the things seen will become tributary to this life in Christ. When the spies compared themselves with the giants, they were grasshoppers in their own sight; but when faith in Caleb contrasted the giants with the God of Israel, then these giants were the grasshoppers. Life from the ascended Christ and Lord connects us by the Spirit with what He is, and our affections are set on the things at God's right hand. But, further, this ministry provides for every emergency, so that "we know if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that, being clothed, we shall not be found naked."

We have thus been guided to consider this ministry of life in the members of Christ, putting them into an entirely new relation with all things, whether present or future, temporal or eternal, seen or unseen; and as regards all the circumstances of the way, only laying these under tribute, so that they work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. This life, moreover, worketh down into death all in us that else would live, and, living, would be the link by which the flesh and Satan work, so as to connect us with this present world, out of which by the death of Christ we have been redeemed. We must be either false to the objects of our redemption, or else in the power of that life which we have with a risen Christ insist upon death with ourselves, and with the world, which by its own act, and by the judgment of God at the cross, is left under that death. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." This ministry of the new covenant, in connection with the ascended Son of man, gives these triumphs to us as the consequences and fruits of His work, that in us (who are not but have life) "mortality might be swallowed up of life." The Church at Corinth and elsewhere was to be "the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men" upon every point in which its conformity by life and righteousness, and by the work of the Spirit of the living God, could make it manifest. Another and a totally different race of people, "new creatures in Christ" were to be seen in this old creation — men no longer living to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again — men who were bearing about in their body the dying of the Lord Jesus, in the presence of the very world that had put Him to death and cast Him out. Properly, this life in us takes up the fact of this judgment by God, and puts us in the place of death, and bears about the dying of the Lord Jesus. What else could this life in the power of the Holy Ghost produce in a new creature?

It requires a world such as this is in which to go down to nothingness, weakness, and death, just as it requires another in which to rise and pass up into its own height of glory, like Christ who is the life. It is dependent on nothing under the heavens nor obstructed by anything, but finds and forces its way in the pressure of resurrection power, drawing into fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, that in the measure in which the afflictions abound, so "the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" may administer the consolations. It draws its sweetest motives from nothing lower than Christ. "The love of Christ constraineth us" and conforms its progress by the example of Him "who died for us and rose again," knowing too "that we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Lastly, this life coming from the glorified One makes Him as He is the test and standard of its judgment. "Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more . . . old things are passed away; behold all things are become new; and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." May God give us to know this ministration of life, righteousness, and glory, as the ministry under which we are placed, and to understand the Spirit of the living God as the power, which is adequate for all the purposes which are to be wrought out in us, so as to keep up the truth of death working by life below; and the other truth of life working beyond the reach and range of death, above, according to "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God!"

"The ministry of reconciliation," to wit, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them," is the suited adjunct to this ministry of the new covenant. "The ambassadors for Christ" to His betrayers and murderers open their credentials by presenting God as beseeching men to be reconciled to God upon this new footing, "that he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." What "the sheet let down from heaven," wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things, was to Peter as the warrant from God to him to open the door to Cornelius and the Gentiles, this ministry of reconciliation was to Paul now, seeing its aspect was to the whole world. Therefore he could say, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief." The Jesus whom Paul was persecuting when stoning Stephen, the Son of God in glory, Christ the Lord, and this blasphemer, the very chief of sinners, give the two extremes of "this ministry of reconciliation," and they meet and are together.

2 Corinthians 6:1-18 speaks of the ministers themselves, and what care should be taken that the ministry be not blamed, giving no offence in anything, but in all things approving ourselves in afflictions, in distresses, in stripes, by pureness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned; as unknown, and yet well known; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. This part of the epistle closes with a solemn appeal to the Corinthians as to things which had interfered with the exercise of this life, "and straitened them in their own bowels." Their enlargement depended for manifestation, on their being "not unequally yoked together with unbelievers;" and it is important to observe that the Spirit of God delivers a soul, not by discussing with it that particular point by which it has been caught by the enemy; but by bringing the conscience up to the sources of life, and the springs of real christian conduct. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?" and again, "what concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

These are the challenges which brace up the soul and free it from the spider's web; for the craft of Satan is to drop in the intermediate shadings between two extreme colours, such as light and darkness, and produce a Christendom in the place of Christ, and to confuse things, so that there is neither the Church nor the world to be seen in these last days of delusion. Men, and alas! Christians, may call this kind of progress enlargement and liberality, but Paul has another word for modern advancement "straitened." Many an exercised conscience groans under the bondage, and perhaps little thinks how near the door of escape is, if there were but simplicity of faith to pass through it. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Here is the secret of all real strength and enlargement of soul, found alone in this association with the living God, and in an entire separation from the evil, which straitens the new man.

How well does Paul add "having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God!" Here it is, if we may so say, that the Apostle of the Gentiles leads these Corinthians to the brazen laver, that they may wash themselves, and pass into the inner courts on their priestly service, bidding them remember that in our dispensation, "they are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." To them and to him and to us, all else summed itself up into infidelity, or idolatry, respecting which, in all its varieties, we are asked, "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" and go outside the camp of the day to Jesus, bearing His reproach. Here, this ministration of life, by the Spirit, has described its own circle; having commenced by writing on the fleshy table of the heart, and finished by cleansing the feet of the saints, and separating them from the Belial of that day, and this upon the authority and blessedness of the promise, "I will receive you," a word of sufficient encouragement for every exercised heart, whether at Corinth, or in England, or elsewhere. A few remarks on the remaining chapters may close this paper, my object being mainly to show from this Second Epistle, what church ministry really is, and in what it consists, just as in the First Epistle I attempted to show what true church establishment, and church endowments were, and what the assembly of God is which is to receive this ministry and its ministers, and to be the epistle of Christ, as altogether distinct from the world, "known and read of all men." The example of Christ Himself is introduced in 2 Corinthians 9:1-15; 2 Corinthians 10:1-18, and the grace in which He commended Himself to our souls is held out when a corresponding virtue is required from the life of Christ in us. For example, when Paul says, "As ye abound in everything, in faith, in knowledge, and utterance . . . see that ye abound in this grace also [of liberality]," he adds, Ye know "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." It is the real secret of power to be thus associated with Christ, not only in life as we have seen, but in the known intelligence of life, which appreciates and loves according to God, what was manifested in perfection in our Lord. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is irresistible as a moral motive, and as a new power in us, which binds the heart to Himself in a similar expression of grace, however different in measure, as all surely must be, though not in character. So again in 2 Corinthians 10:1-18 when Paul encourages them to another grace, he does so by reminding them of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ, "and that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down reasonings, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God,

and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Thus the things which straitened these Corinthians, were not only exposed in a former chapter, as resulting in an unequal yoke — false concords, mixed communions, and corrupt agreements — but are here hunted down to their strong holds, and their hiding places discovered to be in the flesh, and looking on things "after the outward appearance." Nothing less than the knowledge of God for our faith, and the obedience of Christ for abiding fellowship in the truth, can be the upper and the nether springs for the inner man; and the saint who is watchful may often find an opportunity of bringing a stray thought into captivity, instead of being led into captivity, or being straitened in himself, by its escape. What had they reduced their standard to, when they said, "his letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible?" How tenderly yet effectually does he recover them from the point of their degradation, of "comparing themselves among themselves," by saying, for "we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."

Alas! though the temple of Solomon, with its porches, and beams, and posts, and walls, was overlaid with pure gold; and though the house was garnished with precious stones for beauty, and the gold was the gold of Parvaim; yet declension began with its own king, and the glory which overcame the spirit of the Queen of Sheba was soon tarnished; and the Ichabod of Eli's days became the prophetic word to Solomon! The Egyptian king came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and carried away the shields of gold which Solomon had made, "instead of which the king Rehoboam made shields of brass," etc. The same enemy was at work in the church at Corinth, and the watchful apostle writes in 2 Corinthians 11:1-33, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through His subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

False apostles and false doctrines are in the dark catalogue of this chapter; the brass shields are substituted for the golden ones, which the great Egyptian has carried away, "Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." What an opportunity does this day of departure afford to an exercised conscience (and thank God there are many) to refuse these ministers, though they bear with them the imitation shields of brass. The fine gold of Parvaim — the gold of the house of the Lord — "the word which ye have heard from the beginning" remains, and Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. Are they ministers of Christ? asks our apostle. "(I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. . . . If I must needs glory, I will glory in my infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not."

Here we may say how truly is Paul a competent minister of this life, which first in the Lord Jesus Himself reached death in the obedience which could alone bring Him there, "that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us" — a life which could neither be worn down by the enmity of foes nor by the desertion of friends — a life which could not be worn out by the patient endurance of what was appointed Him, but a life which spent itself in doing the will of the Father that sent Him and found its own sustainment whilst doing it! So Paul, like a lesser light, is carried about in triumph wherever the Spirit leads him, whether beaten with rods or stoned, in shipwreck

and in the deep, or in journeyings, in perils of robbers or in perils among false brethren, let down by the window at the walls of Damascus or caught up to the third heaven (as in 2 Corinthians 12:1-21), every step was but the pathway of this life, from the man in glory and now this man in Christ — a life which lived as truly upon death and by means of dying daily in this world as this same divine life will rejoice in the eternal glory, when surrounded by circumstances that are (not more suited perhaps, but) more proper to it, where God is and where evil cannot come! "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

One thing more remains to notice in the last two chapters, that this ministry of life from the exalted Head, by the Spirit in us, which keeps its pressure of death upon the flesh, so that its own activities should not be straitened, is made perfect by weakness, in the absolutism of its own nothingness, and therefore of entire dependence upon the Lord. The persecuting power of Satan, let loose upon him at Philippi (so that he spoke in the beginning of the epistle of the trouble that came upon them in Asia, even to the despairing of life), was accepted by him as "the sentence of death, that they should not trust in themselves." The God who raises the dead was all the nearer and far more present.

Every adversity was turned to account, even to Satan himself. So that at the close of this epistle, when Paul is at the other extreme of the afflictions of Christ and, "coming to visions and revelations of the Lord," says, "whether in the body or out the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth." Such an one was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. "Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messengers of Satan to buffet me."

Here likewise Satan is turned to profit for Paul, in the history of this life, in "a man in Christ;" not in Philippian persecutions, but in the abundance of the revelations in the third heavens! "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me, and he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort opened the abounding consolations at the beginning, and now at the close we see the Lord Himself perfecting His own strength in the felt weakness of this chosen vessel unto Christ. What a use the Lord can make of us for Himself before we quit these earthly places, if we will only go to nothing, that Christ may be magnified in our body, whether by life or by death. "Most gladly therefore, he adds, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Old things are passed away, and all things are become new, and all things are of God; and the things that were gain to me I count loss for Christ. Reproaches and afflictions, with persecutions, are the Lord's bequest to us in this world: they are not misfortunes when met in the path of life and obedience, but they are (as Caleb said of the giants) bread for us.

We need difficulties and trials to prove that this life in Christ and in us will pass in its own title of suffering or endurance through the last and greatest of them. God wants them to bring in His mercies and comforts in the tribulation, and the Lord needs them to prove the sufficiency of His grace and that His strength is made perfect. Moreover, Paul adds, "Therefore I take pleasure [what a triumph!] in infirmities, in reproaches, in distresses for Christ's sake, for when I am weak then am I strong." In the unweariedness of this life, seeking objects upon which to express itself, he assures these Corinthians, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." What a new rule for charity is this, or rather what

another charity is introduced into the Church of God! In 2 Corinthians 13:1-14 and last Paul again insists on weakness, even as Christ who, though he was crucified through weakness, now liveth the power of God. "We also are weak with him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you." If they sought a proof of Christ speaking in him in any other way, let them "examine themselves, whether they be in the faith, let them prove their own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in them, except ye be reprobates." How could they doubt his ministry of life and believe that through his ministration of the new covenant Jesus Christ had been received and was in them? Finally, he prays to God for them, that they do no evil, and is glad when he is weak and they are strong, and wishes their perfection, at the same time adding, "I write these things, being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification and not to destruction. "Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you." This ministry here finds its culminating point, in making perfect and producing comfort in this state, where the God of love and peace may be known and can dwell — an enclosure of His own, in spite of the world, and the flesh, and the devil — a habitation of God through the Spirit! A benediction rests upon this temple of the Lord, this household of God: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." J. E. Batten.

S. Councils, Congress, and Social Science.

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1872 94 The Ecumenical Council of Rome, and the late assumption of infallibility by the Pope, as the great ecclesiastical head of Christendom, and the vicar of Christ on earth, mark perhaps the highest point of pretension to which the civilized world has yet reached. Prophecy however shows a greater than this, when "the Antichrist sits in the temple of God, declaring that he is God" — whom the Lord shall destroy with the spirit of His mouth, and with the brightness of His coming. Upon this graduated scale (though much lower) is also marked the favourite scheme of modern ecclesiastics for a united Christendom by the fusion of its eastern and western churches, and the union of Patriarch, Pope, and Primate. Connected with this movement, the Pan-anglican Council of Protestantism held its session; and "the Eirenicon" of Dr. Pusey (like the dove sent forth out of Noah's ark) was let loose to see whether the waters of division were abated. The Evangelical Alliance still lends its hand as a connecting link with what is yet lower, and is almost become the next door neighbour to the Great Social Science Congress, with all its off-shoots and its monster meetings. The International of Europe, and of America (which is the herculean progeny of these days), has a character of its own, and must be added to this catalogue, in order to see the mighty machinery of all kinds which is so variously acting upon general society to produce the last formations, out of which the long expected universal prosperity is to spring! In effect, and as the fruit of this widespread "knowledge of good and evil" by human attainment, the world's progress and the consolidation of its political and social systems are boldly affirmed as existing facts by the accepted organs of the times; and repeated as such in the familiar intercourse of daily life. All are thus encouraged to build with certainty, upon. "the good time coming;" and as men congratulate each other upon this hope, their only enquiry is, as to its near approach. It must seem strange, in such a state of eager expectation of the best that can happen from these councils and congresses, to raise the question whether they are not the proof that man has long ago left the good behind him! and stranger still perhaps to have these flattering hopes dimmed by the conclusion of such an ancient as Solomon — "lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." The issue is obviously an important and a grave one, which is thus raised between the wisest of men, and the wiser men of the nineteenth century Has man by some disaster or other, lapsed from an original position and state, as "upright before God," and irrecoverably forfeited that place? Is he thus in his own person a witness of what he has departed from? or, of "the uprightness" to which he fondly hopes he is advancing? Are all his "many inventions" proofs of what he has lost, and to be viewed as but so many clever expedients, by which he successfully meets the inconvenience, and reduces the misery, that attaches to his present condition? Is not man a creature, who has become fruitful in discoveries in order to mitigate his own wretchedness, and to relieve himself from the pressure of circumstances, which, had he not broken loose from God, could not have existed at all? "God made man upright;" but that he departed from this state, and sought out many inventions, is the real solution of most modern problems.

Adam's fall was no justification of Cain's "going out from the presence of the Lord," and becoming an inventor of expedients, against the effects of his own independence, as "a fugitive and a vagabond." Man had lost his uprightness — the image in which God had created him; but the Lord had not on that account forsaken the earth, or His creatures. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." The book of Proverbs tells us that the delights of God "were with the sons of men," rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth.

Indeed the great proof that God did not leave man to himself and to the devil is historically given in the various books of Moses and the Chronicles, when a perfect system of political economy was introduced, and established by Jehovah in relation with the people of Israel. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself," and "ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation," are the recorded facts of the way by which God delivered His people from the house of bondage, and established them under His protection, and in His favour.

Having called them out of Egypt, He took the whole charge of them upon Himself and chose for them the land of Canaan, "a good land and a large, flowing with milk and honey," the mountain of God's own inheritance, the place which the Lord made for Himself to dwell in, the sanctuary which His own hands had established. They were His people, and He was their God; accordingly He called Moses up (where man never was before) and appointed him as their lawgiver and commander, charging him with ordinances, and statutes, and precepts, that Israel might be different in all other respects from the nations of the earth. They were thus separated by laws and ordinances from the rest of mankind, so that God might dwell among them, and walk with them, on their journey to the land which He had prepared. Nor were they only to be morally and politically different to all the nations of the earth, but by instruction as a religious people they were taught how the God of Israel was to be approached and worshipped. Moses was therefore established as a mediator, and Aaron consecrated as a great high priest, "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Their intercourse was based thus on the full recognition of who and what God was in His holiness; and what they were as in the flesh: still God could and did meet the people at the door of the tabernacle which He had erected, and talked with their mediator and them. Besides these personal relations, thus established on sacrifice, mediation, and priesthood, that man might "be upright before God" in conscience, on the footing of redemption, by the blood of another; they were cut off from all their own inventions — "if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone, for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it." Another of these early lessons was at their Exodus, "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." And Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. As to the tabernacle itself, Moses was admonished of God; "for see," saith He, "that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." Their education, day by day, was to own that their sufficiency was of God, who dwelt in their midst by the visible cloud, and the pillar of fire by night. Pharaoh and his captains and chariots at the Red Sea, Israel in the wilderness and the manna and the rock that followed them, Jordan, and the final possession of the land of Canaan, alike show that the right hand of the Lord triumphed gloriously. Their future was to be as bright as their past, uprightness of heart consisted then in their obedience; and prosperity was pledged to this uprightness by Him who was in their midst: "if ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them," your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall

reach unto the sowing time, and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. Moreover as to conflict (if conflict came) it would only prove their God fought for them: "five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight, and your enemies shall fall before you."

Besides these relations to their Jehovah, and to one another, and even to their enemies, there were intimacies which the Lord desired personally to cultivate with His people; and these were established by "the feasts of the Lord or holy convocations," which were to be proclaimed in their seasons. "The first-fruits of all the increase" which God had given His people were to be brought to the Lord, even the hin of wine, and the oil, and the fine flour, for His delights were with His people, and He would share in all the good that He had given them. Nothing had been overlooked by Him that could contribute to their prosperity and blessing; even the land was to enjoy her sabbaths every seventh year, and the trumpet of jubilee on the fiftieth year proclaimed liberty through all the land unto the inhabitants thereof, "and ye shall return every man to his family, and to his possession." These scriptures, and the whole of the Mosaic economy, show the desire of Jehovah to establish relations with His people, and prove how He cultivated in every possible way the acquaintance of the people with Himself. God had come down to man upon the earth to bless him in his basket and in his store, to take away all diseases from him, and to establish Israel in such outward prosperity and glory as His people, that all the nations of the world might acknowledge there was none other God than He. This intercourse, which also contemplated man in all his capabilities as a moral and social being with his neighbour, was maintained by statutes and laws, which directed him how to behave to his fellow in the smallest matters. "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury." Legislation on the one hand, or limitation in obedience on the other, was equally out of the question; and he was "upright" before God, who allowed no will of his own to compromise himself in thorough compliance. Inventions were also out of place, and their inventors were troublers in those days. When God dwelt with men upon the earth, everything was by divine pattern, and executed in complete submission. If a man were required "to devise cunning works, or to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones to set them, and in carving of timber to work in all manner of workmanship," it was Jehovah's care, and He provided such a one. "The Lord spake to Moses, See, I have called by name Bezaleel, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship." Moreover, "in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee," the tabernacle, the ark, and the mercy-seat, etc. Beyond all that was merely moral, political, and social, in the circle where man lived with his fellow, the same loving hand led the Israelite as a worshipper, into the nobler exercises of his soul, with God Himself. Moses, Aaron, and his sons; Bezaleel, and Aholiab; had all fulfilled their parts, in "the tabernacle of witness," in the wilderness, and in due time gave place to another order of intercourse with Joshua, and the "ark of the covenant of the Lord of the whole earth," on their way over Jordan, into the rest which God had prepared for Himself, and His beloved people in Canaan. Here also in the days of Solomon, when Jerusalem the city of the great king was to have its gorgeous temple as the dwelling-place of Jehovah, all was by divine pattern, and when finished, the glory took possession of it (as it did with Moses and the tabernacle) so that the priests could not enter, and the Lord was at home, and in rest with His people whom He loved. Kingship in David and the throne of Israel in the reign of Solomon (the bright centre, and light to all the

surrounding countries) were added by God to all He had previously showered upon this favoured people, and man was at his highest and best.

It is a sorry thing to ask, What has become of this grand social system, this nation and its economy, this throne and its Solomon, the city and its prosperity, the temple and its glory, or the feasts of the Lord and the worshippers? It is a yet sadder lesson to learn, that the best and happiest that Jehovah in His infinite wisdom and grace could establish for men (where man is) has become an historical fact, and is behind him! Acquiescence in these ways and judgments of God ought to lead men to repent and turn to the present testimony which He now gives to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the new foundation on which His actings for His own glory and for man's blessing rest. To attempt to reconstruct a social system in this world, where it has already been established and failed through the incompetency of the people of God, is but sparks of man's own kindling! Solomon, in the consciousness of his endowments and resources, asked "What can the man do, that cometh after the king?" A yet weightier question occurs, in the face of what we are considering: What can any congress, or council, or confederation of men accomplish, after the illustrious names by whom God introduced His system of moral and political government, and social order, in the midst of His people Israel? The prophet Habakkuk gives the counterpart of Solomon's proverb to us, and also the secret of man's present relation to God (in the gospel), when He says, "behold his soul which is lifted up not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." Independence and self-will destroy uprightness in the soul, and lead to many inventions; whereas confession and self-judgment bring into a closer walk with God in the path which He opens to the faith of His people. Another prophesied in the days when the heart of Israel was lifted up, and they sought out inventions, "woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen because they are strong; but they look not to the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord." Now the Egyptians are men, and not God, and their horses flesh and not spirit. "When the Lord shall stretch out His hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down together." The force and application of these quotations are obvious upon the supposed advancement of men by social science; and the progress of the world into light and blessing, by means of the fourth beast of Daniel and its ten horns, with the mouth that spoke great things. Do the modern leaders of this movement in the old and new world expect to do better than those men who were so eminently endowed by God, and with whom He wrought in counsel, and where He once dwelt? "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, a people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." (Dent. 33: 29.) Have they any one like Moses, who was with the Lord forty days and forty nights, and did neither eat bread nor drink water? Who but him has ever been entrusted with two tables of testimony — the skin of whose face shone so bright that the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him, the witness from God (and the link with God) upon the formation of Jehovah's delights with His people? Who but Aaron in his garments of glory and beauty, ever was authorized to enter within the veil into the holiest where God was upon the mercy-seat, to obtain by sacrifice and priesthood the remission of Israel's sins, year by year, on the great day of atonement? The same God, who brought in the light of His majesty and truth to the people in the face of Moses, provided for their failures through Aaron the great high priest, in order that the intercourse thus formed with Himself might be unbroken, even by their sins. But besides Moses with the tables on the mount, and Aaron in the sanctuary with the sweet incense and the blood, "king Solomon made

a brazen scaffold of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, in temple times, and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands towards heaven. He stood before the altar of the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven nor in the earth; which keepest covenant and showest mercy unto thy servants that walk before thee with all their hearts."

Mediation, priesthood, and kingship, were thus established between Jehovah and His beloved people, and became the channels through which this intimacy, and their social happiness were maintained. In the midst of all this kingdom glory, and closeness of communion with God, the greatest man was the lowliest. Though lifted up and magnified exceedingly, eclipsing all else as he sat upon the throne of Israel, he would not exalt himself, nor rest in the exaltation bestowed upon him; but bless and praise the God of his father David, who had fulfilled His promises. The Lord had done His best in outward prosperity and blessing for the king and the nation, by leading them into rest, and peace, and glory with Himself, in His own city Jerusalem; and there He rejoiced over them with joy and gladness! Solomon with the people are at their height as they ascribe all this blessing (come down to man, where man is) through the covenant which was made with the patriarchs and with David. "And on the three-and-twentieth day of the seventh month, he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the Lord had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people." All bids fair to abide, when thus committed to the hands of the wisest and best of men; who, in the deepening sense of human insignificance, thus brought into contact with the majesty and faithfulness of Jehovah, asked, "but will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee: how much less this house which I have built!" In short, a theocracy was established, in the wisdom and goodness of God, which embraced the moral and social condition of mankind, both in their relations with their fellow men and with the Creator. We have seen how this form of government and worship was set up, and sought to be carried out in unbroken social intercourse, between God and His people in Immanuel's land; as a witness that He had neither left the earth, nor men in it, to their own inventions. "Three times in a year, shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty."

Such was His identification with His people, and His own delight to dwell in their midst — to fill all hearts with gladness, and all hands with plenty. This throne and its king, this temple and its priests, this city and its rulers, the land and its inhabitants, are no more. Costly and perfect institutions, with their costlier services, and their codes of laws, political and religious, have likewise passed away. A theocracy, and an economy suited to it, are behind men; the mournful records that even such helps and encouragements as were introduced could not permanently lift man above himself. On the contrary, all these magnificent and remedial measures were dragged down to the low level upon which they found him and sought his deliverance and welfare. The psalmist of Israel affirms this. "They tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:" when He heard this, He was wroth and greatly abhorred Israel, and delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand; He gave His people also unto the sword, and was wroth with his inheritance." The ministry of all the prophets followed, by which they were besought to "forsake their inventions," and the broken cisterns they had hewn which could hold no water, and to repent of their backslidings in "uprightness of heart," that God might forgive their iniquities. He likewise

openly punished them, and drove them away out of His presence into Babylon; and brought them back in His mercy by the decree of Cyrus under Ezra and Nehemiah. Long time suffered He their transgressions, reasoning and saying, "Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will only revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint: from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores." The highest authoritative power under law, by Moses and a ministration of angels, had only proved the people incompetent to hold the blessing; for they brought themselves under its curses, and forfeited their relations to God, by their iniquity, so that He was compelled to be their Judge. The wisest and most able administration, by which this nation was to have been elevated above all the nations of the earth, collapsed, and only finds its record in the statute book of Deuteronomy, and the early chronicles of David and his greater son. The problem of human advancement, and a nation's progress, as well as the world's prospects by moral means, has been long since brought out and solved, as we have seen. Moreover, that people are made a hissing and a byword before the eyes of the Gentiles to this day. The very best, the brightest, and the fairest that could be done for man, reached their perfection and concentrated themselves in blessing upon Solomon and the throne, as God's centre of earthly prosperity and of unity between Himself and His creatures. At that same moment the responsibility of this illustrious king began, into whose hands all was entrusted, and, like Adam in the paradise of Eden, almost as soon forfeited. Does God repeat this problem — much less ask the learned, the wise, and the scientific to take it in hand in modern days? Will their present systems compare with His past and future? He has postponed this kind of social intercourse with men till the millennium is introduced, when other and heavenly agencies will be employed (at the coming of the Lord, and the outpouring of the Spirit upon Israel) by which His people shall be all righteous, and brought into final blessing in the land under their Messiah through the blood of the new covenant. The pioneers and guides of public opinion may well stop to consider what has been already done, and vanished away like a tale that is told. If they propose far less, and even compromise, yea sacrifice, the rights of God, that they may find their task easier, will He on that account surrender them? If men shut Him out of their schemes, will He consent to be shut out? If they say "let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us, he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision." Who so fit as the wisest among men, and the central man in all that magnificent system, established between God and His people for His own and their delights, to declare, "lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions?" Who so competent as the sweet psalmist of Israel prophetically to say, "be wise now therefore O ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling, kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little?" "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." "Ichabod" is indelibly written over the departed glory from the temple and the city of the great king, and Immanuel's land, which were once the bright witnesses of the yet brighter intimacy formed and tenderly cultivated between the Lord and His beloved people. The writings of the Old Testament (which contain these records in full) would be merely historical, did they not likewise hold out to the faith of the nation a bright future, when He who scattered them into the four corners of the earth shall gather them together again; "for this is as the waters of Noah unto me." "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee;" and this is God's order of blessing for the earth. If the wise men and rulers of the nations refuse to

take warning from the history of God's favoured people, but think themselves wiser than He — and the Gentiles better than the Jews — if they thus encourage one another — let them listen to the prophet Daniel, as to what is before them. "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall arise after them and he shall speak great words against the most High and think to change times and laws But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart." (Daniel 7:23-28.) J. E. Batten.

S. Death is Gain

Death is Gain.

1. The death brought into this world through sin, as the consequence of Adam's fall, separated us from God — from life also, as towards ourselves, our own natural existence — from present peace as moral beings — and from everlasting blessing. Death as the wages of sin, made us personally conscious of guilt before God — of Satan's title over us, wrought out by our actual transgressions, "led captive by the devil at his will."

Death — eternal death in everlasting fire — is the measure of God's righteous judgment against the sinner — the only way by which the majesty of God and the holiness of His throne could be maintained against sin and Satan.

2. On the other hand death, as known in Christ on the cross, has separated us from sin, from a guilty conscience on account of it, and from all fear of judgment from God, for Christ has suffered in our stead, "the just for the unjust." The death of Christ has set aside the whole power of Satan, for through death He has destroyed him that had the power of death, and separated us by it from that nature (the old man), which, before we knew Christ, alienated us in mind and heart from God. The judicial death of Christ on the cross has glorified God by putting away sin through the sacrifice of Himself, and opened a way by which God has displayed His power in holiness as the raiser of the dead. Moreover, the death of Christ has become the ground of all present grace to the sinner, as well as unto eternal glory between the Father and the Son, God and the elect, Christ and the redeemed, by which the heavens and the earth in the day of millennial blessing will be filled with His glory.

3. Again, the death and resurrection of Christ has changed the whole position of the believer before God, even the Father. We are born out of death, and take life, eternal life, in and with Christ Jesus the Lord, and as joined with Him now — "who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" We are on the other side of death, whether viewed as the enemy's power over the sinner, or as the judgment of God against sin, for we are risen with Christ. God, who made His Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, has made us to be "the righteousness of God in him." We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us, and in the face of sin and death can say, "O death where is thy sting? . . . thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

4. Our relations to death and judgment, God and Satan, the flesh and the world, are all reversed by the cross of Christ. The death which we feared, and which, before we knew Christ, fed upon us as in the flesh, is what now we feed upon — death is gain, and we "show forth the Lord's death till he come." He spoiled the spoiler, and Satan is defeated by death. But more, the judgment of God has found its full vindication in the death of Christ; and it is now behind us. As to the world, we are not of it, even as Christ was not of the world; and, as regards the devil, "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

5. As a consequence of these changes and victories accomplished by the death of Christ, we cannot (for God, any more than for truth or for faith) live in the flesh or in the world, or in relation to any other thing, from which He has redeemed us. "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that as many of us as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ?" Our springs are in the risen and glorified Lord; and the soul is in connection by grace with Him there, and from that height we draw our life and motives for manifesting Him below. No power less than the Holy Ghost can work in us according to this new rule of life and death, in order to maintain us in correspondence with the truth about ourselves, "as it is in Jesus," or enable us to be "imitators of God as dear children." J. E. Batten.

S. Jesus, led of the Spirit

"Jesus, led of the Spirit"

There is a subject of considerable interest in the earlier parts of the gospels, but more especially to be found in Luke, Mark, and Matthew, since these three display Christ in His human relationships as the devoted servant of God, or as the perfect man in the midst of mankind, or in the narrower circle of the nation as the only true Israelite — the Messiah, the promised seed. The subject of interest to which I would call attention is introduced to us in what has just been said as regards the characteristic differences of each evangelist, and is nothing less than the fact, that the Lord in His lifetime on the earth regained, and beyond measure surpassed, every position in which God as Creator, or Almighty, or Jehovah had been discredited, and forced into the strange place of a Judge; whether by Adam's sin and forfeiture of Eden, or by man's break down as the servant of God, or by the nation of Israel's rebellion in Canaan, and its consequent dispersion to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Let us begin with the example last named and call to mind, as Matthew describes to us, the state of Israel when the real son of David, and son of Abraham was given the faith of the nation at His birth in Bethlehem. Under the Roman yoke, as the Jewish people were, instead of under the direct government of their Jehovah God (as was their normal position in the world), carried into Babylon as they once were, and, lastly, made tributaries to Caesar — these are sufficient contrasts with the times of Jerusalem and Solomon to assure any who need such a proof of the displeasure of Him who had sold them into the hands of their enemies. The whole line of prophets opens out to us the moral causes and political reasons of this favoured nation's overthrow and punishment in the righteous ways of their Jehovah — "God of the whole earth." In brief, their pathway out of Egypt and across the Red Sea, by Moses, and the overwhelming destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts, were but the inauguration of a new race of people, with whom God had bound Himself up by promises and covenants, which threw them out into the pre-eminence that marked their every step with Jehovah, the God of Israel. The responsibility was equal to the height of this distinguished nearness; therefore both are declared under that one charter of their true liberty — "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities," saith the Lord. Egypt, the wilderness, Jordan, and Canaan once shone bright, magnificently bright, as they were led on by "the pillar and the cloud," the "visible glory," and the "ark of the covenant." What a people is this, called out to make a history for themselves, and under what auspices! How grandly they come out with Moses under the strong arm of Jehovah's deliverance, and how victoriously they enter into the land with Joshua, under "the captain of the Lord's host." But where was all this glory gone when Jesus was born into their midst? "Ichabod" had been written as a premonitory warning in the days of Eli, and Ezekiel had witnessed the departure of the glory in his times, only to be exceeded by the actual poverty which marked the royal house and illustrious lineage of David when Joseph, the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ, closed up that line and gave room for the offended pride of the people, "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? . . . And they were offended in him." That wonder of the world has

collapsed, and a theocracy has broken down when connected with the responsibility of the nation, as the Creator had been previously outraged in the person of Adam, the man upon whose fidelity hung the destiny of the whole world. Alas, for mankind and the bright prospects of Israel besides! All is gone out in darkness and disgrace that once shone so brightly; the whole is in ruins, one vast overthrow; the hour of Satan's triumph and man's defeat! God has been dishonoured everywhere and on all points — wherever He came out to walk with His creatures. The walk in the garden — how short! and the walk with Israel, the beloved people. How all is become the witness of God's righteous indignation and of man's punishment! The cradle of heaven-born hopes and promises is turned into the grave of the saddest disappointment and shame. Satan seems to be master of the whole position, walking to and fro throughout the whole earth, in the title and power which human transgression and God's holiness had put into the devil's hands. Will God leave all this that He created for His own praise and delight in the hands of the enemy? Has He no resources adequate to such an occasion? Has He no one in reserve to make such an extremity as this the grand opportunity for vindicating the glory of God against Satan?

What an hour! what a new moment in the everlasting interests of God and His creatures is this! and how answered and met? "When the fulness of time was come God sent forth his Son, made of a woman." He who alone could be the light in the midst of darkness like this has come forth from God, and is come into the world; has taken on Him "the seed of Abraham;" has taken "part with flesh and blood" to be made "perfect through sufferings." What a relief and resource to us, as we are now called to trace the new history and ways of "flesh and blood" in this Jesus-Emmanuel; for, having come upon no less an errand than to glorify God in the very place where He had been outraged, and to finish the work which was given Him to do, now comes the question, Where will this Jesus, the Messiah, begin this mighty work — the complete vindication and reinstatement of God by Him "who was found in fashion as a man?" His first steps will be surely over the pathway of His people Israel's disgrace, according to that word "out of Egypt have I called my Son;" on that spot He will plant His feet, and light up once again, with more resplendent glory than ever attached to their earlier history (when "baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea"), the way that He will make for Himself as He passes from Egypt into the wilderness with John the Baptist, and down into the waters of Jordan with His repentant people in their confession of their sins, that He may join them as the fulfiller of all righteousness. He is up to the height of the faithfulness of God, the Jehovah of Israel, and He is down to the level of the remnant's condition and state.* What a new link is this in Jordan between God and His people! and how different from their triumphant march over that river with Joshua, and the typical ark of the covenant before the God of the whole earth! If, however, this new place of John and Jesus, and the remnant and Jordan, bring up their reminiscences and regrets, in comparison with the illustrious journey of the same people with Moses and with Joshua, yet the scene before us in Matthew 3:1-17 : is morally resplendent in its own peculiarities. The nation or the believing remnant must learn the holiness of their Jehovah, whose almighty power they had celebrated on the shores of the Red Sea, and looked at in the light of "the holy, holy, holy One of Israel;" they had now to find that self-same power against them, to drive them out from the very land into which it had once set and defended them. The Jehovah that teaches with a strong hand has set them their lessons now, according to what they have been towards Him; and it is at this point that Jesus by His forerunner identifies Himself with the remnant, who are morally in the place corresponding to the ways of God in righteous government towards them. They are come out at the call of John the Baptist, instead of Moses, when the "I am" had

sent him as the deliverer in power; and are confessing their sins with the hope that the kingdom of heaven which John preached as at hand should be set up under the Messiah who was to come after him. The antitype of the ark of the covenant is now in Jordan with them; and "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" from the lips of Jesus is but the counterpart of that other word which tells us "it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." It is upon these new associations between the Messiah and the people and between Jesus and Jehovah that the heavens will fold themselves back in approbation and delight. They have found their relief in the activities which have given the remnant in Jordan their resource. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God like a dove descending and lighting upon him." The heavens in their history had long ago gathered blackness in the days of Noah and had folded themselves up in impenetrable silence till now. For what had they to look down upon with satisfaction, or for the God whom they concealed to commend? But to the man coming up out of Jordan they will delightedly open, and the voice from within, as well as the dove from without, will alike tell of God's vindication by accrediting Him who has done it as "my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." What new relations are witnessed to here, and what a new starting point is this! The priests' feet stood firm in Jordan, but never after this fashion. True the nation may have forfeited every title to blessing and have been turned out of Canaan to take the place of repentant sinners; but who is this stranger in their midst and yet no stranger? and what is He with them for, and what will His identification with them procure for them in the title of righteousness towards Himself and as the securer of grace and forgiveness to them? These are the new questions. But the heavens and "the Spirit like a dove" have united themselves with the man upon earth, and that man "the beloved Son." Jehovah is once more set in relation with His ancient people, not under the new covenant as yet, but by means of Him who will be in due time its mediator, though at present the only true Israelite and the veiled Messiah. Man in the person of Christ supplies to Jehovah the ground and reasons for coming out afresh as the "leader" according to His own righteous government of this new man! "It became him for whom are all things and by whom to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Israel and man had not only broken down before God in Eden and in Canaan, but had put power into the hands of Satan; for the wages of disobedience are thus turned into capital for the devil; and if this Second man is equal to all emergencies and calls on one in His position, He must overcome him who overcame Adam, and will be led into temptation.

[*This last, of course, in grace, not in personal estate. Ed.]

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." Man in the garden and Israel in the wilderness had fallen under the temptations to which they were exposed on their way into rest. "They could not enter in because of unbelief." As a man come into the midst of all that was "groaning under the bondage of corruption," what course will He pursue in His active love but that of "perfect through sufferings?" And consequently He will be pre-eminent as "the man of sorrows" and acquaint Himself with grief. "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses;" moreover He will go down into poverty and say, "foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." He will accept no exemption from the range of human griefs and sorrows and sufferings, but be the One in their midst who will go more fully than any else possibly could into their sources and extent, on account

of His own inherent perfectness and so take up all in the real feelings of manhood, yet according to God and with God. Strange sight! then was Jesus "led up of the Spirit" and a fresh moment of interest is come; and another question is to be tried — will He who has just been marked out by the heavens allow Himself to be tempted of the devil, that He may conquer every where by life and morally too in life, where all else have been overthrown, till at last Jesus will by His own death "overcome him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage?" Who leads this Jesus into the wilderness? and why must He be "led of the Spirit" "to be tempted?" are enquiries which we may very well make, and which get their answer and meaning as we see the devil leaving this victorious One, and angels coming and ministering to Him! Regaining the place which Adam lost can never be the measure of His paths, who, in making a new position for Himself, surpasses every previous one. Thus, if we inquire what He was to God, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" is the answer. Do we ask what He was for man? "The Spirit in the form of a dove," alighting on Him and abiding, is the unmistakable reply. Do we ask what He was for Israel? Let Egypt, the wilderness, and the waters of Jordan with John and the remnant of that day and the opened heavens, say. If we further enquire what He was as regards the devil, man in the person of Christ is master of the entire position, and has made all His own. He who fasted forty days and forty nights and was afterward an hungered could not be moved away from His allegiance to God nor out of the place of devotedness which became Him as the true servant. He closed His heart against all that the devil had to offer to the extent of "the glory of the world."

Man had dishonoured God as creator long ago, but this second bows to what it became God to do, and is led to be tempted that He might go lower than all mere human responsibility and failure, and likewise go higher for God than any previous claims had demanded from man. Thus He will go up to the mountain-top, and take His seat as the great expositor of the mind of Jehovah, as regards the principles on which the incoming kingdom should be founded, and the style of behaviour suited to those whom He would introduce into it; for they are to be "perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect," who makes His "sun to shine upon the evil and the good." Moreover Moses said on his mountain, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but this expositor will say, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him," and "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." There is no compromise anywhere: God and the relations with His creatures, even conduct and responsibility under Christ's presence, and personal care in the midst of His disciples, are raised; the claims and holiness of God are alike met and exceeded in doctrine on the mount, and in loving obedience by Christ Himself. The devil is nowhere with this last Adam (after his temptations in the wilderness) till Gethsemane, where the last efforts are tried by Satan to terrify that heart by death and the grave, which he could not shake by the blandishments of the world.

Man, in the person of Jesus, has gone down under everything, having emptied Himself and been obedient to death, even the death of the cross: and what could God do on His part but raise Him up over everything, and give Him a name above every name that is named not only in this world but in that which is to come? God has man to glorify as the righteous reward of His obedience and sufferings, and, finally, His death, the death of the cross, where He made atonement for our sins by bearing them, and suffering the just One for the unjust, and putting out of sight all the hindering causes of sin and guilt for ever. By the blood-shedding of Christ, God has been set free from all

the calls of judgment which pressed for punishment and death; for Christ has died in our stead. He has liberated God. So that having a Man in the heavens whom He has glorified, the counsels and purposes from everlasting in Christ can now come in, and God even go beyond Himself, in all that He had ever set up in creation and Israel, by bringing in His own mysteries, "the things which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world." And who has done all this, but that very Jesus-Emmanuel who has also carried His believing people outside the range of death and judgment, to make us partakers in a life with Himself, the risen One, which, by the power of the indwelling Spirit, will enable us to take up every principle of conduct, and to be satisfied with nothing less than to live Christ over again till He comes to have us with Himself where He is! In the mean time, while waiting for Him, what dignity attaches to the saint of this dispensation as told, "Ye are the temple of God," and "the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." And again, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body [and in your spirit, which are God's]." The Lord Jesus made a position for Himself as a man when upon the earth, and elevated doctrine and practice to such an extent that He will at last die to put God in the place of a Justifier; and, by His own session at the right hand on high, become the head of life to His Church, that His members may go back and take all up in living power which He ever spoke or did, and be in this way superior to all that became mere man as man; and finally that they may be like Himself in nature, righteousness, and glory, as the proper manifestation of the unfettered power of God on behalf of Christ and the Church for ever.

J. E. Batten. (On the testimony of T. B. Baines.)

S. Joshua and Caleb

Joshua and Caleb or, Thoughts on the Book of Joshua. The book of Joshua is remarkable, mainly, in that the "ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth" is seen passing over before Israel, into Jordan, to prepare a resting place for God and His people. This involved the driving out of the Canaanites by the introduction of "the captain of the Lord's host" with the drawn sword in His hand, before whom Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship. The wars of the Lord follow in quick succession, and the victories of His people — together with the overthrow of the seven nations, and the destruction of their thirty-one kings. The tribes of Israel then took possession of the land of promise, under Joshua and Eleazar the priest, and went up into their inheritance, as distributed to them by lot in Shiloh before the Lord, where the tabernacle of the congregation had been set up. The God who redeemed His people out of Egypt, by the arm of His strength, and dried up the Red Sea from before them till they were all passed over, did the same thing in the depths of Jordan; and swept away the nations of Canaan, in proof that "the God of the whole earth" had risen up out of His place, and was come down to deliver and to establish His people. The song they sang at the Red Sea had come to pass in the promised land; for "the Lord had brought them in, and planted them in the mountain of his inheritance in the sanctuary which his own hands had established." As regards their enemies too, "sorrow had taken hold of the inhabitants of Palestina, the dukes of Edom were amazed, the mighty men of Moab, trembling had taken hold upon them, and all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away." It is not until God has done all that is needful for the glory of His name, and connected Himself thus in grace with the blessing of His people, that their new responsibility begins. Will the earthen vessel be true to the treasure, and use what it has received for the honour and praise of the giver? has been always the question, which such love and goodness must create whether with Israel, or with the church of Christ since.

Joshua, the son of Nun, and Eleazar the priest, glorified the God of their fathers, and served their day and generation well, though not without many a misgiving as to the people (with whom they had travelled forty years) and their ways towards Jehovah. Brought into the land of promise, having rest from war, and dwelling in peace, they settled down contented with the measure of blessing which they enjoyed and which satisfied them, but failed to drive out the Canaanites. Joshua, when old and stricken in age, called for the elders and judges and the heads of Israel, and rehearsed before them the faithfulness of the Lord, and sought to rally them anew, and strengthen their confidence in God, as well as to deepen their mistrust of themselves. Behold, he says, "I am going this day the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you. If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. And the people entered into covenant at Shechem, and said unto Joshua, Nay, but we will serve the Lord:" so they departed every man into his inheritance; and Joshua, the servant of the Lord died, being a hundred and ten years old; and Eleazar the priest, the son of Aaron, died, and they were buried, each in the border of his inheritance. Whatever these two men of God may have been and were, in their faithfulness to the Lord, as

Moses and Aaron were before them; yet collectively the tribes broke down in their covenanted allegiance to Jehovah; so that the book of Judges takes up the history of their decline and fall, when the angel of the Lord descended from Gilgal to Bochim (the place of weeping). What a contrast! and what a lesson! The earlier scriptures (at the calling out of Abraham) give the bright record of the God of glory breaking in upon the darkness, and hiding nothing from His friend of all He was about to do, walking with one patriarch and another, by covenant and by promise, till at the close Joseph buried his father Jacob, and carried him up from Egypt into Canaan, where Isaac and Abraham were laid before him. So when another relation was formed between the God of Israel and Moses, as the deliverer and mediator of His people, and further revelations were made known to him, and he saw the land from the top of Pisgah; the Lord took him and buried him in a valley over against Beth-peor, but no man knoweth his sepulchre unto this day. The book of Joshua too (where the Lord of hosts rose up as a man of war to shake the earth, and Jordan fled, and the sun and the moon stood still in the heavens when He fought for His people) like-wise closes with the burial places where they laid the heirs of promise, each in his inheritance. The seed of a yet coming and glorious resurrection was thus cast into the ground, in hope of that day when they shall all come forth to sit down together, "Ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God." These all having obtained a good report through faith received not the promises, but saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. It is only as brought thus by divine love into communion with the purposes of the Lord in the final blessing of His people, that either Moses or Joshua, David or the prophets, can stand in the midst of personal and corporate failure as they did, and yet point on the hopes of the godly to a morning without clouds when the Lord Himself shall come, and "He that ruleth over men shall be just, ruling in the fear of God:" for this the nation still waits. Nevertheless Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived him, and which had known all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel.

Joshua had been called into a remarkable place, as leader and commander of the twelve tribes; and Eleazar into one as distinguished, as the high priest in connection with the ark of the covenant at Jordan, and afterwards with the tabernacle at Shiloh. These two offices, established between God and the people, necessarily created a wide opening for the faith and obedience of others to follow, and obtain a good report. It was into one of these vacant places that Caleb stepped as the claimant of Hebron; according to the oath which Moses swore unto him in Kadesh-Barnea, because "he wholly followed the Lord his God." Caleb, as an heir with the royal tribe of Judah, becomes an example to the co-heirs throughout all the other tribes of Israel to maintain their rights and titles as he did, and to drive out the enemy. He thus becomes as remarkable, in his place, as an heir of promise in taking possession of his inheritance; as Joshua was in leading Israel into the length and breadth of the land of Canaan; or as Eleazar and the priests were who bore the ark of the covenant round the walls of Jericho, as they stood firm in the depths of Jordan till the people had all passed across to Gilgal. However different Joshua, Eleazar, and Caleb were from each other, yet the Lord Himself had trained each up for their respective places into which He led them; and this is a very important fact to realize at any time in reference to the formation of the vessel which God may be about to use.

If we examine this additional point in the light of scripture, as regards each of these servants of the Lord, we shall find much profitable instruction. The first mention of Joshua is when Amalek came

and fought with Israel in Rephidim in Exodus 17:1-16 :, and Moses and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill with the rod of God. It was with this enemy that Joshua fought the first of the Lord's battles and prevailed. "The Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; and Moses built an altar there and called it Jehovah-nissi." This first lesson in the school of God was followed by another of a very different kind in Exodus 24:1-18 :, when Moses went up, and his minister Joshua, into the mount of God, and the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. This future warrior of the Lord had been taught at Rephidim already that it was only as Aaron and Hur upheld the hands of Moses (in intercession) Israel could prevail over Amalek; and now he accompanies Moses up to the mount to learn who and what the God of Israel is in His holiness, under whose feet was as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as the body of heaven in its clearness! Moses' minister, the future Joshua and saviour, is thus called to know God, the Jehovah of Israel; as terrible in His majesty and power at Rephidim against Amalek (with whom He will have war from generation to generation) as He is fearful in praises, doing wonders, and glorious in holiness when revealed to Moses and the nobles of the children of Israel on the top of the mount, where they saw God and did eat and drink. The claims of God in righteousness written upon the tables of stone, and a law and commandments were likewise given out to Moses from the mount Horeb that he might teach them to the people. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. Such were the scenes and occupations in the presence of God in holiness, and under the rod of His hand against Amalek in retributive justice, where Joshua's qualifications for serving Jehovah in Canaan were gathered up. But another and a very different lesson still awaited him in Exodus 32:1-35 :, when the Lord sent Moses down quickly from the mount upon the matter of the golden calf, which Aaron and the people had set up during their absence. By the intercession of Moses the Lord turned from His fierce anger and repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people. Now when Joshua heard the tumult as they came near, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp; but the more practised ear and heart of Moses, instructed by the Holy One, could better distinguish between the shout of mastery, the voice of crying, and the noise of them that sing. In effect, the tables, which were the work of God, and the writing which was graven thereon, Moses immediately cast out of his hands and broke; for how could he bring them nearer? The golden calf ground to powder and strawed upon the water which the children of Israel drank, the swords of the sons of Levi by which they consecrated themselves to the Lord and avenged the outrage upon His majesty, are the new and strange lessons which Joshua is learning for himself, and for the glory of God through him in a future day. It was a fine action, and one in unison with the mind of God, when Moses sought to interpose further by atonement and self-sacrifice, so that the sin of the people against God in His holiness, might be blotted out; but a finer one still when he accepted the Lord's rebuke as to its insufficiency. Moses could not make an atonement for their sin (this was a work kept in reserve for a greater than he), but another thing remained open for him to do below for the honour of God and the healing of the people (in withdrawing from the evil) and this thing he did. The children of Israel stripped themselves likewise of their ornaments by the mount Horeb, that the Lord might know what to do unto them; and Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. The nearness to God in which Moses had been for forty days, led him not merely to act in jealousy for His name where it had been profaned, but

also to separate His dwelling place from the abomination of the golden calf. How could He abide there? If Moses broke the tables, he must for the same reason remove the tabernacle. The Lord owned this action, for as Moses entered into the tabernacle the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door where the Lord talked with him face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend. Two great principles had been introduced, as we have seen, and established: the one was intercession, when the hands of Moses were sustained by Aaron and Hur, in the day of conflict with Amalek; and the other was mediation, founded on the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the day when the people worshipped the calf, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of a four-footed beast. These two principles being recognized between God and Moses, became the acknowledged ground of the people's safety and blessing, and have since found their true and proper place in the perfect ministry of Christ, "who ever liveth in the presence of God to make intercession for us." Moses acting on this new footing turned again into the camp, but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle. Rephidim and Jehovah-nissi, mount Horeb and the God of Israel, the broken tables and the action of the sons of Levi, the cloudy pillar and the tabernacle, and the new meeting place between the Lord and Moses, marked out a path and showed Joshua the spot where he could with confidence plant his feet, and there he abode. The minister, Joshua, is no longer seen in the further and secret intimacies with Moses and the God of Israel at the cleft of the rock, or when Moses came down the second time from the mount with the tables that were put into the ark. Like Elisha afterwards, when with his master going the round of Bethel, Jericho, and Jordan, a double portion of Elijah's spirit rested on him; or like Paul in his instructions to Timothy: so Jehovah "the God of the spirits of all flesh" had, by means of Moses, been preparing a man to set over the congregation of the Lord.

It is not till Numbers 13:1-33 :, that Joshua comes forth in his own character, and enters upon his own proper business, though privately, and as one of the twelve rulers, in association with Caleb, who were sent by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan and its cities and its inhabitants. After forty days they returned from searching it, and made their report to Moses and Aaron and all Israel. Those who judged after the flesh, and according to sight and sense, declared that the cities were walled up to heaven, and the men were all of great stature, so that they were in their own sight as grasshoppers. Those who saw by faith, and measured every difficulty and danger by the God with whom there are none, affirmed they were able to go up and possess the land at once. The connection between Joshua and Caleb, as regards the land of promise, is as remarkable in the development of the onward ways of God with Israel, as was his relation to Moses (when his minister) in the unfolding of His counsels to that man of God. The tribes to which these two rulers respectively belonged were brought forward into their rightful prominence by the faith and devotedness which distinguished these chiefs, in contrast with the other spies who brought back an evil report. Caleb was of the royal tribe of Judah, out of which Shiloh should spring, and to whom the gathering of the people is prophetically yet to be. Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim, upon whom Jacob laid his right hand and declared his seed should become a multitude of nations. And he blessed the sons of Joseph that day: one by counsel, and one by promise, and by the blessing of their progenitor Jacob they became united in faith and purpose of heart, now that the appointed time is come for the people to go on their way to their inheritance. Moses consistently changed the name Oshea into Joshua (or Jesus), Saviour of the people, in reference to the mind of God and Israel, whilst Caleb, as an heir of promise, bears his own name which means

devotedness of heart; and proves it by his readiness to go up and take possession of the whole land. Nor is it without divine significance that "Hebron" is the place now mentioned in connection with the journeyings of their future Saviour, and of Caleb the heir — "they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron, where the children of Anak were." If the unbelief of the ten failed to learn the deep moral lesson which these facts conveyed to the heart of a true Israelite, what would be the yet further appeal which the occupation of Hebron by the giants Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi would make to the faith and feelings of Joshua and Caleb? This Hebron to which their father Abram removed his tent after he had separated himself from Lot, and where the Lord appeared and said, "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." Then Abram came and dwelt in the plains of Mamre, which is Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord. Nor was Hebron remarkable only as "the place of society, or friendship and enchantment" to Abram the friend of God, and the father of the faithful, but it was to be remembered too, as the place where Sarah died (who is the mother of promise, and the free woman) and was buried. There, also, Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham and there Jacob came unto Isaac his father to Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. Machpelah, in Hebron, became thus the sepulchre of all the patriarchs who had died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off and connected them with the Christ of God and His day, and were glad. Descendants of these fathers, not merely in the flesh, but associated with them by the same faith and hope, they were alive, so to speak, before the eyes of Caleb and Joshua; just as Jesus Himself said of Moses and the bush afterwards, "Now God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to him;" and this is what faith affirms, which calls things that are not as though they were. The promised land was thus a living scene to faith in these two spies, as it had been to Moses when he viewed it from the top of Pisgah. The faith which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, whether in Abraham or in Moses or in the spies, looked at the land, or walked through the length and breadth thereof with the living God, and in the light of His purposes counted the giants but as bread to eat in the time of the coming conflict. Hebron too, though for a moment in possession of the sons of Anak, asked to be remembered by the heirs of promise as the sepulchre of their fathers, who were sleeping there "in hope of the better country, that is, a heavenly."

Joshua and Caleb who walked thus with God through the land made a good report of it, and carried a cluster of the grapes of Eshcol and brought of the pomegranates and the figs as proofs of what grew there. The action of Caleb was in keeping with this report when he stilled the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it." His confidence was in the right hand of God's power, which had just destroyed Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea, and would further display itself in driving out the Canaanites on the other side of Jordan, if there was but faith on the part of Israel to follow Him. Instead of this the congregation murmured against Moses and Aaron, and said one to another, "Let us make a captain and return into Egypt." Then Moses and Aaron fell upon their faces, and Joshua and Caleb rent their clothes, saying, "If the Lord delight in us, he will bring us into this land and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey; only rebel not ye against the Lord." This identification with God and His purposes and ways on the part of Moses and Aaron, and this twofold testimony on the part of Caleb and Joshua to the strength of His arm, and the delight of His heart in His people to bring them into the land, though adequate for faith, were insufficient to quell the rebellion. Separated as these four leaders were from all the congregation, and united in their confession of

the one living and true God, He vindicated His witnesses; when the people bade stone them with stones, the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle, and He threatened them with pestilence, and to disinherit them. The intercession of Moses again prevailed against their sin, and they were sentenced to wander forty years in the wilderness and to fall there. Moreover, the evil spies died of the plague and the unbelieving generation was cut off. The confidence and repose of faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which characterized Joshua and Caleb as spies when they searched the good land, equally distinguished them as pilgrims in the wilderness throughout the forty years of their wanderings. Faith, which has to do with God alone, is not concerned about places and circumstances; it has simply to follow Him where He leads: the consequences are His care. The forty years' pilgrimage inflicted upon the evil generation became a school-time for the fuller qualifications of Joshua and Caleb when the set time should come for the crossing over Jordan, and for the settlement of the tribes in their inheritances. Moses and Aaron died in the wilderness, the high priest's garments were transferred and placed upon Eleazar as the successor of Aaron. Moreover, the Lord had given some of His spirit to Joshua, and Moses had laid his hands on him and put some of his honour upon him in the sight of all the congregation of Israel, that they might be obedient to him. Further, Joshua was to stand before Eleazar the priest, who was to ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim and Thummim before the Lord. "At his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in," and Moses did as the Lord commanded him, and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the high priest, and gave him a charge. The original leaders of the people did not continue by reason of death; each one died governmentally for his own sin, committed at the waters of Meribah, where they failed to glorify God; and these have now given place to Joshua and Eleazar. Moses and the rod of Jehovah's power stretched out over land and sea in Egypt for the redemption of Israel form the bright record of God's actings in the book of Exodus, as does the rod of priestly grace in Numbers, by which Aaron put away their murmurings. When the wars of the Lord begin on the other side of Jordan, these rods are superseded by the captain of the Lord's host with His drawn sword, and by Joshua and his spear, and now that "the God of the whole earth" passes over before His people to put them into Canaan, Eleazar and the priests come into prominence. The ark of the covenant (in which was laid up the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant — each to come out another day, and be manifested in the person of Christ and His offices in their perfectness,) was to precede the people in their journeyings, and be the one object before their souls. "When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests and Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go after it." The faith of an individual like Caleb is no longer distinguished when confidence and courage mark the whole company of this new-born generation, led forward by the Lord of all the earth in connection with the ark of the covenant, borne by Eleazar the high priest and the Levites, under the leadership of Joshua; so that Jordan itself fled away from before the feet of the priests, when they were dipped in the brim of its waters. The great city Jericho too fell down flat, and its giant walls before the ark after it had compassed the city about seven days. In their onward progress, Jerusalem and its king, Adonizedek, with the other crowned heads were all overcome and hung upon five trees until the going down of the sun. Joshua is as great in his conflicts and victories against the enemies of God, as Moses was distinguished for his patience and meekness amongst the people of God. His jealousy for the Lord, in removing the tabernacle away from the camp, when the idolatry of the golden calf was in question, sanctioned as it was by the glory of the God of Israel, which appeared

to him at the tent door, and talked with him, was a day of remarkable moral character and beauty.

Perfect in its season as this act of Moses was, yet Joshua is equally distinguished in the day of Jerusalem's capture by the hosts of Israel. Joshua spake to the Lord, and said, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon," until the people avenge themselves upon their enemies; "and there was no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel." The whole power of the enemy is broken up, after one more battle. "Now when Jabin the king of Hazor heard of these things, he gathered round himself the confederated nations of the north, south, east, and west, and came down like the sand which is upon the seashore for multitude against Israel," like the Gog and Magog nations of a yet future day (in Ezekiel). These wars and their victories clear the way for peace. Though in Joshua 11:1-23 : Joshua made war a long time with all those kings, "yet finally he took the whole land according to all that the Lord had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes; and the land rested from war. In Joshua 18:1-28 ;, "the whole congregation of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle there," and the land was subdued before them. Now Joshua was old and stricken in years, and he and Eleazar the priest cast lots at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in Shiloh, and distributed to the tribes their inheritances — so they made an end of dividing the country — God had thus overcome the enemy and established His people in the promised land, who were commanded to make no terms with the stragglers, but utterly to drive them out. Moreover God had planted His tabernacle in Shiloh, and surrounded Himself with the thousands and tens of thousands of Israel, the seed of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Joshua lastly exhorts them to cleave unto the Lord, and the people finally bind themselves with an oath to serve the Lord and to obey His voice.

Besides these public and prominent services of Joshua the leader and commander of the people, and Eleazar the high priest who was appointed to ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord, there remain two important histories of personal faith, each perfect in itself which the book of Joshua records: the first is that of Rahab, and the second that of Caleb. In truth we may say the records of Israel would not be complete without these, as not else coming up to the mark of what God is, or giving the examples of the outflowing and overflowing of His goodness and grace, wherever there was faith that could in defiance of every let or hindrance reckon upon this goodness, and cast itself upon the riches of His love! Rahab, who was not one of the people, but on the contrary an alien and of the accursed race, threw herself upon the boundlessness of this grace, that could not be confined to the limits of Israel but must illustrate itself by overleaping all bounds, and saving a Rahab, even when dwelling in Jericho; yea, the conquests of the people of God in Canaan must give precedence to her. The scarlet line from her window, witness of her faith, and pledge of her identification in heart and soul with the hopes and interests of the Israel of God, was also a token to them and to her of the deliverance for which she waited. The scarlet line had saved the spies, when she let them down from her house by its means, and it was to save her and all her family in the coming hour of Jericho's overthrow — and this is what faith is, whether then or now — from her window, or at the cross. The young men that were hidden by Rahab in the stalks of flax went in at the bidding of Joshua, and fetched her out and all that she had, first, as they swore unto her: and then burned the city with fire. The further history of Rahab, and the dealings of God in grace with her, are as remarkable as the beginning. In chapter 7:, "she gets a

dwelling-place in Israel, as it is said unto this day," and in process of time is married to Salmon, one of its princes, and becomes a link in that illustrious genealogy through which the Messiah Himself was introduced to this world. In Matthew 1:5, "in the book of the generation of Jesus Christ," we read "Salmon begat Booz of Rachab," nor is this all, for she passes on from this genealogy to take her place in another, and got her record among the celebrities of Hebrews 11:1-40 :, of whom the world was not worthy. Another record still awaits her — and a yet further example of her faith remains for the apostle James to publish, where she stands side by side with Abraham, the head of the whole family of faith, and the friend of God. Likewise also he asks, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. The chain is complete and as perfect as the grace of God always makes whatever it takes in hand — whether the pattern be "a Syrian ready to perish" — a Rahab out of Jericho — a thief upon the cross — or a Saul of Tarsus — or one of ourselves in this day of grace and of the coming glory. In Joshua 14:1-15 : it is, that we are introduced to Caleb again; and in this chapter he comes before us in the double character of an heir of Judah, when that tribe was settled in its inheritance; and also as the claimant of that Hebron, which had so won his eye and heart in the living associations which it recalled. Distinguished in the early days of faith and promise, when Abraham walked with God and still more so in the light of prophecy, when the king David of Jehovah's appointment should take his crown and kingdom from Hebron, it became the spot of all others which was dear to faith. Joshua's calling and work as leader of Israel was well-nigh finished, and he had become old and stricken in years, and was going the way of all the earth, as he said, when Caleb's path as an heir of promise was only opening itself out. He steps forth from the children of Judah at Gilgal, and makes good his claim by reminding Joshua of what the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning them at Kadesh-barnea. He comes out as young and as fresh at fourscore and five years of age, as he was at forty, when sent with Joshua to spy out the land; and he becomes in his place an example and pattern to every individual in every tribe of the whole heartedness before God which was the source of his unflinching strength and courage. How different would have been the history of Israel, had each heir of promise been as Caleb and driven out the enemies from their inheritance, as he did from Hebron! The language of faith has always the same character of confidence and calmness, whether it be in Caleb's assurance to Joshua that he would drive out the Anakims; or in David's account of himself to Saul, touching the lion and the bear; and his bold avowal that so it should be with Goliath and the army of the Philistines. "I wholly followed the Lord my God," reveals the secret of faith's strength, either in first viewing the land and gleaning the grapes of Eshcol, or in wandering with the rebellious people in the wilderness for forty years, or as here in claiming the promise of Hebron from Joshua.

"Now therefore give me this mountain, of which the Lord spake in that day: if so be the Lord shall be with me, then I shall be able to drive the giants out, as the Lord said; and Joshua blessed him." Here we get a man of the right sort, with a faith in God that does not give way before either giants or mountains, but declares "as yet I am as strong this day as I was forty years ago; in the day that Moses sent me, as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, to go out and to come in." It is a faith indeed that cannot be measured by days or weeks, or months or years; and even as to Caleb's history it is to be remarked, that we get no notice of his death. The Spirit's mind takes a different turn, and is marking out to us that he neither got old, nor waxed feeble, nor became stricken in years; but wholly followed the Lord God of Israel, and was always young and strong,

Such was Caleb the claimant. So Joshua gave to him Kirjath-arba, according to the commandment of the Lord, which city is Hebron; and Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai; and he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir. The faith of the whole-hearted Caleb, which followed the Lord fully and knew neither ups nor downs, stamps its character also upon his house and family; and this is very beautiful. He would only give his daughter Achsah to the man of like faith, who could distinguish himself at Kirjath-sepher, as Caleb had done at Kirjath-arba; and Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb took it, and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife. Nor is this all; for the faith that wholly follows the Lord God of Israel (who is in these days, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) is not only consciously blessed in itself, but delights, and can make another as happy as itself, as Caleb did Othniel. Even further, it rejoiced to bestow a blessing upon Achsah, when she lighted off her ass, and, in the character of a claimant, asked her father for the upper and the nether springs.

There is a point of further interest to be noticed respecting Caleb and Hebron, which comes out in the book of Judges and travels on to its completion in the records of Samuel and the Chronicles; for the faith which has to do with God must connect itself with His interests, and all that He does. The personal faith, which made Caleb illustrious as an heir and a claimant, likewise gave its character to his relations and his family. He gathered those round himself like Othniel upon the one and the same principle of confidence in the God of Israel, which had been the secret of Caleb's unflinching strength and whole heartedness. Upon this pathway it was that he introduced Othniel at Kirjath-sepher, and as was the father, so was the son-in-law; for after the like term of forty years in the school of God, and in the midst of the declension of the tribes, this Othniel became the first of their deliverers, and of their judges. He was (as his name implies) "the hour of God" to them in their distress; for the Lord had sold them into the hand of the king of Mesopotamia for eight years, because they had forgotten Him, and served Baalim and the groves. But when the children of Israel cried unto Him, the Lord raised up a saviour for them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel and went out to war. Moreover his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim: so the land had rest forty years, and this rest might have been perpetual, which Othniel had recovered, but for the subsequent idolatry of the tribes; and Othniel died. Deeper corruptions set in, and other deliverers were raised up till, after the times of the judges, came the reign of the kings. In the end of 1 Samuel 30:1-31 : the introduction of David and his men, and their faith in God lights up again the darkened page of Israel's royal history, and Hebron is mentioned as among the places where David and his men were wont to haunt, when by Saul's jealousy and persecution he was hunted like a partridge upon the mountains. After the death of Saul and Jonathan by the hands of the Philistines, and David's lamentation over them upon Gilboa, he enquired of the Lord whether he should go up to any of the cities of Judah, and the Lord said to him, Go up; and David said, Whither shall I go up? and he said, Unto Hebron. Caleb the heir in Judah, and the claimant of Hebron, four hundred years before, had given place to Othniel as their judge, and the deliverer of Israel from the oppression of the king of Mesopotamia. As we know, the prophet Samuel took the precedence, when the Aaronic priesthood had been corrupted by the profligacy of Eli's sons. David, the man after God's own heart, had been anointed as king from out of the midst of Jesse's sons: so David and his wives, and the men that were with him went up with their households, and dwelt in the cities of Hebron. The men of Judah thus take up the purposes of God and the blessing pronounced on this tribe by Jacob, and in their turn carry them out by anointing David king over

the house of Judah. "The sceptre and the law-giver" are thus united; and kingship is now established upon Hebron, the bright answer to the faith of those who, in expectation of the day, gave commandment concerning their bones, and lay buried there in the caves of Machpelah. So David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul became weaker and weaker, and unto David were born sons in Hebron; and the time that he reigned over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. The man to whom God gave testimony, this son of Jesse who should fulfil all His will, schooled as he had been in the sheepfolds of the wilderness, was now to be invested with the entire majesty and royalty of the throne, and as the shepherd of Israel.

Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and said, Behold we are thy bone and thy flesh; and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and shalt be a captain over them. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and king David made a covenant with them there before the Lord, and they anointed David king over all Israel; and David went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him. One object of the Lord in raising up David is stated in chapter 3: 18, "by the hand of my servant David I will save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines," and out of the oppression of all their enemies. As the anointed king, his first exploit was to gain Jerusalem out of the hand of the Jebusites; for it was to be the city of the great king; and the appointed earthly centre for the manifestation of His kingdom and the glory of the throne of Israel. The inhabitants of Jebus said to him, "thou shalt not come up hither. Nevertheless David took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David, and said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first, shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruah [like another Othniel] went first up, and became chief, and David dwelt in the castle." Travelling days and the journeyings of the children of Israel are well-nigh accomplished. God had brought them into Immanuel's land, and to the city of Jerusalem, and to Mount Zion: moreover David was there, and in their midst as the anointed king. The tabernacle in the wilderness was about to give place to the temple and the glory; and the next great business of David was to bring up the ark of the covenant from the house of Obed-edom. "And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, and said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it; for because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order." Unless the sense of God and His grace keep the heart in the enjoyment of His favour as better than life, the knowledge of Him is soon lost, and Israelites become identified with Canaanites, as the book of Judges declares, and reduce themselves to the same level. Baal had his altar in the house of Joash, the father of Gideon; nor could this mighty man of valour do the deeds of one against the hosts of the Midianites, with his three hundred and their lamps and pitchers, till he had thrown down this altar, and first put himself right with God, as a worshipper. The Lord will not give His glory to another. Until Baal and his altar were thrown down by Gideon, there was confusion in Israel; for God and the idol were both there!

Here we may observe, that in the history of the Judges no mention is made of the high priest, or any other priest, or even a Levite, either for counsel or for action in any public way, from the time of Phinehas the son of Eleazar down to Eli. The knowledge of God was lost, and the relations in which He had stood with His people by the ark of the covenant violated and forgotten. When David sought to bring up the ark into the hill of Zion, after its capture by the Philistines, so unacquainted was the sweet psalmist with the ways of God respecting it, that a new cart and the two milch kine

did as well for him as the shoulders of the Levites.

Priesthood and the priests, through the breach upon Uzza, come out brightly once more with king David, in the persons of Zadok and Abiathar; and it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings, and David danced before the Lord with all his might, and he was girded with a linen ephod. It is after God is thus owned by David and all Israel, that the Lord makes a covenant with him concerning Solomon, saying, "he shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever; I will be his father, and he shall be my son," etc. It is along this glorious pathway of God's purposes and counsels, as to the throne and kingdom, the people of Israel, and the land of promise, the temple and Mount Zion, the city of Jerusalem and the yet coming Messiah, that God has ever led the faith and expectations of those whom He called out to walk with Him. Abraham, Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb, Othniel and the judges, David and Solomon, and all that family of faith, looked for a city whose builder and maker is God, and desired a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God. The faith that follows God fully becomes acquainted with Himself and His sufficiency to care for His own glory, and the final blessing of His people, whether in Caleb or Abraham or David. This faith in things unseen and eternal enabled the first of these to look through Hebron, and see a future sceptre and Shiloh; or another, through Mount Moriah and the son Isaac, to see a dead and risen Christ; or a third through Mount Zion and a Solomon (after the flesh) to see a glorified Lord at the right hand of God, and a heavenly Jerusalem. These and further revelations from the Father's love concerning His well beloved Son, by the Holy Ghost through the apostles of the New Testament, are the highways and bypaths by which we also are called out into the fellowship with the Father and the Son. In the epistle to the believing Hebrews, we join them upon the heavenly calling, as the Spirit by Paul guides their faith along this line of their ancestors; only adding this, "but ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and to the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." The summing up of this epistle may very properly close these remarks on the ways of God with His people. This cloud of witnesses (some of whom have been noticed) are here brought forward into their new place, in association with our Lord; and though dead yet speak, claiming their heirship and blessing through the Seed of Abraham and of David, which is the Christ of God; and wait for His second coming. Jesus is also presented as the Author and Finisher of faith, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God, waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. By His death and resurrection, He has made the mercies of Jehovah's covenanted grace sure to Abraham and to David, as their Son and Lord, and secured the promises as Son of God, and made them "yea and Amen, to the glory of God by us." The mystery of the church, as the body and bride of the Lamb — the mystic Eve — is now being formed by the Holy Ghost. God is calling out from Jews and Gentiles, the quickened members of the body, into union in life and righteousness with a rejected Christ, hidden in the heavens; for whose shout we wait, to catch us up to meet Him in the air, and to be changed into His likeness. Creation, likewise which groaneth under the bondage of corruption, waits in hope of its deliverance into the liberty of this glory; when the manifestation of the sons of God is come to pass. The last few touches only remain to perfect the mystery of God, and the Lord will rise up

from His place and quit the Father's throne to sit as Son of man upon His own throne in His own glory, and the glory of all the holy angels. Israel redeemed, and brought into this scene of blessing, under Christ and the bride (the heavenly Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God), will then understand its own mystery — "that God had provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." How gladly will they sing in that day, "for of him, and to him, and through him are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen." J. E. Batten.

S. Mr. R. P. Smith's "Farewell"

Mr. R. P. Smith's "Farewell." My Dear —

I have read Mr. Pearsall Smith's address, delivered at the "Farewell Meeting" in Liverpool, as reported in "The Christian" of September 24th, and now say a few words on it as you request.

It is but right, I think, to give the importance that is due to this last lecture, as it contains his own review of his course in England, and states his own judgment upon the work and its results, which he earnestly commends "to the intelligence of the ministers of Great Britain." In common with many others, I have not been uninterested, as you know, in the main objects proposed by Mr. S., namely, "increased holiness of life" in our daily walk, and more "entire consecration and personal devotedness" to the service of the Lord. In neither of these objects is he peculiar, and he only expresses a common want which, thank God, is felt by thousands of Christians who have been waking up to the discovery of declension in themselves, and of their sad departure from Christ's glory in the church of God, as such. The ways and means by which he proposes to reach these objects, and which he recommends so confidently to others, are the things really in question — and by many, more than questioned. Let me add, that as a system (for it is one), I at one time hoped Mr. S. would have judged it as a whole and broken it up, as fundamentally opposed to scripture; but his farewell address leads me to fear he will only take his vessel into dock to be repaired, with possibly the removal of some avowedly rotten timber, and then relaunched. This I deeply regret for his own sake, and the sake of others in this country, who have had their curiosity excited, or in many cases really got a something which they had not before. As regards his doctrines, Mr. S. says, "I have been thrown in the way of men now, of high culture and of deep piety, and have been benefited thereby. I shall before God, with prayer, reconsider and rewrite what I have already sent out: if I am wrong, retract; if I am right, stand to it" — which is all very well as far as it goes; but I doubt whether Mr. S. will in this way get into his real and true place before God.

Mr. Smith knows that some of his own friends have openly declared they cannot give away his publications as they now stand, because of wrong doctrine; and surely this is matter for conscience in confession before God. May the Lord preserve him from being a judge in his own matters, for he says, "if I am wrong, retract; and if I am right, stand to it." "To the word and to the testimony."

Another thing I would ask for him in brotherly love, namely, that he may not be allowed to reconsider, with a view of rewriting what he has already sent out; for this would be a great snare, and will in fact be only bringing out the old ship with new copper-bottom to conceal her defects, and new sails to make a finer show than before. And now a few words on the "Farewell Address" at Liverpool, which does not show me any advancement, either as to growth in holiness, or personal consecration to God of which he and they speak; but on the contrary sanctions an acceptance of conscious sin and known existing evil. Would you expect to hear Mr. S., who is the teacher and example of this higher life "of increasing holiness and personal consecration," publicly

say, "no one has been unsettled from his ecclesiastical surroundings; to churchmen the prayer-book, they say, is a new book to them; and the baptists confess they never understood their own standards before?" Where Christ becomes better known, this is the case with the Bible.

Again, where persons have been exercised upon the evil with which they are connected as Christians, Mr. S. tells us, "I have said to those inclined to change, you could not do a worse thing than to leave your church." "Don't discuss," he says, "but search the scriptures with the honest purpose, to gain a scriptural experience before God. This rest [what rest?] may be attained by all denominations of true Christians; your dogmas may remain unchanged but must be illuminated. [Is there no such thing as truth?] The churchman and dissenter alike need to walk more and more in the light of God and in the company of God," etc.

What is meant, and more important still, what is the value of this "scriptural experience before God," and "this rest," which are compatible with a person abiding in existing evil, and all the various forms of ecclesiastical corruption in these last and perilous times? Is there such a thing as "the church of the living God"? and is there no responsibility for today in the words, "every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is;" and further, as to the man himself, "if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy which temple ye are"? What kind of "scriptural experience before God," and what kind of a rest which may be attained by all denominations of true Christians, may this be, which Mr. S. has discovered for himself, and to which he leads his followers? Is this the way of holiness and personal consecration by which one may "walk more and more in the light of God and in the company of God," and by which "God's word becomes of greater virtue to the soul"? Whose voice are we to follow — his, who tells "I have said to those inclined to change, You could not do a worse thing than leave your church" — or the voice of Paul to the Corinthians, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty;" and again the voice from heaven in the Apocalypse, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues?" It is with sorrow' one is compelled to add that seldom, if ever, have there been such loud professions and calls to holiness of life and personal consecration (connected, too, with an expected "baptism of the Holy Ghost," and a "pathway of power") as have been made by Mr. Smith and his followers, and yet only seen to collapse at the very moment when an opportunity for their definite and distinct application against ecclesiastical evil and corruption occurred.

"I will spue thee out of my mouth" were the words of the Lord (who walked through the midst of the seven golden candlesticks), as regards Laodicea. "Be zealous therefore and repent" marked the moral estimate of Him whose eyes were as a flame of fire; but says Mr. Smith, "you could not do a worse thing than leave your church"; and "no one has been unsettled from his ecclesiastical surroundings." If principles are to be judged, and the truth of their character by the results produced, what can be said of the competency of Mr. S. to hold the balances of holiness in the one hand, or of sin in the other in the church of God? No, I repeat my desire that he may not occupy himself in the reconsideration of his tracts, with a view of rewriting them and reprinting them, with a patch here and there, but judge himself to be unfit for any such work, while there remains a prior and grave matter to be searched out and confessed between his soul and God in secret. In my

judgment he does violence to the sanctuary of God upon the questions of holiness and sin — to say nothing of the whole scope of Christianity — and comes out with an unsanctified balance, and weighs clean and unclean to the saints with false weights and measures. If he has done this unwittingly and ignorantly, as I fully believe, yet is he on this account unfit and unable to detect the wrong, much less to put the truth of God right; and this is why I trust he may be kept from the use of his pen at present, lest he should only give proof of this to his own sorrow and shame, and the regret of those who are anxiously and prayerfully waiting on the Lord on his behalf. This entire repudiation of conscience or responsibility to relative evil before God leads to the fact (which is evident enough in his system, and in this "Farewell lecture") that he only contemplates the individual in what is but his own personal purity. The object becomes self, and is reduced to one's own self: consisting in the expurgation of sin, and bad tempers, and cares; and "a re-adjustment of body, soul, and spirit to Christ," accompanied by "an inward realization of purified affections," etc.

"There is," he says, "to be found in Christ a uniform victory over sin, not variable, but unbroken, cloudless, shadowless," and he then asks, "What is sin?" His final answer to this query is, that "the scriptural standard is not faultless, but blameless;" and then by an illustration of a little girl spilling the ink on her mother's dress, and "much pleased with the result," he reduces God's standard to mere consciousness, and this little girl's "conception" of not having done a wrong thing! "So all that is beyond our conception," he says, "is met and cleansed every moment by the blood of Christ, and in our Christ we have resource for uniform victory over sin." If so, why were sins of ignorance to be atoned for? He also speaks of "the commencement of a long life of sanctification," and that "there must be complete consecration to God, and complete trust in His promises" — which is all a turning back to Judaism, and reducing Christians to an inward realization of a lower purity. "Thus has come a harmony into my existence," he says, "a re-adjustment of the whole nature, spirit, soul, and body to Christ, that must be the wonderful reality of the words, 'Christ formed in you,' 'Christ in you,' 'the being filled with the Spirit,' the 'not I, but Christ liveth in me,' and 'the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.'" (See "Holiness through Faith," p. 19.)

All this reasoning, and from these precious scriptures too, shows how much the system consists of making everything of self as the object down upon this earth, instead of the Christian's portion and state with the ascended Son of man in heaven at the right hand of God in glory. He borrows from Christ, it is true (as the scriptures just quoted prove), what is necessary to produce all these effects; but it is to re-adjust the Adam nature in order to get an inward state and realization of purified affections, etc. In result, it separates Christ from us, as the one and only object for the soul, and makes the state of the soul an object to itself instead; and then necessarily and naturally modifies the standard of holiness, so as to bring it down to one's reach; and of sin, so as to escape its condemnation. Otherwise, why take such an example as the little child and the ink-bottle, and its want of conception to excuse its misconduct as to the mother's dress, instead of "If we walk in the light, as he (God) is in the light, we have fellowship one with another"? Take another instance of dropping the standard of holiness and sin to suit a present state and condition on earth — "If we could see into everything future in our life, we could never take another step; but God progressively shows it to us." This is applied by Mr. Smith to the church too — "may the church walk in Christ, not in self, not faultless, but blameless before God." What confusion is here!

If the state of a believer in Christ were looked at as accepted and complete in Christ, why make this distinction between "faultless" and "blameless?" For surely looked at as in Him, which is our

true and changeless standing and state, we are both "unblameable in holiness and unrebukable in love." If we have for our souls another state and experience for this present life, then it is plain the perfect example and faultless, yea, sinless, nature of Christ will not do for us as the proper object of faith and hope any more than the absolute holiness of God.

Nevertheless, if this be beyond us now in everyday experience and in positive conformity, as it certainly is, and must be till His coming, it is not beyond that mighty power of God to effect which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, etc., as Head of the new creation of God. Do you think that these variations, and this sliding scale of holy and unholy, clean and unclean, faultless and blameless, etc., would be necessary, if the new creation with Christ the Second Adam were the one object before the soul? Are we, or are we not, on the other side of the cross, and by means of it, through death to the old man and our resurrection with the new, united to Christ in life and righteousness and glory? We are not in the flesh, nor of the world, even as He was not of the world. Is there merely a re-adjustment of our nature, body, soul, and spirit to Christ? or is it true that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away and all things are become new, and all things are of God"? The witness and testimony of the Holy Ghost is certainly to Christ where He is, and as He is — and He is likewise in us, the assurance from God the Father of our sonship; yea, further, that "as Christ is, so are we in this world." Why should we lower the standard of the new creation to any present state, if it serves God to work for His own glory by no one less than the Son of man as He is? He has begun to create and will conform us to the image of the heavenly man at His right hand in glory; and practically "he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he Christ is pure."

I am sorry for those who accept any other pattern than Christ as our rule of life while here below, and who would make a difference between faultless and blameless to get at an ideal purity another way. Was not Christ both faultless and blameless when on this earth? and is it not falsifying the standard in heaven where God is working for His own glory, as well as below where the Holy Ghost is working for Christ's glory, to accept any other pattern than what our blessed Jesus was and is?

There are of course other statements upon which I will not remark. Still I repeat, where separation from evil, even from the corruptions of ecclesiastical evil, around us is refused, and yet holiness of life and personal consecration to God is pressed, I cannot put these opposite things together without, as I have said, a compromise of the balance and weights and measures of the sanctuary of God; and this we ought instantly to judge. His standpoint is wrong. In conclusion, I would observe as to the system of Mr. Smith, that it is mainly occupation with the flesh, with sin in oneself and what it produces; though accompanied it may be with what he calls a uniform victory over sin and the world through faith. Some such difference of ministry is stated by John the Baptist when speaking of himself in contrast with Christ; "he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth. He that cometh from heaven is above all, and what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth." As a consequence, there is but little use made of John's Epistles except one verse — "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" — and this, as you know, is misused by him. The new nature, and "that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us," of which John speaks, and which is in fact the apostle's subject, has but a small place with Mr. Smith or his system. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit [practise] sin, because his seed

abideth in him, and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God," is a truth which, as you will easily understand, cannot well be worked up in his theory. So likewise "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world," is seldom or never used, for the same reason; whereas the latter part of this verse is of constant occurrence, and "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." In short, the partial use of such fundamental scriptures as these, and indeed, John's Epistle, at large, as well as the misuse of others not only in John but in the Romans, etc., guide exactly to the defects, not to use any stronger and more exact word, of all such systems as this of Mr. Smith, and shows where they all break down by making one's own state and experience here the object, instead of Christ.

It is not the new creation with the Second Adam at its head, and God in sovereign power by the Holy Ghost quickening the dead in trespasses and sins, raising them up together with Christ, and making them sit together in heavenly places in Christ, which flows forth fresh and full from his soul as one who is there in the full glow of what satisfies the Father's love to give to His Son. On the contrary, this when referred to is merely called a standing, and, let me say, coldly declared to be a "judicial" standing! Why this, except it be that his system is so exclusively moral and human — so wrongly subjective as to be all but confined to the state and experience of a person either with or without a temper, and the absence of daily cares; having at the best a uniform victory over sin, except as to what is not known of evil in the flesh, through want of perception or conception, like the little girl? Such effects of faith and this holiness, coupled with an inward purity and a progressive sanctification, are Mr. Smith's objects, instead of "beholding the glory of the Lord, and our being changed (morally) into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

He has not got into the true position of a Christian as united to Christ at the Father's right hand, the Second Adam, and Head of the new creation of God; or one with the church as a member of the body of Christ on the earth, where the Holy Ghost is come down from the Father and the Son "to gather together in one" the members of Christ, and to work in the church, "dividing to every man severally as he will." Not being consciously in a true position with Christ in heaven by the anointing of the Holy Ghost, he speaks and urges lower things which have not to do with forming "our citizenship in heaven" by the things which are at God's right hand, but with objects which may serve to make a man happy and contented on earth through a uniform victory over a certain kind of sin, and an absence of care, etc. Is this mode of life and its experiences what Paul meant when he said, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"? Mr. Smith contents himself with these proofs of his own daily victory, and with confident assurances of it to others, for their encouragement; but all this must fall infinitely short of the measure of Christ, and what He has overcome to reach His present place in glory, and to give us communion with Himself there by the indwelling of the Spirit. In the end all such experiences must be unsatisfying and powerless to himself and others; because he makes his own conscious enjoyment the measure of his communion, instead of Christ and His fulness, and what the Father has given Him, that He might see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. We are sharers with Him in all this through His own most precious love, in a present fellowship and joy (imperfect in nothing save its measure in us as down here) by the power of the Holy Ghost, whom we have of God, and who dwells in us — a blessed portion! May this form our life and ways below, while we wait for Him.

Yours faithfully in Him, J. E. Batten.

S. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

It has struck me whether our Lord does not begin another action in John 8:1-59, by sovereign power and effectual grace (which is continued in the four following chapters); and that this new action is consequent upon His return from "the Mount of Olives," with which the first seven had ended.

If so, it is dispensationally in keeping (and will be morally so too in His future dealings with Israel) to find Him "early in the morning in the temple," sitting down to teach again the people. Equally in character with this position on His part was the act of the Scribes and Pharisees, who brought before Him the "woman taken in adultery," that He who alone could pass judgment on the sin should take this place, and in righteousness condemn her. This scene not merely opens out the trespass to which their thoughts and intentions were limited, but has a far wider and more serious application to the nation and its rulers, under the guilt of whoredom and adultery, which should have lain heavily upon their consciences, in the presence of their Jehovah-Jesus! Is not this the iniquity which has first to be judged and tried by the bitter water of jealousy, according to "the law of jealousies when a wife goeth aside to another, instead of her husband, and is defiled?" Prophet after prophet had been sent unto them, saying, "surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord." The Scribes and Pharisees, who brought the woman and accused her, declared that "Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned;" but they are not in the current of His own thoughts about the deeper trespass which had been brought to light by His own presence in their midst. How could He judge or condemn the woman, and not in righteous jealousy curse them? They had set her "in the midst," and demanded "what sayest thou?" To His eye they had by their own act set themselves in the midst with her, and passing beyond the statute laws of Moses (see Numbers 5:17) into the depths of His own feelings about them, He refused to take their accusation. Long ago He had sent Jeremiah, saying, "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown;" and now one greater than a prophet is come to win her heart back to Himself by His own grace. If He applied the law of Moses to the nation, as the accusers wished Him to do towards the adulteress, He must have taken "holy water in an earthen vessel, and of the dust that is in the floor, and put it into the water, and as a priest of the tabernacle bring up the question before the Lord." This He refuses to do, and now mark how He passes into His own heights and depths of love (cost what it may in the end) to justify Himself in not condemning either the woman in her sin, or the nation in its greater trespass. "Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground [as though he heard them not];" for in the love which had brought Him amongst them, and in which He was come to work, the sin of her who was taken in the act, and the sin of Israel, though equally under "the eye of the sun" for righteous judgment, was written on His heart in grace. He who came out from God came not to put her away, but to put away her sin, and to cleanse her and make her whiter than snow. Viewed in this

light, how significant of their state, and of His own purpose in love, are the words which He spake unto them, "he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her; and again he stooped down and wrote on the ground!" He rolls the sin and the accusers away from the floor, and thus purges it; nor will He gather up the dust thereof in any earthen vessel or prepare "the bitter water of jealousy" between Him and them. He walks in a higher path of His own, which none but He could make; and so goes out of the midst, and away from all their accusations and questionings, saying to them, "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He was left alone and the woman standing in the midst. "When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." As "the light of life," He has thus purged His floor cleaner than by the law of stoning! Blessed Jesus, He has made all the sin His own, and will eventually pass into the ground and take the curse Himself, and die the death, that what He wrote upon it in the day of His grace, may (whenever gathered up in jealousy) be pardoned and obliterated by the blood of atonement and reconciliation, through the depths of His own sufferings.

If John 8:1-59 : has introduced the national charge of Israel's departure and estrangement from Him who had espoused her to Himself, and come after her as we have supposed, John 9:1-41 : is equally significant as showing their individual state and national blindness. As the former could only be portrayed by the woman taken in adultery, so in this it is by "a man which was blind from his birth." The state of the nation was not in either case beyond the typical virtue of the balm of Gilead, or the skill of the great Physician; and this instance only calls forth the power and grace of Him whose prerogative it is to give sight to the blind. It is remarkable that Jesus refuses to take up this case, in the form in which the disciples view it, when they asked, "Master, who did sin; this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" He will not look at it in this light any more than judge the treacherousness of the nation by the woman. In the governmental ways and dealings of God with men upon the earth such a question might fairly arise as this, for He did "visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation;" but taken outside the responsibility of man, and viewed in connection with the counsels of the Father and the Son, "Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." In the pathway of the Word made flesh we follow Jesus thus "showing forth his glory;" and so the man that was born blind serves as exactly as the woman did for its display; yea to the condemnation of those who stood around in unbelief and said they saw. As "the light of the world" He passed out from the temple, and from the midst of the woman and her accusers. In His true greatness, He refused to use that light in which He walked for condemnation, though He commanded it to shine in upon the consciences of each, so that all were convicted and made their escape from its searching power, "beginning from the eldest even unto the last." There was yet another use of the light, and that is what we are now considering, in the case of the man born blind; "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

It is a great action therefore that occupies Jesus at this time; not merely opening the eyes of the blind by sovereign power, but giving Himself as the object of sight in effectual grace to the man and to the nation if they will accept Him — being likewise the light without which the eye, though opened, could not behold Him! In view of this Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent

me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work." Observe, day and night get a new meaning, when they are looked at in reference to Christ's continuance and work upon this earth. "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." The dust of the floor, and the water, and the earthen vessel which would have made up the compound in "the hand of the priest" for the infliction of the curse and the rot, upon the trial of jealousy and unfaithfulness, had been refused. He who alone can "bring meat out of the eater" gives us now to learn instead the virtues of the spittle, and the ground, and the mystic clay in the hand of Him that is come to work the works of God. Jesus said to the man "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed and came seeing." The dust of the ground, out of which the first man was "made in the image of God," had been cursed because of transgression and Satan; but now, under the power of Christ it is reclaimed and made available by the "sent" One through His spittle for bestowing an eye of faith to behold Him who came to bear away every curse, let it lie on whatsoever floor it may; and turn "the curse into a blessing!" The Light which had filled the temple just now and emptied it of every accuser, (how could they abide in its searching power?) leaving the woman alone with Jesus, does the same thing among the Scribes and Pharisees, now that the man who "was born blind" is brought into their midst. How well has the compound of the Apothecary done its work in connection with the sent One? "If this man were not of God [he says to them], he could do nothing. They answered, and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? and they cast him out."

Jesus and the woman were left alone. And now the man who had walked in darkness all his days, but who has got "the light of life from Christ and confesses His sovereign power is turned out of the synagogue to follow Him. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him [as in grace He would], he saith unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? he answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" Two precious assurances flow from the lips of Jesus upon this inquiry, as He unveils Himself to the outcast one; "Thou hast both seen him [the new object to the opened eye] and it is he that talketh with thee; and he said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him." New relations are thus formed which lead the Lord to take (in John 10:1-42) "the place of Shepherd" to this cast out sheep, and to declare His love for the flock as well as His protecting care against every foe. He also reveals the secret of the double title and interest which the Father's love as well as His own have over the sheep. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

We cannot fail to notice in these narratives how Jesus comes into the world, and accepts it just as it was by Adam's sin and Satan's power in death, to show Himself equal to every claim which the misery and wants of those in it daily and hourly brought across His path. More than this: for He passes through the world with the Father, in another and higher character than that by which as Creator-God, the heavens and the earth were made by Him and all that they contain. Earlier in this Gospel Jesus said to the Jews, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," introducing thus a power which could turn everything round to His own glory and the development of the hidden purposes of divine love. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." In this equality with God, there cannot be any

uncertainty as to the nature of this new power, or its exercise; "for as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" is its scope; and we are the blessed objects in whom it is made good.

John 11:1-57 : gives occasion to our Lord to pass into a yet further glory, upon the death of Lazarus; and to act by sovereign power in His higher titles, as "the Resurrection and the Life." Here also Jesus refuses to hold His intercourse with them about death, as they viewed it in relation to Lazarus; but teaches the disciples to look at it in the presence of Himself and His Father; that they may understand Him, and the new doctrine which He declares. "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." How else could He act in character as "the Resurrection and the Life," without a Lazarus who was dead (in the twelve hours of man's day) and buried, and had been in the grave four days already, so that those who loved him said "by this time he stinketh!" Death and the grave and corruption looked at in their condemning and separating powers in relation to God in His righteousness, and man upon whom death was inflicted on account of sin, are indeed fearful; all men are guilty under the weight of this penalty, and every mouth is stopped at the grave of Lazarus. Jesus is alone here with God, in the presence of Satan and his greatest power! The blindness of the man who was born so, whether through his own sin, or the sin of his parents, left him yet alive in this world; and the transgression of the woman who was taken in adultery, and whom Moses commanded to be stoned, forfeited her own life to the curse of the law she had broken; but "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

Jesus took this place in the temple and passed before the Scribes and Pharisees as the light of it; but they left Him alone with the convicted woman as "the light" to her, who under the law which they used was appointed to death. He had also come to the man who was born blind and had so filled his vessel with "the light" from Himself, that the man needed only to learn further the Person who had brought to him "life," in the confession of "the Son of God," whom he worshipped.

Happy deliverances and trophies were these for themselves and for Him who was passing thus through the world in a power that was able to tarn the very causes of human misery out of it; or in the meanwhile to find a new use for them for "the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." This is what the Lord is doing as "the potter with the clay," and under His skill everything is seen to suit Him and serve His purpose very well for glory or beauty, and just as it is! The language and actings of Him, who now comes into Bethany as "the Resurrection and the Life," are all in correspondence with such a title. "He saith unto them, our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." In the hands of Him that quickeneth and raiseth, "this sickness is not unto death," though, speaking as those about Him do (after the manner of men), Lazarus was dead and buried, and in corruption.

Passing this however, we see that even the faith of Martha and Mary, which recognized a "resurrection at the last day" (for this was their hope) must open itself out to take in Jesus in the light of His own perfections "while it is called today," and learn all these lessons afresh in this connection with the Son of God. "The last day" therefore is out of place when Jesus is in their midst, to act as the Resurrection and the Life.

Here we may well challenge our hearts upon the importance of such a revelation as we are considering in all its parts. "Now that Christ is come," He calls us out to learn our new lessons as

"the truth is in Jesus" in His company, and as He teaches us, by act and deed. Old things are passed away in His creation, so that "sickness unto death" and almost everything besides, which is the natural order and relation in Adam, have given place to another order in the Son of God, who was dead but is alive again and "liveth for evermore, and has the keys of death and of hell." How slowly we make room, like the two sisters and the group at Bethany, for the display of "the glory of God," above and beyond all that sin and Satan brought into the world and put us under in the cruel bondage of death and corruption; not seeing that the Son of God has laid hold of it all for Himself, to be glorified thereby, down to the grave by means of death; and up to the right hand of the throne of God in glory, by means of resurrection! What a pathway of trespass and guilt — sin and blindness — sickness and death — have these chapters opened up; and what misery would they still record, if Jesus had not passed through the midst as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and made all its stumbling-blocks His own stepping-stones, up to the right hand of the Father, and the crown of glory which adorns the victor's brow. "When Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet saying unto him, Lord; if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." But in this confidence of her love, she is not near enough to His own heart, in the secret that all He is, as the Son of God, He is for the objects of His affection, for "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." He did not come to reach His glory by preventing death, as Mary supposed (for He abode two days in the same place where he was) but came to win His spoils by means of death; and to bring in "the Father of glory" in due season to His own sepulchre, that He might raise and glorify His Son with other glories, besides those which He had with Him "before the world was."

We may remark here that this visit of Jesus as the Son of God to Bethany, and the rolling away the stone from the mouth of the cave, to bring out man who lay therein "with the napkin about his face and bound hand and foot with grave clothes," is a companion picture to "the exceeding high mountain" in the other Gospels, upon which Jesus stood and was transfigured before His disciples. His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light, "when he received from God the Father honour and glory, and there came forth the voice to him from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The Son of man in righteousness, thus accredited to us by His transfiguration upon "the holy mount," was at His height in majesty and glory upon the earth — further He cannot rise that way, unless He goes up alone to God, in the title of His own worthiness. On the other hand, Lazarus in his cave "bound hand and foot with grave clothes" under the power of death, was sunk down into the depths of corruption! These two extremes are met in the Person of the Son, who passes through John's Gospel (not so much in "the coming and majesty and glory of his earthly kingdom") as in the veiled power and title of "the only begotten of the Father;" to work the works of God out upon the new platform and footing, that "neither hath this man sinned nor his parents," that he was born blind; or as to Lazarus, "this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

Such an one in our midst makes the depths of this ruin and disgrace to man His own, and it is to be rolled away out of the floor in the title of Him who has written it upon His own heart, as before and with His Father, in the fire of His jealousy, and "the zeal for His house which had eaten Him up." How will He and the ground and the dust thereof (out of which Adam was originally taken) settle this new and last question, now that man has been driven back "unto dust," by that death which his Creator inflicted upon him as a sinner? The work, the sad work of Satan, is before the

Son of God at the grave — where man who "was made in the image of God" has been laid in the separating power of death, the keys of which the usurper held upon the cave and over the captive dead; buried out of sight from those who were in tears at the felt desolation of that hour. "A groan" goes up to God from the heart of Jesus, who has come into such a scene of helplessness and misery to "work the works of God" in the face of Satan's power and title at the grave's mouth. The groan found its answer between the Father and the Son, "and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me, and I know that Thou hearest me always." Nor is this new work of Jesus as "the Resurrection and the Life" to be only for the glory of God (as the first object, ever before His soul) but in truest sympathy and love for the oppressed and bereaved, He adds "because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me." In whatever way this grace could associate others with itself in such an act, it is ever the delight of His unjealous love to do! How like Himself is it, when Jesus bids them begin this mighty action, saying, "take ye away the stone;" an act only to be rivalled when all was over, by the same love which bade them "loose him and let him go;" what a moment for them, for they did it! The groan to God brought its answer from above to the opened ears of Jesus. Perfect in the expression of His sympathy, to the sorrowing and helpless ones with whom Jesus wept, they looked that these tears should be wiped away by power from Him, as the Son of God. Jesus is left in possession of the entire scene, and "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth, and he that was dead came forth," bound hand and foot! "A new thing" had been wrought already in the man who walked about upon the earth, with his eyes opened by means of the clay, which Jesus made out of it; but now a greater wonder is to be wrought in reply to the groan and the tears and the loud cry; for Lazarus comes forth from the depths of the grave, at the bidding of Jesus the Son of God passing through the ruins, as "the Resurrection and the Life." Blessed Jesus, Thou hast won back all that the enemy had plucked from the hands of men, from Adam in Paradise to Solomon in his kingdom and majesty in Jerusalem, as declared when Thou wast transfigured upon the holy mount. In this Gospel Thou art come down from that height, that Thou mightest be seen also to enter into the palace of the strong man and spoil his goods, and take from him all his armour wherein he trusted.

John 12:1-50 : opens after these triumphs, and presents Bethany under quite another aspect. It is no longer the house of weeping, for "there they made Jesus a supper, and Martha served and Lazarus (whom the grave and corruption had given hack out of the womb of death) was one of them that sat at meat with him." One crowning act only remains to be done for "the glory of God, and that the Son of God may be glorified thereby," in order that the counsels of the Father and our eternal blessing may be established beyond the reach of Satan's power, and outside the range of sin, and the judgment of God. Who could take up this work, and by what new paths in life or death, incarnation or ascension, could such an end be reached; but by the Son of God come down from above, in the mystery of "the Word made, flesh," that He might accomplish it? In this spirit, Mary took "a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." Elias and Moses, the two men who appeared in glory, on the top of the exceeding high mountain, spake with Jesus of "His decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem;" and He carried this secret down with Him into the house of Bethany, that He might declare it to those whom He loved, and in connection with this anointing. To the natural thoughts of Judas (like the inquiry respecting the man who was blind from his birth, and its causes) this use of the ointment is but waste, and should have been

sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor; but Mary is in the current of her Lord's thoughts, and He said, "let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this." The act of Mary had this significance to the heart of Jesus, and He prepares Himself for the path by which the causes of human misery, and God's dishonour, and the world's bondage should be met and overcome. Long ago the Spirit of prophecy had cried, "O death, I will be thy plagues, O grave, I will be thy destruction;" and now He is come to whom that finger pointed. Jesus knowing that His hour was come speaks to His Father about it, and says for Himself, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He who proved Himself as "the Resurrection and the Life" at the cave of Lazarus, has in view His last and greatest work of expiation for the guilty. He sets Himself to descend into the belly of the earth, that the dust of the tabernacle-floor — the writing of the finger — and the original curse upon the ground — may get their answer, and be set aside in His own death, as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." God, the Father of glory, may thou take His new place, and raise up Jesus out of His grave on the third day, as the proof of His own glory over sin by death, and of our redemption; for "God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." A deeper path than all these groans and tears at the grave of Lazarus, opened itself to our Lord and Jesus said, "now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name."

It is no longer merely Adam's sin that is in question, or the transgressions of his posterity, multiplied as they may be; for "God manifest in flesh" has come into the midst of the family as a man and brought every adverse power into crisis in His own person at His cross. Satan's usurped rights over man were challenged and set aside by the perfect obedience in life and death of the Second Adam. Tempted by the devil in the wilderness (when the temptations were ended) Jesus said, "get thee hence, Satan." So again in Gethsemane, when "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," in the knowledge that this was Satan's hour, and the power of darkness; still He accepted it in the confidence that it was the path of "the predeterminate counsel" that led to the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby in life and in death, and at the right hand of the Father!

Obedience unto death was the only measure of His perfectness as the faithful servant who loved his master, his wife, and his children, and would not go out free. The sin and the iniquity of His own, the flesh, the world and Satan; the majesty and righteousness of God in their own nature, as well as in holy judgment against all evil, were gathered up by Christ at that hour, and made His own care at the cross. He not only vindicated the rights of God in His ways with men in government, but glorified the Father according to His own essential being and Godhead; and in doing this, proved at the same time who this Son of man must be, who did it. He who in grace to us, and in infinite love to the Father, made all these His own care, wrought them out in His atoning sufferings and death, when "he said, it is finished: and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost." In the righteous judgment which He bore, as the Just One for the unjust, it follows that the prince of this world must be cast out. In the same judgment which He took and because of it, He further said "now is the judgment of this world." Unrighteousness must in due time be as publicly judged by God from heaven, because righteousness in the suffering victim was cast out by the world and its prince; and Jesus was with the Father. As to Himself in grace to us, Jesus said, "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me. This he said signifying what death he should die."

Precious Jesus, what Thy people owe Thee; who hast broken through every yoke — borne the curse — put away sin by the sacrifice of Thyself — destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil — brought life and incorruptibility to light — and set us in relationship with Thyself, and Thy Father as our Father, and with Thy God our God!

John 12:1-50 closes however "in darkness" as regards those in whose midst He was thus shining forth, as "the light of life," and lighting up the darkest places of the earth by taking possession of them in His own glory, and so drawing out "the sting of death" itself, if they would only let Him, because He could not be holden of it. But they listened to the law, instead of beholding the glory of the Son and said, "we have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou, the Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?" and they too are offended at Him. Nevertheless Jesus presents Himself once more to them in this group of chapters, as the light of life saying, "while ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light," lest darkness come upon you.

Like the accusers of John 8:1-59 who went out one by one, and left Jesus alone with the woman; or like the Scribes and Pharisees who cast out of the synagogue the man blind from his birth, who confessed Jesus and worshipped Him; so these in their turn compel Jesus to take an action for Himself (a last and final one) but in judgment against them; "these things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them!" The sun which had risen in such brightness upon them, and shed its beams across their path, has gone down in obscurity — and set, till another day, because of their unbelief. They have lost Jesus, and the light of the world has left it! The first seven chapters of this Gospel ended by every man going to his own house, and "Jesus to the mount of Olives;" they then parted company till his feet shall stand thereon another day. These five chapters finish, as we have seen, by Jesus hiding Himself from them and the world. John 13:1-38 and onward open the new and blessed subject of the Father's house, and of our union there by grace in all the counsels of the Father, to the glory of "the departed One" who is the Son of His own love.
J. E. Batten.

S. Our Exodus

Our Exodus.

(A sequel to "Our Genesis" in the Bible Treasury, No. 156, May, 1869.) "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." The disciple who has accompanied his Lord through the various scenes which served to call out His personal glories both by words and works in the first twelve chapters of John's Gospel, must have been prepared in some measure for His departure "out of this world to the Father." Nor is this rupture to be accounted for because of what men were when brought into the presence of the Word made flesh, though an early intimation reveals the secret that "Jesus did not commit himself unto them because he knew all men;" and a later one declares "they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God." But other reasons are at hand. The group of men and women who had been attracted out of the world by what He was, and gathered round Him with true-hearted affection, had to learn that they could not follow Him. "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice." But further, that little enclosure at Bethany where Jesus was at home with Martha and Mary and Lazarus whom He loved, and which shone out in such heavenly light and grace, would not satisfy the heart of the Lord: He must have them with Himself, in His own life and likeness and glory. All was at its very best — "there they made him a supper and Martha served." Lazarus too, who had been dead "was one of them that sat at the table with him." And Mary took her ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. Moreover, "the house was filled with the odour of the ointment," and He who brought His glory into it, was there as "the resurrection and the life." Measuring themselves by themselves, why was the house at Bethany broken up? and why did the Lord give that strange character to Mary's act, "against the day of my burying hath she kept this?" The glory of God had been the rule and object of Christ's action at the grave when He cried with a loud voice "Lazarus, come forth;" and so now, in His renewed intimacy with them in Bethany, He accepts no other measure. Lazarus, though raised from the dead, was still in the image of the first man earthy. The Son of the Father passes beyond all their thoughts into the depths of His own love about them, and is as truly in intercourse with "the voice from the excellent glory" in John 12:28 as when upon the mount of transfiguration about the matters of the kingdom and its glories, and His own personal majesty. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." In John we may remark the entire absence of the holy mount, of which Luke and Peter give the account. They were occupied with "the Son of man coming in his kingdom," when His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light: though at the mount of transfiguration, as in the house at Bethany, He accepted the debase which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, as His appointed pathway into the kingdom and His personal glory. John's occupations are different, and have other objects, though there is this point of similarity, that the house of Bethany, where Jesus was anointed for His burying, is transferred to another day; just as the transfiguration scene was folded up for the millennium, when Jesus

accepted "his decease" from that mount.

John's Gospel introduces us to the Father, and the "Father's house," during this dispensation, while the kingdom glory is in abeyance, and its king rejected and seated at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven. It is therefore with these new relations, as one with Him who has left this world and gone to the Father to prepare a place for us, that John 13:1-38 begins, though founded upon His decease and the day of His burying — "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." The home of Bethany has given place to the Father's house and its many mansions. The hour has come and gone, that the Son of man should be thus glorified. The voice from heaven has verified itself by glorifying the Father's name, and glorifying it again in the resurrection of Him who was "lifted up from the earth," that He might draw all men unto Him. Other and new associations have been formed between the risen One and His own by redemption through His blood, never to be broken up — with those who are not in the flesh, nor of the world, but born of the Spirit, and in life, and in union with Christ. Himself said, "Go tell my brethren I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God." Lazarus was dead and risen, but in the likeness of Adam. The redeemed are dead with Christ, and risen in Christ, and new creatures in Him. In Christ we have passed out of the judgment that man in the flesh, and the world, and Satan are judicially under and are going into. "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." A parting word was uttered by the Lord in John 12:1-50 before all was closed up in darkness, "while ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These words spake Jesus and departed and did hide himself from them." They have lost Him: the light of the world has gone down in obscurity. Israel is in thick darkness; the life that was the light of men has been refused; and the Anointed One of Bethany has passed through His "burying," and become the glorified Son of man at the right hand of God.

It is in this position, where man never was before, that we who now believe in Christ are called out to know Him, and by grace to take a portion with Him; and this fact amongst others necessitates the new ministry of the water and the towel and the bason between the Lord and ourselves that we "may have part with him." From John 13:1-38 onward we shall find our heavenly relations opened out consequent upon the break-up and the break-down of the earthly ones, proposed to Israel by Him who rode into the city of Jerusalem upon a colt, the foal of an ass. Before we leave the first twelve chapters of this Gospel we shall do well to remember that "the Word made flesh" had presented "himself to his own, and his own received him not." As a worshipping people He went up with them to the appointed feasts of the first and the seventh months; and then in His own person took the place of the Passover and of the feast of Tabernacles. He had visited their temple which should have been the house of prayer for all nations, but found it a den of thieves; and been compelled to challenge a ruler of the Jews, the one who owned Him as a teacher come from God — "if I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" After this He publicly convicted the nation, or at least the two tribes, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you," and prophetically adds, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." Israel after the flesh had set itself aside, "ye will not come to me that ye might have life." The Lord has become glorious in other eyes by departing out of this world to the Father — He has made us one with Himself where He is. The revelation of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost had been made in the ministry of our Lord when on earth, and especially in the Gospel of John; but it is by the anticipated departure

of Jesus in the chapters we are now about to consider, that we are put into relation with the Father by the Son through the Holy Ghost. That which constitutes Christianity, three persons in the Godhead, a trinity in unity, would be repugnant to the mind of a Jew, for he seemed instructed otherwise, "the Lord thy God is one Jehovah." These chapters therefore become the basis, and declare the character of the present dispensation: that is, if the Church can be said to be in any. Moreover this period between the ascension of the Lord and His second coming, and our gathering together unto Him, is not only marked by this full revelation of the Trinity, and our relations with the Father's house; but by the descent of the Holy Ghost consequent upon the departure and ascent of the Son. Nothing can be so important as this, if we would rightly understand the peculiarity of our dispensation — one that is marked, and indeed constituted by the Father's glory in the heavens — the Son's departure from this world to the right hand of God — and the Holy Ghost's descent to this earth as the Comforter, and the Spirit of truth during the Lord's absence. This revelation of the unity in trinity, and this change of places as regards the Son and the Holy Ghost, is characteristic of our new position and standing, consequent upon the world's rejection of Christ. He beheld the Person in heaven, in whom the counsels and purposes which were hid in God from before the foundation of the world are now connected; just as when the Lord was upon the earth Jewish promises and prophecies and types found their yea and Amen in Him. The Holy Ghost by the apostles has made known to the Church since Pentecost, that hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Another book has also been written, "the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass," and which tells us of the marriage of the Lamb, in the coming day of His espousals when His Bride shall have made herself ready. But the Church soon lost consciousness of the fact "that she was espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ," as well as of her portion with her Head and Lord in heaven, and her place of testimony on earth. It is this forgetfulness of what the Church of God really is to Him and to His Son and to the Holy Ghost, that makes it so difficult to recover the members of Christ, from the Babylon and harlotry of these many centuries.

Enough has been said perhaps to lead some to the discovery of the peculiarity of the Christian, which these precious chapters of John's Gospel so abundantly and plainly declare. Indeed so entirely is our calling and portion with the departed One in heaven, that He must needs say, "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." There was really no place anywhere "for his own which were in the world:" only they were confident in His love, who loved them to the end. From the river to the ends of the earth had been given by covenant to Abraham and his seed in the earliest times; and moreover the Seed and Heir of the world had them in possession by incarnation and righteous title. The kingdom and its glories were also His, as we have seen at the Mount of transfiguration; but neither His kingship, nor His heirship, nor His sonship with Abraham and David, would He enjoy alone. No, the love He bore to the earthly people led Him to talk of His decease with the men in glory, just as He interpreted Mary's anointing for the day of His burial; that so He might at a future time take His place as the true Boaz, and lead His redeemed people into the inheritance. In the meanwhile He forms an entirely new dispensation with the Father, according to the hidden wisdom and secret counsels which were hinted at by the Lord to His disciples; but which became the glorious subjects of Holy Ghost revelation and testimony, when the earthly order and course of Jehovah with His nation and people were set aside, for the

millennial age. There was thus no place on earth for the followers of a rejected Lord, and certainly no place in the heavens, for Christ was not as yet ascended, though all was perfect in counsel and in purpose, but a mystery hidden in God. Nor does the peculiarity of the Christian's position apply to place merely; for it was equally so as regarded any relation to God Himself. In truth we were orphans, without a father, and without a house or home — outside of the dispensation to Israel, of which as Gentiles we never formed a part: and not yet introduced into this new dispensation or economy which was about to be opened in heaven.

It was that we might not be left in this state that these chapters from 13: to the end were written, and which open up to us the new sources of life and love which the departure of Jesus to the Father, formed for Himself and us. We were orphans; but new revelations and heavenly relations were at hand, and thus Jesus said, "I will not leave you orphans [comfortless], I will come to you." "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" — blessed portion! Two abodes for those who have part and place with the departed One are opened out in these scriptures: the first is in the Father's house for the orphans but the children of His adopting love; and the second is on earth, and in ourselves — "if a man love me, he will keep my words: and may Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The intercession and communion are thus maintained between the Father and the Son and the children, by the descended Holy Ghost in the power of life in our inner man; and in a known understood fellowship, which makes us partakers of Christ and with Christ, in love and joy and peace. For instance, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." He puts us also into the same place that He held with the Father. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." So in reference to love, His own love, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end," and as regards His Father's love, "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

It was indeed this hidden communication, so real and yet so unintelligible at that time, which led one of the disciples to ask, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" How entirely different was this kind of intercourse from what they had known with their Messiah on the earth, in the days of His flesh, and which was closed up at Bethany! He who was once seen with their eyes and heard and looked upon and which their hands had handled is now the invisible and departed One — the absent and the missing One-but nevertheless to be known and enjoyed in a new way, and in such a manner as would surpass all they had ever felt or understood before, even when their hearts burned within them, as He talked with them on the Emmaus journey! "We have the mind of Christ" — they had the opened understanding. In a certain sense the general acknowledgment of Christians is a true one, and most important when intelligently made, that this period in which we are living is "the dispensation of the Spirit." The Holy Spirit has come down consequent on the Son of man's glorification, "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you for ever" — fruit of the intercession of Christ above. Besides this, the Holy Ghost has descended in virtue of the title and right of the ascended Lord in His own person, "when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, he shall testify of me, and ye also shall bear witness," etc. But further, as to ourselves, "howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak

of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come." Proceeding from the Father, sent by the Son, and dwelling with us and about to be in us, He is the glorifier of Christ, the Son of man in power and glory on high; "he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Finally, and to complete this full statement of blessedness during our Lord's absence, and that we might not be left orphans, it is added, "all things that the Father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine and show it unto you." This is what the apostles in their varied epistles bring out to us, under the anointing and teaching of the Holy Ghost. The descended Spirit, thus standing in relation to Christ's own which are in the world as the Comforter, takes a place of convicter towards all who are not His: "when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." He is the evidence and witness, from the departed One who is with the Father, of the world's sin, which cast out righteousness in the glorified Man, and of the coming judgment of God upon those who did it, and of the casting out of its prince. The presence of the Holy Ghost upon earth is all this, whether men accept the conviction and receive their forgiveness through faith in the blood of the Lamb, or not. These chapters contain the great characteristics of this parenthesis (so to speak) in which we are living, and which bring out the requisite revelation of the purposes of God respecting us; and unfold the relations with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, till the Lord comes again to receive us to Himself, and to present us in the Father's sight, holy and unblameable and unproveable. The Church of God does not properly form the subject of the Son's ministry, and is therefore not found in this gospel; but the Father, whom He came to reveal, and the Father's house which He is gone to prepare for us, and the joint manifestation of the Father and the Son making their abode with us while unmanifested to the world, are the prominent features of these chapters. Some details which they present, as the Lord was teaching these mysteries to His disciples, may now be examined. Two things in the beginning of John 13:1-38 which refer to the Lord alone need be stated, that we may understand the ground on which He personally acted in their midst. The first is, "Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, and having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end," so that go where He may His own are one with Him. The second thing to notice is, "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself; after that he poureth water into a basen, and began to wash the disciples' feet," etc., and this ministry of love connects the Lord with us where we still are. "If I wash thee not [as he said to Peter], thou hast no part with me," explains and accounts for the object of this loving service to "his own which were in the world," though because they were no longer of it.

Strange and contradictory powers are brought into view in this chapter: on the one band, Jesus in the activity of love, which has girded Him afresh for new ministry; and, on the other, the devil corrupting the mind of Judas Iscariot, and putting it into his heart to destroy his Lord and Master. The devil and man are together, but as they never were before, nor ever can be again; "and after the sop Satan entered into him. He then having received the sop went immediately out and it was night," and a long and dreary night it has been from that hour to this, save as divine grace has broken into it, to "turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." But let us return to Jesus, and witness the self-sacrificing devotedness of His heart to His disciples. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His own whom Jesus loved, and this place of confiding rest for the head of a disciple is as necessary, in order to have part with Jesus where He now is,

as that He should gird Himself and wash and wipe a disciple's feet in order to maintain the character by a walk on earth, with the departed One in heaven.

Besides this devotedness of heart and hand to His disciples in the active services of His living love, the hour was come, when by His dying love He reached the point where the Son of man found His glory, and where God was glorified in Him. Connected with this — yea growing out of it — Jesus adds, "If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." His perfect obedience in life, and by laying down His life, His decease at Jerusalem, and His burial, were the steps by which He reached these glories for Himself and His Father, till lower He could not go. He had secured everything for God against the full power of Satan by going down into "the lowest parts of the earth." In His own thoughts with the Father, as to the causes that brought Him to this hour, and the consequences in glory both now and hereafter which were about to be declared by His death and resurrection, He must of necessity be alone: and this leads Him to say to the disciples, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you, ye shall seek me, and, as I said to the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say to you." His departure out of this world raised the inquiry in Peter, "whither goest thou, and why cannot I follow thee now?" The present One was soon to be the absent One, and thus a new trouble filled their hearts; nor was their faith able to understand the fact, how He would become the object of their confidence and hope, in the place where ascension would soon carry Him. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Yea, every further word that Jesus spoke was a trouble of heart to those that were to be left behind Him, and when He said to them, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," Thomas replied at once, "Lord we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Difficulties thicken, as they necessarily must, between Him and them, nor are they lessened when He adds, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him." This declaration of the identity of the Father and the Son leads Philip to say, "Lord show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." What does this strange but blessed intercourse between our Lord and His own which were in the world prove to us; but the love which was thus giving them "a part with himself" for communion and joy with the Father, and the Father's house, that they might not be orphans when He was gone? The last question, and one of equal importance perhaps, arises as to the required and adequate link between the Father and the Son in heaven, and His own upon the earth, by which this living communication should be maintained in an existing relationship. Fruitful in loving affection to Jesus from whom such blessedness flows, Judas said, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" These four questions from Peter, Thomas, Philip, and Judas, served to reveal and lay the basis, or at least to bring out all that was needful for them and ourselves, as regards our intercourse with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, in a known peace, "my peace," which the world could neither give nor take away. Moreover this intimacy is maintained by the Comforter "who dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" upon the footing of an obedience in which love delights: so that Jesus declares, "he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him and will manifest myself to him."

All is thus formed and complete that is requisite for a heavenly people to have part with the Son in the Father's house, till He comes again to receive us to Himself. He has girded Himself for our feet, and displayed Himself in a love which draws the disciple's head to His breast. He stands

revealed as the way, the truth, and the life, by whom we come unto the Father, and declares, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;" adding, "believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake." What remains, but that this same love should bring Him back, and crown itself by receiving His own to Himself, "that where he is, there we may be also." In this interval, and while the Holy Ghost is dwelling with us, John 15:1-27 shows the Vine and its branches, with the clusters of fruit whereby the Father is glorified. The producing powers are in the two preceding chapters which have mainly occupied us; and plants of such planting, branches in such a vine, cannot but yield fruit of the quality which is to the eye and heart of the husbandman. Indeed this chapter of responsibility naturally follows the others which declare our portion with the Son in the Father's habitation, and stands in relation to us as the Book of Deuteronomy did to Israel and their Exodus — a book which, though given by Moses on this side Jordan, has much to do with the other side, when the people had come into the land and had crossed over, to 'whom he taught the manners and customs and behaviour that suited the nation, when in the midst of idolatrous countries that knew not the God of Israel, as His people were called out to know and to obey Him. John 15:1-27 is really a continuation of that same love which, having carried His own upward, when Jesus departed out of this world, desires to associate us with Himself as the true Vine on the earth, and that we may have part with Him in bringing forth fruit whereby His Father may be glorified, down here in the place of true discipleship. What can be plainer or more inviting than the ground He states? "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." The Lord only knows one path for Himself as for us, and with the same result to both. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Part, and place, and position, with Him everywhere and in everything, in heaven and on earth, are His only rule towards us, and He has planted us with Himself in life and blessing above, where He is gone, that we may bring forth fruit below, where He is not!

Again, in John 16:1-33 He spake of His absence to them: "A little while and ye shall not see me; and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father." But this little while was as much a parable to them as when He spoke in John 14:1-31 and said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," by whom they could alone come to the Father. Indeed Jesus Himself said, "These things have I spoken to you in proverbs, but the time cometh when I shall no more speak to you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father." What a time was this for the disciples! The Father revealed, but not known; the Holy Ghost not yet given, because the Son of man was not yet glorified; and the Lord whom they had known and loved and who loved them, separated from them first by His death, and then by resurrection from the dead. "Sorrow had filled their hearts." Was this what He had chosen them for? Was it for this they had left all and followed Him? to be carried outside the fold of Israel and left homeless in a world which was about to cast Him out, and in which they would be houseless and fatherless, orphans and without a hope! They said, therefore, "What is this that he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith." Jesus knew they were desirous to ask Him, and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." But all this was a darkening parable to their minds, till the womb of death gave forth the dawn of the third day. They would then rejoice "that a man was born into the world" by resurrection, and remember no more the anguish. Ye now therefore have sorrow, "but I will see you again, and your heart shall

rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you, and in that day ye shall ask me nothing." This daytime, bright with their risen Lord, chased away the shadows, and turned their night into day. In "that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." He now reveals Himself to them, in the light of His own personal glory, a light inscrutable to the natural mind and in language unintelligible to the human understanding, but nevertheless received and held by the simplest faith, in the confidence of a love which does not doubt Him, in word or deed. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee," etc.

It seems at first sight disappointing, when their thoughts are at rest about Him and themselves, and just beginning to embrace Him in the light of that day of resurrection which was to follow this night of sorrow, to be thrown into yet deeper darkness and distress by their own failure. Hitherto He had spoken of His leaving them but now He says "the hour cometh, yea, is now come that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave ye alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." It is this unchanging and unbroken link which is now to be manifested and to take the place of every other, for all else had gone or were about to give way, and "leave him alone." In view of this, and to take their own thoughts away from themselves, He said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." This is what He was to them; and they would prove all creature-cisterns to be just what they were to Him. If they could receive it, the associations which He had formed for them with Himself and His Father were of such a nature as to have completely changed their relations to all former things, and even to the world itself. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;" and it is with Himself and upon His own ground of victory and triumph that He puts them, that His own may have part with Him everywhere and in everything. His work is complete, His path trodden, the next step is before Him, and the very last: and having to do with Him who sees the end from the beginning, and who calls things that are not as though they were, He passes into His own solitudes with His Father. The wonderful John 17:1-26 opens this intercourse to us, and lets us in where angels' feet had never stood. It is as the overcomer of the world, that He enters it, and "lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." He holds His place too, as "the glorifier of the Father upon the earth," and the finisher of "the work that was given him to do." Power had also been given him over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as had been given him; "and this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." It is such an One, in righteousness upon the earth, and in righteous title as the fulfiller of all that had been entrusted to Him, who can lay claim to His own essential glory; "and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." God hears man upon the earth speaking these words: righteousness is with this Second man, and joined with perfect obedience, so that God can come back again into the habitable parts of the world and begin His delight with the sons of men. "The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." The Word made flesh has prepared this earth for God by redemption, and God has found a place for the Son of man in heaven by resurrection; nor have these changes, mighty as they are, either shut us out, or left us orphans; for Jesus said, "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." Blessed portion, one with the departed where He now is, in the unseen but well-known fellowship with the Father; sealed by the Spirit of adoption — part with the coming One, in all the glory of which this unparalleled chapter witnesses. "That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Nor is this blessedness known only as the fruit to us of accomplished redemption while unmanifested to the world, nor of glory and power by resurrection to the Son of man, who is to be manifested in the glory of the Father, and in His own glory, and the glory of the holy angels, when He sits upon the throne of His glory; but witnessed as perfectly before God, when in the veiled perfection of His incarnation. "Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." As the anti-type of the Hebrew servant, who loved his master, and his wife, and his children, and would not go out free; faithful to Him that appointed Him, with the ear bored, or the ear digged, as in the Psalms; as the ear opened, morning by morning as in the Prophet Isaiah; till, passing all that the type could betoken, He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not His face from shame and spitting; "Made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed; and He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death, because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. By such steps as these has God been glorified by the Son of man. Finally, by the perfectness of His loving obedience unto death, He brought back the righteousness of God in company with Himself into the same descending path in which lay our deliverance; till at the grave's mouth the glory waited on Him who lay there to vindicate and claim Him on the third day by taking Him up, "Raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." The Second man began another history, as seated in the heavens, after that God had been first brought back into the earth, through the intrinsic righteousness of the righteous One, on whom the Spirit of God rested in the form of a dove, and who was anointed by the Holy Ghost. The heavens were first drawn aside as a curtain to look down upon this Man whom they have since received, and who now sits there on the right hand of God.

John 18:1-40; John 19:1-42 give us in fact and in detail what we have been considering in full accomplishment. Led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before His shearers, dumb, so He opened not His mouth. Judas, who dipped his hand with his master in the dish, betrayed Him with a kiss. Caiaphas the high priest condemned Him, and Caesar crucified Him. Collective and concentrated human enmity, instigated by Satan, got their vent on the person of the Lord, and found their complete outlet at the cross where He was hung — nailed to the accursed tree by wicked hands. The descent of the Holy Ghost as the glorifier of Christ, the teaching of the apostles in the various Epistles, and our own anointing and unction from the Holy One, have made this Gospel (and especially the part which is so peculiarly characteristic of this present period since the departure of Jesus) plain and intelligible to us who have part and place with Him where He is. It is on this account perhaps that we are so little able to understand, much less to enter into, the difficulties and disappointments that filled the disciples' hearts.

Trouble and fear took possession of them at the announcement of Jesus "departing out of this world to the Father," as we have seen; but an additional fact or two may serve to make their dilemma plain and intelligible to us who were never in it. The example of Mary in John 20:1-31 shows the bewilderment of mind in which she stood at the sepulchre weeping, and said to the angels, "they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." What was she for the moment, but a disappointed, homeless, forlorn woman, in truth an orphan in her destitution? But He who said to them, "I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]; I will come to you," appeared to her, though she supposed Him to be the gardener, and knew not that it was Jesus. As the risen One, alive again from the dead, He made Himself known to her, first of all, and then bade her, go tell my brethren, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." He has made true His own promise by coming to Mary, and thus He put them into relationship with Himself in life and union, and as sons with the Father in heaven. Moreover "He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" bringing them thus into closer association with Himself in the power of life, as the risen man, the Son of God, and Lord. The two disciples on their road to Emmaus who talked together, not of His decease or burial but of the empty sepulchre, were in the same perplexity and sorrow as to their Lord as was Mary when she found Him not. The narrative in Luke shows their disappointment and how to their own thoughts they were cast upon the world, friendless and fatherless, orphans in very deed. "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and beside all this today is the third day since these things were done." The words of the women too, who told the apostles of the empty sepulchre and of the missing body of the Lord Jesus, "seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." In fact, if Christ in resurrection was not their hope nor even upon their minds as bound up with His own testimony to them before His betrayal, what must have been their desolation? They had lost Him, and were in this sense of all men most miserable. Personally He had attached Mary to Himself in resurrection, and in this same character He joined these disciples who communed together and were sad. Mary mistook Him for the gardener, and these suppose Him to be a stranger in Israel: yea, so little had the third day brought the light of His resurrection-morn to their thoughts, that they only mention the fact to Himself as the then measure of their desertion by His death. "Today, is the third day since these things were done." Then He said unto them, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself."

Thus by personal intercourse with one and another, and by opening the scriptures and opening their understandings at one time, or else by coming into their midst when the doors were shut, and saying, Peace be unto you, and showing them His hands and His side, He reestablished their confidence. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." But neither this redemption nor His own reappearance in their midst and intercourse for forty days had served to disconnect their minds from the world, so as to have part and portion with Him in His departure to the Father; and what the Holy Ghost would come down to bring to their remembrance or to reveal. When they were come together in Acts 1:1-26 :, they asked of Him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" And He said unto them, "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." Perplexity, if not disappointment, had still hold of them, and especially now that the resurrection which had just given Him back to them must be superseded by an ascension that would take Him away again where He was before. What were

these hundred and twenty disciples to do, shut out from the world in an upper room where they continued in prayer and supplication; no longer any hopes of the kingdom-glory, or of the nation's blessing as a present thing; shut up to the heavens in the new-born expectations of what "the promise of the Father" should mean, and "the baptism of the Holy Ghost" could be, which they had heard from their again departed Lord?

Further, He had said, "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem," etc. And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. But these were the necessary paths for Him to take, that they might pass out of their orphanage into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to the Father, according to the good pleasure of His will. Their confidence was restored and unshaken, as they saw the cloud receive Him, and angels waiting on Him, and the heavens claiming the rejected One of the earth.

Judas and a band of soldiers had come out against Him with lanterns and torches, as against a thief — the high priest had condemned Him as a blasphemer — Pilate had crucified Him — and the grave had shut its mouth upon Him. It was this dark and dreary path downward into the lowest parts of the earth that had awakened their fears. He was in the region and shadow of death and dead! But now "they look stedfastly into heaven," and see the risen One, the glorified Son of man by ascension, going up to God in the power of life to be crowned with glory and honour, and to be set over all the works of His hands. And 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 whom ye have seen taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner," etc. Then returned they to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, "and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, there was a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and filled all the house where they were sitting." They are no longer forlorn or destitute. All fear of being left orphans is at an end, for there appeared to them cloven tongues, like as of fire, which sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. By this baptism of the Holy Ghost the disciples were united to the risen Lord and Head of His body, the Church, and had part and portion with Him in all that the Father hath made Him to be and put into his hands. We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. "All things are yours," the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all things are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's. And 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. But to return. The object and character of the Son's ministry on earth was to declare the Father, and to lay the foundation for this intercourse with the children of His adopting grace: the Holy Ghost as the Comforter came down to dwell with them and to be in them, of which these chapters treat. He had glorified the Father on earth and finished the work that was given Him to do. Founded on this fact Jesus said in John 17:1-26 "Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." As to His own, He adds, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world;" and again, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." Further, He says, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." He stood between us and God, upon the

question of our sins, confessing them and putting them away by the sacrifice of Himself. Here He stands as intercessor between us and the Father, touching His own glory; and the glory which had been given Him as Son of man — bringing us before the Father in love, upon the same ground He took for Himself in righteousness. Yea, more than this, He puts us into the Father's care, because He is about to leave the world: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." The circles of the Father's glory through the Son — of the Son's glory with the Father — of the Holy Ghost's glory, as proceeding from the Father and the Son — and of the church's glory as the body and bride of Christ; the pillar and ground of the truth; the church of the living God (though not brought out in this gospel, yet consequent upon the Holy Ghost's presence on earth) are all complete. These describe the peculiarity and blessedness which is our portion, who are called out to take part and place with the departed One, while hidden in the heavens, till He comes to receive us to Himself.

John 21:1-25 is another proof of the incapacity of the disciples, previous to the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, to connect themselves with Christ in resurrection — and the last one. They put themselves in relation to their former pursuits, as deserted and forsaken — left to their own resources as comfortless. "Peter saith to them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing." But He who had said "I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you," appeared on the shore to take part with them, in their unsuccessful fishing; and to leave another proof behind Him, that as the risen Son of man (who had put them, in John 20:1-31, into relationship with His Father, and His God, and was Head over all things) He had also all things put under His feet, "all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beast of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea." In the exercise of this title He said unto them, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it, for the multitude of fishes."

They no longer ask of the "little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me, and because I go to the Father," for the Lord had rejoined them, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." They have passed out of their trouble and fear, though as yet, not at home with the risen one, who had afresh charged Himself with the care of His own, and all that concerned them; so when they were "come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread." He has girded Himself anew and come forth from death and the grave to show Himself to them, and to serve them, in these new titles by resurrection, on his way up to the Father; and to His place on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. The sorrow that filled their hearts when He left them has given place to satisfaction, though none of the disciples are at ease with Him, in these new ministries of His love, any more than when He girded Himself with the towel, to wash their feet; yet they "durst not ask him Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord." As the risen Son of man, Jesus has proved to them, that He is the Lord of the seas as well as of the earth on which He stood, and then "cometh and taketh bread and giveth them, and fish likewise." This is now the third time that Jesus Himself to His disciples after that He was risen from the dead. They have seen the Lord and He has made Himself known to them in breaking of bread, and by the net full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three. "Part with me," as Jesus said in John 13:1-38, was the object before Him, in regard to His own, when leaving the world to go to the Father; and the ways by which this fellowship has been formed and

secured till He comes again to receive us to Himself (by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and His abiding presence as the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, and the glorifier of the Son, both by indwelling power for our communion, and by outward testimony to the world), have been the subjects of the intervening chapters. But there remained in John 21:1-25, for the Lord to take His place with Peter, as the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, by restoring that disciple who had denied Him, to the confidence of that love which was stronger than death, and which no denial could turn aside. Subjected to this searching care of the soul, piercing even to the dividing and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart; another sorrow takes hold of this disciple, and he judges himself for not taking part with his Lord when blasphemously accused and condemned. Conscience and heart do their work, when Jesus said the third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" "Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time Lovest thou me? and he said, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." It is in this character of "the shepherd and bishop of souls" that the departing Lord thus established Himself in grace; and it is this disciple, whose feet had been washed at the beginning, and whose soul had been restored at the close, who consistently speaks to us, in his epistles, of our Lord in these two offices. The confidence of Jesus in Peter, by this recovery under the Bishop's care of his soul, received an immediate proof by the Lord's saying to him, "Feed my lambs." As the great Shepherd of the sheep, brought again from the dead by the God of peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, He said again, "Feed my sheep:" and the last chapter of Peter's first epistle is very full and complete, in the recognition of our Lord and himself in this responsibility as an under-shepherd, in view "of the crown of glory that fadeth not away." In every fresh relation in heaven with the Father, and on earth, as caring and feeding these "other sheep which are not of this fold" (see John 10:16), these disciples have part and place with their Lord; and these positions and their corresponding services, form the peculiarity (as we are tracing) of this present period marked by Christ's absence, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. But there was yet one more proof, by which a disciple might have part with his Lord; and of this Jesus speaks to Peter, before He finally leaves the world for the Father's presence. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me." What could unjealous love do, but set "His own" in the road He had Himself trodden down to death, as the new pathway by which a disciple could have part with his Lord — and in which glory on earth was to be reached, and God glorified by the laying down of life? Another disciple was standing by, whom Jesus loved, who also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, Which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." Here also is a last and crowning instance of the love of the Lord to "His own, which were in the world," and of the character of the love, in which "He loved them unto the end." He sets John in the ways of His own steps to wait for His coming — just as He had put Peter to follow Him in death — a death by which He should glorify God. Love, divine love, Christ's most perfect love, had identified His own with Himself in all that His departure out of the world to the Father would carry Him up to; and this love had set us to have part with Himself there in the springhead of life, everlasting life, and at the fountain of all blessing, the only source of righteousness, and joy, and peace. Himself is now the unfailing and untainted channel of supply to us, through whom these

living waters flow, Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith and this same Christ too the hope of glory, the glory for which we wait. The Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, who dwelleth with us and is now in us, has become the living power in the new man, for this fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ into which we are thus called. Moreover this ministry is known and understood by us, inasmuch as it is we who are strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man and according to the riches of His glory. Under such operations of the Holy Ghost in us, what could be the corresponding effects in a disciple so inwrought but what we have just seen the Lord introduced Peter to by death — a death by which he should glorify God, and John by the patience and suffering in continuous life till the Lord came, a life by which he would tarry, if needs be for the glory of Christ? Peter knowing and calmly telling the church of God, "that shortly he must put off his tabernacle, as the Lord had him," and John writing to us as a "brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."

If we go on in our thoughts beyond the relation to disciples, in which the Holy Ghost thus works to bring out the resemblance to, Christ in death, or in life; and consider the church and what we are, as members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones — such meditations would carry us beyond this Gospel, or even the Apostle John's writings, and beyond the subject of this paper.

There are three distinct ministries in the New Testament; one is the blessed ministry of the Son when on earth, which made known the Father and brought us into the place of adopted children that we might not be left below as orphans; the Son Himself going away to the Father's house, and the many mansions, to prepare a place for us; that we should not be left destitute and homeless. The next ministry is that of the Holy Ghost by the apostles, gathering out the members of Christ into living union with the ascended Lord, and forming them into a body with the risen Head by the baptism of the Spirit, thus constituting the Church of the living God, the body and bride of Christ, the Lamb's wife. The other ministry is "the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass," and has to do with the kingdom, and with the holy Jerusalem, the city coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, "having the glory of God." It was with the first of these three glorious ministries and revelations we have had to do, as children with the Father, and what the Father's love in counsel and the loving and perfect work of the Son in death and resurrection opened out for us during a period like the present, when the world which cast Him out, neither sees Him, nor knows Him. May the Lord give us individually to prove how real and true an abode the Father and the Son have with us now, and with the family, by an obedience which is the element in which divine love lives and dwells! "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." In conclusion, if these chapters in the Gospel of John, from chapter 13: onward, open out to "His own who are in the world" our new connections and relations with the Father, through the departed One, and by the living fellowship of the Holy Ghost, as the abiding Comforter, till the Lord comes to receive us to Himself, how immense must be their value!

If Satan's blinding power can be brought in anywhere, so as to obscure the light which so brightly shines; or close the eye against the knowledge of this glory, in the saints, we may surely expect his wiles and artifices would be directed here: and so they have been, and alas with too much success. Else how can it be accounted for, that the blessed hope of the Lord's coming and our gathering together unto Him, should have been for ages lost to His people? How else can it be

understood that His own descent from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, should almost by common consent be postponed to the last day; and that consequently our being caught up to meet Him (which depends upon His own descent into the air) should be also put off to the remotest point of time? The newborn hopes and expectations of His own were no longer to rest on the restoration of the kingdom to Israel according to Old Testament prophecy; but upon His departure to prepare a place for them in the Father's house; leaving them this assurance, "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." "If I will that he tarry till I come" is the only measure that a disciple who estimates everything respecting time and place by Christ, will consent to adopt as the rule of his faith, or the guide to his hope. But, thank God, the fact of the Lord's second coming as a present hope to the souls of His own, that they might not be left orphans, has been recovered to the church in this century — but how revived or restored, if it had not been lost? Many thousands, in various parts of christendom and the world, have also been awakened by the cry: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him:" but how aroused, if they had not all slumbered and slept? The withering power of Satan's craft has likewise settled upon and blighted as an understood and present fact, the descent of the Holy Ghost to dwell with the saints and to be in them. His presence as a divine Person, has been reduced to a mere influence, and thus the great and distinguishing peculiarity of "the promise of the Father," by the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost upon the disciples, as the abiding Comforter, is as much out of mind as a fact, as the coming of the Lord has been as a hope. It is the Holy Ghost who has taken the place of Christ upon the earth in the midst of His own; and occupies the interval between the departure of the Son to the Father, and His coming again to receive us to Himself.

What a masterpiece of the devil's policy was it, to wrest these facts and hopes which the love of Christ to His own had provided, that they should not be comfortless, and, by stripping the Lord's people of their unfailing resources in the heavens, and the Paraclete on earth, put them back into the very place of orphans! How else can it be explained, that such multitudes of Christians are found praying for the Holy Ghost, in the forgetfulness that their responsibility is, "not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they are sealed to the day of redemption?" Certain consequences must follow these grave denials of the coming of the Lord as a present hope to His saints; and the personal presence of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, during the absence of Christ, to dwell with us, and be in us; yea, and to carry out the counsels and purposes of God upon earth, respecting Christ and the church. These consequences have followed, and are equally a matter of confession and for a lamentation as when Jeremiah wept and said, "Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us, and consider, and behold our reproach. We are orphans and fatherless. We labour, and have no rest. We have given the hand to the Egyptians, and to the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread. Princes are hanged up by their hand, and the faces of elders were not honoured. The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us that we have sinned. Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk; their visage is blacker than a coal, they are not known in the streets. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of a potter!"

Besides the personal state which these quotations from Jeremiah so plainly and affectingly describe as suited to the present day; the particular revelation which was opened in the ministry of the Son, as we have seen, and continued by the Holy Ghost through the apostles, when the

departed One took His place as the glorified Son of man, at the right hand of God in heaven has been obscured, if not lost to the Church. For example, a rejected Christ, rejected and cast out by the world, is not followed in the pathway that caused His rejection; nor is the departed One any longer the missing One, any more than the absent Lord, the expected One. On the contrary, "my Lord delayeth his coming" not only characterizes Christendom as the Lord prophesied; but the evil consequences have followed thickly amongst the fellow servants. In the lamentable forgetfulness or ignorance of their proper relations with the Father and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and to one another as the body and bride of Christ — as waiting for His coming, and the marriage of the Lamb: the enemy and the "evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" have turned the thoughts back again to Egypt, and the providential mercies of God to be enjoyed in this world. How else can it be accounted for, that such multitudes have turned aside to ordinances and ritualistic observances; and the distance from God in which a worshipper must consciously find himself who is so employed? Nor indeed is there any other alternative for a believer, a man in Christ, but to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," or else fall back on a previous economy and its religion, and become Judaistic, or in modern language a Ritualist. Though evangelicalism may escape this condemnation, by accepting Christ for worship and faith, and by a refusal of the shadows which served till He really came; yet the retrograde steps are equally plain, and for a lamentation upon another ground. How else can the practice of such be understood, in their organizations for the conversion of the world, and the restoration of the Church upon this earth; when they unhesitatingly turn back upon the Old Testament scriptures and the prophets to prove a good time coming, and find a warrant for their work? Solomon and his prosperity as a centre on the earth, with all his might and glory, is accepted as the type for this corrupted Christianity; instead of Christ and the cross, and a present crucifixion to the world by it, in true loyalty of heart to the rejected Lord, and in a willing allegiance with the departed One, till His shout announces Him!

"I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world:" — what word was this?

It is of the greatest moment, for our communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son, as well as for our true guidance in service for today, to give the place and authority to the words of our Lord over us, to which He refers in John 17:1-26 :, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee:" — what words were these? And again as to the truth which came by Him, both as regards His present position to us, and ours to the Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth: and for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." No, we are not left orphans, to eat the crumbs that fall from another's table; nor to steal the earthly promises that belong to the people of Israel; on the contrary, it was said to the Hebrews, that "God had provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us; unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages." J. E. Batten.

S. Our Genesis.

Our Genesis.

There is a striking correspondence between "the beginning" in the Book of Genesis, and in the Gospel of John, though the subjects of each are so vastly different. The Creator in one, and the Word in the other, alike come forth into the respective circles in which each is to be displayed. The earth was without form and void, and the eternal Word was concealed in His own essential perfectness. The elements with which we are now familiar served to bring into existence and beauty a material creation; and the attributes, by which Deity has clothed itself, introduced the Creator. True, one was the beautiful development of a thing formed; and the other, the almighty power and wisdom of Him that formed it. "God spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast." As to the earth, it was without form — "Darkness was upon the face of the deep — and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." But the eternal "Word, was with God, for the Word, was God; and the same was in the beginning, with God."

Creation and the Creator are necessary to each other; but for what different reasons — like the potter and the clay! The formless and void earth, With darkness upon its face, carries along the secret power of its formative beauty in the Spirit of God which moved upon the face of its waters. So in John, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness." The Genesis formations, of day and night, firmaments, earth, and seas, with their greater and lesser lights, are completed; and the history of signs and seasons, days and years, with the fruitful products of the earth for man and beast, are familiar to us all. But the Gospel of John now claims its own pre-eminence, and passing away into heights and depths, which neither the sun above, nor the sea beneath, can measure, brings out its own mystery, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth."

Again, if we go back to the Adam of Genesis, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." But pass we on to the new created man of John, and we find another race, "For as 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." The creation of Genesis just ran the cycle of its one week, as we follow it in its magnificent course, from evening to morning — and from its first day to the sixth day, till "God rested on the seventh day, from all the work which he had made; and blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." In this Eden man was made the responsible head, on whose obedience the whole creation depended. Adam sinned, and the link of relationship was snapped between the Creator and the creature, and all broke down. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain," is the sad consequence. The Genesis of John's Gospel brings in a revelation of grace and truth, reveals the Second man, the Word made flesh, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." In this new beginning, grace — the grace of God — towards man, as a sinner, takes the place of responsibility between

the creature and the Creator. Eden's gate soon closed upon the fair scene of the six days' work, and upon the sabbath of rest too — the cherubim, and the flaming sword, forbad the thought, much more the vain attempt, of the sinner to return. Grace, and the resources of God, are what John records: the Word made flesh was the great reserve of God. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" is become the new connecting link with God. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;" and this is the grand theme which the Gospel of John opens out.

How touchingly this is recorded in the intercourse between Jesus and the woman of Samaria! The links which sin had broken in Genesis have been formed anew, between God and the sinner, but only in and through Christ, who shed His blood for the remission of sins. The former ground of creature responsibility is abandoned through the knowledge of that eternal redemption which we have in Christ, "the beginning of the new creation of God."

Nathanael under the fig tree, and Nicodemus the master of Israel, set us in the path of the kingdom-glory, with "the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man;" and moreover, all must be born again, "to see or enter into it." How blessedly does the Messiah, the King of Israel, undo every burden, and loose them that were appointed to die! How refreshing thus to see the Second man, as the source of life and joy, where the first had brought in death and misery! The marriage scene of Cana in Galilee gives further the style and actings of our Lord in millennial blessing, when the water is turned into wine, and every water pot filled to the brim. What a word will that be, when, in the full consciousness of unhindered joy around Him, and Himself the cause and producer of it, He says, "Draw out now, and bear to the governor of the feast."

There are two ways in which the Lord opens out the fulness of His person to us in this gospel. The first is what we have been considering, and may be described by that verse in John 2:1-25, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory" — a title by which He will link the ruined creation of Genesis with the victorious effects of His own death and resurrection, when He comes again to fill every heart with gladness and every tongue with praise. But other and higher glories are connected with His person and may be described by another verse in John 1:1-51 : "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," and it is in these two characters of divine and human glory that the Word made flesh passes along before our view as we follow Him throughout this precious book of our new Genesis. The difference we are considering is this: the latter is the personal glory as of the only begotten of the Father, and the former was the miraculous power which accredited Him to the people by act and deed. Various chapters might be selected as displaying one glory or the other, and here and there a combination of them, which is very grand.

Before passing on, let me say that while the first and second chapters have been introduced for the purpose just described of marking these two especial glories of Christ, yet that chapter 1 throughout is the unfolding of the person of the Son, from His own essential being, into the relations by which He stands connected with God and man, and also in the various titles by which promise, type, and prophecy had pointed Him out. It is in this breadth and fulness of grace that the Father's love has given Him forth to the faith of His beloved people, and for which the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove lighted on Him and sealed Him! In John 3:1-36 the Lord in His intercourse with Nicodemus presents Himself in the circle of His own personal glory, taking as the centre the antitype of Moses and the brazen serpent, giving Himself out to the faith of a needy sinner, as the

lifted up Son of man — a centre of a circle which in its vast dimensions embraces the love of God which is above all sin in its essential holiness, and yet stoops down to the worthlessness of the perishing one, whom it rescues in sovereign grace. So again in John 4:1-54, where the personal and the moral glory of the Lord shines forth with the woman at the well, leading her up to the springs of life from which He had come, and yet giving her to drink thereof according to the perceptions of her own need which He in grace awakened, He maintains His own ground in this touching scene and proclaims "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Thus He connects God, in what He is in love, with the poor Samaritan in her sin, and by the supply of this living water to her soul, which was in her a "well of water springing up into everlasting life," led her to drink from a spring which is divine. The nobleman from Capernaum brings Him down to the level of miracles again; but He consents to this, with the rebuke, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

John 5:1-47 begins with a word of power to the man at the pool of Bethesda. "Jesus said to him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk." From this point He rises to the height of His personal glory, and says to the Jews, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise;" and this is applied to quickening, judging, and raising the dead, in this Bethesda-world, the house of effusion (for such is its name), as well as of pity and mercy. In John 6:1-71 a great multitude followed Him, "because they saw the miracles which he did on them that were diseased." And He puts His disciples to the proof as to whether they were yet up to the point of His personal glory, by asking, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Subsequently, this scene of five loaves and two fishes gives place to the grand action which had brought Him down from heaven, as "the bread of God, that giveth life to the world." And here, if we may anticipate the tenth (or Shepherd) chapter, it is only for the purpose of saying, the Lord seems to be acting in this character in chapter 4:, where He led in the sheep of Samaria, and bade them lie down by the still waters; as in chapter 6: He leads them into "the green pastures." "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh;" for "my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." The feast of Tabernacles, in John 7:1-53, like the Passover, in John 6:1-71, carries the Lord up into His own height with the Father. He passes beyond the reach of a reasoning, cavilling people, and presents Himself to faith as equal with God, or rather as identified with Him. "I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me." Again, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." One with the Father in counsel and purpose, yet He is on the level with any who can lift the veil and see His personal glory, and take, in the title of His grace, all He is. In the previous chapter He had spoken of "ascending up where he was before;" and now, contemplating the day of His glorification at the right hand of God, He connects His disciples with the blessing, which should descend to them from thence: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," adding, "this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." What streams in the desert here surround us, as we follow the incarnate Word, the crucified Son of man, and the exalted Lord! The narrative, in the beginning of chapter 8:, important though it be, serves as the ground of introducing Himself as the Light of the world, adding, "He that followeth me, shall not abide in darkness, but shall have the light of life." In the midst of such a scene, what other challenge could He make than "Let him that is without sin among you, first cast a stone at her;"

and then takes His own place as a Teacher and a Deliverer. "Verily, verily I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." And again, "If any man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death." What assurances! They are like the grapes of Eshcol, that come from another land to thirsting souls. "Free from sin" through the lifted up Son of man; "the light of life" by following Him; not "tasting death" through His resurrection. In what majesty and grace has He thus displayed Himself! and how truly do all His paths drop fatness! Yet those who could not cast a stone at the adulteress now take up stones to cast at Him who had said, in the consciousness of His personal glory, "Before Abraham was, I am." But Jesus hid Himself; and, in the silence of disappointed love, "went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." They have lost Him!

Before entering on John 9:1-41 we may observe (in reference to the previous eight) a dispensational link which connects them together in a way of its own; for while every type and promise pointed to Him, He must necessarily embody the type and supersede it. This is the fact even as regards His forerunner, for John's two disciples follow Jesus, and John declared, "He must increase, but I must decrease." So as to the temple, "I will raise it up in three days; this spake he of his body." And again, with Nicodemus and the brazen serpent in the wilderness, "Even so must the Son of man be lifted up." So also He takes the place of Jacob's well, and gives the living water; and at the pool of Bethesda He supersedes the angel, who at a certain season troubled it. He is likewise the antitype of the manna, by proclaiming Himself "the living bread." He also takes the place of the feast of Tabernacles, and finally acts as one superior to Moses the lawgiver, and greater than their father Abraham. Israel's hopes and prophecies are thus embodied in Himself; and in this character He meets the man blind from his birth, in John 9:1-41, ready to do for the nation what He does for the individual, if there is faith to receive Him. He presents Himself to them, with the man whose eyes He had opened. Will they accept the hand stretched out to give them sight? What a moment! But they say, "We know this man, whence he is; when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is." They cast out the man who confessed Him to have come from God; but to be cast out of the synagogue was then, as now, to be thrown upon Jesus, who reveals Himself to the man as the Son of God; and he said, "Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." Jesus quits them with the solemn words, "For judgment I am come into the world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." In John 10:1-42 the cast out sheep, in the person of the blind man last mentioned, gives occasion for Jesus to declare Himself the Good Shepherd, who lays down His life for the sheep. To Him the porter openeth. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." There are also "other sheep which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, that there may be one flock and one shepherd." "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." The double title in which the sheep are held is very precious. "My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him," accusing Him of blasphemy, because He, being a man, made Himself equal with God. He makes a last appeal to them: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him. Therefore they sought again to take him." They will not be gathered into the fold, and they cast out the Shepherd of the sheep.

John 11:1-57; John 12:1-50, or the Bethany chapters, are complete in themselves; and, if not standing alone, are to be viewed as family paintings, which represent the circle of Christ's social affections, with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary — a home group which had been gathered around Him — a green spot — a miniature representation of what the wilderness is to be when He comes again: and by His abiding presence turns it into a fruitful field, and gives the true length and breadth to Bethany, or the house of song (which its name implies), the house of obedience, and the house of the grace of the Lord. In the light of the past, as John gives it, Bethany and its inmates may well stand as a companion picture with the scene at the mount of transfiguration, where Jesus led others up to be "eye-witnesses of his majesty, when he received from God the Father honour and glory." The one is the circle of the social affections of the Lord — "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus;" and the other is the manifestation of the "Son of man coming in his kingdom." But these two chapters supply their own proofs by which, as we have said, this gospel is occupied. In John 11:1-57 the death of Lazarus leads Jesus to announce Himself as the "resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." The knowledge of Christ carried no outside sin and condemnation, as other chapters have shown us; and now this further knowledge of Christ carries through death and the grave. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth." Thus the Lord, in this resurrection scene, sets "the glory of God "above sin and its consequences. In John 12:1-50 Mary anoints the feet of Jesus, and the whole house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Jesus interprets the act, saying, "Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this." For the last time He presents Himself in the light of promise and prophecy to Israel, and rides into Jerusalem on the colt the foal of an ass. "When Jesus was glorified, then his disciples remembered that they had done these things unto him." His own death is now before Him as the only door of deliverance for His people, and for His own glory, and the establishment of covenanted blessing with Jehovah and the nation. He consequently takes a larger sphere for Himself (outside His Messiah, and king of Israel relations), and on the coming up of the Greeks to see Jesus, says, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." By His own righteous title He had raised Lazarus from the grave, but He is now about to descend into death Himself, as between God, and mankind, and Satan; that God may take Him up out of the grave, and declare Him to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead, for obedience to the faith, among all nations. (Romans 1:1-32 :)

"The light of the world" has travelled over its orbit in these twelve chapters, and, as was declared at its rising, the darkness comprehended it not." But before it sets, Jesus cries, "Yet a little while is the light with you. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." These things spake Jesus and departed and did hide Himself from them! He is refused in His personal glories — so also as to His acts and deeds, from the "beginning of miracles, in Cana of Galilee" to the close of His ministry, this is the sum, "though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him." His incarnation has failed as a bond of union between "His own" and Himself, and therefore between them and Jehovah. Alan must be changed in the springs of his nature; and what deeper work can be undertaken that shall effect this change? This is what is now before Jesus, and in the prospect of the cross He says, "Now is my soul troubled Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up

from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said signifying what death he should die." The secret is told, for here are found the hidden depths in which Christ must work for the glory of God, the overthrow of Satan, and the salvation of His beloved people. This closes the first half of John's Gospel, proving that relations in the flesh, however drawn out by what He was who was "manifest in the flesh," fell short, infinitely short, of what the holiness of God required, or the condition of humanity around Him needed.

Redemption must be the new basis of intercourse between God and His creatures, and these are the tried stones — the foundation stones — the precious corner stones — which the Lord lays in His death and resurrection. He turns away from everything on the earth — the links are broken, never to be formed again, except on the other side of death and judgment, where divine life, in resurrection power, is the new holding of all established blessing. "Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father;" and this opens a new path upward to the faith of "his own which were in the world." Judaism, in its full results, is the manifestation that God is come down to man upon the earth; and this will be displayed in the millennial days of Israel's blessing. But Christianity is based on the wondrous fact that man, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is gone up to God into the heavens. This, however, finds its place in the beginning of John 13:1-38, or the last half and the heavenly side of this gospel. J. E. Batten.

S. Saul's Declension.

Saul's Declension.

It is a homely and daily picture that 1 Samuel 9:1-27 : supplies of a man like Saul, dwelling with his father Kish, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. Another point of similar interest is, that Saul found his occupation in pursuing the objects which this circle produced; until Samuel was commissioned to declare the purpose of God respecting him, and "to anoint him as captain over the Lord's inheritance." Nor should this link of connection between the two, however different from each other, be overlooked, as affording some moral lessons of great moment to a servant of God.

There is considerable beauty in what Samuel said to Saul, when this link of association was severed by his exaltation to the throne of Israel and his heart was lifted up by the favour of God. Then Samuel said, "When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes?" etc. A fallen nature, because it is such, always uses the mercies of God for self-exaltation, and therefore against the giver; and these are some of the lessons presented in the history of Saul, when invested by God with kingly power, and seated on the throne of Israel. While he was "little in his own eyes," every relative duty that sprung up around him was of more importance and consideration than himself. Thus the asses of his father, which were lost, served him for an object as readily as when a few years after the Lord sent him to smite Amalek, and better done.

Indeed the sketch given of Saul as "a choice young man and a goodly, who from his shoulders and upward was higher than any of the people" falls singularly on the mind in connection with his diligent search after "his father's asses" through the land of Benjamin, except as we remember the secret, "when thou wast little in thine own eyes." The father was a rule to Saul in abandoning the pursuit as much as in undertaking the search in obedience. So when they were come to Zuph, Saul said to his servant, "Let us return, lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us." "Little in thine own eyes" stands thus connected with ready obedience to the will of another and in self-denying devotedness of heart, be the occasion small or great, the missing asses of Kish, or Agag the king of the Amalekites. But God had His own intentions respecting Saul and makes the object of Saul's search a link of introduction to the prophet Samuel for the establishment of kingship in the earth. The details of this and the following chapter are remarkable as showing him bow entirely God holds every one and all the circumstances in His own hand, so that His will is the controlling power over Samuel and the sacrifice in the high place. Saul and his servant, and the young maidens going out to draw water — all are truly great by being little in their own eyes, and God everything and everywhere, from the prophet downward, for the Lord had told Samuel in his ear the day before about Saul. "Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it upon his head and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?"

More remarkable still are the instructions given to this first king, the anointed of the Lord, to suit him for the place and responsibilities into which he had been inducted; and this is in truth always the way of our God to us in the varying character of His grace.

Saul's first lesson was "when thou art departed from me [Samuel] today, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin by Zelzah." As pertaining to the tribe of Benjamin, this should have been an open volume to Saul, for what was Rachel and what her sepulchre to the instructed heart but the "place of the mother's sorrow" Ben-oni; yet the birth-place of Jacob's hope, and therefore his father called his name Benjamin, or "the son of my right hand?" Like Abraham, who from the altar on Mount Moriah received his son Isaac back again from the dead in a figure, as a typo of the true son in death and resurrection; so here, in Ephrath, Jacob and Rachel do but give out the two names which make up the person of Christ, who by His own cross and the empty sepulchre was the Man of sorrow and the Son of the Father's right hand. What deep but precious lessons were those for the first king over Israel to learn in communion with the ways of God till the true anointed one, great David's greater Lord, should come! Not merely as to kingship were these secrets whispered forth from Rachel's sepulchre, but also as to the redemption of the people, over whom Saul was to reign in figure, till the promised and covenanted blessings should be established in Jerusalem the city of the great king, and the "whole world be filled with the glory of God."

Samuel's next instructions to Saul were "thou shalt go on forward from thence, and come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel." The Lord was thus setting Saul in the ways of His own steps, that he might learn who the God was with whom he had to do, and see that all His paths drop fatness. What should Bethel have been to a true Israelite, the descendant of Jacob, to whom God appeared when he fled from the face of his brother Esau — that memorable night when Jacob took of the stones, and put them for his pillow, and lay down in that place to sleep that night, when he received the directions for his faith by the ladder set up on the earth, but whose top reached to the heavens, and on which the angels of God were seen ascending and descending? What unmistakable signs were these, and links of connection too, between the heavens and the earth by angelic agencies thus made known to Jacob, and bound up in his person! Beyond all this however was the Lord Himself, who stood above it, and said, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac, the land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it, and thy seed." Jacob thus becomes the heir of promise, and with the assurance that "in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed;" confirmed too by the declaration "I will not leave thee till I have performed that of which I have spoken to thee." Connected by grace with such promises and blessing, what could Jacob say in accordance with the Lord's mind but "this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven?" Perfectly in keeping with the occasion was the further act of the patriarch, when he awoke early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow and changed it into a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. To crown all, he changed the name of the city Luz, or "separation" (guided by faith), into that of Bethel, or the house and meeting-place of God.

All seemed to promise fair with Saul at the first, as he travelled over these paths, and halted at these resting-places of grace and of the veiled but promised glory to the land and people through the seed. Moreover, "men were going up to God to Bethel, and were carrying three kids, and another three loaves of bread, and another a bottle of wine. Besides this they were to salute Saul, and give him two loaves of bread. The oil which Jacob poured out upon the pillar has gained additional significance by these sacrifices; and the kids, with the bread and the wine, were the suited confession on the part of the godly that the people, who had commenced their history

across Jordan at Gilgal in the book of Joshua, had been since met by the angel of the Lord at Bochim, or the place of failure and weeping, in the book of Judges. Nevertheless this confidence is maintained to faith by Bethel, and the God of Jacob, who cannot deny Himself, and these confessions of the conscience are met by the assurance to the heart, thou "art the same, and thy faithfulness endureth throughout all generations."

Samuel had likewise told Saul, "after that thou shalt come to the hill of God where is the garrison of the Philistines." Nothing is more valued by the soul which has been led along the highway of Jehovah, God Almighty, in olden times, or in the new revelation which He has made of Himself to us, as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, than to find ourselves associated with His purposes, and moreover by grace "workers together with God" now in the ways by which He is accomplishing them. Saul was thus carried outside himself and his father's house, and the strayed asses which he diligently sought in the land of Benjamin, and became identified with the sepulchre of Rachel, and the vastness of God's thoughts in the son born, the Ben-oni and the Benjamin, if he can only read these lessons aright, with the prophet Samuel, and the Jehovah of Israel. The plain of Tabor, and the three men going up to God to Bethel, had been crossed by Saul, and became the living witnesses to him that there was the same unchangeable God for today, as had been known by their father Jacob at Bethel. Moreover, they saluted Saul, and further associated him with themselves by act and deed in the gift of the two loaves of bread, which he was to receive at their hands. We may remark here that all these steps were previous to Saul's arrival at the hill of God, where the Philistines lay in garrison; and were the requisite strongholds for faith in communion with God, by which alone a successful conflict with the enemy could be maintained.

These principles are the same for christian conflict with "the wicked spirits in the heavenly places," however different the objects of our faith and communion may be, and assuredly are, in the Father and the Son, by the Holy Ghost. It is a wonderful word to us in Ephesians 6:1-24, "finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." And again, as to the panoply for the christian champion, "put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." The will of our God is entirely different too, "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies." Still, whatever the range of the enemy's power, whether larger or smaller, or whatever the varying character of the conflict before Christ came, or since His exaltation into the heavens at the right hand of God, the enemy is the same, and the watch-word of the entire army of the faithful is "our sufficiency is of God." "The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee" was the word of Samuel to Saul, and "go in this thy might," whether to him or to Gideon, was only to prove that God would make a way for Himself through the thickest or the mightiest of His foes, and for the faith that followed Him.

Besides the sepulchre of Rachel and the plain of Tabor and the hill of God with the garrison of the Philistines, a company of prophets coming down from the high place were to meet Saul, having a psaltery, and a harp, and a tabret, and a pipe before them; and they were to prophesy. With these also Saul was to be identified; for Samuel had said "the Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man." It is at this point, and not till then, that Samuel could say, "let it be, when all these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serveth thee, for God is with thee." We may note here that the principles of God since the fall of man are the same, however different in their application, or varied in their character. In

the world that now is God called out Abram, the head of the family of faith, to walk with Him, and Bethel was the place of the altar where the Almighty God appeared to him; just as the mount was the meeting place between the Lord and Moses, or Gilgal in the days of Joshua, and mount Zion in the time of David. In the instance of Saul (the first king between Jehovah and His people), it is important to see that three great ends were reached in reference to himself personally: he was turned into another man, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and God was with him. All that God could then do, short of effectual calling perhaps, had been done for Saul and a marvellous catalogue it is! He had been instructed in "the matter of the kingdom," and anointed as the king of Israel, led about and taught the sources of strength for a man of faith in "the living God;" had a view of the enemy's garrison where it ought not to be, and by the Spirit of prophecy guided, with others that prophesied, to look into the bright future of Jehovah's ways, with the Israel whom He loved. It is not till grace and goodness have done their utmost that responsibility begins, whether as to the kingdom or this king. "What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done? wherefore, when I looked for grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Grace in fact creates our responsibilities, whether then or now, and supplies what is needful for their fulfilment, so that there need be no discouragement as these increase, provided the flesh in us is kept under the death which has passed upon it judicially by God at the cross of Christ. The Spirit of the Lord upon Saul, or in a David — Jesus Himself with the disciples — men full of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, or a man in Christ now, show plainly enough the manner and the measure of the grace of God through Christ, and the increasing responsibilities, as knowing "that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which we have of God;" so that "ye are the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men." But Saul's responsibility, and how he acquitted himself, is our present subject of study, and instruction. God had done what His prophet had spoken, "and it was so, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel that God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day." Saul, who had been thus identified with the interests of Jehovah and His people, and the company of prophets, was to be further associated with Samuel who was the link between God and the nation of Israel; if he could walk with Him in this character.

Samuel said to him, "thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down unto thee to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice peace offerings; seven days shalt thou tarry till I come to thee and show thee what thou shalt do." The place of Samuel before God, as well as his relation to the people was to be respected, nor is another to intermeddle therewith, though this other be the king of Israel. The Lord had early called Samuel to Himself, and had used him as the reprover of Eli the high priest, in the days when the ark was taken captive by the Philistines and the glory was departed. At Mizpeh he had gathered all Israel together, and Samuel prayed for them to the Lord. And as he was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel, but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon them, and discomfited them, and they were smitten. So when Saul and his servant were directed by the young maidens of the city to the high place that they might find Samuel, and ask the seer about the lost asses, they were told "the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice: and afterwards they eat that be bidden." What pertained to Samuel was made plain and clear to Saul; and the less had been anointed and blessed by the greater. He was to tarry seven days at Gilgal, till "Samuel came to sacrifice to the Lord."

"And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling." "And he tarried seven days . . . but Samuel came not, and the people were scattered from him." Here is the moment of trial for Saul: can he own the real link between Jehovah and Israel to be in Samuel; and leave all his new anxieties and cares there — or will he step out of his own place by intruding into Samuel's, and incur the displeasure of God? How easily is the line of individual responsibility traversed! "Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them? and Jesus said, ye know not what spirit ye are of." "And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings: and he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass that as soon as he had made an end, behold, Samuel came and said, What hast thou done?" Saul attempts to give a good reason for doing a bad thing; and this in truth is what disobedience always demands where the thing in question is not confessed as a sin. He excuses himself upon the ground which fallen nature must take (the seeing of the eye), and regards only the people, his misgivings respecting Samuel, and his fears concerning the Philistines: and these are the three things which carry him away from God. "Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down upon me to Gilgal;" and this is the conclusion of the natural heart when guided by its own fears. Another thing comes to light, which accompanies such a condition of soul, "I have not intreated the face of the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering." What is this lesson to us, but a proof that the active restlessness of human nature, whether by the reasonings of the mind. or the hopes and unbelief of the heart, unsettle faith, and prevent Saul from waiting upon the God of Israel, as the newly appointed king, in the hour of danger; or waiting for Samuel to offer the sacrifices appointed between Jehovah and his people? Then "Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever."

How often the hour for the establishment of the proffered blessing is lost through inadvertence, and becomes the moment of forfeiture and defeat, and of Satan's power! At this very point it is, when the kingdom and the king were about to be confirmed by burnt offerings and peace offerings for ever, that Saul breaks down; and like the first man Adam, who gave place to the last Adam, so the first king must be set aside to make room for the Second or true David. Sorrowful words follow from the lips of Samuel, who (instead of being in the place of offering, and blessing the sacrifices, and the people, and their king) becomes the prophet of woe to Saul: "but now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee."

We have thus an example in Saul of a man who though little in his own sight at the onset, allowed his nature to turn everything round, which should have glorified God to his heart and conscience (and faith too, if he had it), for his own advantage and self-importance. The illustrious spots in this world's history, along which the Lord had led him, from Bethel to Gilgal, and the transformation which, by the power and grace of God, had already passed upon him, to the astonishment of the people, so that they said "what is this that has come to the son of Kish?" should have made him truly great by keeping him "less than the least" in his own eyes. But it was otherwise; and Saul, ceasing to be this, does what is right in his own eyes, and is again as one of the common people. Nor let us fail to remember the way in which he accounts for his degradation to Samuel: I had "not

made supplication unto the Lord; and I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering." In one of our church epistles, it is very instructive to notice that "pray without ceasing" is set in order, and jewelled by "rejoice evermore" on one side, and by "in everything give thanks" on the other; and it is added "for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus, concerning you." The thing which is effectually excluded from this enclosure is that very flesh to which Saul fell a prey ("I forced myself"), when in the moment of real exaltation by grace his heart was lifted up within him. Our rejoicings as well as our thanksgivings should never part company with the word of admonition "pray without ceasing" lest the flesh should connect itself with our mercies, and escape in this way from under the consciousness of its worthlessness in any real service for God. Indeed the judgment of our flesh is of the greatest consequence in a walk with God; as we may plainly learn in the early lesson of Jacob and the angel and their wrestling at Peniel, when the sinew shrank and the name of the patriarch was changed into Israel; or yet more distinctly at the cross, where, instead of wrestling, God condemned sin in the flesh "that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." The journeyings of Saul had this character, as well as that he might have confidence in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as the God of Israel; but the flesh escaped and rendered Saul personally unfit for his anointing; he became of consequence in his own esteem, by the distinguishing bestowments conferred upon him "by grace," which should have witnessed to him only of the goodness and greatness of the Giver.

If however the faithfulness of God in the ancient chronicles gives us the record of a faulty man as a warning of the way in which human nature may clothe itself with all that the Lord bestows and turn it round for self-exaltation instead of for His own glory, He will not leave Himself without witness, nor us without an example of the right sort. The closing days of Elijah's life may supply this to us; for, as Samuel gave faith's directory to Saul, so the prophet Elijah takes his successor Elisha with him on that remarkable journey which terminated in his being taken up into heaven; and a double portion of His Spirit descending upon Elisha as the witness for God on earth. Their starting point was Gilgal, and from thence to Bethel, where the sons of the prophets met them. And Elijah said unto Elisha, "Tarry, I pray thee, here, for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho." From thence the prophet went on to Jordan, and so would Elisha, perfecting himself for his future place in Israel and work for God by thus acquainting himself with the spots on earth which were of greatest moment between the departing one and the God of Israel, ere the whirlwind which waited to carry him up into heaven did its work. So identified were these two in every way, that the link on which the blessing of Elisha depended was this, "if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." Places of strength and witnesses of divine power on earth had been visited; and now the sources of sovereign grace in the heavens were to be the rule of faith's observance; and true in its own simplicity and singleness of eye Elisha cried "my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more." Moreover, he took bold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces; and he took up also the mantle of Elijah, that fell from him, and went back and stood by the banks of Jordan, and smote the waters and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? The waters parted hither and thither, and Jordan gave forth the man upon whom "the double portion" of his master's spirit rested, for the work which lay before him. He "entreated the Lord" and wrought marvellously, "forcing himself" into obscurity and nothingness. A greater than any of these has since come into this world, and lighted up a new pathway for faith and the communion of our souls. A sword pierced through the mother's heart at

His birth, as Simeon told out the mysterious history of the Jehovah's Christ to those around, and to Mary. Ben-oni and Benjamin were familiar names to her, as regarded her son and her Lord, when she stood at His cross weeping, or was the glad witness of His resurrection to the right hand of the Father. The life of Christ during those three and thirty years on earth, and what they unfolded to the anointed eye, arc to us what the Bethel, and the plain of Tabor, and the hill of God should have been to Saul; or what Gilgal, Jericho, and Jordan really were to Elijah at his departure, and to Elisha who was left to glorify God in the midst of His people below. Elisha "saw Elijah no more," but our departed One is the coming Lord; and, instead of an Elisha, we have the Holy Ghost, come down from the Father and the glorified Son of man, to abide with us as the Paraclete while Christ is absent.

There is another stage in Saul's declension and departure from God, which may yet be examined for our profit, on whom "the ends of the ages are come." Samuel also said unto him "the Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over Israel; now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord." At the beginning of Saul's action in this commission to smite Amalek and utterly destroy all they had and spare them not, he promised fair, and gets a thought from the heart of God, who in judgment remembers mercy, though the Amalekites were to be utterly consumed. The Lord of hosts said, "I remember what Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt." And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. If God would utterly destroy "the liars in wait," surely He would remember the Kenites who showed them kindness; so "Saul said unto the Kenites, Go get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt." Of old, when Sodom was to be consumed by fire and brimstone, Abraham made intercession with God upon the footing on which Saul was now acting, "this be far from thee to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked: shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" This was not the hour of Saul's temptation:, though it was close at hand; he "smote the Amalekites from Havilah, till thou comest unto Shur." But Saul and the people spared Agag the king, and the best of the sheep and oxen, and all that was good; "but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly."

Here it is the first king falls a second time: first, intruding into Samuel's place by offering the burnt sacrifice; and now, in not maintaining his own place as "captain of the Lord's inheritance" in obeying the commandment of God. Again, he allows his nature to guide him, and is betrayed by the seeing of the eye, and the hearing of the ear, and by the reasoning of his mind; till at last self governs his actions, and he becomes separated from the thoughts of God, and thus loses the link of connection between the Lord and what Amalek did to Israel when they came up out of Egypt. How easily we may use whatever God may have given us outwardly, or in the Church, in a natural way, and so make another pedestal for self (like the Corinthians) and lose sight of the glory of God! The Lord repented that he had set up Saul to be king, and Samuel was grieved, and cried unto the Lord all night; but not Saul, for he had gone his way. Again, Saul has himself and his doings to excuse or to defend, so that Samuel confronts him by asking, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." The spring of this disobedience is thus traced to ignorance of God, and in what He delights; or in self-will, which is rebellion. And Samuel said,

"Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

"And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned;" but neither his confession, nor the exercise of his conscience and heart under sin, is in the presence of God and his holiness. On the contrary he betrays the fact, that his own great desire is to stand fair in the eyes of the people, and would even make Samuel subservient to this end, just as he had used the advantages of place and position which God had given him as king, for the like purpose.

He excused himself to Samuel for his disobedience of God, "but he feared the people, and listened to their voice;" as did Pilate when he delivered Jesus to their will to be crucified. But Saul cannot rise higher than himself, and would make use of Samuel to recover the reputation which he had lost. "Now therefore pardon my sin, I pray thee, and turn again with me that I may worship the Lord. And Samuel said, I will not return with thee, and as Samuel turned about to go away Saul laid hold of the skirt of his mantle and it rent; and Samuel said, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee, and given it to a neighbour of thine that is better than thou." All that God gave him is forfeited and the kingdom gone, and Saul pursues his downward course rapidly to the witch of Endor, and fatally to Mount Gilboa, where he perishes under the Philistine army. A few words upon the sin of Saul in destroying the vile and refuse, and sparing the good, may be of service. How could anything be good which was bound up with Amalek? And yet, if this principle be applied to the flesh and the world, which Saul failed to carry out according to the mind of God upon Agag and the land of the Amalekites, how common does Saul's sin appear in this day! Where is the unsparing judgment as to the flesh which accepts the declaration, "so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God," and where the deep knowledge of oneself that returns the answer, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing?" Where is the unsparing hand that, like Samuel, hews Agag in pieces, come he ever so delicately, that takes part with God in the judgment of sin in the flesh, and accepts the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raiseth the dead? As to the world (like everything in the land of the Amalekites) how few of us have really learnt the lesson "love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him!" Will any cast a stone at Saul for sparing the good and the best for sacrifice unto God, and destroying the refuse and the vile? What is the religion of today, but Saul's? "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (and these were the things that guided Saul and were his overthrow) is not of the Father, but of the world."

"And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord." Solemn words for today; and equally so was Samuel's reproof: "what meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

"And Saul said, The people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed." May the Lord give the needed grace to apply all these principles to ourselves, in close self-judgment in His own presence; that so His holiness, and the cross of Christ, may not only be the rule of our faith, but of a more severe line between the Amalekites and the children of God now, and between Agag and the Spirit!

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And again, "God forbid that I should glory save in

the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. J. E. Batten.

S. Some Notice of the Rev. F. Bourdillon's Tract

Some Notice of the Rev. F. Bourdillon's Tract, "The Experiences Described in Romans 7:7-25."

Many are the writers who have undertaken to tell us about the soul under its difficulties, and the soul in its experiences, when seeking to be "free from the law of sin and death." In itself the subject is of the greatest moment; for the soul, in such exercises before God, must necessarily be occupied primarily with what He is in His holiness, as well as with what we are, who were "born in sin, and shapen in iniquity." The most efficient guides to a soul when under such experiences will surely be those who have passed out of them into the enjoyment of that "liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." The knowledge that such guides have, in their own exercises of soul, gone down to the extreme point of "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" commends them to those who still need help, and gives the proper character and weight to these words, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Those who are out can lead out. My reason for saying anything on Mr. Bourdillon's tract on Romans 7:1-25, and "the experience described," is, that I more than question whether he is a guide of this kind. Moreover, as the tract is stated to be "the substance of an address delivered at the aggregate clerical meeting held at Tunbridge Wells," and since "published by request," it takes a place of unusual importance under this commendatory form of clerical sanction, and leaves it fairly open to remark. It is not my purpose to review the tract, but to state the main design of the writer, so that, if his object is unscriptural, one may be excused following the course he pursues for himself and recommends to others for accepting the experiences of Romans 7:1-25 as properly descriptive of the Apostle Paul and ourselves, or of a christian state. The object of Mr. B. is to make this scripture "the narrative or picture of a soul's progress and condition. Yet, though an individual history, it has (he tells us) at the same time a representative character — it furnishes a sample, an instance." He says that "the apostle describes himself — here PAUL appears in every word. It his own soul's autobiography, it is his portrait self-drawn." Mr. B. is true to his object in the use he makes of this scripture, and having declared it an autobiography of the apostle and a portrait of Paul, he attempts to reduce the declared wretchedness of the soul's experience down to the lowest dilution by a misapplication of other scriptures in Paul's writings (such as, "lest I should be a castaway," etc.) Mr. B. turns the key in the door upon the apostle finally as to all hope of actual deliverance out of the prison and his captivity, and calmly says, "it is the voice of distress, it is an appeal for help; yet I hear not so much in these words the cry of a chained captive to be set free, as that of a soldier in conflict, who looks round for succour.

I quote no farther for the moment, but turn most gladly to say, what a mercy, and what a comfort, for us, as believers in Christ, that another ear was open to that cry of wretchedness, and a heart that could interpret it so differently as to give deliverance (not through our incessant conflict as soldiers, and continuous cry for succour), but by His own death and resurrection out of it, and ours too. "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," is our song!

Here let me remark, how needful it is that we should be on the same degree of latitude, and sailing by properly adjusted compasses, if we would make even our ordinary geographical observations with correctness and certainty. Surely it is of much greater importance for the soul and its exercises that the guides should remember Paul's own exhortation to his son Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." And now let me seriously ask those who read their Bibles for themselves, is this the purpose and object of the Holy Ghost in writing the seventh chapter of the Romans, namely, to show a man that "in himself, that is in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing" and to leave him under the power of the evil that he would not do? Is the object of this scripture to pass and re-pass a soul through life-long experiences under the holy law of God, which lead him to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" and then to leave him in hopeless conflict with self and indwelling sin, with a parting word that the wretchedness and the cry are not so bad? In short, is the individual a soldier in conflict (a faithful soldier, too, as Mr. B. tells us), or does Romans 7:1-25 describe one who is "sold under sin" — "brought into captivity" — instead of ever getting out, or gaining an inch by conflict, and finding instead that the tyrant in power (sin), "taking occasion by the commandment, deceived him," and turning it to his own advantage, by means thereof slew him? The idea of conflict as a soldier is entirely foreign to the chapter — there is no battlefield named — we do not fight with "the law of God." It is not the surroundings that are in question, nor is it by enemies that the soul is confronted, but the question whether the law is a power in my hand for life, by obedience, and for righteousness before God; or whether the commandment which was ordained unto life, I found to be unto death? Did it detect the very lust in myself, and give me the mastery over it? or did it convict me of indwelling sin only to give all its strength to sin, and prove it to be my master, with power to lead me into "captivity" by the law of sin, which is in my members? Another, stronger than myself or that which chains me down as a captive, can alone deliver; and, instead of being like "a faithful soldier," I find myself a slave to sin and lust in my members; a criminal by the law of God, which forbids it, and under death and condemnation, as the judgment of Him against whom I have offended. Will a culprit in his cell fight with his walls, or a slave in his chains with his manacles — much less talk of being a soldier, and "a faithful one," in conflict? Nay, a slave has the experiences of a slave, and a culprit the feelings morally of a culprit, under the law, as in this chapter, which forbade and detected the sin, in the very lust that conceived it. It is the discovery of oneself and "the motions of sin" in one's own members, which raises the cry of "O wretched man that I am."

There is no thought of another person, much less of an enemy, external to oneself, with whom to fight; nor is the cry to be delivered from outward enemies (like the cry of soldiers worsted on the battlefield), but "wretched man that I am," one who has found out another and deeper kind of wretchedness in the sense of what I am, in relation to all that is in myself and what I carry about with me, as part and parcel of myself, when brought to light, and tested by the righteous claims of God upon me, through "a law which is holy, and just, and good." The human way of deliverance from an exacting power is no doubt by means of conflict; but the divine way is by death (our old man has been crucified with Christ), in which every claim is met and answered; for who can press a demand on one who has died, or who can arrest a dead man?

Mr. B. does himself an injustice, therefore, by thus denying there is full deliverance out of the wretchedness of chapter 7 into "the glorious liberty of the sons of God," chapter 8; and he does the

scriptures a greater wrong, and Paul who wrote them, by declaring "that from verse 7 to 13 he describes his past transitional state; and that from 14 to 25 Paul describes his present and spiritual condition." This is too in the face of the confession, "O wretched man that I am," and in presence of the cry, "who shall deliver me?" We may well ask, are these the meagre fruits and spoils of Christ's sufferings and death? are these the poor triumphs of His glorious ascension? is this the liberty wherewith Christ makes free — a closed door, and a cry from within? On the contrary, does not chapter 8 declare our deliverance from "the body of sin and death" by our own death and resurrection with Christ, and that "there is no condemnation?" Does it not affirm that "we are made free by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," and that "we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit?" Moreover, we have life in union with the risen and glorified Christ, we enter upon our new relations with God the Father, as suited to such a life as we have in the ascended Son of man, the second Adam, and "have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father?" Further, "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." We have thus been delivered from the condemnation and wretchedness felt by the quickened and renewed soul when passing through the experiences of one "under law," as in Romans 7:1-25, without "power to perform," and are established in the life, and liberty, and love of God, through grace, as indwelt by the Spirit, the witness and seal of the promised glory, till Christ comes to carry us there, of which Romans 8:1-39 treats.

We may fairly ask each other, in the joy and deliverance of this chapter, were not these the objects of the Father's counsel, and of the work of Christ by His death and our redemption? What a triumphant answer verse 29 gives to this question — "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!" Dare we say we are left as soldiers, to fight our way out of wretchedness in a hopeless conflict, if we can, and perhaps to fight our way into the liberty and blessedness of chapter 8 as we best may; or gladly own positive and actual deliverance out of one and introduction into the other by the grace of God, through the trouble and travail of Christ's soul (rather than by exercises of ours), when He suffered "the just one for the unjust, that he might bring us to God?" Finally, what a different object the Holy Spirit puts before Paul, and those whom he represents, to what Mr. B. does, who locks them up under the law! What different utterances they employ, if we will only let Paul speak of their "present spiritual experiences" for himself: 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."

If Mr. B. had told us how necessary it is that we should have "the sentence of death" written upon the flesh, and all the expectations as to the works of the flesh under the law, and that we should individually accept this sentence in our souls before God, and say, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," he would have done some service at the present time. If he had further shown the hopelessness of any one in that condition striving to get out by any efforts of his own, and had "shut him up to the faith of Christ" as his only Deliverer, he would have really helped on many souls, by showing death at the cross to be the door of deliverance, and not their own conflict with some foreign power. If Mr. B. had written as "one who knew the law" in this respect, and spoken as Paul did to others "that knew it," and said, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are

become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God," he would not have sung the dead march of despair as proper christian experience, but have gladly celebrated his deliverance and marriage with Christ on the bright morning of His resurrection, with all those that are His.

M. B. does violence to Paul in chapter 7 by shutting him in upon the wretchedness which it describes, and does dishonour to Christ by denying Him there as an actual Deliverer. Mr. B. says truly, "we tread on holy ground when we enter on this question; let us walk warily, let us think gently and reverently. But I cannot but believe that this faithful soldier was sometimes worsted." Be this as it may between Mr. B. and the apostle, our question is not whether Paul was worsted or anything of this sort about Paul, but whether Christ was worsted, so that He did not actually take His people out from this wretchedness of Romans 7:1-25 and put them, by His own death and ours, into the liberty and glory of Romans 8:1-39? Is a Christian to be told, as Mr. B. does, that deliverance is not a change of place and relationship with God, in and with Christ by the Spirit, according to the utterances and experiences of chapter 8, but a temporary and occasional relief, etc., "to a weary and a faithful soldier in conflict?"

"The experience described" denies it to be one of a spiritual crisis merely, a stage or period passed through once for all, and then done with; but of a state, an oft-recurring conflict. "Again and again was the attack renewed, for the evil was ever present with him, again and again the battle had to be fought. Often, doubtless, the conflict was short and sharp, and often must the same experience be gone through."

Let me solemnly ask, is all this exercise of one under the law to be falsely styled christian conflict, in the very forefront of its companion, chapter 8, the magna charta of our christian deliverance, and privileges, and victories? "Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

There are conflicts, as in Ephesians 6:1-24, and elsewhere, proper to a Christian as such, when consciously seated in heavenly places with Christ, as the Head of the body, the church; and would to God Mr. B. had led forward the soldiers of the cross to that struggle, as Paul does there — "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in the heavenlies." Will Mr. B.'s tract lead his readers out upon that battlefield? Nay, may I not, in faithful love, ask rather this question — are Mr. B. and "the aggregate clerical meeting" there for themselves, and have they ever taken rank or place in this conflict?

Whatever Romans 7:1-25 may be and is, it is not wrestling with wicked spirits, much less in the heavenly places; and whatever questions are raised, they certainly are in connection with "flesh and blood," and the law given by Moses. The "aggregate clerical meeting" will do well to ponder these things at their next gathering, or before. On the other hand, it is possible to "frustrate the grace of God," as the Galatians did, and to resist "the truth of the gospel," by "building again the things that have been set aside or destroyed." Suppose Paul had fraternized with the Galatians in the objects they were pursuing, would he not have been as foolish and bewitched as they? Did the path they took confirm them in the liberty of Christ and of the Spirit, or lead "back again into

bondage?" Will Mr. B., in the face of this Epistle to the Galatians, venture to shut up Paul, and those whom he represents, in the hopeless captivity and wretchedness of Romans 7:1-25, or hear him, as he warns those who desired again to be in bondage? "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you; I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice, for I stand in doubt of you." It is a serious consideration, that in this way there may be a resistance of God and a fighting against Him, by denying the rights of Christ as our Deliverer and refusing the deliverance which He has effected for us from under every yoke. This unbelief as to our complete deliverance out of our natural Adam-standing and sin-state, as well as from "the body of this death," as described in Romans 7:1-25, in and through Christ, is surely no conflict with the devil or the wicked spirits, either in heaven or earth, but a very unchristian resistance of God in "the truth of the gospel" respecting Christ Himself and His saints, which those who are guilty of it will do well to confess before God and the church. One is led to ask, why are these efforts made by such as the Rev. Mr. B., and sanctioned by aggregate clerical meetings, with requests that their statements may be published, etc., which, in effect, lead back again, or confirm souls in the captivity and wretchedness, on account of which Christ died and rose again, that He might deliver them, and set free for ever? Does Moses and the law suit them personally, and perhaps ecclesiastically, better than the Headship of Christ, and the action of the Holy Ghost in the church? Does Judaism, with its ritual and liturgy and distance from God, correspond more with their order and worship than "the rent veil" of Christianity, and our liberty to enter into the holiest, "as kings and priests unto God?" Otherwise it is more than strange after "the house has been broken open," and a full deliverance preached by Paul himself, that he and those whom he represents should decline to come out into the liberty of Christ through death and resurrection — strange that he should have once stood up for his own freedom and rights "as a Roman" citizen, against the authorities of the Philippian prison, and compelled the rulers and the magistrates to come and beseech them, and bring them out, and desire them to depart out of the city, and yet that when the title and rights of Christ, and Paul's too are fully in view, as in Romans 8:1-39, he should not insist upon his heavenly privileges against the authorities of the law, and the body of sin and death, to detain him, as a free-born citizen of heaven! Unpardonable that he should forget "the old man had been crucified with Christ," and lead us back (as the apostle of the Gentiles) into captivity, and put us with himself under their dominion, to experience deeper wretchedness, and cry out for deliverance never gained, and there abide in that state, as "our present spiritual condition." But the apostle neither says nor does nor accepts nor suffers any such things as are reported by Mr. B. in this tract as "his present spiritual condition." On the contrary he cries out to the Galatians, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." When Paul writes to these Philippians of his "present condition," as to sufferings and conflicts, they are entirely of another character, and spring from another source than Romans 7:1-25 — "for unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake, having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me." By these remarks and quotations, I mean to show that there is in this way a fighting against God, and a departure from Christ, by the unjudged evil and hardness of the natural heart, through which the wilderness journey is turned again into a provocation, and, as a consequence, the people of God, in the experiences of their souls, are kept out of their rest, and turned back in heart to Egypt. In principle this is done by Christians, when they refuse deliverance out of all their captivity through Christ their Deliverer, and declare they are "tied and bound by the chain of their sins," and confess

themselves to be, what they originally were, "miserable sinners," in spite of all that He has accomplished below, and the place He has taken as their intercessor at the right hand of God in heaven, as the second Man crowned with glory and honour. They will neither go out by redemption, nor enter in by faith, with their Forerunner; they will not quit Egypt and cross the Red Sea with a song in their mouths, nor go over Jordan with their Joshua into Canaan, or take possession (in present communion with the Father's love and the Son's joy through the power of the Holy Ghost) of their proper birthright, in the heavenlies. In conclusion, let me say, there is a widespread religious system in Christendom at the present day, a corruption of Judaism and of true Christianity, which falsifies the believer's present standing and state and experiences, as accepted and complete in Christ before God even our Father. Moreover, it falsifies the relation of the Holy Ghost as the witness and seal of our union with Christ in life and righteousness and earnest of glory, and of ourselves as indwelt by the Spirit, and knowing "our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which we have of God."

Paul says to us, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;" but Mr. B. would bring back, and keep the apostle (and those whom he represents) in the captivity and wretchedness of one under the law. Mr. B. leaves Paul and others in the experiences described in Romans 7:1-25, crying out for deliverance, and yet never actually delivered out of them, nor brought into liberty for present communion and joy. All will do well to mark the contrast between these two systems. J. E. Batten.

S. The Book of Joshua," and "The Epistle to the Hebrews

"The Book of Joshua," and "The Epistle to the Hebrews." The leadership of the people of Israel by "the ark of the covenant and the priesthood," under Joshua, when the time was come for them to cross over Jordan into Canaan, form the magnificent forefront of this book. Besides this, their history reveals the coming forth of "the captain of the Lord's host with the drawn sword in his hand," followed by their victories, and overthrow of all their enemies. Nor is this all; for it is not till after this clearance is made, that "the tabernacle of the congregation was set up at Shiloh," under Eleazar the high priest, in order that the covenant relations of Jehovah with the twelve tribes might be seen to stand upon election and grace, and be maintained inviolate amongst them, on what God was in Himself. Moreover, "the tabernacle at Shiloh in the land of Canaan" was as necessary a part in the book of Joshua, as opening the way of approach to God for Israel as worshippers; as was Gilgal, and their recurrence to it, indispensable in the history of their conflicts, for their renewal of strength in the day of battle.

If we look into these subjects we must take a larger view than this circle embraces, and think of the nation of Israel in their primary relations to Jehovah. For this we must obviously refer to the books of Numbers and Exodus, that we may not lose sight of the original ways of God and His purposes, as declared to them by Moses, when he was their commander and mediator, and Aaron their great high priest. Indeed this link is manifestly kept up in the early chapters of the book of Joshua, and applied in a most encouraging way to him by the Lord, who said, "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee, I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." Besides this assurance to Joshua personally, as the appointed successor of Moses, there was the necessary continuation of the high priest, and the Levitical priesthood in their midst for services connected with the ark of the covenant and the order of the tabernacle at Shiloh, which neither Joshua nor his armed men dare touch. Each of these great functionaries held their respective appointments directly from the Lord; and the two in their combined action, whether in the sanctuary of God, or in the camp of Israel, carried out the mind of Jehovah concerning His own holiness and majesty, or His people's glory.

Indeed, the priesthood and the tabernacle were indispensable as the way of approach for them as worshippers; whilst outwardly the relations of God with Israel by the ark of the covenant were manifested in the sight of all their enemies. This was true during the ministration of Aaron in the wilderness, or the Levites with Joshua when Jordan fled; or when marching round the city Jericho, and the walls fell down flat. Moses and Aaron were inseparable in their varied ministries at their exodus from Egypt, as were the priest and the captain at the door of the tabernacle in Shiloh for the settlement of the twelve tribes in the promised land. Indeed, these orders and services were not only established by God at the first, but when Aaron died on Mount Hor (as recorded in Numbers 20:1-29.) "Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son," as the Lord commanded him. So likewise when Moses was to die on Mount Abarim, and he prayed the Lord "to set a man over the congregation," he was directed to take Joshua and put him before Eleazar the high priest, and give him a charge in the sight of all the people. The connection, and yet the contrast between these two, are also marked in Numbers 27:1-23, "And he shall stand

before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him, after the judgment of Urim before the Lord, at his word shall they go out; and at his word shall they come in; both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation."

It is necessary to gather up this divine order given to Moses respecting the man who was to succeed him for a commander — as had been previously done on Mount Hor concerning the successor of Aaron as a priest. "And Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation. And he laid his hands upon him and gave him a charge." The book of Numbers (and especially chapters 20 and 27) introduces to us Eleazar and Joshua, and the latter is seen to be under the guidance of the former, who was to ask counsel of God by the mysterious Urim. This order, and these enactments and appointments (one need scarcely say) are the basis for the onward history of Israel under Joshua, and the anointed priesthood with "the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God;" and also "the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth," which they bore along. This ark was not only the witness of Jehovah's presence, but the symbol of His relations with His people; and embodied typically to their faith by the costliness of its construction and its marvellous contents, together with its staves and rings, the coming forth from God of the Word made flesh. In due time Christ would begin His mysterious journey in this wilderness world, or else, like the tabernacle at Shiloh, dwell among them, or later still in Jerusalem, fill the temple itself. In result He would finish that work which the Father had given Him to do for His own glory, and our eternal redemption, to which the ark and all the vessels of the sanctuary pointed.

It is of the greatest moment for us who are Christ's, and who are now sealed by the Holy Ghost, to gather up this precious fact, that God always takes care of His own glory; and of the full and final blessing of His people according to His purpose; yea, that He never lets them be separated, or pass out of His own hands, but works them out together, because (wonderful to say) He has made His people and their blessedness a constituent part of His glory. How suited, therefore, was this ark of the covenant to be in advance of the twelve tribes on their way to rest in the habitation of God, upon the mountain of His holiness, that Mount Zion which He had chosen for the full display of Himself in the midst of His people, in the still future day of their millennial joy. Such was the ark at Gilgal. On our part, we may charge ourselves that we neither separate our present communion with God from the pathway of His own glory in the life we live on earth; nor accept any other object for eye or heart, than Christ Himself, in whom and through whom the glory of God and His people's present and eternal blessedness meet, and are counselled and established.

Every eye was upon "the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God" who had gone forth before them to find a resting-place worthy of Himself, and in which to keep His appointed feasts, and to share his delights with Israel, whom He had chosen. Their journey out of the wilderness had begun, for "it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host, and commanded, saying, When ye see the ark, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place and go after it." Besides the hidden but glorious contents of the ark, as typifying the Christ of God, since manifested in His life, and death, and resurrection, and besides being the external and abiding symbol of God's presence in sovereign goodness, the ark was a witness from Himself of the manner in which He was to be known by them, and approached. This was two-fold in its declaration. First, Israel was to learn by it that God, as Jehovah, had put Himself into covenant relationship with them, "it was the ark of the Lord your God" by means of which (or

rather what it foreshadowed) not a jot or a tittle of all He had ever promised should fail. Secondly, they were to learn by it that God, as creator of the heavens and the earth, would pass before them in His majesty and power, to make a way for them and drive out all their enemies. Therefore it was "the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth," for He weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance, and taketh up the isles as a very little thing. These are some of the characteristics, both of the hidden and manifested glories of the ark that preceded them, and which charged itself with the entire weight and burden of the people, and the dangers and difficulties of the way. They and the ark were to inaugurate a new history, for God had come out of the heavens to walk with His people on the earth, and lead them into His rest. In the next place, who are the persons which demand our attention in this movement out of Shittim? This company is "the priests the Levites," who are appointed to bear the ark, which, when Israel saw to be in motion, was their signal for advance, "then ye shall remove from your place and go after it." This the congregation do, and the first act they behold is the way in which God gets glory to Himself, or puts a seal upon His own title, as "the Lord of the whole earth," by the power through which Jordan, when it intercepted their path, was driven back, and stood up as in a heap. Nor was this merely an act or seal to the title and rights of God as "the Lord of all the earth," (for how could He be this if Jordan were allowed to bar the way?) but Jehovah loves to give the seal to His own people, at the same time and by the same act, that He is the "Lord your God," for it was when the priests' feet that bare the ark touched the brim of the waters, that Jordan rolled itself back. The priests and priesthood thus gain a distinguished place in the book of Joshua, and are in the foreground because of their consecration and appointment to the services of the sanctuary. "And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people," etc. The prominence of the priests, as bearing the ark, does not interfere with the place of Joshua (in this Joshua 3:1-17) as the leader, for he "spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant;" nor indeed, throughout the book, when Eleazar comes out more distinctly into the forefront, to divide their inheritances.

Indeed, the value of these records is, in the concurrent action of Eleazar and Joshua, where they can be combined, as in Joshua 14:1-15 :, Joshua 17:1-18 :, Joshua 19:1-51 :, and Joshua 21:1-45 :, which we need not anticipate just now.

We shall thus find as we proceed with this Joshua 4:1-24 :, and Joshua 6:1-27 :, that the priests with the ark of the covenant, have a much larger footing as well as Eleazar and the tabernacle at Shiloh in this book, than we are accustomed, or perhaps know how, to make room for or give to the fact, especially when we come to apply it to ourselves and Christianity, and still more so when we attempt to run a parallel between the book of Joshua and the writings of Paul. Leaving this too for the moment, the priests, with the ark, whether in Jordan or when over it, and confronted by a great city instead of a river, are not only in prominence, but take the lead of the whole congregation and the armed men as at Jericho, or else stay in the danger, till all beside are gone clean over, as in Jordan. In Joshua 4:1-24, "twelve men" out of every tribe, were to take up twelve stones out of the river, "where the priests' feet stood firm," and carry them over, and leave them in the place where they would lodge that night. Besides this, "Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests stood which bare the ark of the covenant," as a memorial that the twelve tribes who had risen up, out of the power of death at

Gilgal, were the same people who had been there. In this typical history of the children of Israel we may observe, that at the Red Sea they neither left twelve stones in its bed, nor took twelve out with them upon the other side. On the contrary, Pharaoh and his captains, with their chariots and horses, lay dead at the bottom, as a witness that the mighty power of the enemy which held them captive in Egypt had been overthrown, and that the depths covered them. "But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on the right hand, and on the left." Thus the Lord saved them that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, whom they saw dead upon the shore, whilst He put the song of redemption into their mouths, saying "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously." The Red Sea was a memorial between Jehovah and His people, that the antagonistic power which held them captive and refused to let them go, had been all broken in pieces; but Jordan was to be the overthrow of an opposing power of the enemy that refused to let the people enter into their inheritance. It is in these two ways, we have still to watch against the devil. God brought them to Himself at the Red Sea, having on the way sheltered them by "the blood of the Lamb as roast with fire," and then taught them redemption by power when they sang unto the Lord, "Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." Beyond this difference in the ways of God with them or with us in our redemption out of Egypt by blood and by power (as confirmed to us now by the sacrifice and vicarious death of Christ) all that generation was cut off in the wilderness. They had crossed the Red Sea, but in their journey onward, they proved how incapable flesh and blood were, to walk with God, much less to keep company with Him. A further lesson was taught by Jordan, beyond redemption by blood and by power as known at the cross and foreshadowed by the Red Sea, namely that the people thus brought to God must pass through their own death and resurrection by figure of the twelve stones in Jordan, and the twelve stones out. They were to begin another history with the ark of the covenant, and their new circumcision at Gilgal, with Joshua and the passover and the captain of the Lord's host, with the drawn sword. The priests bearing the ark were not to be seen in the bottom of the Red Sea, but the enemies lay there, who had been consumed as stubble by the wrath of the Lord. On the other hand, no Canaanites were in Jordan, nor was a single foe overthrown there; but it was sanctified to the Lord and to Israel, by the priests and the ark of the covenant for glory and victory; as much as were the waters of the Red Sea "when they returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh in terrible judgment."

It is to our purpose here, as believers in Christ, to notice that at this juncture the epistles of Paul take up these types from Exodus and Joshua, and carry them out unto their fulfilments, in Christ, where He now sits "at the right hand of God." The one to the Romans, which is founded on deliverance and redemption, accomplished typically at the Red Sea, is generally admitted. So also Jordan finds its spiritual application in the Colossians, by our own death and resurrection, as united to Christ who is our life and Head. May we not, or rather must we not, on the same principle say, that the tabernacle at Shiloh, in the land of Canaan with Eleazar, find likewise their similitudes and accomplishments throughout Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, in our great high priest, "passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," as maintaining the relations of God with His people here below on the ground of His own sovereign purpose and grace? How necessary were Shiloh and the tabernacle as the witness of this to the Israelites in Joshua's day. And how indispensable for the Hebrews, and to ourselves, for whom Paul wrote his epistle, leading them on into "the heavenly calling [by faith] under the apostle and high priest of our profession!"

Further yet, the agreement of the battles in Canaan with the epistle to the Ephesians, and our spiritual conflict with principalities and powers in the heavenly places, is admitted on the same principles of exposition. Nor do I judge that this group of epistles by Paul cannot be separated one from another (however profitable and necessary it be to distinguish them) without loss to the typical book of Joshua, and far greater to the completeness of Christianity, and our own relations to the heavens and the earth, of which they treat. "And it came to pass when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all the banks, as they did before." It was on such a day as this that "the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they feared him as they feared Moses all the days of his life."

It was on the selfsame day, too, that the Lord put honour on priesthood, and even upon the soles of the priests' feet, when they touched the brim, or stood firm in the midst of that Jordan till all the people had passed over. It was when they reached the dry land for themselves that the waters returned to their banks, and all because of "the ark of the God of the whole earth," which they bore. Moreover, "those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal, and there they encamped. And he spake unto them, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? then ye shall let your children know that Israel came over Jordan on dry land." Gilgal and the twelve stones, were a witness yet further "that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty; that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever." Beyond all these memorials of rivers and their stones to the twelve tribes, was the witness they carried everywhere to God, that He was "the Lord their God" by relationship with them through the ark, for they had followed it in triumph to the other side; and likewise that He was "the God of the whole earth," for Jordan had fled away and stood up as an heap before Him. It is in this double title and character that the Lord now appears before them and "all the people of the earth" at Gilgal, as a God that doeth wonders. But there was another lesson at Gilgal, for "at that time the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time," for a people in the flesh had been cut off, even all the previous generation, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness. This new or second generation of the children of Israel, had in Jordan accepted their own death and resurrection before God, by "the ark of the covenant," which they followed, and were to learn their further separation to the Lord by circumcision at Gilgal, as suiting for the land into which they had now entered. The Colossian epistle in particular, takes these great typical facts out of the book of Joshua and connects them with our history as new creatures in Christ, and applies them to us as on our way with the second Adam into the new creation of God, as "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit" (beyond Romans). We pass on, and are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, made without hands, in "putting off the body of the flesh." Moreover, as dead and risen with Christ, "our life is hid with Christ in God;" and as in the power of the Holy Ghost (Gilgal) we "set our mind on things above," not on things upon the earth. As spiritual men, we are over Jordan with "the ark of the covenant" which precedes us, and subsequently "with the tabernacle and Eleazar at Shiloh," which maintained the relations of God with them through priesthood, in the times of the judges, and Eli and Samuel; and in which He has planted us (see Hebrews 8:1-13 :) in the sanctuary which the Lord pitched. To this we belong, as a heavenly people, though actually upon the earth, and in the time of need; yet in respect of the heavenly calling we are the heirs who are "entering into rest" with Joshua and David's Son and

Lord, for "there remaineth a rest" for the people of God. (Hebrews 4:1-16 :)

We may remark here that the walls of Jericho fell not by strategy, nor by the strength of the armed men, but "before the ark of the covenant, and the priests who bore it," and even then not by sword or spear, but when the priests blew the rams' horns. Indeed, it is as a victorious and a worshipping people who follow the ark with the priests, through the water floods, or walking up straight into the city of Jericho upon its prostrate walls, that the Israel of God first shine forth in the greatness of the Almighty, who refuses every obstacle, and makes a way for Himself and for them. Perhaps before going out with the captain of the Lord's host, and much more in using the sword in our holy war, it is of more moment than we conceive to listen to the voice of the Prince, who bids us "loose the shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy." Some oversight as to this, and the right of the ark to the forefront, and the pre-eminence in Israel, may have occasioned the sad reverses of Joshua through the boasted sufficiency of the two or three thousand armed men who went up against Ai and were driven back, so that the hearts of the people melted, and became as water. Possibly the same neglect may have occurred as regards the sin of Achan and his concealment of the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold, because of which trespass the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. Where was "the Urim" of Numbers 28:1-31 :? Be this as it may, "the ark of the Lord, and the priests," were in the midst of the host, not merely as a token of the covenanted blessings to them outwardly in the land, but also as a means of approach as worshippers on their own part, and of consultation, too, by Him, when needed, through Eleazar their great high priest. Joshua, as the leader and commander of the people, failed to take counsel, either directly by the ark, or immediately by Eleazar, "at whose word they were to go out and come in, even he [Joshua] and all the congregation." Under this double failure of Achan and Ai, "Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face, [and mark] before the ark of the Lord," until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads." And alas! in this breakdown, by which Joshua had separated himself and Israel in its unity from the guidance of the ark, by accepting the counsel of the men who went to spy out Ai, he is further betrayed by his own mouth and the hard thoughts of his heart against God. "And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan." So it is with us of today individually or collectively. We must either maintain ourselves in the right, by going when and where the ark goes, and by taking counsel of the Lord, and getting the victory in His sufficiency, or else be brought back in humiliation and confession before the Lord from whom we have departed, and, like Joshua, fall down before the ark, and wait for God. In the midst of declension and departure like this (if indeed it be such) how good of the Lord to recover His servant by grace, and to the true thought and care for God's glory! "O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies"; for the Canaanites shall hear of it, and "what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" God who waited upon them, by the mystery of the Urim, and Eleazar the high priest, in His own excellency and sovereign power as at Jordan and Jericho, now condescends to the prayer and contrition of Joshua and meets him upon the ground "of a broken and a contrite spirit." The unity of the twelve tribes had likewise been violated, by this detachment of two or three thousand men; and these breaches and offences are taken in hand by the Lord, in rebuke and chastisement, in the matter both of Achan's trespass and of Joshua's oversight. The unity of the tribes is righteously insisted on by God, who says "Israel hath sinned," and He will have them all to share the shame and blame of Achan: so likewise in Joshua 8:1-35 "the Lord said

to Joshua, Take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai: see I have given the king and all into thine hand." A foreshadowing of "Ichabod" casts its dimness on the book of Joshua at this point where the ark is offended by the negligence of the leader, for certain it is, that from Joshua 7:6, when "he and all the elders of Israel fall upon their faces before it till eventide, and put dust upon their heads", the ark of the covenant of the Lord retires. It only comes out again in Joshua 8:1-35 to sanction "the altar in Mount Ebal, unto the Lord God of Israel, which Joshua built, an altar of whole stones, upon which they offered burnt offerings to the Lord and sacrificed peace-offerings." And afterward Joshua read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that Moses commanded, before all the congregation of Israel. After this retirement of the ark we necessarily find ourselves upon lower ground, where human thoughts get into place, and also natural expediency. We read of strategy and ambushments on the one hand, where Joshua is successful; but on the other, we see him and the princes overmatched and outwitted by the craft of the Gibeonites. Still God abideth faithful, for He cannot deny Himself; but we sadly miss "the ark of the covenant," and the soles of the priests' feet, and the blowing of the rams' horns, and the victories which were won simply "by faith," as the Spirit tells us in Hebrews 11:1-40 :

Though the order of battle be thus changed, and the fighting more like "wrestling with flesh and blood," yet the conquest is sure, and the kings of the countries are killed, and the confederated nations broken in pieces at Jerusalem, with its wilful king, Adonizedec, as a type of the latter-day overthrow, in the greater confederation of Revelation 19:1-21 : under the beast and the false prophet.

Grand it is to see the eternal God come forth to their help upon the heavens, and in His excellency in the sky — "yea, to cast down great hailstones upon the enemies of his people, so that they were more who were slain after this manner than those whom the children of Israel slew." As "the possessor of the heavens and the earth," and as the Creator of all they contain, He puts honour again upon Joshua, by commanding the sun to stand still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, at the bidding of His servant.

After all these conflicts, by the ark and its priests, and the shout of the people, at the first, or by the Prince of the Lord's host with a drawn sword, or by the flesh and blood wrestlings under Joshua and his spear at the close, the thirty and one kings are slain, and the land rested from war. Israel is in quiet possession, and the time is come for them to inherit the land according to their tribes, as the heirs of the Lord's inheritance.

It is at this new point of their history that Eleazar personally takes his place, in conjunction with Joshua, for the distribution of the land at the door of the tabernacle. "Caleb" also takes a distinguished place, as "an heir of promise," and claims the mountain of which "the Lord spake to Moses." As to the common allotment "of the children of Israel, Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun," distributed their inheritances to them in Shiloh. When difficulties arose, as in the case of the daughters of Zelophehad, they came near before Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, for their settlement. The tabernacle, in Joshua 18:1-28 :, also takes its permanent place at Shiloh, where the whole congregation of Israel were assembled together. So that, what Gilgal was to Joshua and the armed hosts for power in their days of conflict, Shiloh and the tabernacle were to Eleazar and the priesthood, for maintaining the precious relations of Israel with Jehovah, as a worshipping people, in the time of peace and rest. Concerning the tribe of Levi and the Levites,

they had no part among the people, "for the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance." The tabernacle and Shiloh take their place as a new centre, in chapter 18:, from whence Joshua sent out the three men from each tribe to pass through the land, and describe it by cities, into seven parts, in a book. On their return to Joshua, "he cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord; and there he divided the land unto the children of Israel." Their travelling days, by the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, were over and gone, and their migratory character as a people was to give place to citizenship in due season; but at present, under Joshua, they are only as dwellers in the land. "These are the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers," divided by lot in Shiloh before the Lord, at "the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." So they made an end of dividing the country. As a yet further proof of the important and necessary place which the priest holds throughout these chapters, we may notice, in Joshua 21:1-45 :, that "the heads of the fathers of the Levites came unto Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and spake unto them in Shiloh, in the land of Canaan, respecting the cities and suburbs which Moses commanded should be given to them to dwell in." Finally, upon this point, in chapter 22:, touching "the great altar, Ed," which had been set up on the other side of Jordan, it was the priest, Phinehas, son of Eleazar, who was sent with ten princes to investigate this grave matter. On their return, "the children of Israel blessed God," and gave up their intention of going to war against Reuben and Gad.

These quotations and references to the Book of Joshua have shown us "the ark of the covenant of the Lord" as going before the congregation, and borne along by the priesthood. A space of two thousand cubits was to be left between the ark and the people, "that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore." Need we say that, in Christianity, the Holy Ghost, as the glorifier of Jesus, gives this place and precedence to our blessed Lord, as having superseded the splendour of the typical ark in the full and eternal glory of His person? This will be readily admitted when we follow the synoptic Gospels, and view Jesus as the Messiah, with the repentant nucleus of Israel, and baptised with them in Jordan, as the antitype of this ark of the covenant. The heavens opened over this scene as He begins their history over again, and the voice of the Father, and the descent of the Holy Ghost as a dove, do more than accredit these associations between "the ark" and another generation of the people. The Messiah, who goes before them, to lead them, by a way they had not heretofore gone, into the kingdom of heaven, is also their true Joshua, to clear the way of every obstacle. If they had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, "they might say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it should obey them." As the Son called out of Egypt, He had come into the wilderness, and met His forerunner, at the end of the law and the prophets, who prophesied till John. There the Messiah stood, with the Baptist in Jordan, as the veritable Ark, between Jehovah and Israel, to begin a new history as the "fulfiller of all righteousness," and in grace to identify Himself with them, as come in the flesh, and to carry all their sorrows and griefs, as a disgraced people. God had driven them out of the inheritances in Canaan, into which the typical ark, under Joshua and Eleazar, had formerly brought them and planted them. As their Messiah, He had not only been accredited from the opened heavens by the voice and the dove, in these new relations with a repentant people, accepting a baptism of John in the waters of Jordan, but Jesus had also been "led of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil." The wilderness and the solitary place are made glad by reason of Him who, by His obedience to God, made the desert to rejoice, and blossom as the rose. As the Son of Abraham, and Son of David, according to the flesh, though Son of man, and

Son of God (like the pure gold of the ark), He overcame the tempter morally first, and by means of the temptations to which He submitted. Unswerving in His obedience and devoted allegiance to the Majesty of God, He overcame the devil, and said, Get thee behind me, Satan. He has entered into the strong man's house in righteous title, and proved Himself, as the tempted Man, stronger than he. He then goes forth upon His mission as the Deliverer, with His disciples, to proclaim "the glad tidings of the kingdom of heaven," to preach repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and to cast out devils from the men into whom they had entered. Such was "the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God," when originally given out in pattern to Moses, and when borne along upon the shoulders of the priests under Joshua and Eleazar, in "the form of shittim wood, and the pure gold," in the forefront of the great congregation of Israel. Such, too, was "the ark of the covenant," when "come in flesh and blood" into the midst of this same people, disgraced by their disobedience, and driven out of the land into which Joshua had led them aforetime. What a moment was this! Will they welcome this Joshua-Jesus, come to begin a new history with them morally, by repentance and confession of sins to the Jehovah they had offended when in Canaan by their idolatry? He began this wonderful ministry in their synagogues, when He opened the book where it was written, "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 broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." But such beauty and glory as this, which dwelt in Him morally, and come so close to them bodily in grace, as to be in real flesh and blood in their midst, required other eyes and hearts to appreciate and worship; "And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?" They have lost the sense of what "the shittim wood and the fine gold" of the typical ark represented to their fathers, nor can they see "the form and comeliness" in the mystery of the Word made flesh; and fail more deeply by refusing Him thus in the glory of His humiliation. They will not follow this "ark of the covenant of the Lord" in their midst, but rise up, and thrust Him out of the city, and lead Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, "that they might cast him down headlong." They refuse "the acceptable year of the Lord," and have rejected their Messiah, the true Ark of the covenant between God and Israel, till another day, when His people shall be willing in the day of His power.

We may now turn from the synoptic Gospels to the Holy Ghost's subsequent testimony to Jesus in resurrection, as by Paul to the Hebrews, and see how "the ark of the covenant" is again brought out, and presented to another generation of Israel. The ark in this epistle, however, is no longer known after the flesh, nor as in the world, but as gone on before, and passed through the heavens for faith. Jesus sits there on the right hand of the throne of God, as the veritable "Ark of the covenant of the Lord," once given out in pattern to Moses, and constructed by Bezaleel, and carried by the Levitical priesthood over Jordan to Shiloh, and by David to Mount Zion. Surely the Holy Ghost, as the Glorifier of Jesus, is bringing back to the Hebrews by Paul the essential glory of the Person of the Son, who, by His accomplished work on the cross (as foreshadowed in their tabernacle and its services), has substantiated all the promises of God to their fathers, and made them yea and amen to "the children of faithful Abraham." What is the ministry of Paul, in Hebrews 1:1-14 :, but the embodiment "of the ark of the covenant" in the Book of Joshua; and beyond all that, the indestructible and incorruptible shittim wood, or the finest and purest gold, could prefigure of Him that was to come? What is Paul's testimony to the Hebrews of his day, if it be not another presentation of Christ to their faith and hope, according to the glory, above the brightness of the

sun," which had arrested the man who did so many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth? A pattern to them, and an example!

We may ask again, what is Paul doing with the Hebrews (as a new generation), if it be not acquainting them with the personal glory of the Messiah, like "the light which had appeared to him" before he was filled with the Holy Ghost, and "there fell from his eyes as it had been scales?" Under this anointing it is that Paul writes to his kinsmen, "God having spoken in many parts, and in many ways, formerly to the fathers in the prophets; at the end of these days has spoken to us in the person of the Son, whom he has established heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Indeed these glories far exceed all types, for this Son is not only the Creator of all worlds, but "the possessor of the heavens and the earth," although He humbled Himself to pass along before His people, in "shittim wood and fine gold," veiled under "the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God," and in the hidden character of "the Lord of all the earth." But again, as to the brightness of its light, Paul says, "Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the exact expression of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, having made by himself the purification of our sins, set himself down on the right hand of the majesty on high." Nor is this marvellous glory only that which the Son (as the true Ark) is essentially in His Person; but relatively He has in grace purged our sins, and officially as the Priest sprinkled the blood before the mercy-seat, where God in His holiness dwells, and where Christ has sat down.

What is all this but the antitype of "the ark of the covenant," and of "the true tabernacle," which goes before the people of God, and which, in this precious chapter, this remnant of Israel is exhorted to follow? Moreover, the kinsmen of Paul after the flesh had, like himself, refused Jesus in humiliation, as the Child born of the virgin, in Isaiah 7:1-25 ; so that he can present Him now in the magnificence of His exaltation, as indeed He had appeared to Paul "above the brightness of the sun." Taking a place, he says, by so much "better than the angels, as he inherits a name more excellent than they." For to which of the angels said He ever, "Thou art my Son, I have begotten thee"? And again, "I will be to him for father, and he shall be to me for son?" And again, "When he bringeth in the first-born into the world, he saith, And let all God's angels worship him." Besides this presentation of the personal glories of the Son, as the only "Ark of the covenant between the Lord and his people," whether with John the Baptist, in Jordan, on earth; or much more by His death and resurrection to the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; He concentrates likewise in Himself all relative and official glories, as King and Priest. He passes along before us, too, as "the appointed heir" of the inheritance, yea, and of all things. Moreover, the blessed promises and prophecies in this chapter touching "the throne, and the sceptre, and the kingdom," are all to be fulfilled in the city of Jerusalem, in the coming day of their millennial rest and prosperity, by redemption through His blood.

It is to be observed that Hebrews 1:1-14 : is more in character with Isaiah 9:1-21 : and His exaltation, than with Isaiah 7:1-25 : and His humiliation. In this, "the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful," etc., "and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth and for ever." And are not these relative and official glories made sure to David and his son, by an everlasting covenant? What does it mean, "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this," in Jerusalem and Mount Zion, if it does not find its place, and form part of the glory of "the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God?"

Doubtless, "these mercies of David" and of Israel are made sure to him and to them by the actual death and resurrection of Christ; but does this fulfilment in the heavenly places first, disconnect them from the typical ark and the priests, when they bore it along, in wood and in gold, into the land of Immanuel? It is significant that Paul propounds the same enigma (from Psalms 110:1-7 :) as the Messiah did, "Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies a footstool for thy feet," only with this difference, that Paul quotes it to account for the absence of the Messiah from the earth, as rejected by His enemies; and Jesus, that He might oblige the Pharisees to confess that David's Son must be David's Lord at the right hand.

These were the ways of "the ark of the covenant" (in which they had not heretofore trodden, and for which, typically, they were to leave a space of two thousand cubits), in order for them "to come to Mount Zion, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels," etc., when "the Lord of all the earth" will come forth, and reign before His ancients gloriously. Nor were the throne, and the sceptre, and the government, and the kingdom in Mount Zion, the only mercies promised to "the appointed heir," and spoken of by the Messiah when upon the earth, or by Paul, in his Epistle to these Hebrews, when he bade them go after the Ark, which had really taken the way of Jordan, to reach its place of rest in glory. Either they took part with the enemies of the ark, when "in wood and gold," or when it passed along "in flesh and blood," or when it took the way "of death and resurrection to the right hand," and would "be made a footstool for his feet" another day; or else they formed part of the new generation of Gilgal and Shiloh who believed, and were entering into rest, in the city for which Abraham looked.

They had come out originally (Paul tells them in his epistle) by "the way of Mount Sinai, and the voice of words," and the former covenant of works; but the ark of "the covenant of the Lord your God" refused to travel by "the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire." it takes its path through "the tabernacle" of Moses in the wilderness, and then upon the shoulders of the priesthood across Jordan, in the days of Joshua, onward to Shiloh, by Eleazar, and finally is carried up by David, under other patterns, and another ministry, to Mount Zion, and then put into the temple of rest and peace, in the reign of Solomon, where the staves are drawn out. May be, these stages of the mysterious journeyings of the ark, and its spaces, are the ground-work of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, and, if so, would illuminate and illustrate the Book of Joshua, whether for Jews, or for Gentiles, or Christians with their heavenly calling.

Certainly he bids "the children of Abraham" come forth, and follow the "true ark," in the first chapters, as "anointed with the oil of gladness," to conduct them into "the great salvation" of the second, where the ark (in flesh and blood, and by the passage of Jordan) goes down with the priests to the bottom, and stands firm till all the people are passed over. They were baptised unto Moses, in the cloud and in the Red Sea; but they came up out of Jordan under "the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God," to possess the land. In "flesh and blood," too, Christ takes the place of Joshua as "the Captain of our salvation," made perfect through sufferings." He took part of the same "with these children, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." What is this action, if it be not in type, meeting the whole strength and power of Jordan, at the time when its waters overflowed the banks too? They left twelve stones in the bed of the river, and they carried twelve stones out, as the abiding proof to their children that the tribes of Israel had followed the ark and the priests by the path they had not heretofore travelled, of death

and resurrection, to Gilgal and Shiloh. Besides this, He, "the ark," in flesh and blood, and as "Son of man," in this Hebrews 2:1-18 :, takes His place as "the appointed heir of all things," according to the scope and power of David's Psalms 8:1-9 :, "in the world to come," and all things put under His feet, according to "the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." The ark of the covenant, or "the brightness of the glory," which came forth in the beginning of this epistle as the express image, and in the effulgence of the eternal Son, whom all the angels of God worship, enters by another way in chapter 2: "The ark" reveals itself here under the coverings and curtains, in the glory of His humiliation, and seen in the likeness of man, "for verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." Moreover, "in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." As the "Captain of our salvation, he was made perfect through sufferings," and now, for loving sympathies as the High Priest, he has qualified Himself, being tempted, "to succour them that are tempted." He has identified Himself as the ark with the congregation in the Book of Joshua, by "flesh and blood," with the nucleus of a new generation in Jordan, by the baptism of John; and now, as on the other side of its waters, with "the children" and "the brethren" in the true tabernacle, and in the midst of the great congregation, by a real death and resurrection with Him. "He who sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one," becomes the new principle and manner of "the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God," when revealing itself in its other relations to us, in the tabernacle of Shiloh, on the way, or in the sanctuary of its permanent rest in heaven, and "made without hands." (As in Hebrews 7:1-28 :)

How graciously Paul seeks, in other parts of this epistle, to win these believing Hebrews away from the shittim wood and the pure gold; yea, and from the mere "likeness of flesh and blood," and their associations with an earthly Messiah, as well as from their typical history under Moses and Joshua, by giving out the summary of all these, from "the ark of the covenant" passed on before them. "Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum; we have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Indeed we must own, that the Hebrews is the only epistle which teaches us what christian priesthood is, and which introduces to us "our great High Priest, Jesus, the Son of God, passed through the heavens." Its connection, therefore, with the Book of Joshua, in which "the ark of the covenant" borne by the priesthood, and taking the way of Jordan into the promised rest, is of real importance, and is analogous in many respects to "the rest which yet remaineth for the people of God" (in Hebrews 4:1-16 :), and into which "we who believe are entering," though the space may be yet between the ark and ourselves. The temple, it is true, is not named in the Hebrews, for how could it be, seeing that its patterns were not even given out till Solomon was in view, and after David had brought up the ark "from the fields of the wood at Ephratah?" We may turn for a moment from the ark, and its connection with Joshua and the drawn sword, to notice Eleazar and "the tabernacle which was pitched in Shiloh" for the worship of Jehovah, as this forms another centre. Indeed we may ask, What would all the fighting in Canaan be worth, or the conquests, if the relationships of God "by the ark of the covenant" were not maintained with His people in their midst; and if Eleazar and the tabernacle were not at Shiloh, as the way and means of their approach to Him as worshippers? Again, we may inquire, Are not these three typical things, which are the prominent characteristics of the Book of Joshua, namely, the ark of the covenant, the Captain of salvation, and the priest in the tabernacle at Shiloh, the

groundwork of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews? To be sure, the book is typical and earthly; whereas the epistle is matter of fact, and heavenly; but such differences as these are familiar to us, and natural to the christian standing, with the ark at the right hand of the throne, in its proper place of rest, and the journey, with its combats, over and ended. It is as out of Jordan, by Him who destroyed the whole power of death, and as one with the Priest who has made propitiation for our sins, and as one with Him who sanctifieth, that the "holy brethren" are addressed as "partakers of the heavenly calling," and exhorted to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."

"Holy brethren" come into place in connection with the ark and the priest in the sanctuary, so that, perhaps, this part of the epistle has more to do with worship, from Heb 5:-10 :, than with the ark of the covenant, and our following it through death and resurrection, at the time when Jordan overflowed its banks, as in chapters 1:, 2: No doubt the tabernacle in the wilderness was taken over Jordan, and became the tabernacle in Canaan, for "the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there." Thus we find, in chapter 4:, the wilderness, and the journeyings, and the grace for "the time of need," side by side with the rest of creation, and the rest of Canaan, and the rest that remaineth for God and His people. In short, there is no temple in the Book of Joshua, nor any temple in the Hebrews, but there is a tabernacle instead, with Eleazar, and pitched at Shiloh; and, correspondingly, we have the true one in Hebrews 8:1-13 :, "which the Lord pitched, and not man." Indeed, it is because Shiloh, and the tabernacle, and Eleazar the priest are in such prominence in their own circle in the Book of Joshua, that the correspondence becomes so important in Paul's epistle as the antitype.

Moreover, "the heirs of promise" are looked at by God, and encouraged on their way, in Hebrews 6:1-20 :, to lay hold upon the hope set before them, by the immutability of His counsel, as Joshua had done, in Joshua 18:1-28 :, to the children of Israel: "How long are ye slack to go and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?" There is this difference, however, and a most important one, that Paul says to his Hebrews, "whither the forerunner is for us entered in, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." Paul had not to fight that he might get possession, but Joshua had. The Forerunner Himself, "the appointed heir" of all the inheritance, had already entered in, and appeared to Paul when on his way to Damascus. There is yet a difference to be noticed in the Book of Joshua, and one that brings Caleb forward as a claimant, in Joshua 14:1-15 :, and which gives him priority and prominence as a true heir, amongst his co-heirs. Indeed, he takes the centre of this circle, on account of his faith, and is remarkable for endurance and patience, whilst following the ark on its return journey into the desert, as he was famous in energy for conflict with the Anakims at Mount Hebron, when on the other side of Jordan.

We may pass on now from the "holy brethren" with their heavenly calling, and the pilgrims and strangers in "time of need" — yes, and from "the heirs of promise," with the hope of citizenship in the land, to their final rest on Mount Zion, as in chapter 12:, with the ark of the covenant, to look at a further glory of the Son, which Paul connects with "their father Abraham." "For this Melchisedec," he says, "who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, is king of Salem, and priest of the most high God" — to whom Abraham gave a tenth part of all; who is first, being by interpretation, "king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace." It appears to me that this slaughter of the confederated kings in the time of Abraham, like

the overthrow of the Adoni-zedek, and the Jabin confederation, in the days of Joshua, has very much in common with the yet coming confederacy and slaughter "of kings, and captains, and mighty men," in the Apocalypse, and particularly in Revelation 19:1-21 : In a certain sense the Book of Joshua is more like a clearing of the inheritance for the heirs, and putting them into possession of the promised land, with Eleazar and the tabernacle at Shiloh, as the connecting link of relationship with Jehovah, than as reaching further into their history. After Gilgal and Shiloh came Bochim, and after Joshua and Eleazar came the Judges; nor does Israel come out again in lustre till the time of Ichabod had passed by, and "the Lord's anointed King" was crowned, and Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord, instead of David his father, and the temple was filled with the glory of God. "Ye are come to Mount Zion," etc.

Melchisedek is I submit, outside the Book of Joshua, and far beyond it, though I do not doubt it rightly comes in on the way with Paul's Hebrews, as he leads them forward to "the heavenly Jerusalem, and city of the living God," and will get its actual fulfilment in the grand millennial times of the true Solomon's reign. Wonderful as the Book of Joshua is typically, yet, in some respects, it is short of the Hebrews; of course, I mean as regards Melchisedek and the ark of covenant, in its connection with Mount Zion, under "the king of righteousness and king of peace," in the heavenly Jerusalem, which is, after all, their line of march and of inheritance, only under Paul's leadership. As regards ourselves, as believers in Christ, and as true worshippers, "who worship God in spirit and in truth," in the holiest, where He dwells, and where the ark of the covenant rests, and where Christ is sat down, we all know increasingly how precious this epistle is to us, as our new and completed Book of Leviticus. It may, and does, come short of the Colossians, and Ephesians, and some others, but it contains what neither of those does; and, above all, makes known to us the anointed "High Priest of our profession," and this, too, in the essential glory of His person as Son, as well as in His twofold relations of the only-begotten Son of God, and the exalted Son of man, set over all the works of the Creator's hands. The Book of Joshua does not lose by it.

Besides these, we have His glorious offices, as High Priest "passed through the heavens," as Intercessor, living in the presence of God for us, and as Mediator of the new covenant to the house of Israel, when "the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob." The Great High Priest "passed through the heavens," even Jesus, the Son of God, is essential to Christianity, and for christian worship and intercession. Such an High Priest became us, and Paul's Hebrews (who followed the ark, up to the right hand of God, by faith), who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens. The priesthood and the priest must be equal to the position of the people, whether earthly or heavenly, and be made higher than their calling, and these give their character to the holiest, where God is, and to the worshippers and their worship, as in Hebrews 9:, 10: The practice of elucidating Paul's Epistles to the Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians, by the various chapters in the Book of Joshua, and their distinguishing records, is quite right (and vice versa), but neither of those epistles, be it remembered, takes up priesthood or worship. The relations of God, therefore, which were maintained by the tabernacle of witness, and Eleazar the priest, at Shiloh, in the time of Joshua, must be passed over in any real exposition of this book; or an epistle is wanted which recognises these relations, and applies them to ourselves and priesthood as over Jordan, and why not this Epistle to the Hebrews? If the answer be, that it is an epistle for the wilderness, this is freely admitted, but not for "the time of need" only — for the tabernacle was in the land of Canaan, as we

have been examining. The classification of the Hebrews for priesthood, and its introduction, with Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians, under their characteristic differences, would make the group complete, and enable us to take up and elucidate all the parts in the Book of Joshua, under these four epistles of Paul. In this way the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests bearing it, as well as Eleazar and Shiloh, with the tabernacle for worship, would be no longer in the background, or omitted as they generally are. But enough has been said to call attention to the fact, and to help in the consideration of the real character of the Hebrew epistle as a complete reference to the Book of Joshua, and this is the main object in these remarks. In conclusion, and as a summary, I judge that the ark of pure gold is beautifully embodied by "the express image and glory" of the Son, as in Hebrews 1:2-3, and that the Shittim wood of the ark is as perfectly represented by His manhood as the only-begotten Son, in verses 5, 6. Moreover, "the body prepared for him," and in which He came to do the will of God, was the embodiment of the two tables of the covenant which the ark contained, but which were, in like manner, taken out, and magnified in Himself, who said, "Yea, thy law is within my heart." What, too, are the central chapters of Hebrews, touching the Priest in heaven, but the transfer of "Aaron's rod that budded," and "the golden censer," out of the typical ark, into their own proper place in the presence of God for us? Again, what is "the golden pot that had manna," but the person, and words, and works, and ways of Jesus below, and of which this precious epistle is the exposition? So, likewise, as to the tabernacle itself (with Eleazar and Shiloh), wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread, what is Paul uncovering to his Hebrews in our epistle but the things themselves, in their great Antitype, who is passing before them in the glory of His person? But enough for inquiry and suggestion, though "Jesus the author and finisher of our faith," and "so great a cloud of witnesses" form a marvellous company — of whom the world was not worthy! J. E. Batten.

S. The Eirenicon

The Eirenicon; or, A United Christendom.

Dr. Pusey's bold proposition of a united Christendom, published in his "Eirenicon," has been more than welcomed of late by ecclesiastics in the Anglican Church. The silence which prevailed for so many months on the direct proposal, led some to suppose the idea was likely to be confined to the author and the book which developed the scheme. This conjecture deepened in the minds of many, as they heard rude-spoken men take up mere ritualistic observances in their grosser forms, for the purpose of proving modern innovations or practical departure from the Establishment. The Eirenicon, however, has made a path for itself, and opened the way to others far removed from the popular outcry, and the material symbols of worship which excite the multitude. Leaving this region of agitation and strife for the more scholarly interchange of thought and theory Dr. Pusey's Eirenicon is now accepted. The symbolical "olive branch" has been made matter of fact by the encyclical letter to the Patriarch of the Greek Church, by the late Primate of England. True, the Dean of Carlisle (Dr. Close) was roused against his superior, and to the pitch of declaring "rather be my hand withered than I should hold it out to the Eastern and Western Churches," adding a hope "that the Pope would deal with the encyclical, as he dealt with Dr. Pusey's Eirenicon, nail it to the church doors." In spite of this exceptional voice, though a loud one, the Primate, the Patriarch, and the Pope, are no longer confined within their own circles, but may meet each other as the centres of their ecclesiastical systems, but upon the avowed possibility of a united Christendom — the preliminaries are under consideration. The circle narrows, as the Dean of Canterbury (Alford) issues his proposals for union between Churchmen and Non-conformists at home. The original principle is maintained by him, but for the moment to be experimented on within the range of an ordained ministry (no longer "clergy") of England, and to be practically manifested by an interchange of pulpits, and a more mellowed social intercourse between the respective ministers and congregations. The Dean of Westminster (Stanley), while open to the full width of his primate, yet puts into the picture his own tints and colours; and in this way, artistically illuminates what else would be too much in the sombre grey of pietism. He practically gives up the idea of an existing Establishment, and foreshadows a social revolution — the church itself being civil society. For instance, the Dean would abolish all distinctions between clergy and laity, and would recognize every man a minister who is capable of rendering good service to the community. On the other hand, if the Church and State should continue united, it is because the Church is not more holy than the State. The Politike, or State, he says, is as much invested with "divine authority" as the Church; Paul appealed to the tribunal of Caesar, and in this way recognized the supremacy of the State over the priesthood. Further, the Dean asserts there is an advantage by merging the Church in the State, as it affords scope for the growth of various opinions, and favours such changes as the State may see fit to effect, thus ignoring the existence of a body of revealed doctrine, which it is the Church's privilege to hold and to inculcate as being the ground and pillar of the truth. To crown all, Dean Stanley selects Gallio as the model statesman (though often reviled as a careless libertine), for he shelved the true judicial attitude towards petty sectarian squabbles, of which he

would take no cognizance. The Anglican group in this sketch, though too heterogeneous and contradictory in itself, for any combined and really practical purposes connected with the evangelical party, gathers up strength from this confusion, and in this growth of various opinions finds an advantage over all the old ideas of uniformity and agreement. Scope is moreover demanded for the spread of mind and will thus liberated from the shackles of a revolution, and a corresponding responsibility to divine authority over conscience and faith.

One may well ask, What can be the product of these ideas but uncertainty upon all points respecting which the word of God is definite and obligatory? What is a united Christendom but union on the differences which mark it and have made it what it is? What is fraternization with the Eastern and Western churches but the further abandonment of the modicum of truth which made them different from each other? It is no wonder that national establishments should seek shelter under the covering wings of this Eirenicon, of larger or smaller diameter, in face of the declaration that the Politike is as much invested with divine authority as the Church. Such a fusion is but the embodiment of the prevailing idea of church extension. What is there left, but that civil society in the nineteenth century should boldly take the place of the Church on earth, and that all distinctions should be set aside in the common abandonment of the claims of the truth of God? Shall we ask such a question as whether Christ can own this confederation? Is civil society what He loved and gave Himself for? or is it what He will present to Himself "a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing?" horrible thought! If so, what and where is the vine of the earth, which is to be cast into the winepress of the wrath of God? The spirit of sacerdotalism is fast taking the place even of evangelical doctrine; but this change, serious though it is, as regards the effect produced on the masses, is but a consequence. The originating cause springs from the partial (where not complete) denial of revelation, and of the authority of God, by His word and Spirit, over conscience and faith. The masterminds, the guiding spirits of the present movement, which have stepped into this place of divine prerogative, have sacrificed the truth and all certainty between God and the soul to a sliding scale, which accommodates itself to the conjectures or speculations of philosophers and religionists. Fraternization or union is the absorbent of all else: and what can the value of such a unity be which is only successfully reached in the measure of its departure from the truth and from God? By what rule can this abortion be estimated as it lays hold on the two extremes of Popery and Unitarianism at the same moment?

If we drop the National Church (this troublesome excrescence of the State), and look at the schools to be established for religious education, it is only to discover the same turbulence of spirit in debate and action, upon this new problematic question. Strange that in the same country and moment, and by the same legislature, "The Educational Bill" should be announced with a "conscience clause," when the Establishment of the country has grown weary and old under the weight of such restrictions; and only sees liberty and daylight as it cuts its way out from the entanglements, by the surrender of conscience. What can the State do in the double dilemma which the church and the schoolhouse impose upon it, but Gallio-like say, "If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdness, reason would that I should bear with you; but if it be a question of words, and names, and of your law, look ye to it."

Legal obligations were formerly in operation, and members were bound to profess the christian doctrine. Tests and Corporation Acts were also in force; but these have long since been pronounced grievances, and are expunged from the records of the State which inflicted them. Vain

are all the bulwarks, and an educational clause besides, which the legislature imposes as a last and puerile attempt to check the infidelity which threatens to carry everything along with it that is even a shade better than itself. The word of God and the relation of conscience to divine authority thereby is set aside: the direct link with what is Supreme has been broken, and the whole world is drifting and at sea. The real question at issue cannot now be what it was. New forms of old corruptions are developed as the energetic movement of unbridled will rushes onward to its object. For instance, the State Church principle was formerly the antagonism to Nonconformists; but this has in measure ceased and given place to a far graver matter, the question of today being between Christianity and Infidelity. In the education scheme which was lately the subject of a petition from the Oxford University to the then Primate, the thing dreaded was a system which would make all christian teaching in a high sense impracticable, and would hand over even the government of the Universities and of the English youth to those who deny the first principles of the christian faith. What a spectacle was presented as the Archbishop received with one hand this petition from Oxford, begging that the floodgates might not be opened to superstition and infidelity; and with the other holds out a letter of amity to the head of the Greek church, proposing the closest brotherhood. The solemn word of Isaiah's warning to a similar confederation in Israel's history may well be quoted in conclusion and as a last appeal to a united Christendom. "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us. For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary." J. E. Batten.

S. The Glory of the Son, the Valley of Dry Bones, and the Mount of Olives

The Glory of the Son, the Valley of Dry Bones, and the Mount of Olives.

I desire to mark an analogy which exists between the prophecy of Ezekiel, and the earlier part of the Gospel by John, in reference to the ways of the Son of God, when presenting Himself to Israel and Jerusalem, both in the temple and at the national feasts; in other words to point out (and in a yet fuller sense) the correspondence between "the vision of the glory" which appeared to the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans; and "the glory of the only-begotten of the Father" when beheld by John, in the person of the Son Himself, sent forth from God and come into the world. In this light, the object of Christ's coming and the work that was given Him to do were twofold — embracing all that God had spoken, and promised by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began; and comprehending also the secret counsels and purposes bound up in the Son of the Father, which lay hidden in God from before the foundation of the world. Even Moses was taught somewhat of this difference, when he said, "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever," etc. Indeed such a manifestation as "the Word made flesh and tabernacling amongst us" was necessary, in order to embody and accomplish all that the Spirit of prophecy had foretold of the earthly and heavenly relations between God and His people in and through Christ Jesus. Upon this hangs likewise the ultimate blessing of the whole creation, which was made subject to vanity not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; for creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. The Son who lay in the bosom of the Father could alone declare Him. He was "the One whom God had made strong for himself," and it was He alone who could as the Christ of God make every promise and type; "yea" even as He has by His death, and exaltation in the glory put His "amen" to all the hidden counsels that were from everlasting, prepared in Him as the second Adam. The Gospel of John opens, as is evident, with the glory of this person who was with God, and who was God, and who was in the beginning with God. The glory of the incarnation brought Him into our midst as the great mystery of godliness, "God manifest in the flesh," and in this grace to us He took His place in the human family, and entered upon His relations with the sons of men. The Baptist's testimony to Israel, that this was likewise the Messiah-Jesus, by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him like a dove, identified Him with, and yet put Him far beyond the typical "likeness of the glory of the Lord" in Ezekiel's vision; which is content to fill its place as a lesser light, and to be eclipsed in the presence of the opening glories of the Christ of God. Indeed this was the characteristic feature of all prophetic ministry, and we may say of the prophets themselves; for however willing the people were for a season to rejoice in the light they kindled, yet the "greatest of them that were born of women" said of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John rejoiced greatly to hear the bridegroom's voice, and to point Him out to the hopes and expectations of the people, adding, "this my joy therefore is fulfilled," as he withdrew into obscurity. The glory in the vision of Ezekiel was a pattern of the intimacy which existed between Jehovah and His people; and became therefore the

test as to how this intercourse had been maintained on their part, while it abode in their midst as the outward witness of the favour of God. Measured by this standard of responsibility, the glory was offended and grieved as it took its course through the land of Immanuel, and beheld the temple with all its abominations, the city filled with idolatry and its corruptions; till, hovering alternately over one and the other, it abandoned the guilty scene, and took its flight from the Mount of Olives, up to its own place on high, in hope of a future day. (Ezekiel 11:22-23.)

Since those typical times the Son of God in His manhood-glory has traversed the same path, "as the fulfiller of all righteousness" on their behalf if they could so receive and welcome Him; but He was grieved in His turn by the hardheartedness of the people, and hid Himself when they took up stones to kill Him. His only refuge was in ascending up to where He was before; and Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, was also received up in glory from the mount called "the mount of Olives;" till in the coming day of His millennial power His feet shall stand there again, and ten thousands of His saints with Him. Israel too shall be willing in the day of His power.

It exercises and humbles the soul to discover how everything which came forth from God to men has been thus either grieved or refused, and compelled to retire into the heavens till another day — whether set up in type and figure, or as since in substance and by personal appearance; for where is Christ? The beginning of the Gospel of John held out a promise of something different, for when the forerunner said, "behold the Lamb of God" to two of His disciples, they left all and followed Him. The glory of the only-begotten of the Father was thus acknowledged, and our Lord became the new centre of gathering upon the earth. They abode with Jesus that day and only left the house to tell others what they had found, and gather them also to the Lord in this new place of blessing. The activities of love which dwelt in the bosom of our Lord led Him the day following to go forth in other glories, into Galilee, in the devotedness of the willing and obedient servant. It was this personal acquaintance with the Lord in the house that became the spring of testimony in the two disciples who had enjoyed it. Besides their own peace in His dwelling, they were able to tell others who the Christ was they had found, as answering to all that Moses and the prophets had written in the scriptures concerning Him. The words "come and see," which had gathered them to Christ, put Nathaniel also into this pathway of life and blessing. Jesus saw him coming, and said, "behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." The question, "whence knowest thou me?" got its answer from the Lord, "when thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee," and on this Nathaniel confessed Jesus to be "the Son of God, and the king of Israel." The first ripe fruit from under the national fig-tree, where Nathaniel was sitting, was gathered by the Lord; and the secret was divulged to this Israelite indeed, of "the opened heavens, and the angels of God [henceforth] ascending and descending upon the Son of man," the gathering point for Israel and the world, and the uniting link between the heavens and the earth. Precious revelation of a yet future day, when the nation shall be ready like its Nathaniel, to own the person and glorious titles of the anointed Christ, and be born in a day! Prophetically we know, that Israel itself will be delivered from all guile, and be no longer a hypocritical nation. God will turn to them a pure language, and put His laws into their hearts, and make them to be His peculiar people. In that day saith the Lord of hosts, ye shall call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree, and great shall be the peace of His people. The marriage in Cana was beautifully in keeping with these exhibitions of the personal glories of Christ, and His royal title as Son of God, and king of Israel, and opens out the works by

which He was to be acknowledged. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him." In this two-fold character does He pass before us, into the further revelation of this Gospel; that (being accredited by the glorious majesty and grace of His person, on the one hand, and by the manifestation of His power in miracles on the other) He might be owned and accepted in Israel. He comes to Jerusalem, as in spirit Ezekiel had been carried in his day (see Ezekiel 8:1-18 :) to the city of the great king, to see if she is ready to arise from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments now that her light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon her. There is a promise of joy in the land, for Jesus was called and His disciples to the marriage; but alas! the vine of Israel and its grapes are like the fig-tree with its one Nathaniel, and prove unequal to the occasion. "The mother of Jesus saith unto Him, they have no wine," and how can they celebrate the wedding, or make Him a feast? The Israelite without guile, sitting under the typical fig-tree, left it for the "Immanuel," when He was walking through the land; and now the One who came up to the wedding must take His place in another character, and act as the Lord of it by turning the water into wine. The time of figs was not yet, nor did the vine send forth a goodly smell. He had come into His garden, but the winter was not over, nor was the time of the singing of birds yet come. Made of the seed of Abraham and David, He had appeared in their midst at the marriage; but the words He spake to His mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come," show how He felt the barrenness of Israel in those relations according to the flesh; and that to meet this need He must manifest forth His glory in far deeper words and mightier works than as the royal Son of David and king of Israel. The Bridegroom would be taken away from them, and the children of the bride-chamber fast, till in their millennial day they say, "blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Then Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the whole earth with fruit. Jesus leaves the vines and the fig-trees, and comes out of His garden into the city of Jerusalem, for the Jews' passover was at hand. This centre of light and blessing, the beautiful temple, is next to be tested whether she is suited for the reception of her Lord, and may be found more in keeping with the character and ways of the Son of God, who comes into it that He may fill it with His glory? Will she open her gates, that the Lord of hosts, the king of glory, may come in? The "hole in the wall" to Ezekiel, in the vision of the glory, or the visit of the Messiah to the door of the temple, only disclosed its abominations. Alas! for the house of prayer, it had been turned into a house of merchandise, and had become a den of thieves. Jesus made a scourge of small cords, and drove them all out of the temple, poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables, saying to those that sold doves, Take these things hence. The feasts of the Lord with His people could not be established in the harlot city, and its temple — all — must be cleansed, and the people baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The zeal for His Father's house had eaten Him up, and He who drew Nathaniel out from under the fig-tree, and turned the water into wine at the marriage of Cana, now presents Himself in the temple in the mystery of His decease, saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." This spake He of His body. An exceptional Israelite, one without guile, had been found, and in faith confessed the Word made flesh; but as to all else, Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men. The light of the world had walked in their midst, and the glory had shone upon the heart and ways of man, and this is the condemnation from His lips, "who knew what was in man;" that when known in this searching light he is not to be trusted, Jesus did not commit Himself to them. This verdict was substantiated even to Nicodemus, a man of the Pharisees, who came to Jesus by night, owning Him as a teacher

come from God, and as one with whom God was, because of miracles which He did. But He who knew what was in the man, knew that the ruin and alienation in which man and Israel stood from God lay far deeper than ignorance, which might be met by a teacher come from God — and by such a teacher! This man of the Pharisees, though a ruler of the Jews and a master of Israel, yea (and because he was all this), must not hold his intercourse with Jesus upon the mere footing of God's wisdom and man's ignorance — and is put back. Nicodemus, a first-class man (and this is very important, now that "the true light" shineth) is told that he will not do, with all his standing and attainments, for the kingdom of God. He must be born again, born of water and the Spirit, and enter in by the cross — through the knowledge of the Son of man lifted up, as the antitype of the brazen serpent, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. This master of Israel must disown his standing in the flesh as tested by the glory and accept a new one with Christ, through redemption by His blood and the quickening power of the Spirit. A question of purifying is attempted by the Jews, in this chapter (John 3:1-36), but purification of the flesh, which was characteristic of Judaism, had produced nothing. At the cross of Christ man as he was in the flesh has been discovered and disowned, for the last Adam was upon it in death; and christian purification is only by means of that death, which has put an end to the flesh for ever: "ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit." Nathaniel was drawn out by the glory of the person; now Nicodemus is shut up to the efficacy of His work on the cross — and the water and the Spirit — that he may thus get rid of himself, and be born again, and enter into the kingdom of God. The man of the Pharisees when at his best is set aside, and at Jacob's well the woman of Samaria who met Jesus when at her worst was accepted, so that the disciples marvelled when He talked with her. The light of the glory in which He walked, and into which He brought her, shone in upon her conscience, and in that searching light she owned herself and her state. "He told me all things that ever I did," and confessed Him, "Is not this the Christ?" Precious discovery of herself and of Him! But He came to do much more than this, "if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" — and with this He filled her vessel. The cross for the master of Israel, and the living water for the woman of Samaria, showed that the grace and truth come by Jesus Christ could be no respecter of persons. The temple, having likewise been superseded by the body of Christ, necessitated a corresponding change as to worship. It could no longer be restricted to places, any more than to persons; and thus Jerusalem and Samaria are set aside. The new order of worship is this: God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Christ being come as the true light, and giving eternal life to them that believed on Him; the religion suited to man in the flesh, in the temple at Jerusalem or elsewhere, goes away with it; and the true worshippers are they that worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. The way to see and to enter into the kingdom of God had been shown to Nicodemus; and now the Samaritan is to be sanctified as a worshipper of the Father, and drawn away from her water-pot and Jacob's well, as Nathaniel the "Israelite indeed" had been drawn out from under the national fig-tree, and Nicodemus from his Pharisaism. The light and the life are doing their work in love, wherever the ear is opened to hear His words, or the eye anointed to behold His glory.

Israel's unbelief and unpreparedness to receive the king into the city, or the glory into the temple, force Him to gather around Himself into His own solitude and counsels, any who could lift the veil of "the Word made flesh," and say with the Samaritans "this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." The pool of Bethesda and its multitude of impotent folk, waiting for the moving of the water,

might have risen up to condemn the nation and its priests and rulers, who lay under the heavier pressure of God's displeasure, and yet waited not for the Lord of that pool to deliver them. The blind and the halt and the withered watched for Bethesda's angel to come down, though only one out of the crowd, and he the first who stepped in after the troubling of the water, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. The Word that was with God, and was God, must needs come to this place; and He calls out the man, who told the disappointing tale of many a one "stepping down before him." But He, before whom all the angels are but worshipping spirits, had come to heal the people of all their sicknesses and diseases, and was at the pool where they lay, if they would but let Him take the place as greater than the angel.

Jesus said to the impotent man "rise, take up thy bed and walk, and immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked, and on the same day was the sabbath." Man can rest, and be at home in a ruined state of things with which he has grown familiar; but there God can only work to rescue him from the misery he is under. A feast of the Jews, the pool of Bethesda, and the sabbath were together, in strange connections, through Israel's transgressions; for in its normal state God had said, I will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt upon you, and will take away all sicknesses. Into this scene of wretchedness the Lord of the sabbath entered, not to rest, but in quickening power to deliver out of the ruin of the old, and to bring into the new. As the life and the light, and full of grace and truth, He proclaims the great fact "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." He passes through their midst, as the quickener into life, and the raiser of the dead. In this chapter He walks in the majesty of His own person as one with the Father, going under our entire wretchedness in divine power and grace, to raise up those who were bound in fetters of iron. "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."

Israel with its ordinances and feasts of the Jews and the sabbath on the one hand, confronted and contradicted by the pool of Bethesda and its multitude on the other, give occasion to the Lord to identify Himself with the Father in the counsels which brought Him into the world, and to exercise that almighty power by which the morally dead could be quickened. The old creation is before the Lord, with the vineyard which He had chosen, and the pleasant plants and noble vine which He had brought out of Egypt, and placed therein. Such cultivation as He had unweariedly bestowed had not produced grapes; the boar of the wood, and the wild beast of the field, had devoured it. Forgetfulness of God, and satisfaction with a state of things suited to themselves only led them to throw over all this moral evil the covering of the sabbath, and impugn the right of Christ to work recovery in their midst or even to alleviate their misery. They vainly use the law against Him that made it and magnified it, and sought in violation of the law to slay Him whose power and grace in healing the impotent man they could not deny.

New and divine sources of life-giving power are here opened up; for as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. The Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment likewise, because He is the Son of man. Death and the grave are also in prospect overcome, in the righteous title of "the Word made flesh." The hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." To Him as the Son of man the Father has thus given authority over all flesh (upon its proved incapacity and ruin, under ordinances) to give eternal life to them that believe, whilst in His own

prerogative as equal with God, whatsoever the Father doeth, those things also doeth the Son likewise; for as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself. Having thus passed through this valley of dry and dead bones, and presented Himself as the quickener and the raiser of the dead, if they will accept Him and take deliverance and thus enter into the rest of God in Christ; He quits the scene, saying, I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. As in the vision of Ezekiel, so in fact with Jesus in their midst, the bones were not only dry, but very dry.

John 6:1-71 lays the groundwork for the exercise of such a life-giving power as this in the death of Christ; for how else could it be either bestowed by Him, or received by us? There is a beautiful correspondence here between the living bread come down from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall live for ever; and the living water of which the Lord said to the woman of Samaria it should be in her a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Besides this, Jesus is presented in the glory of His person, as "the bread of God," the incarnate One, who came down from heaven to give life to the world. This glory is manifested to us in that new order of manhood, by which He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God (Jehovah's fellow) made Himself of no reputation, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross that He might there connect Himself with the mighty ruin to overturn it—and then gain through redemption, resurrection, and finally by ascension (to "where he was before") the triple crown of glory, which lay before Him. By such a path did Jesus enter the dark valley, where "the dry bones of the whole house of Israel lay thick around Him" so very dry, and so many, nor would they be wakened up from their moral death in trespasses and sins, nor stand upon their feet, breathe He never so encouragingly upon them. Jesus said unto them, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever;" but if this presentation of Himself shook the dry bones of Israel, it was only to relapse into an alienation still deeper, and if it moved the broken sticks of Ephraim and Judah for a moment, it was but that they might sink back again into the stiffness of death. The Word made flesh has dwelt among them so that it could be said, "behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and by others "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." It was this glory in the person of the Son that now walked through this world, and cast its bright beams upon "every man coming into it;" if so be that men would respond to it, and take life, and walk in the light of life with this glory; "to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name." The glory finally in the person of the anointed Christ, the Messiah of Israel, re-entered the temple of Jerusalem, and rode into the royal city too; but only to be grieved afresh; as it was prophetically, when in type Ezekiel was the recorder of its visitations from place to place. The nation was familiar historically with the faithfulness of "the glory of the God of Israel," together with the "pillar of cloud" which led them from Egypt, through the wilderness journey; till in the days of Solomon this glory found its rest in the temple which it filled, and where it made itself at home with that favoured people. Protected they had been, in every step of their wondrous journey into Canaan by it, and blessed under its covering wings, when brought into the habitation and house which Jehovah had prepared for His delights with His people; and now the promised seed, the Messiah Himself, the Jehovah-Jesus, the Son of God, was come down into their midst to lead them back and establish them in all the covenanted blessings and promises which they had forfeited. Are they ready? The result of Jerusalem's visitation by One greater than its temple, and greater than Solomon, is before us; but this inspection on the part of the glory must necessarily

lead to the exposure of the moral state of the temple and its worshippers, which it detected, as well as of the city and its rulers, when tested by their readiness or unreadiness to welcome the presence of the God of Israel in the glory of "the Word made flesh." Alas! the temple had become "a den of thieves:" a fitting but awful presage of the royal city itself, which shortly after gave forth the betrayers and murderers to shed the blood of Him who in pity and compassion "wept over her and said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem how often would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not; but now your house is left unto you desolate." Entreated, and tested by the glory, though He spake as never man spake (as they themselves said), all was refused and lost by them in the rejection of Christ the Lord — and the glory retired from the city!

One only path remained in grace, and this lay among "the valley of dry bones." The Lord took His place among the Jews when in this condition morally, as these chapters describe; but if they were in this state of death, He on that account was in their midst, as "the breath who had come from above the four winds" of heaven to breathe upon them. In this chapter He had gone in and out amongst them, as the quickener of the dead, the restorer to life, the recoverer of sight to the blind; and these living proofs of His power (who were made every whit whole) were walking about in their streets to convict and condemn the rebellious children. The promised glory came amongst them to lead them out into peace and blessing with Jehovah, if they would accept the hand stretched out to deliver; and the valley of dry bones, with the all-sufficient Saviour of His people there in fulness of grace, characterized the ministry in love, which followed them, and which put them to the test, up to John 6:1-71. It is then that Jesus spoke to the disciples which followed Him, of the necessity of His death, in order to give life to them; and that they should have the real "bread of God" to sustain that life. Even they stumbled at these new ways, in the open valley — the four winds of heaven were inadequate to the moral ruin. Often had they heard the sound thereof, but as Jesus said to Nicodemus, "thou knowest not whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The Holy Ghost must needs come into this valley, and do a greater work than He did in creation, when He moved upon the face of that mighty chaos to bring light out of darkness, and order out of confusion. Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God or stand in this new connection with the Son of man who came down from heaven and yet is the Son of man which is in heaven. "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him." It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing — the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life — is what the Lord of glory proclaims in this valley of dry bones, when He was passing through it. Many said, this is a hard saying, who can hear it? but Jesus in spirit is carried yet further and asks, what and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? and from that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. With others "the bones came together, bone to his bone," and the word which was spirit and life in Christ had caused them to live, and they confessed Jesus to be the life, saying, "to whom shall we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Nationally the time of figs is not yet — these are but gleaning grapes, two or three from the uppermost boughs, four or five in the outmost branches thereof, who are thus gathered out into place and companionship with the rejected Son of man into another and far higher glory in the heavens.

Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand, and His brethren said, "If thou do these things, show thyself to the world, for neither did his brethren believe on him." But the pathway of our Lord is determined on, and lies through the untrodden regions of death and resurrection, that He may give life to the world. His time for showing Himself to Israel at the feast of tabernacles and then to the world go together, and is not yet come. "I go not up yet to this feast;" the world and Israel are alike too, in their enmity; "the world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil." "Your time is always ready, but my time is not yet come, and when he had said these words he abode still in Galilee." Instead of any contradiction in this action of Christ at the feast time, there is beautiful moral order; "about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught" passing on into His own heights, when He said, My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me, if any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. They keep their feast as though all were right in Israel, and the glory still filling the temple of Jerusalem; not realizing the fact that the Lord of the temple had passed through it, only to make a scourge of small cords, and to justify that strange act, by saying, "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." But a greater zeal than that now takes possession of the Lord, as He reveals Himself in the descending steps of His sufferings and death; for He cannot lead His people into promised blessing by any other path, than their redemption by blood; nor will He take any other road to His own glory, or to His kingdom, than through His sufferings. The glory will wait upon Him on the morning of the third day, at the door of the sepulchre! In perfect keeping with this, Jesus says to the Pharisees and chief priests and officers who were sent to take Him, "yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me; ye shall seek me and shall not find me, and whither I go ye cannot come." One great necessity was declared to the man of the Pharisees, the ruler of Israel, at the feast of the passover; when Jesus deposited the secret to Nicodemus of the lifted up Son of man, in order to see and enter the kingdom of God; and now at the feast of tabernacles, He reveals another great necessity. "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 him as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that the Son of man was not yet glorified." Precious Jesus, what grace hast Thou shown to Thy rebellious people — deeper than the depths of the humiliation that brought Thee down upon the level with man on earth, or into the valley of dry bones, must Thou needs descend to serve him. Into Thy sufferings and baptism of blood hast Thou gone on the cross, as "the lifted up Son of man," to redeem them; yea down into the very dust of death hast Thou been brought, fast bound by the pains of death, that God Himself might loosen Thee from them. Thine agony and atoning blood as the Paschal Lamb have turned the relations between God and man into a feast of the passover, for Thy willing people, and as the basis for all the remaining feasts. Out of the depths of the grave, and the heart of the earth hast Thou been raised, having won all the glory for Thy Father and Thyself, and for us, which death and the eater would yield to none but Thee. By ascension to the right hand of God, as the glorified Son of man, the Spirit will yet come down and breathe upon the valley of dry bones at a future day, when the whole house of Israel shall stand up in the power of life, and the two sticks of Judah and Ephraim become one. "Behold they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, we are cut off from our parts; therefore prophecy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves . . . and will put my Spirit in you and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land, then shall ye know that I

the Lord have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord." In conclusion, we see in this group of chapters, the journey of the glory through the midst of Israel and the world, down into the dark valley, in order to grasp this mighty ruin as He alone could, and make Himself in grace responsible for lightening it up, and bringing "his own glory and the glory of his Father and of the holy angels" back into it, that all the world may be filled with the glory of God. The lifted-up Son of man on the cross, and the lifting up of the glorified Son of man to the heavens, were necessary, in order to the descent of the Holy Ghost, and for the gathering out of the church first. This other company, brought out with Peter, upon a present confession of Jesus, as the Christ the Son of the living God, during His rejection by the Jews, and the judicial hiding of Himself from both houses of Israel, was now to be manifested upon the earth. The valley of Ezekiel's vision will be opened up, and bone come to its bone, a very great multitude, according to the Spirit of prophecy, when that same Spirit from on high is poured out upon the people to make good all their latter-day blessing. The offended glory, and the Lord Himself once rejected, will again return in the person of their crucified Messiah; holiness shall then be upon the bells of the horses, and the pots in the Lord's house be like the bowls before the altar. In the meanwhile, the new and heavenly family are distinct, and distinguished in these chapters, as brought out to the Lamb of God, the Word made flesh, and these can say, "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." They dwell with Him, accompany Him in all His ways of patient love in the midst of His Israel according to the flesh, and are His associates in service and testimony after to the heavenly things themselves. God is gathering out through Christ a people for the heavens, into the Father's house, in contrast with the feast of tabernacles, which was the record and witness that God dwelt with Israel on the earth, and blessed them where they were with natural blessings in the earthly places. Peter and others make the confession which identifies them with Christ now and hereafter; for when Jesus said to them, Will ye also go away? they reply, "To whom shall we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." The "hard sayings" and tests of chapter 6 brought to light the secrets of all hearts, and put all to the proof. Peter and those with him witnessed at that time a good confession, and go on with their Lord, and continue with Him through His temptation; others (who are sifted) go back, and "from that time walk no more with him." On the other hand, the refusal of Christ to accept the footing of the feast of tabernacles for Himself and Israel and Jehovah in chapter 7: as the present way to prosperity and blessing in Canaan, and a millennium on earth; and His refusal to show Himself there, or in the light of it to the surrounding nations and the world, became a test to the men of progress then, and religiously to the ritualists of that day, as well as now. "Every man went to his own home," and thus they broke company with their Messiah, and refused Him, and the heavenly things; but "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives," into the counsels of the Father concerning Him, and the hidden glories to which that death and His departure to the Father should introduce Him. Thus the One in whom the glory dwells has in spirit departed from the house, and the nation, and its temple, and the feast of tabernacles, to the mount of Olives; just as the typical glory did, in the prophetic times of Ezekiel. Moreover, it is by the way of the east (after the Lord's shout and the glory, in the twinkling of an eye, have caught us away to be for ever with Him) that He and it alike return; for His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem. Like the disciples, we (in the meanwhile) follow Jesus into the place of rejection here, and by the way of the mount of Olives to the right hand of God, into oneness with Him and the Father, where

He now is; as being identified with Him in grace, in every thought and purpose which the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory has counselled in Him for the everlasting ages.

United to Him, and members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, our suited prayer is that He "may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 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 fulness of him that filleth all in all." J. E. Batten.

S. The Promises to the Seven Churches.

The Promises to the Seven Churches.

There is a point of much interest, which I desire to trace, in connection with the promises to the seven churches. It will be found, on an examination of these promises separately, that they embrace all that God had committed to man, or to the nation of Israel, under responsibility to the Giver; but which had been forfeited either through weakness or wilfulness, and had been in this way stolen by Satan out of the bands which were incompetent to hold them.

God had been good, supremely good, as these promises or actual gifts prove, which He so bountifully showered in the pathway He had chosen for Himself and His creatures. Into this path He had, in sovereign grace, called out the patriarchs to walk with Him as "the God of glory," and with His people Israel under the covenant name of "Jehovah." But a driven-out man from Eden, and a scattered nation from Canaan, tell plainly and sadly of Satan's triumph, of man's disgraceful defeat, and of God's consequent dishonour. Nevertheless, this great fact was established, that the creature to walk with God (as a receiver of blessing) must in life and nature correspond with Him whose delight it is to bless: otherwise must responsibility be, when man is put to the test, but a temporary triumph for the devil. The book of the Revelation introduces us to "One like unto the Son of man," who laid His right hand upon John, saying, "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." It is the presence and position of such an One as He who thus proclaims Himself that turns the whole course and order of things round again to God, for His eternal glory with His creatures, but only as redeemed by the blood of His own Son. By His intrinsic obedience when on earth, an obedience unto death, and by His righteous title as "the first begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth," He gathers up, and connects with His person, as Son of man, every promise and gift which man had forfeited, and holds them till the day when all the promises of God which are now made yea and amen" shall be manifestly established "to the glory of God by us." In the meanwhile, till Christ comes to receive us to himself, He gives to those who "have an ear to hear" a present communion, in the joy of knowing that these promises and gifts are embodied in Himself; and those can best testify how precious this fellowship is who have tasted deepest what forfeited blessing means.

These remarks may suffice to introduce our subject to us, and in confirmation of the fact that the Lord, in His visit of inspection to the seven golden candlesticks, gives these promises out afresh, in connection with Himself to this last vessel of responsible testimony on the earth before He comes, let us take them up in the order in which they are presented by John in the Apocalypse. To the church in Ephesus He says, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Here we get the earliest of the forfeited gifts between Adam and the Creator in the garden of Eden, "so God drove out the man." But in the new title of "I am he that liveth" the Lord grants the promise in redemption order, as well as in resurrection power; and leads the overcomer to eat of the tree of life (of which Adam never ate) which is in the midst of the

paradise of God, where the first man never was. A garden in Eden is lost, it is true; but the paradise of God is gained. The flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the tree of life, is sheathed by the knowledge of a crucified Christ; and He who was dead takes the place of the cherubim and affirms, "I will give to eat of the tree of life and in the paradise of God."

Let it be observed, this new bestowment is not merely regaining a place of blessing between God and man, but, being now embodied in Christ, acquires a fulness of meaning which His own worthiness before the Father brings into it, for the eternal delight of Himself and the redeemed, where the tree of the knowledge of good and evil never grew. The promise to the church of Smyrna is "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." This recognizes the fact that sin had come in where the Creator and the creature were once together, walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and that as a consequence the crown had fallen from the head of Adam, the fine gold had become dim, and death stood before him as the penalty inflicted — the wages of disobedience. But this dark cloud is dispersed by the bright shining of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and makes even death to be the new measure of faithfulness (as it was in His own pathway upon the earth), and puts upon the head of all such the crown of life. Thus each promise gets its fulness from Him in whom God has been glorified; and so death, in the pathway of an overcomer by obedience, is made a power by which he reaches the crown of life. He shall not be hurt by the second death, for "he that loseth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." Even Satan, who had the power of death, knows by the risen Lord his own defeat. Death cannot hurt. "We have the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead." Moreover, as regards Satan, "Thou shalt bruise his heel, but it shall bruise thy head." The promise to Pergamos carries us into the world since the flood, and connects us historically with Israel's journey out of Egypt. "To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." Man had eaten angels' food, as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven." Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead, but Jesus said, "he that eateth of the bread that I shall give him, shall live for ever." The names of the twelve tribes had been engraved, by the skill of the cunning workman, upon all manner of precious stones; and set in the breastplate of the great high priest of Israel. But these have become things of the past, like the garden which the Lord planted in Eden. Hosea had stood in the midst of a guilty people, and prophesied "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." But forfeited blessings are again gathered up by Him who has since trodden this path (as the son called out of Egypt) and substantiated in Himself for this same people in the future day of their history: when they shall say "blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." In the meantime, while all is hidden between the Lord and His heavenly ones (for our life is hid with Christ, in God), we get in Himself the hidden manna, and a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, "which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." And this is given out to us by Himself in the new associations in which by grace we "have been circumcised by the circumcision of Christ," as one with Him in a new and heavenly position, while hidden from all below. We, as new creatures in Christ, can well understand, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, what these secret interchanges mean; and what the white stone records — "as Christ is, so are we in this world." Paul was familiar with the stone, and with the new name, and was teaching the Galatians the lesson by it, which they were so slow to learn, that our

purification is by death, when he said, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me." The promise to the church of Thyatira is "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." Here likewise was Israel's place of pre-eminence among the surrounding nations, though now a forfeited one. Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, and Rome, have in their turn broken in upon her, and spoiled her, like the wild beast of the field, and the boar of the wood. Since those days the hope of Israel, the Messiah, has been in their midst, and wept over the city, saying, "If thou hadst known, even in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." And finally, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled." Be that liveth and was dead has recovered this position of pre-eminence by His own righteous title, and holds it for Israel, till the time comes when she "shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the earth with fruit." In the meanwhile, He who has embodied this forfeited place of rule and kingly power in Himself, gives it out to the overcomers of today in association with Himself; "even as I have received of my Father." Nor is this all, for as He connects us with this grant, and promise which is peculiarly His own, He unites us in a hope of which He alone is the fulfilment, "and I will give him the morning star." The saints will be with Him too in the day of retributive righteousness, when He comes out from the opened heavens upon a white horse, and when the armies which were in heaven follow Him, "clothed in fine linen, white and clean, and out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, and he treadeth the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God." (Revelation 19:1-21.) Ignorance of the ways of God, and of His purposes in Christ, can alone explain the fact that the Church has thrown itself into the world's vortex as a peace-maker, and so missed her place of real testimony between God and mankind, as regards the coming forth of the Lord from heaven "to judge and to make war." That He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood forms no part of the Church's present testimony, and indeed how can it, since it would be against herself for being in a voluntary alliance with the world? Neither the consciences of men are aroused by such a coming forth of the Lord, nor the love of Christ acknowledged, which delivers from this impending wrath upon the living and teeming millions of Christendom, by the preaching of a present salvation for today by faith in the atoning blood of the Lamb. The promise given next to the Church of Sardis carries us still farther on in the history of God's ways with the nation of Israel, and takes up its priesthood. "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." In king Solomon's days, when the ark was placed in the temple and the temple filled with glory, "the Levites, the singers, all of them arrayed in white linen, could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud," which had taken possession of the entire scene in the name of the Lord. Further, "her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire;" but the same prophet adds, "their visage is blacker than a coal, they are not known in the streets, their skin cleaveth to their bones." Zechariah shows Joshua the high priest standing before the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. The filthy garments, or the defiled priesthood of Israel, are set aside prophetically, as it will be really, in the future day of their national acceptance, when the fair mitre on the priest's head, and the change of raiment in

connection with "The Branch," will enable God to remove the iniquity of that land in one day. He who is the first and the last has likewise secured this forfeited place of blessing in Himself, adding to it (as He gives it out to the overcomers of this day) the assurance of its perpetuity. "I will not blot his name out of the book of life [like the blotted page of Israel's history], but will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Our own personal security, and the permanence of every purpose, are alike found in a present companionship with Christ, till He comes. We have it not in the outward display, in which it is to be manifested, and on this account we hold all blessing not merely upon His title who deserves it and has the keys of death and of Hades, but in the delight of His own love. "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." What a place and portion does our sojourn on earth afford us, the little while that we are waiting for His shout and our rapture! The promise which is given to the church of Philadelphia brings us to the culminating point of Israel's history in its connection with the throne of God; and the earthly centre, the focus of this world's light, the city of the great king. These links which constitute the theocracy, in which they lived and made their boast were all broken, and Jehovah "profaned his throne by casting it to the ground." The vision of Ezekiel most touchingly relates how the glory (which was the witness of the Lord's acknowledgment of His people) moved away from its place, till, like Noah's dove, finding no rest for the sole of its foot, it took back the sad tale of desolation to Him from whom it had come forth. This too has been secured by "the Prince of the kings of the earth" for Himself and for the government of God, and till the day of millennial glory comes gives it out to those who now suffer with Him in communion with Himself. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God: and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God: and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name." This is the promise to Philadelphia, an assurance that all which had failed on the earth and been forfeited would now be committed no longer to human responsibility, but be seen to come down from God out of heaven to abide for ever. Material pillars and a material temple are superseded; just as stones have been set aside in the spiritual house for living stones, and as God and the Lamb finally take the place of the temple and the city, for that which is perfect is come. In the meanwhile, the Son of man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, says, "I will write upon him that overcometh the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God." What new links of living associations with Himself, in the sanctuary and the glory, are these as He thus puts us into connection with the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God, which is to bring back again the glory of God! But besides this catalogue of blessing, the Lord adds, "and I will write upon him my new name." What is this? For many and various are His titles and names of renown. The angels introduced Him as Jesus-Emmanuel, the waters of Jordan gave Him forth as the Messiah or the Christ, the anointed One, the temptation in the wilderness as the victorious Son of man, the cross as the Lamb of God for sinners slain, the sepulchre as the destroyer of him that had the power of death, resurrection as the Captain of our salvation, ascension into the heavens as the Great High Priest and Advocate at the right hand of God, so that we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Redemption by His blood is the new circle into which everything that yet groans is to be brought; and resurrection by His power, the new holding by which all blessing is maintained for ever. Moreover all His enemies are to be made His footstool. There yet remains a new name in which Christ will be manifestly known when He comes forth to put all "the families in heaven and on earth" into relationship with Himself and God. What a day will that be when God and the Lamb are eternally together, and give a new character

to the entire scene! Our present joy is in communion with Christ, in the power of this new name, as we keep the word of His patience till He comes.

There is yet another promise to the Church of the Laodiceans: "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." Promise and prophecy had alike announced Jesus, the Messiah, as the rightful heir to the royalties of David's throne. "He shall be great and 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 for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." In this title, and with these claims, He presented Himself to Israel when He rode into Jerusalem upon a colt, the foal of an ass, "and all the people cried, Blessed be the king of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord," But this choicest gift of Jehovah's love they rejected, and set up over His head, when they crucified Him, "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews." Therefore He is set down with His Father on His throne, cast out by the world! Yet this place of blessing, though forfeited on their part, He holds in His own personal title as "he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore." The rejected king of Israel — rejected by those to whom He came in grace — is nevertheless the One who says, "Even as I also overcame;" for though death and the grave were the limits of Satan's power, there was a path which the vulture's eye had not seen, and resurrection to the Father's throne declared Him, beyond all controversy, to be the overcomer. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." It is a present fellowship with Himself, in a way that the world knows not, in which He gives the promise, "I will grant to sit with me on my throne;" for the Church by faith through the Spirit can look into the future and distinguish between the Father's throne where the rejected One is set down, and the Son's throne on which He is to sit and reign, and trace the effect which will follow this change of position. How precious for our souls to discover that throughout all the confusion in the pathway of forfeited or rejected blessing from the starting-point in Eden to the Father's throne, the Lord Jesus Christ has been the glorifier of God and the Saviour of the lost! Promises and blessings which were originally put into creature hands are now made "yea and amen in Christ." Gifts and callings which were necessarily on creature responsibility are waiting to be opened out to the glory of God by us. The creature itself is no longer dependent upon its own expectations, but stands on the new footing of redemption. Another life has been brought into the world by the incarnate Son of God, and, by His death and resurrection, is communicated to all them that believe. "He that hath the Son hath life." The hour upon which heaven and earth waits is that of which He said, "Of that hour knoweth no man, neither the angels of God, but my Father only." He will then quit the Father's throne to sit upon His own throne. From that point and by that act above all things below will change into their own respective places and correspondence, either caught up to be for ever with the Lord; or by judicial power commanded to depart — consigned to the lake of fire, where the devil and his angels shall be later.

We are come to the end of the history of God's goodness to man in the flesh, and therefore of forfeited blessing. It is unspeakably gracious in our Lord (who has recovered all that was lost both for Himself and for God; and keeps all in His own hands for the coming day of universal glory) to anticipate that time and give, as we have seen, all these spoils to the overcomers, during the period of His rejection, in a known enjoyment with Himself. In the light of this love, we can accept these promises to the seven churches, and eat the fat and drink the sweet, and know the joy of the Lord to be our strength; while the world is running its own course heedless of the gathering storm.

Or we may take the assurance of the Lord Jesus, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." How very precious to find our souls drawn aside from the glory of man by companionship with Christ; and as overcomers, through a closer walk with Him, to hold these various promises in the secret of the white stone, "and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it!" We become independent of everything under the heavens, by being thus consciously united to Christ, and in all which comes down from God out of heaven. All our blessings, while we are waiting for the Lord, are descending blessings; for "every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning." We owe nothing to the flesh, nor to the world, nor to Satan, except it be to maintain the fact that we do not. On the other hand we are not our own, but bought with a price, and are set by grace in that new place of glorifying God in our body and spirit, which are His. The overcomers have but a little while in which to do a great deal. "Behold I come quickly" is His parting word to Philadelphia. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown," is the encouraging word to us till He does come. J. E. Batten.

S. The Smoking Furnace and the Burning Lamp.

The Smoking Furnace and the Burning Lamp.

Genesis 15:1-21.

I desire to express a few thoughts to your readers on some of the various groupings of the scriptures. Every one, for example, must have been struck with the family circle at Bethany, and the outflow of divine and human affections which made that scene of resurrection, power, and life, what it was — but that Lazarus, was a man who came forth from death and the grave. What was true and suitable, when the time was come for Jesus, as "the resurrection and the life" to form the centre of that circle was equally in keeping with the ways of God as Creator, when the man and the woman were originally introduced into the world, as the heads of the whole human race, and when God walked in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day. This man came out of the dust of the earth, and was called therefore Adam. The woman was formed out of the man and was called Eve, or "the mother of all living." How different!

Another and a very distinct group came out from the ark with Noah upon the world that now is. These had typically "seen the end of all flesh," by the waters of destruction, for man had corrupted his way upon earth and filled it with violence. These close up the history of Adam and the creation, and begin another from the ark as the witness that all who were therein had passed through and over the death and judgment which had swept all else away! Every one must have lingered in company with this new group of Noah and his wife, and their sons and daughters, and two of all kinds of cattle and fowls and creeping things — all these "found grace in the eyes of the Lord;" and the altar with its cloud of sweet savour, in fellowship with which the rainbow of the covenant encircled the horizon of their faith, unmistakably reveal the new ground of their intercourse with God. The Creator, who walked in the garden in the cool of the day, has come forth from the thick darkness — not of original chaos, but of death and righteous judgment at the flood — to bless this second group through "the sweet savour" which He smelt.

"The God of glory" came in (after Babel and the confusion of tongues) to call out Abram from the whole world besides; and it is with this patriarch as the bead of the family of faith and those grouped around him with whom we shall have particularly to do in what follows. Genesis 14:1-24 and Genesis 15:1-21 may give us the diameter of our circle.

Here and there we find in the Old Testament some illustrious stranger introduced, such for instance as Jethro, "the father-in-law of Moses," who seems for the moment to be a leader and commander of the whole scene and then withdraws. So here in these chapters, Melchizedek, the king of Salem and priest of the Most High God, is the prominent person in action, and takes precedence of "the friend of God;" so that for the time that then was, and for typical purposes (as we know from Hebrews 7:1-28 :) he met Abram returning from the slaughter of the kings, and brought forth bread and wine and blessed him. The comment of the Holy Ghost upon this illustrious visitor is remarkable. "Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the

patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils . . . and without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." But this group in Genesis will not get the commanding colour unless we add, "For this Melchizedek, being by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." The patriarch thus met and thus blessed was in himself the separated one unto God — the only one upon earth with a "calling" — called out from the whole world to walk with God, and that too in the character of the God Almighty.

What a delight to see the head of the family of faith — and in this sense "the father of us all" — thus encouraged and so distinguished! How truly is he the representative man of the new race of men, who are partakers of that faith, without which it is impossible to please God — a faith which identifies them with their calling and with Him who calls, as well as with the blessing wherewith they are blessed, and puts them consequently into a place of separation while in the world, out of which they are called as pilgrims and strangers. Melchizedek blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy band. And he gave him tithes of all." It is instructive and encouraging to see "this head of the family of faith" wrought upon by the double power of the calling and the blessing — when in the place of real separation — so that by faith he put to flight the armies of the aliens, and wrought deliverance for "his brother Lot and his goods, the women also and the people" who had been attracted into another and a very different path, by the well-watered plains of Sodom. What a warning, or else an example, for all of us! Nor is it merely in victory and rescue that Abram is a witness, but likewise in his steady refusal to the king of Sodom to accept from a thread even to a shoe-latchet (or anything that was his) lest he should say, "I have made Abram rich." Thus early do we get an example of one who would not morally defile the head of his Nazariteship!

It is to such an one that the word of the Lord comes in Genesis 15:1-21 : saying, "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." Nor is the faith of our father afraid to put God to the proof, according to this announcement. "And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?" One of faith's earliest lessons is here before us — the faith which gives glory to God, by letting Him in to take the place which is according to His own mind. God had made Himself known in calling as the God of glory, and in blessing through the priest of the Most High God as possessor of heaven and earth: He had also proved Himself stronger than all that was against Abram. What could faith say to the possessor and doer of all things, but "What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?"

Abram's faith puts God into the place of a giver, and this is what the living God is, and this is the way to give glory to Him. Moreover "the bread and wine" brought out to Abram by Melchizedek is a great warrant and foreshadowing to us in all our intercourse with God. Nevertheless that which is first in order for our communion with the Father in His own thoughts is often last in manifest and outward accomplishment. No doubt this order has been observed by many in the types of Leviticus, where the burnt offering takes the precedence of all others, though in the actual experience of our souls, when first awakened, we began with the sin offering, as requisite for a guilty conscience. In these two chapters Abram seems growingly alive to the fact that this must be God's order, if He begins to act from Himself towards the man who is His friend! Indeed we (in our

day) may well say that some of the profoundest secrets are here coming out; for what is the setting aside of Eliezer the steward but the making room for a child of promise, the son in the house? Just as we find in Genesis 16:1-16 : with the realities of Sarah and Hagar, or Isaac and Ishmael, and the yet further reality that the "son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman," which things are to us (in New Testament language) "an allegory," of yet deeper mysteries touching Mount Sinai and Jerusalem which is above! In short the external ways of God are but the history of the steward and the stewardship, for this is what man under responsibility to God, from Adam downward, surely is, and therefore the time must come when the unjust steward must be "put out of the stewardship." As those who know the Lord Jesus Christ, we begin with the Son in the house. The Old Testament is in this way the history of the stewards, and "the kingdom of God taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." The New Testament is the revelation of the Son, and the Father, and the Father's house: and it was into this path in principle and type that Abram was being led, though in his lessons he had to offer up his son Isaac, symbolically on Mount Moriah, and receive him back from the dead again in a figure; for the time was not yet come nor the true son of Abraham born into the world. Another thing to be noticed is, that when Abram measured himself by himself he was childless and had no heir; but as soon as he viewed himself in the vastness of God's thoughts, all similitudes and comparisons by things around him fell infinitely short of the Lord's intentions. So "he brought him forth abroad and said, Look now towards heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." A most important fact springs out of this look toward heaven, for the Spirit says, "He believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness." He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. This is what God imputed to him for righteousness, or giving God His right place and Abraham taking his — as it is written, "who against hope, believed in hope" that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, "so shall thy seed be." Indeed we may add, that the whole family are justified on the same principle as their head; "now it was not written for his sake alone, but for us also to whom it [righteousness] shall be imputed, if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." The "God of glory" likewise proclaimed Himself to Abram, as "I am the Lord that brought thee out from Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" An Isaac had been substituted in the house for Eliezer, and now heirship is to be established in the son, instead of a steward; and the inheritance itself grounded upon a covenant of which "God is one," and the only one, and therefore unconditional, because based upon sacrifice and promise. "And he said, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon," and he divided them in the midst, and laid one piece against another, but the birds divided he not. Abram as head of the family of faith, and made righteous by faith, stands before God as the exceptional man, called out to be blessed and to walk with the Almighty, on the ground of covenant and promise; and now he must needs pass through, by types and shadows, the ways and methods by which God will establish all to him and to his seed in the latter-day glory. The "God of Abraham" exercised his soul according to truth, as well as in grace, and so "when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him." The "friend of God" in Genesis, and "the man after God's own heart" in the Psalms, are alike instructed by the Spirit to

look beyond their own histories, and those of their respective sons (whether an Isaac, or a Solomon), and to see by faith in the far distance, a greater than either; so that when Jesus was on earth, He could say, "your father Abraham saw my day, and he saw it and was glad." The Holy Ghost in the Acts witnesses as the Spirit of prophecy in David, that the sweet Psalmist of Israel being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon His throne; "he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

Abram in earlier days passed through "the horror of great darkness which fell upon him" and into which his younger son David, both in the flesh and by faith, likewise entered and perhaps yet more fully. The heifer, the she goat, the ram, the turtledove, and the young pigeon, had each a voice to the faith of Abram, and a deepening voice; a horror, as he took unto him all these and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another! Who was to walk in this new pathway of life, and death, and substitution, but "the burning lamp?" and who was to be justified as the Giver, but "the smoking furnace in type? and who was to learn the security of the inheritance, and indeed of all covenanted blessing by such means as these, but "the man in a deep sleep, under the horror of a great darkness?" and who had asked, "Lord God, how shall I know that I shall inherit it?" And may we not (upon whom "the ends of the ages are come") pause here to speak to one another of Abraham's greater Son and David's greater Lord, the Son of man and Son of God, who in the days of His flesh poured out His soul unto death, when this "deep sleep" was before Him and "the horror of darkness" really come? "And lie taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy, and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here and watch. And he said, Abba Father, all things are possible unto thee: take this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." "And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." "But this is your hour and the power of darkness." Our souls well know that beyond Gethsemane (the last Adam's garden) lay the cross, where the Lord Jesus our Saviour took up more than remained in the deep sleep of the patriarch. The hour that could not pass by was come and He who alone could enter into that horror of darkness did. Then and there He was in fact what "the divided pieces" were in type; for He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, suffered the Just One for the unjust. His own self bare our sins in His body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should be alive unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed. On the cross, too, He submitted to "the smoking furnace," and under the searchings of that fire vindicated the righteousness of God by the wrath which He endured, whilst the offended holiness found its food and satisfaction in the perfection of the offering, which it consumed. "And it came to pass when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces." The furnace and the lamp have each done their respective work at the cross and the sepulchre, for "from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour, and about the ninth hour Jesus cried, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The Lord who had trodden this fiery path and come up out of it, when He rejoined His disciples, reproved them: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" The bread and wine to the head of the family of faith, in type from the hands of Melchizedek; the victims and the

divided pieces in Abram's deep sleep, and the ground of all promise and covenanted blessing in the shed blood, culminate at the Lord's supper, as we sit now around His table to show forth His death till He come. These are handed out to us in their new fulfilments by the glorified Head and Lord from the heavens, where He now sits as the real Melchizedek, in their true and accomplished meanings. The man from the third heavens, "caught up into paradise" says, "I have received of the Lord that which also I have delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he brake it and said, Take, eat; this is my body which was broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." After the same manner He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." "It is finished" closed this work of the burning lamp, and "the rent veil" by the hand of God superseded the smoking furnace; and when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. But the first man who was created in the image of God had also a deep sleep, though of course no horror of darkness nor offerings, for there was no sin. "The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman and brought her unto the man." We shall do well to contrast this deep sleep that fell upon Adam with the deep sleep which fell upon Abraham, and what issued from both under the mighty power of Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. It was before the fall, and while Adam was still in "the image of God," that the typical Eve was formed from his side and brought to him, the product of that deep sleep, during which the help meet for the man was created, the one only good thing lacking where all else was pronounced to be "very good" to the eye and heart of Him who had created all things. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone."

We all know from the Holy Ghost's teaching in Ephesians 5:1-33 to whom this one only paradisiacal symbol pointed, since the very words of the first Adam are quoted in application to the coming marriage of the Lamb, "for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh: this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." We may well remind ourselves, how close we must be upon the second coming of our Lord, seeing that He has Himself passed through in fact the deep sleep of death and the grave whereby to gain His Bride, the Lamb's wife; "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." The Lord repeated by His death what God had said at creation, "it is not good for man to abide alone;" so He bought His Church by His own blood, and brought her out by redemption-title into the new creation of which this Second Man is the beginning, and Lord; and into which He is about to come with His Eve! So likewise (as we have noticed) the horror, and the darkness, and the deep sleep of the head of the family of faith, have been gone through in fact by Him in whom all types and symbols concentrate. The blood of the everlasting covenant has been shed by Christ, and accepted by God; a pathway by which we can be brought back again in the day of the Son of man's glory, not only as the possessor of the heavens and the earth, but according to His promises to Abraham, and to his seed, and the inheritance, and to fill the whole world with His glory. "It shall come to pass in that day I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel."

There is yet another thing to be remarked in the grouping of Genesis 15:1-21 : "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall

serve them: and they shall afflict them four hundred years: and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterward they shall come out with great substance."

Other important principles are introduced here, such as the government of God in connection with His people, and His promises, and the time of final blessing, as well as the judgment of God amongst the nations and their overthrow. No doubt this was typically carried out in the record of God's actings by Moses, in the land of Egypt, when Pharaoh would not let the people go. "Now the sojournings of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years." And it came to pass, "even the self same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out." "Thus the Lord saved Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore."

It may be needful to say a word perhaps upon verse 16, "for the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full," seeing that so many of the Lord's people of this day have no idea of God allowing iniquity to come to the full; but on the contrary, are expecting evil to diminish and gradually to cease. If we transfer this principle of the growth of evil from the Old Testament to the New, or even from Genesis 15:1-21 : to 2 Thessalonians, we shall perhaps discover what a measure of insubjection of mind still exists in reference to the character and growth of the evil described in chapter 2: "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 one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth and destroy with the brightness of his coming." For, "God shall send them strong delusions that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Indeed it is difficult to conceive how a revelation from God, closing as the New Testament does with the Apocalyptic woes and vials and trumpets and plagues, can be understood in any other way than of the coming judgment upon a widespread apostasy, or as Abram in his day was taught in the fact that the "iniquity of the Amorites was not yet come to the full."

It will have been seen by these sketches and groups and their applications, whether of Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, or Solomon, in the ancient chronicles, that they have each and all found their common centre in the Lord Jesus Christ. Types, prophecies, and promises have all been made "yea and amen in him unto the glory of God by us." All covenanted blessing for the earth and for the heavens, which have thus concentrated in His person and work on the cross, wait only for the second coming of the Lord, when they must all as truly emanate from Him in the day of His glory and shine forth like the brightness of the morning to chase the darkness away and fill every heart with gladness and all tongues with rejoicing. The blessed hope of the Lord's coming, and our "gathering together" to meet Him is full upon many a soul as the present and peculiar calling of the Church. When the heavens have received us, with our Lord, who is to introduce us to the Father and to "present us holy, and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight," all will then have reached the climax and be in position who are to go upward, as truly as all below will rapidly form into crisis under the imperial beast and the antichrist, who are to go downward into the lake of fire!

"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither; I will show thee the Bride the Lamb's wife: and he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the

holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." In the order of the new creation, everything is seen to come down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God; whereas in the order of the old creation everything was made out of the dust of the earth, and proceeded from man the creature, to the Creator. God's order is changed. The steward is outside the new creation, and the Son of God, once manifested in the flesh, is become (according to everlasting counsel), in "the dispensation of the fulness of times," the new centre, around whom all things are gathered together, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. J. E. Batten.

S. The Spirit of God," and "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost

"The Spirit of God," and "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost." In order to understand these subjects of divine revelation, and yet to distinguish them in dispensational action, it is necessary to learn from the word of God the present standing and relations of a believer in Christ to the Father and to the Son, as compared with the previous calling of Israel into a place of blessing on the earth. It will be seen that "the Spirit of God" is connected with each, as likewise with the nation and the church, but in different ways; whilst "the baptism of the Holy Ghost" (at Pentecost) brings out from the world into a present portion with Christ glorified in heaven. Indeed it is this, and the blessings which flow from union with Christ, our new Head of life, founded on eternal redemption through His blood, and opened out by His resurrection and departure to the right hand of God in power and glory, which characterise Christianity and Christians, and distinguish them from the economy of Moses, and the position of Israel in the Old Testament, as a "people under law and in the flesh." In bringing these observations to bear on the subjects proposed, I would say, in the first place, that "the Spirit of God" could not bear witness to Judaism as an economy, or to its ritualistic and sacerdotal observances, except to say, that "the law made nothing perfect," and to add further, "that the way into the holiest was not made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing."

"The Spirit of God" declined to witness to man under the law, and to its ordinances, by Moses and Aaron, for the simple reason, that "in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin God had no pleasure," inasmuch as there was a remembrance of sins. "The Spirit of God, which moved upon the face of the waters" in the chaos of creation, could and did act likewise upon the creature — man — at every time, and under any circumstances, in this ruined world. Judaism, though an institution from God, started with nothing perfect; it did not possess in itself a perfect sacrifice, or a perfect priest, or a worshipper made perfect; and therefore the Holy Ghost waited on the person of the Son of God, and tarried in His testimony for the coming in of Jesus as the Saviour, "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." This refusal on the part of the Spirit to witness to the polity of Moses "and the worldly sanctuary" is stated in Hebrews 9:8, and that He waited for the "time of reformation." His readiness to bear testimony "to the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God," is unhesitatingly declared, as well as to the purged worshipper, and to the new and living way which was opened into the holiest "through the rent veil." This is the basis of our communion.

Hebrews 10:14 affirms this to be the glorious truth of Christianity and of the perfections of Christ, throughout the length and breadth of its revelations, namely, "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." For by one offering "he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us."

"The Spirit of God" thus tarried for Christ, and then rested upon Him, when He took His place as "the sent One from the Father," and entered on His ministry and work, for the glorification of God, in the midst of men below.

Indeed one peculiarity of John the Baptist's testimony was this — "upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." We have further before us from this scripture the two great parts of Christ's ministry: one, as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" and the other, "he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." The first was accomplished by His death on the cross below, and the last by His ascension into the heavens as the glorified Son of man. Our redemption by His blood, and our acceptance in the risen Christ, was a pre-requisite to any witness of the Spirit of God to men. He did wait upon Christ, and rest upon Him, as we have seen; but the work of redemption could be the only basis of our intimacy with God, and by which "he could shed his love abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." It is, then, as believers in Christ "we joy in God," by whom we have received the reconciliation. "The men whom thou gavest me out of the world," as Jesus said to the Father, must first be born again of the Spirit, and become partakers of eternal life and of the divine nature, before the Holy Ghost could bear record to them as new creatures, or come and dwell in them as "the Spirit of adoption, and witness to us that we are the sons of God." The descent of the Holy Ghost is consequent also upon the departure of Christ out of this world, and His exaltation at the right hand of the Father. "If I depart, I will send him." Moreover, the Holy Ghost tarried for the glorification "of the Son of man in heaven," even as He had waited upon Him at His incarnation, and rested upon Him, when on the earth. This is the first and prime object of the Spirit, namely, "He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine, and show it unto you." United as we are with Christ, by the power of the quickening Spirit, He can then witness in His turn to us, "that as Christ is, so are we in this world," and "make our bodies the temples of the Holy Ghost." "Ye have an unction from the Holy One," etc.

It will be easily perceived that all which has been stated, and which distinguishes us as Christians, flows from the grace of God into which we are called by the Son of His love, and from the perfection of Christ's work on His cross below, as well as from the glory into which He has been raised above. In this range of blessedness which pertains to the new creation, and of which the Son of man, as second Adam, takes the Headship, our prayers can have no part in the way of means, either as to "sending the Holy Spirit, or receiving His baptism." We are introduced by sovereign grace into this circle by the Father's love, and the prayer of His beloved Son, "Father, I will that those also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." In an earlier chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus had spoken of this further witness and presence of the Holy Ghost in the midst "of his own who were in the world," as the result of His own prayer entirely. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." In John 16:1-33 : also, the coming of the Spirit depended upon the Lord's absence from His disciples: "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send him." Once more, in John 14:1-31 :, which is very precious, because out of the range or need of our prayers, as touching the Holy Ghost and any of His relations (which prayers some suppose to be necessary to bring Him), Jesus says, "but the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name," etc. The presence of the Spirit of God on earth depended thus on the departure of our Lord — upon the Son of man being glorified — and on the double action of the Father and the Son, as further stated in the following verse, "but when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me," etc.

It is evident that our Lord's own prayer to the Father, and not ours in any way, whether past or present, have to do with the descent of the Holy Ghost, or with any of the relations which He undertakes and carries into effect, for the accomplishment of the Father's purpose, and the Son's glory. Indeed this is the only ground taken by the Lord when He actually leaves the disciples in Acts 1:1-26, and is carried up in a cloud into heaven; "being assembled together, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which," saith He, "ye have heard of me." "The baptism of the Holy Ghost" was thus a future thing, though proximate, yet not connected with His resurrection from amongst the dead so much as with His departure and place in heaven, as "Head over all things;" therefore He said to them, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." This descent of the Spirit of God was in effect the fruit of Christ's own request to the Father, and not an object of prayer on the part of others. It was a promise of the Father's, and further, a promise of the Son, for He adds, "which, saith he, ye have heard of me." Moreover, His prayer, and this promise to send, coupled the fact of their "receiving power" with the descent of the Spirit, "but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses to me, both in Jerusalem . . . and to the uttermost parts of the earth."

Here it is of all importance to acknowledge a further peculiarity of this dispensation, namely, that another and a new sample of men was left behind at Christ's ascension, and bidden to tarry for "the promise of the Father," and "the baptism of the Holy Ghost." This new company waiting below were connected with Christ, "the first-fruits," who had gone up as the wave-sheaf before God, and as associated with whom James writes, "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."

Before the Lord had ascended, and taken His own place as Head of the new creation, the Holy Ghost could only witness and abide with one person on the earth, and that One "the Word made flesh." The Spirit of God could not witness to the perfection of Israel, even when under Solomon in all his glory, for they were a nation in the flesh, and separated to God by external ordinances, and were a responsible people to Jehovah their King, both by covenant, and as under His government. It may be proper to notice here, that the Holy Spirit could, and did, bear testimony to all that the God of Israel was and did amongst them by His words and ways, and could likewise act on any individual — for Jehovah was sovereign. The prophet Isaiah records this historically in Isaiah 63:1-19 :: "As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah caused him to rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name." So in their journeyings, "the angel of his presence saved them, in his love and in his pity he redeemed them," etc. The presence of the Spirit was likewise amongst them from the onset, for the prophet says, "Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him?" And, lastly, "but they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them."

Besides this recognition of the Holy Spirit in the general history of Israel, and the ways of God towards them in government, we may as well introduce here the cry of David, "the anointed of the God of Jacob," when he prayed, "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." This penitential cry is often quoted to prove a coming and a going away of the Holy Spirit in Christianity as in former days (so little is the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost realised);

but the dispensational difference which has been already described is a sufficient answer to any such difficulty. In whatever ways the Holy Spirit was with Moses, as the leader and commander of God's people Israel, and in whatever way the Holy Spirit was with the sweet psalmist as the spirit of prophecy — or with the long line of the prophets in Old Testament history — yet the Holy Ghost, as such, was never a witness to an economy which consisted in types, and shadows, and patterns of the heavenly things to come, and stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, imposed on them until the time of reformation. The Holy Ghost waited for the heavenly things themselves ere He could become the indwelling Spirit of a believer in Christ, and the witness to the second Man, as Head over all things, or as the earnest of the inheritance, and as the anointing and seal from God the Father to His many sons. He could not be this till that "which was perfect was come."

We may now return to the Acts, to witness, as a matter of fact, the descent of the Holy Ghost, which "filled all the house" where the men who tarried were sitting. His coming was not what they had to pray for then or now (as some affirm), when all were waiting in confident expectation of the gift. Nay, all depended upon the Father and the Son, as touching "the promise, which ye have heard of me!" Cloven tongues as of fire, which sat upon each of them, were the result of Christ's "prayer" to the Father, and of His own faithful love to those whom He had left behind; and so "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The baptism of the Holy Ghost, which was promised "not many days hence," was come, and they were under its grace and power. For the first time on earth there were "men in Christ," united to Him who had gone up to heaven by the presence and power of the Holy Ghost who had come down. He further claimed them in Christ's name, and possessed them for Himself as His temple, being one with the glorified Head on high; "and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." What had been promised was thus accomplished, and the Holy Ghost was present on earth as the other Comforter sent by the Father, "to abide with us for ever." He takes His place likewise as the formative power here, in uniting the members of Christ together, "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." His power and presence, as we have said, is formative of the present dispensation, and therefore necessary for the carrying out of the Father's counsels as to Christ and the church, "which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." The presence of the Holy Ghost upon earth in divine power is requisite, therefore, for the counsels of God, and for the glory of Christ, in gathering the members of His body into this unity; and in fashioning the bride, as the Lamb's wife, in expectation of the day when the marriage of the Lamb shall have come, and the bride have made herself ready. The Holy Ghost, and His presence and actings on the earth, as sent by the Father and the Son, "this other Comforter," is, further, a constituent part of our faith, because essential to Christianity itself, which is dispensationally in the power of the Spirit. "The baptism of the Holy Ghost" is thus indispensable to "the church of the living God;" nor could there be "the body of Christ on earth," till His descent at Pentecost had witnessed afresh to the Lord as Head above, and made known to us the presence and power by which "Christ and his members" were to be formed, and united as one body. "So also is Christ." There was no such work or operation as this till the Head was seated in the heavenlies; on the contrary, up to the cross, and the crucifixion of Jesus, there was a doctrine of baptisms and "laying on of hands," with a crowd of ordinances, which only "served for the purifying of the flesh," before that Christ arose, as may be seen abundantly in the Old Testament, and the synoptical gospels. A baptism by water, in Jordan and elsewhere, was connected with John's ministry, as the forerunner

of the Messiah; but this was for repentance and remission of sins, and recognized man as still under the law. The disciples also of Jesus baptized with water; but there could be no "baptism of the Holy Ghost," even in connection with the Lord's ministry, before His death and crucifixion; for there was nothing on earth with which God was "well pleased," or in which He "could rest with pleasure," except the Son of His own love, and He was buried. Our eternal redemption by the cross of Christ has put us on the other side of the flesh and the world and the devil's power and dominion; and our union with Christ by resurrection has associated us with Him in life, and "as new creatures in the Father's counsels and love," which were pre-determined before the foundation of the world. It is this "mystery, which was hid in God," but is now brought to light, and manifested in the glorified Son of man, that the Holy Ghost witnesses to, and declares to us by the apostles, under the anointing of the Spirit, in the epistles. This opens out the place, as well as the objects and ministry of the Holy Ghost, in this present dispensation, and which required His descent to carry out. He had, moreover, to form upon the earth that glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, which Christ will finally present to Himself when He comes to fetch her.

"The baptism of the Holy Ghost," having relation to the members of Christ, is therefore more corporate than individual, seeing that it is by it we are brought into the unity of this body with all our fellow-members, and in which we are respectively set as" it hath pleased God." His bestowment and presence cannot therefore be the subject or object of our prayer and supplication, seeing that the day of Pentecost is the record of His descent; and not only this, but that those who waited the few days as representative men received this baptism, and "were all filled with the Holy Ghost," and united to Christ as the Head with ourselves. On our part His presence is to be acknowledged as abiding with us for ever, and this forms our new responsibility as "men in Christ;" for example (and individually), "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption;" and again (as in the assembly of God), "Quench not the Spirit," despise not prophesyings.

We have thus looked at the Holy Ghost, not only as a Person revealed to us in Christianity, as one with the Father and the Son, but chiefly as taking His place of co-operation on earth, in this dispensation, and consequent upon the departure of the Son to the Father. He is also the energizing power in quickening, and gathering, and uniting the members of Christ to their Head in heaven, by "the baptism" of the Holy Ghost. This, as we have said, is a more corporate action of the descended Paraclete at Pentecost, than as a proper personal expectation, and not, therefore, to be understood or restricted to us individually, like the indwelling of the Spirit, or as the Spirit of adoption.

Besides this formative power of the Holy Ghost, between the Head in heaven and the members of Christ on earth, and this baptism, by which the body is gathered out and completed, and the "unity of the Spirit" maintained and kept, there remains yet to be considered what this new order of man is, and what this new company of men are, who come out of "the upper chamber" in Acts 1:1-26 : — for this is individual. Personally they are new creatures, born of God, and one with their departed Lord in the Father's love and counsels, in the many-mansioned house. As to their description and nature, they are "men in Christ," and correspondingly "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," and tongues as of fire sat upon each of them. Thus are they distinguished from all the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea, and from mankind at large. Their characteristics are, first, that they are individually united to Christ in life and righteousness, who is gone up; and filled with the Holy

Ghost, who has come down. There are thus men upon the earth who are "not of the world, even as Jesus was not of the world" — men who are one with the Second Adam above, and are to represent Christ below as heavenly men, and to "walk as sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," etc. Moreover, while this was their peculiarity, as gathered out from the children of men, it was also their normal state and description, as seen in "the Holy Ghost's actings" throughout the Acts. Perhaps one of the most convincing and remarkable proofs of this is supplied in chapter 6:: "Wherefore look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," etc. Another may yet be added: "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with 'boldness.'" Proofs of an opposite kind may also be stated, which sprang from the enmity produced in those who were of the wicked one, against those who were one with their Lord, and the consequent persecution "against the church" which was at Jerusalem, so that the disciples "were all scattered abroad."

"As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison;" they that were after the flesh persecuted them who were after the Spirit. Another proof of the contrariety which thus originally existed may be gathered from the declension and growing apostasy of these last and closing days, when the difference has been so completely lost that the world cannot find anything like enough to Christ, or sufficiently unlike itself, against which to stir up its enmity, or to call out its persecution. This fact, however, ought only to give more earnest desire "to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called," in the true confession of what has been let go and departed from, through the craft of men, and by the subtle wiles of Satan. Our responsibility is in the acknowledgment of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the distinctive relations in which by grace we have been set, and in the confession that our sufficiency is of God. The rights of Christ, and the privileges of His own, and the mystery of the church, are inalienable and indestructible, and it is only adding to the confusion and declension to say, "who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above; or who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead." Nor is it different in principle to pray for the descent of the Spirit, or the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which were promised by the Lord, and sent from the Father and the Son at Pentecost, and which characterize Christianity itself as the only adequate power on earth, whether for the formation of the church of God, the body of Christ, or for making ready the bride of the Lamb. The recognition of this "baptism of the Holy Ghost" is the church's responsibility, and should, in these days of departure from the truth, be acknowledged and carried out, by a withdrawal from all the sects of Christendom, the existence of which violates this "unity of the Spirit," and by a refusal to co-operate with any, and all, who accept and build upon this general declension which we see around. To make this condition a common ground of alliance in confederated action is the sin of the day, and to use it as a platform for united prayer and supplication to God, as is, alas! so usual amongst the sects, is sad. Thus to turn round what is our shame, and reproach, and default, into an occasion (not of repentance and confession), but of combined effort by prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit, and for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is a very grave artifice of the enemy. The one grand distinguishing mark of Christianity was the promise of the Father, which was fulfilled by the descent of the Holy Ghost, as "the other Comforter," and "He was to abide with us for ever." The outward manifestation of His power, in the way of miracles, gift of tongues, raising the dead, and recovering of sight, may have been withdrawn judicially from the church, because the presence of the Holy Ghost has been

forgotten, and treated as a thing of the past, and almost out of mind. Even in these last days, just on the eve of the Lord's own coming and the church's rapture, it is made the absorbing object of united supplication by the sects that the Spirit may be poured out, or that the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost may be received. The resource of faith now is in true repentance and confession; not in conferences for the descent or baptism of the Holy Ghost, but by "praying in the Holy Ghost, and building ourselves up on our most holy faith, keeping ourselves in the love of God," etc. The remedy is not by unbelief in a new form, and repeated by Christians towards the Holy Ghost, as it once was by Israel in reference to the Lord, saying, "who shall bring him down from above," but what saith it? "The word is nigh thee," etc. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." The relief is to be found in the unfailing grace of God to those who still get into the place of His mind through His word, by the teaching and guidance of the Holy Ghost, which remaineth amongst us, "whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Confession that He has been sinned against, and dishonoured, and grieved, is the right and true exercise of soul before God in days like these. Dependence on the grace of Christ, and the Lord's unchanging love to His own, are the open doors for the reliance of faith, in any departure from Himself above, or in forgetfulness of the Holy Ghost's presence and operations on the earth. But to refuse humiliation and confession (which would be so proper) because of this sin against the Holy Ghost, and to combine in earnest prayer for His bestowment or outpouring, and baptism, is to overlook the church's responsibility, and to take an antagonistic position to the truth of the dispensation. It is virtually to say His descent at Pentecost has been falsified or forfeited, and that it depended not upon the promise of the Father and the Son "to abide with us for ever," but on the faithfulness of the church to Christ.

Any who at this present time have, on the other hand, taken this ground of confession and humiliation on account of the sin of the professing church, and refused to join in united prayer that God would send down the Spirit afresh, have found by faith and obedience the sufficiency of the Lord's love, and the real presence of the Holy Ghost in their midst. Unbelief and Saul's armour have been by them refused, to make room for dependence and the power of the Spirit. The twos and threes who thus meet together now throughout this kingdom, and in other lands, have found the faithfulness of Christ in their weakness to be more than enough, and there "am I in the midst of them" has been the rallying-point in many a time of trial. "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name," has often cast them in the confidence of dependence upon the grace and sympathy "of him that is holy, and him that is true," who has, in faithful love, "set before them an open door, and no man can shut it." Not by might, nor by power, "but by my Spirit," saith the Lord, has been their refuge: and the encouraging words of Paul to Timothy ("Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," for patience and endurance, on the one hand; or else, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," for conflict, on the other) have strengthened the feeble knees in prayer, and nerved the outstretched arm in the hour of danger, Instead of entreaty for the Holy Ghost to be sent (a more unhindered power in the Spirit has ever been their request). And they remember the word of the Lord by Haggai to Israel, in their declension and apostasy, "Yet now be strong . . . for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts." This recovery and power lay in the fact of Jehovah's presence in their midst, as it is in these perilous times too: for the "foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

After the manner also "in which the Holy Spirit was with Moses and the people," when Jehovah brought them up out of Egypt with His glorious arm, as has been previously referred to, so Haggai says in his prophecy, "according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not." The confidence and assurance of the remnant with Zerubbabel rested upon the word, "for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts," having for its counterpart, "so my Spirit remaineth among you," and they proved by faith and obedience their sufficiency to be in the living God, unbelief, especially in an evil day, may easily turn the path of faith and dependence into a provocation, as did Israel in the wilderness, or as does the professing church now.

Forgetfulness or ignorance of "the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost" on earth, or of "the Lord's faithful love to His own" which are in the world "unto the very end," has caused the prayers and supplications of Christians to be neither in the truth nor in the Spirit. Their persistent maintenance of sectarian systems and church establishments, which not only prove, but are themselves, the departure from scripture, as respects the glorified Head of the church in heaven, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost into one body on the earth, has stopped the way for ages to the manifestation of this "unity of the Spirit." This denial of the one body on earth has, on the other hand, thrown open its flood-gates for union with the world, as seen in the multiplied religious and political associations of today, crowned by "an Evangelical Alliance." As the legitimate fruit of this spiritual fornication, the truth of Christianity, and of the rights of the Son of man on high, have been sacrificed to the world's advancement. The formative power of the Holy Ghost for quickening and gathering men out of the world into oneness with the ascended Lord, as Head over all things to the church, has been in this way surrendered to "the prince of the power of the air," for the advancement of man in the flesh where he is, and the development of his faculties, in order to make the wrong world what it seems to be. Besides this downward road of departure from the glory of God by the responsible church on the earth, and from the glory of Christ in His Headship in heaven, through the wiles of the enemy, there still lies, as we have seen, the unbelief of the Lord's own people as to the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost with us for ever — not merely to quicken those who are dead in sins, and to dwell in those who are thus born of God, but to "baptize the members of Christ into one body, and to make them drink into one Spirit." The Holy Ghost, ever true to the glory of the Father and the glory of the Son, has not changed in the work which brought Him down at Pentecost, but is carrying it out; and "my Spirit remaineth among you," together with, "I am in your midst," are the rallying assurances for faith and obedience today. No sect on earth, and the refusal of any, and every one of them, clears the way back "to the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace," and opens the heart to the abiding truth and preciousness of the "baptism of the Holy Ghost." It is not by abandoning to the enemy's craft the great fact of our dispensation, namely, the Spirit's presence in power on the earth, "to gather together in one the children of God," or by having recourse to united prayer, and begging that He may be sent in power to baptize, that any who are in the snare will get out of the spider's web, but by the acknowledgment of the truth, that He abideth faithful to the objects which brought Him here, and thus take their places in the one body.

"Be strong," "fear not," are handed down for faith from generation to generation. Moses rehearsed them to Joshua, with the addition from Jehovah Himself, "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee." Haggai, in the last days of Israel's past history, reassures the remnant of their sufficiency for an evil day (and in the midst of general departure too) by the abiding faithfulness of God, and the

presence of His Spirit. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire," etc., are the encouraging words to "him that hath an ear" to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. Let all be careful not to reduce the Holy Ghost's presence in formative power in the church of the living God down to our own individual relations to Christ, and the Spirit's operations in us, wonderful and blessed as these are, lest we should be satisfied merely with what He witnesses of to us, and of which He is the earnest and seal, and so overlook the glory of the Head. May our hearts, in the sense and enjoyment of all that is individual, be the more free to acknowledge what is collective and corporate, by the Spirit's power, and baptism into one body, for the glory of Christ, the Lord, and for the glory of God the Father, in another relation to Himself personally, as "the members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." That the Lord nourishes and cherishes these members now is a present fact, and proof of what the Holy Ghost has come down to gather together in the unity of the Spirit. He abides with us, in the exercise of this divine power which unites the members thus to Christ, and forms the body on the earth, in hope of the approaching nuptial day. In conclusion, let our corporate relations to Christ and the body, at this present time, be understood, in the love that nourishes and cherishes each one of His members, and be added to our individual ones, that many who desire to know the truth of the church of God, but are still in the sects around, may take their place outside them all, in the true unity of the Spirit, and by this acknowledgment of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as members of Christ, and of the same body, refuse to be schismatic, and bad builders. May many be thus practically led into the realisation of their oneness with Christ and the church, that in the enjoyment of an extended communion and fellowship with all saints, they may "endeavour to keep" it with those who do. Beware of surrendering "the church of the living God," and the truth of "the body and bride of Christ," and the necessary "baptism of the Holy Ghost," as present realities, to the enemy of Christ's glory, and to human tradition. The object of Satan is to keep man where he is, and to make him active, benevolent, and philanthropic, in the darkness of this "present evil age," of which he is the ruler. He seeks to get Christians off the ground of their heavenly calling, that they may religiously become citizens and dwellers upon the earth, and so deny their dignity as God's fellow-workmen in another order of things, for the new creation of God, with the second Adam, our glorified Lord and Head.

Satan encourages any use of Christianity or Christ, yea, and of the Holy Ghost, that can be applied for the improvement of the world, and the advancement of mankind in it, and thus triumphs over those who blindly accept the slavery "of sweeping and garnishing the strong man's house," as false to their confession of Christ, in positive separation of life, and walk on earth; as well as untrue in a daily denial of the world, the flesh, and the devil. J. E. Batten.

S. The Testimony of our Lord

"The Testimony of our Lord."

There is a difference, I judge, between what is called "the present testimony," and "the testimony of our Lord;" and, further, between this and "the testimony of our Lord," in its external and kingdom character, of which Paul writes to Timothy, when all in Asia had turned away from him.

Present testimony, for example, may be, and I suppose was, the subject on which the prophets of the Old Testament wrote to Israel, as meeting their then state, whether in the days of Isaiah, Haggai, or Malachi, as distinguished from the testimony of Jehovah Himself, when He dwelt with the people of Israel in the wilderness, with Moses and Aaron; or in Canaan, with Joshua and Eliezer: or in the days and reign of king Solomon, when Jehovah filled the temple with His glory, and entered into that rest with the redeemed nation.

Whatever the character of "the present testimony" of the prophets was, as varying to suit the declension and final departure marked on the sliding-scale of Israel's apostasy; yet the original testimony to Jehovah Himself, and His purpose to lead and establish His people in unending blessing (as well as to judge and destroy all their enemies, from Pharaoh to Anti-christ) was introduced, and shone out brightly here and there, to sustain the faith of the remnant, and guide their hopes to a yet future day.

Isaiah was called forth, to declare to Israel in his prophecy their state as a worshipping people, when tested by "the throne, high and lifted up, and the holy, holy, holy One" — for this was their relation to God in privilege, as their Jehovah. Long after this came Ezekiel, whose ministry was characterized by "the glory of the God of Israel," and when this was also applied as a measuring-line, and cast over the nation and people morally, it ended in judgment and condemnation. The testimony both to "the throne of the Holy One," and to "the glory" which followed them in the wilderness, and dwelt with them in the city of Jerusalem, was violated and forfeited. Like Isaiah in his day, so Ezekiel saw the glory depart, and became the witness of the sad consequences to the rebellious people — nevertheless, he prophesied of its return with the Messiah, and the nation's ultimate blessing, when the whole world shall be filled with the glory of God. Thus, in the ministry of the prophets, we get present testimony, and yet the original and future testimony of Jehovah to Himself connected therewith, in His unending power and goodness. When we open the New Testament, we find the same distinction maintained in the ministry of Jesus and His disciples, as regards "the testimony of the kingdom of God," which was then preached to the Jews, and presented in the person of Christ. He took the highest place in it on earth, when on the Mount of transfiguration with His disciples, He shone forth as the sun in majesty and glory — all was ready on His part. This testimony to the "Son of man coming in His kingdom" was changed, however, and became "present testimony," by the parables of our Lord in Matthew 13:1-58, because it had to do also with the state and condition of the nation, in their then alienation of heart from Jehovah-Messiah.

Consequent on the rejection of Christ and the kingdom, and His exaltation at the right hand of God, as "Head over all things to the church, which is His body," it is obvious that any and all subsequent testimony must suit itself to the glory of His person as sitting there; and if in full manifestation, as embracing both the heavens and the earth. The counsels of the Father's love (which had been hidden in God), and His outward government, henceforth take the double character of what was visible and invisible in their communication to men; or seen and not seen. The Second Man, accordingly, as the rejected King and Lord, crowned with glory and honour by God in heaven, became the subject of external and general testimony to the world, which had crucified Him; whether as making known the riches of God's grace, for life and salvation, through faith now, or as the coming King, whose claims and titles will be established; by God in power and judgment; so that "every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Besides this outward and general "testimony of our Lord" and His Lordship, there is (as has been expressed) the internal or hidden testimony to the church which is His body, and confined by the Holy Ghost to those who are, by grace and heavenly calling, the members of Christ in life; and brought into this unity one with another by the baptism of the Spirit. These two kinds of witness are plainly seen in the various epistles of Paul and others; that is, the external and internal testimony of our Lord. For instance, "that the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear," as an outward testimony; and "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began," as the gathering testimony into the unity of the Spirit. In applying these remarks to a given epistle (namely, the 2nd to Timothy), may it not be that Paul goes over with his "son in the faith" the constituent parts of this outward and general "testimony of our Lord, and of Paul his prisoner," of which Timothy was not to be ashamed, etc.? an external testimony, not only to every creature under heaven, but to professors then or now, and also suited to "the last times," of which the epistle treats; beginning from "a promise of life in Christ Jesus," and extending to His future coming as "the Judge of quick and dead, at his appearing and his kingdom." The whole breadth, in short, of what makes up Christianity in external testimony, reserving the revelation of "the mystery" of the Head and the Body for other epistles, like the Colossians and Ephesians; and not even introducing it here, with "the great house, and its vessels to honour and dishonour." Does not this epistle contain a public and important side of "the testimony of our Lord," about which Paul exhorts his son in the faith? If it does, it is easy to see in what this testimony consists, in its various chapters, as an external witness to men of the displacement of the first Adam by the appearing of the Second; and then of His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God to take the kingdom, till He returns as the Judge.

Reference has already been made to the opening "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus." Also, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind," for its public declaration. And, "be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God." These verses declare another life in Christ Jesus, promised by God, which has by the incarnation long ago passed out of promise into accomplished fact, and of external public manifestation to the world. Life and incorruptibility have been brought to light by the appearing of Jesus Christ. God maintains by power and courage in

His servants what qualifies them to be the witnesses to Christ, and to this eternal life in Christ, which necessarily sets aside the first man, not only as to the counsels of God, but now, in fact, as to his sin-life and nature. The pre-Adamite Man in divine philosophy is Christ. A second Man in Adam's world, walking through it as the life and the light of men in quickening power, cast down all the pretensions of mankind, and raised the persecutions and afflictions which came upon Paul, and in which he exhorted Timothy to be a partaker. God's "own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began," and by which we "are saved, and called with an holy calling, not according to our works," reduced the creature down to clay in the hands of the potter, and is the next part of this testimony of our Lord. To this is added what Christ did on the cross, as the ground of God's new action in grace towards us, for eternal salvation and effectual calling. The appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ has made this "purpose of God" manifest in fact. This testimony of our Lord also affirms that He has "abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel;" of which Paul was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher among the Gentiles, for the obedience of faith. The confidence and assurance of Paul are then stated. "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." He also exhorts Timothy to hold fast the form of sound words, and to keep that good thing which was committed to him by the Holy Ghost.

We have thus the qualifications which God knew to be needed, and which He provided, that the testimony of our Lord in itself might be preserved uncorrupted through "faith and love which is in Christ Jesus," and that the witnesses might not be ashamed or afraid in delivering it. Looked at in relation to God and to the Lord, it would, in effect, turn the world upside down, and finally turn Satan out of it; even as it had put aside man as self-sufficient, in all his pretensions of life, wisdom, or righteousness — because Christ, and the purpose of God in Him before the world was, have come in to take effect. God's new order in His new creation is this — "Christ is all, and in all." A double testimony, which thus makes nothing of man, except to save him, and which makes everything of the Second Man in the efficacy of His death, as coming into it, to abolish it and sin too; a testimony which affirms His titles and prerogatives as Judge and only Lord (now that "He is raised from the dead," and gone back to the Father in glory) was too revolutionary and extreme to be entertained. Those even who had embraced this testimony (purposed by God in grace and wisdom before the world was, and now brought into it by sovereign power, through the appearing of Christ) had turned away from Paul. This record ends the first chapter, the refusal of the testimony is complete as regards those in Asia.

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," and remember Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, raised from the dead according to my gospel — are the subjects of the second chapter — "wherein," as Paul says, "I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound." Jesus and the resurrection (as forming another part of this public testimony of our Lord), whether among the Jews at Thessalonica, or among the Athenians at Areopagus, was not only a new doctrine, but led to the accusation that the apostle was "a setter forth of strange gods" by preaching it. Jesus and His appearing, by which he brought life and incorruptibility to light, was the resource of those who were under the law of sin and death: and also was the avowal on the part of God to rescue man out of the fallen and sinful state he was in. "Jesus and the resurrection" proved also the rejection by the world of the One who had come into

it. Philosophy at Mars' hill was overthrown by this "strange god," who had entered by incarnation, and departed out of the world by ascension. Corrupted Judaism was overturned as a religion on the earth, which had not kept these prophetic records of Jesus and the resurrection, as its divine deposits and treasures. That He had abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light, were new doctrines, and strange things, even to the nation of Israel; and to the Gentile prisoners, who were groaning in their chains, fast bound in the snare of the devil, and led captive by him at his will. The whole world was turned against its Deliverer and Lord. A new and heavenly association with Christ, through His own death, and our death made good in His resurrection, is the next part of the testimony — "therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying, for if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him," etc. But now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and the testimony of Jehovah's power, when the typical rod in Egypt wrought their deliverance from Pharaoh; so do Hymenaeus and Philetus, and men of corrupt minds, resist divine truth, and become reprobate concerning this faith and its glorious triumphs, presented to them by the appearing and resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Paul is himself in chains. The righteous judgment of God must finally accomplish by power this "testimony of our Lord" on behalf of those who wait for the salvation which is in Christ with eternal glory. Therefore Paul charges Timothy, "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom," to preach the word, and be instant in season and out of season. The outward and visible witness to the glory of Christ's person, and His rights, titles, and prerogatives made good in resurrection, will thus be established another day, and manifested in "his kingdom" of power and public rule, when all His enemies shall be trodden under foot. There is another King, one Jesus, to come in, "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood."

Paul, the prisoner of the Lord in this world, will receive and wear "the crown of righteousness" in that which is to come at that day; and riot to him only, but to all them also that love His appearing. Is not this the nature of Paul's preaching, in its external and kingdom character? The roaring lion would have swallowed up this witness of "the testimony of our Lord," brought in against the "liar and murderer from the beginning." "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me," Paul says, "and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." In the confidence of "Jesus and the resurrection," and the Lord's appearing to "judge the quick and the dead," in the coming kingdom; Paul accepts the sentence of death below, "keeps the faith, fights the good fight," knowing that there is laid up for him a crown of life and righteousness with the King of kings, and Lord of lords, in that day of unfailing and eternal glory. Thus the circle of external testimony is complete in its constituent parts respecting the Lord Himself, by His appearing — His rejection — His death — His resurrection — His reappearing as Judge of quick and dead, and as the rewarder (of a crown of righteousness) to those who enter with Him into His kingdom and glory. The kingdom, and its outward public manifestation, is a subject of testimony in 2 Timothy, as well as of its fulfilment. The church, the body of Christ, is the unseen bride of His own affections, to be displayed in the Father's kingdom, when the marriage of the Lamb shall come, and the bride have made herself ready. She has veiled herself from outward gaze in the meanwhile, and does not at present form part of the public testimony of her Lord, in the times of the great house, and of evil men and seducers! The elect, who are called to obtain the salvation of Christ with eternal glory, are in the secret of the mystery, and in the enjoyment of the Bridegroom's love; in the blessed

hope of His voice from the mountain tops, and the shout that shall call them up to meet Him, and be like Him, and be with Him. Till then "we are the epistle of Christ," known and read of all men. This may mark the difference between this external testimony of our Lord in 2 Timothy to the world, and the inward or gathering power of the epistles to Ephesus and Colosse; and between things seen and unseen. Yet their combination is essential, as constituting the entire testimony to our blessed Lord, whose glory fills the heavens above and the earth beneath, and in which He establishes finally both the church and the kingdom. J. E. Batten.

S. The Throne of God and the Son of Man

The Throne of God and the Son of Man.

It is important to distinguish between the ways of God in government on this earth, whilst nations and peoples are living upon it, in all the busy activities of human enterprise; and the judgment after death, which awaits mankind, when "small and great, stand before God, and the books are opened." The difference maintained in the scriptures between a first and second death is marked and bold — at the end of a "threescore years and ten" life, in this world; or in the beginning of that undying life of woe hereafter, when "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." There are, further, important distinctions, and varieties in the present ways of God, towards the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church, some of which it is my object to notice. So real indeed is this difference in the governmental actings of God in time, that a Gentile can never with propriety take on himself the responsibility of a Jew — nor a Jew charge himself with the responsibilities of a Gentile — nor a Christian with either. Moreover when Christ was on the earth, and standing in His own peculiar relation to each of these classes, who has not loved to trace Him in the perfectness of His own paths, and intercourse with each, as He enters into the narrower circle of the nation of Israel, at one time; or passes into the broader one as a man, in the midst of mankind; or at last in that new group of men and women, who were the nucleus of Christianity, and of a new-born Christian people? He weeps over his own city Jerusalem before He leaves the world. He sends the Holy Ghost down from the heavens, when He is gone up there, "to gather out from the Gentiles," a people for His name; and He is coming a second time to call away the Church from this earth, when "the marriage of the Lamb is come." Who does not see these differences in result, as "the Jews, and the Gentiles, and the Church of God" in their various relations to Christ are viewed now in the light or shade of their respective histories; or when each is glorified in the glory of the coming Lord and of the approaching King and His kingdom?

What will be manifestly true in outward form and fact then, when "the oil of joy" and "the garment of praise" take their place and do their work, had an equal reality, but a very opposite one, when dispensationally and "in the days of his flesh" that blessed Jesus, who will fill all hearts with gladness, "offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears," as He entered into the afflictions of His people, or took His place as "the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." It is to this part of the wondrous life of Christ, in these varied trials of man and of Israel, when He went His weary way through this earth, that the following remarks will be confined — the past; and with this part of that engrossing past! Before the great mystery of godliness, "God manifest in the flesh," had appeared, Isaiah had been called forth in that magnificent outburst of prophecy, to measure the nation and its worship, by nothing less than "the throne and the temple" of the sixth chapter, and "the holy, holy, holy Lord of hosts." What less than this standard could the Jehovah of that day apply to "the Commonwealth?" Indeed we shall see that whenever God introduces any fresh manifestations of Himself in power and grace, these necessarily form in righteous government the new responsibilities of the people. And Isaiah will say, "Woe is me, for I am undone," as he weighs himself in these balances, "because I am a man of unclean lips;" or, as he

applies this standard of the throne and the temple and the Holy One to the state and condition of all around, he will add "for I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips," and assign as the groundwork of the whole action "for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of hosts!" The theocracy of Israel was maintained in their midst by the throne and by the temple, and Isaiah must first, as the testifying witness from Jehovah to His people, judge himself in the presence of the Holy One, as we have seen, and then go forth with the balances of the sanctuary, and declare everything according to truth and to God, as he does throughout his prophecy, with the reserves of Jehovah's grace and the resources of the people either for present faith, or else for a future day in sovereign power. The throne and the temple had not only distinguished Israel, but likewise the glory had travelled along with them in their journeyings, and accompanied them to the last; and had in temple days of rest made its abode in their midst. What a people are they under Solomon their king!

Another prophet from "the river of Chebar" must in his turn be called forth to estimate morally the condition of Jerusalem according to "the vision of the glory!" And who has not mourned, as chapter after chapter shows us the reasons why the glory is first grieved, and then seen lingering over God's centre of earthly blessing — hovering upon the city and the people till, hopelessly grieved, it departed! The principle is a very simple, but very important one, whether viewed in the light of Isaiah's "throne and temple," or Ezekiel's "vision of the glory;" and the principle is this — whatever God bestows, if rightly used, becomes the sure guarantee and measure of the people's blessing; and if not held for Jehovah's honour, He cannot accredit His people in their disobedience, and will "profane His throne by casting it down to the ground," and by recalling the outward and visible glory, as in Ezekiel's time. It is not my intention to go into the touching details of these two prophecies, but only to seize the characteristics which mark each in its way; and which especially bear on the subject of this paper. I might add that Jeremiah is as perfect as these two prophets: only he of course will not be charged to view the state of the nation, and its responsibilities, by "the royal throne," or "the visible glory," but will report all according to the two covenants of Hagar and Sarah, or of Mount Sinai or Mount Zion. Hence, he will say in the depth of his Lamentations, "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!" And now that prophecy has brought to light present delinquency and the threatened forfeiture of all that Jehovah had given, except they nationally repented, what greater prophet than Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, is yet to follow? what greater person than these, or any of their predecessors, is yet to come in upon the scene, and vindicate the offended rights of the throne of Majesty, and of the grieved and departed glory, and of the broken covenants? Should there be any such One in reserve, as there surely is, upon the pages of each of these three prophecies, yet how shall He "when the fulness of the time is come" vindicate these to the full, without also going down into the righteous consequences of the nation's disobedience in this earth? Inflictions had come upon them on account of what Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel had respectively been commissioned to bring to light, and upon what righteous plea are these to cease and be changed, save upon the fact that He, who in due time would vindicate and secure by Himself the offended rights and claims of Jehovah, would also by entering into the sorrows and afflictions of His own people, and suffering with them, cry out from their very depths to Jehovah, and be heard because of His own perfections and obedience, and in this way discharge all preceding liabilities, and even found a new claim before God as a man, and an Israelite, on the double title of His own glorious person

and of having glorified God upon the earth! What a pathway was marked out for the blessed Lord, if we call to mind the Levitical types and ask ourselves, who is to take them all up and fulfil them, but He to whom they point?

Again, when the prophecies come before the mind in their double character of present consequences governmentally, as well as of future recovery and blessings, who is there that can clear away all the existing obstructions and charge himself with the formation of new, and abiding, and permanent positions upon this earth, whether for man or for Israel, but He whose meat and drink it was to do the will of the Father who sent Him, and to finish His work? Who could magnify the law and make it honourable, but that very Jesus whom the law could not measure? As regards all besides, whether under Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, the law disclosed the fact "that the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." Jesus alone has found "meat out of the eater, and honey out of the strong." The line of the promises and of covenanted blessings from the first to the last, whether as centred in Adam, Abraham, Noah, or David, are all "made yea and amen in Christ," and will as surely be "to the glory of God by us" in their respective times and seasons. Do we think of ancient prophecies? the Lord Himself will tell us, "All the prophets and the law prophesied until John." Do we think of the whole of the Old Testament, as to its applications and fulfilments in its long line of shadows, and types, and fingerposts? that same Jesus will say, "These are the words that I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me." The place which John the Baptist held is remarkable in every way. All previous testimony gave place to him, and as "the prophet of the Highest," in the song of Zacharias, or as "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God," in the older strains of Isaiah; or in the more modern narrative of Matthew, "The same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey" — all these witnesses serve to tell us that the greatest of those "who are born of women" will readily give way to the alone Lord, whose paths he was making straight. Who does not love to hear John himself say, "Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him;" and again, "He must increase, but I must decrease." "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." The prison in a later day, and its voice by John's disciples, "Art thou he that should come or look we for another?" will tell us how this "friend of the bridegroom" would readily precede his Jesus Messiah as a suffering witness, and change his joy into present sorrow if "the way of the Lord and the highway of our God" took that course. Still later, "John the Baptist's head in a charger" will declare how worthily in all respects, both in life and in death, he would "make straight in the desert" at one time, or in "the rough valley neither eared nor sown" at another time, the ordered goings of "the desire of all nations." Precious thus to anticipate the ordained path and the appointed steps which Jehovah-Jesus would tread; a path as truly ordered in the counsels of eternity as ever they were taken in time: or as when the body "thou hast prepared me" was necessary, in which every purpose from everlasting to everlasting was to be carried out in the veiling manhood below! Promises and types, prophecies and testimonies, the throne and the temple, the long line of anointed kings and the longer line of consecrated priests, have all done their work and served their purpose: and what a work and purpose was theirs! Refreshing as every soul has found it, to view the incarnate and suffering One in the lights and

shadows of the past, with what joy do we bid adieu to testifiers and prophets, yea, to the very last and greatest of them, and feel our relief as we rest our eyes and hearts on "One" object, and only "One," in the whole universe around us — "Jesus, the Lamb of God," and He "dwelling amongst us." The ways of Jehovah in government and in grace will all centre in this delight of the Father's bosom. Nothing less than what is personal, and personally perfect, is now between God Himself, in the supremacy of His own holiness, and men on the earth, "publicans and sinners," with whom this "child, born into the world," will grow up; and as He grows form a new foundation for His joys and sorrows, His delights and His sympathies. No longer with "the morning stars," who shouted for joy when, as the Creator, day after day, He gave them their fresh occasions of praises and of songs, till "the seven days' work" was finished; but in a ruined world, where all was wrong, and sinners in their sins around Him; where all was one universal groan to God in felt misery, and in a yet more fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation hereafter. He, He Himself, is come into our midst in grace; these groans and tears, these sighs and sorrows, and their deep, deep causes, measured in their infinite extent as towards God, and Satan, and man, upon this earth in time, and in hell eternally, have gone up to the bosom of the Father, and brought out "the Son of his own love," as when in typical times the unconsumed bush, and the fire, and the voice called out a Moses as the deliverer of a captive people. Then "the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and am come down to deliver them . . . and to bring them up out of that land," etc. Now all eyes are upon this Jesus-Emmanuel, the Son of the Highest, in the place of the lowest; come "not to be ministered unto, but to minister," and, in due season, "to give his life a ransom for many." The heavens, and the earth, and hell, are each and all, for these varying reasons, moved at His coming. Anointed of the Spirit, and led of the Spirit, according to every declared thought and purpose of God, and every manifested act and deed in righteous government amongst men and Israel, He will measure the whole claims and calls upon His own person; and, single-handed, for He has no fellow, stoop down to greatness and victory; and stoop He will to vindicate and justify God in the very place where man by independence and pride had lost himself and ruined all that had been munificently put under his lordship. Man, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, has now embodied and charged and taken all upon Himself that concerns the glory of God in His ways upon earth — and, as a stranger in the earth, He will nevertheless be at home with "a sinful man" in a boat, or with "a woman at the well," or with "a master in Israel." If He leaves the place of the stranger, and takes that of "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," it will be to learn in spirit, with a widow of Nain, how to descend into the depths of her troubled heart, as His own sympathies entitle Him to do. Will He leave Nain for Bethany? it will be with Mary and Martha to enter into their sorrows and sufferings, and make Himself master of the whole scene, as He mingles His tears with theirs, and surpasses them all in His own perfectness, as He groans to God and according to God. He will take up the whole range of sin, and death, and the grave, and corruption in the depths of genuine human feelings; as great in the tears He shed as in the groan He uttered, or as in the voice which cried "Lazarus, come forth!"

If we narrow the circle of our observation, and see Him in the midst of "his own" after the flesh, in more strict Israelitish associations and goings, who does not love to view the Messiah with a repentant remnant, "confessing their sins" in the swellings of Jordan? Will He join them there and identify Himself with them in those depths, for other reasons, and be to the broken heart and troubled conscience a nobler guarantee of a safe passage to blessing than ever Joshua and the

typical "ark of the covenant" witnessed in (externally) a more triumphant period of their history? He will do this, and if a "Jesus baptized" goes outside and beyond the scope of John's thoughts and ministry, He will give the key to His prophet and forerunner by saying, "thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," and all will be well between them. Sorrows and their reliefs met together at Nain; tears, and groans, and their resources met together at Bethany: just as a repentant people in their sins and "the fulfiller of all righteousness" begin to settle these matters with the heavens and with Jehovah in the waters of Jordan.

Jesus-Emmanuel is making everything His own concern, in living obedience to His Father, or in loving sympathies with all around Him; and in the midst of His own sorrows and sufferings going down in moral perfectness, where none but He could make a path for Himself, and out of that new place, where devotedness to God, and obedience as a servant, and sympathy as a man, and sufferings in grace, had led him to cry to God out of such trials and sorrows, and only cried to be heard and answered. The Gospel by Luke will take us along the lonely paths of this sometimes solitary Man, though never an isolated One. How could this be with Him, who had come down into the whole range of God's dishonour, and of Satan's triumph, and of man's disgrace and defeat? No, never withdrawn from "the Father's business," though often withdrawn from surrounding things about that business, we find Him throughout Luke as the dependent but confident One. "He withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed;" and if we quit this wilderness, Luke will tell us, "It came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." What a night was this! — the Son of man upon this earth, taking on Himself all the failures and liabilities of men in their relation to the powers of God in righteousness, and justifying the Judge of the whole earth by accepting the consequences of their disobedience, and making that the very starting-point of His own walk with God and men below. Where could He look but to heaven? with whom could He speak on matters like these, but with the Jehovah of Israel? and to whom could He pray but to Him who accredited this Son of man at the outset by the voice from the opened heavens, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased?" Our blessed Lord will not only take all these accumulated liabilities on Himself and glorify God by their means, but, whilst doing this in righteous obedience and suffering, He will carry all their weight and pressure to God, and in "the night seasons" not be silent; yea, "meditate on thee in their night watches." At this point we may connect the offended holiness of Isaiah's day, in its separation from backsliding Israel, with the re-establishment of the Holy One, not as yet with the nation, but with the true Israelite, the Messiah and Head of that people, as "the Spirit of God, like a dove descending, lighted upon him;" or as the annunciation by the angel declared to Mary, "that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Precious fruits are these in their seasons! Likewise the broken covenant of "the Lord our righteousness," as proclaimed in the time of Jeremiah, will no longer be estranged from "the wilderness of Judea." The Messiah is in the baptism of Jordan, as the "fulfiller of all righteousness," and the heavens are opened to Him. In like manner the grieved and departed glory of Ezekiel's day will await Him, till He in righteous title walks up the mount of transfiguration, and when "as he prayed the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening." The voice from the excellent glory, "this is my beloved Son," will find its resting-place once more, and neither the glory, nor "the Lord our righteousness," nor "the Holy One of Israel," will ever be grieved again; but "holiness upon the bells of the horses" in a coming

day shall be the "ribbon of blue," and "thy people shall be all righteous" will be their millennial name under "the new covenant" and their Mediator; and Ezekiel's "vision of glory," with the Spirit and the wheels in all their activities, shall be the new characteristics of the relations of Jehovah with His beloved people, when Jerusalem shall shake herself from the dust at "Arise and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." In His own person, the Messiah, Jehovah-Jesus, has secured the old relationships between the Lord and that nation, and will make them good for the people by His work upon the cross, where (having vindicated the righteous government of God in the earth by His living perfectness) He will glorify His Father still further, by means of sin, and death, and the grave, and will charge Himself with our personal transgressions and judgment, and, as the sacrifice and substitute, suffer — "the just for the unjust to bring US to God." Positions, and new ones, as regards their foundations and stability, are won for Israel, and through Israel for the Gentiles upon the earth, in the coming dispensation. Redemption by blood, and resurrection in life and power, in the ascended and glorified Lord and Head, must have their place and get their hold in every future position, and how securely will all feet stand upon this Rock of Ages! — the stone which the builders once refused, become now and for ever "the head of the corner." In the title and ways by which He has thus won back and secured all that was out of place and out of position, both for man and for Israel, by His own personal righteousness and obedience — by the descending steps which He took and which led Him into the consequences of His people's rebellion, when living in their midst, that in all their afflictions He might participate and be afflicted and take all their sufferings up according to God. A new footing was found for Him who did all this, and a call made on "the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" from the righteous Sufferer below! Another and a new link is thus formed between God and this "Son of man" — between Jehovah and this true Israelite. And He who has secured all by going down into their sorrows and trials is become the procurer of reliefs and mercies and blessings for them on the way. Their Messiah, who will be the leader of their praises, in the future time, when the great congregation shall once more shout and fall upon their faces, in the consciousness of full and everlasting deliverance, is now the leader of this same people in their present condition, and the foremost in their midst, as "the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." The Jerusalem over which her Messiah wept, when her sons and daughters "would not be gathered," the city of the great king, which could not penetrate the veiled majesty and glory, when He rode into her very centre as the meek and lowly One, sitting on a colt, the foal of an ass — the nation under its Caiaphas, which condemned Him as a blasphemer, when He at last lifted the veil and confessed Himself to them — the people who mocked Him, and denied Him in all His rights and titles, will yet be pardoned for these added enormities on the person of the Jesus-Emmanuel, according to that prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Nevertheless, in righteous government Jerusalem shall receive "at the Lord's hands double for all her sins," till "her warfare is accomplished" and her iniquity and blood-guiltiness forgiven. "How is the faithful city become an harlot: it was full of judgment, righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers . . . therefore saith the Lord of Hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies."

How really Jesus made all their sorrows His own, and how truly He took all up with them, according to God, when in their midst, is not only witnessed by His tears over Jerusalem, but at the close of His varied ministries, and when He had been rejected in them all, and He is forced into the place of the "Prophet," as the witness from Jehovah against them! He will even then say "for

the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." If He sees nothing but their passing through the time of tribulation "spoken of by Daniel the prophet," He will precede them in the thoughts of His own loving heart, and say, "then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains, and let him which is on the house top not come down to take anything out of his house." His considerate pity will direct "him which is in the field," and awaken afresh His companions, as He says, "Woe unto them that are with child, and to them which give suck in those days." Moreover, He will guide them in that distressing hour of their yet future punishment, as well as associate Himself with them in John the Baptist's days, and say, "pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day." He will enter with them into the very dangers of that hour, and leave a word of caution for His elect, "then if any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ, or there, believe it not; for there shall come false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders." Precious it is to hear Him add "inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect;" and then close up these last words of parting sorrow with "behold I have told you before" — perfect in everything, as He alone could be! The foremost in our sorrows and griefs and sufferings in the governmental ways of God on the earth is viewed also in the light of the future by Isaiah, where He says, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles . . . He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law." This Spirit on Christ below, or as the Spirit of prophecy on Isaiah, or as the Spirit in the Psalmist of Israel, or as the descended Spirit in Paul, will associate each in his varied relations and in his respective seasons, with the marvellous history, past, present, and future, of Jehovah's favoured nation! Like the Moses of their earliest days when, in intercession for the sin of the people, he said, "If not, I pray thee blot me out of thy book which thou hast written," so will Paul take up the accumulated sins and heavier condemnation on account of a rejected Messiah and a crucified Christ and Lord, in Romans 9:1-33 : "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites," etc. The apostle who "travailed in birth" a second time (for the Galatians bewitched), till Christ was formed in them, will turn his aching heart back upon his "kinsmen" in the flesh, and even say in deeper tones, "I could wish that I myself were separated from Christ, for my brethren." The Paul, who with a broken spirit said "Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things," will exceed himself, and go into depths where tears and travail in birth cannot be the measure of his heaviness and continual sorrow of heart, as he declares, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." We may well ask, in the surprise which such language creates in our souls, what character of sorrows and sufferings are these, in behalf (not of the Church, but) of a people "to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen?"

How little we even know of such sympathies, and sorrows, and heavinesses, and their effects, whether in an apostle or in a Messiah as He bore all upon the perfectness of His own heart, with this very race of people, during the three and thirty years of His exercised soul according to the holiness of God! Can a Moses in ancient days outshine in the depth of his feelings their own

Messiah-Jesus? Will the apostle of the Gentiles go beyond his Lord and Master in this dispensation, in this "continual sorrow of heart," in this "truth in Christ" to which "the Holy Ghost is witness?" Who among us will not rather confess that there are ranges of sorrows and sufferings in the scriptures with which we are but little acquainted — classes of experience in the Psalms, the prophets, and Moses, which we may do well to learn unshod; and in this, as in all other respects, sit at Jesus' feet and be taught by Him? Shall our selfishness as Christians only lead us to know our blessed Lord as easily touched with our infirmities, now that He is in the heavens, feeling what every member feels? or shall we know Him also as entering into the state and condition in which any of the members of His earthly people suffer, that He may be as perfect in sympathy with them below as He is with the Church now that He is on high? No, rather let us bow down in worship and adoration as we see Him doing the Father's will from first to last, and marvel as we are taught; "for it became (God) to make the captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings." "He suffered, being tempted." "In all their afflictions, He was afflicted." Precious Jesus, Emmanuel, Messiah, the Christ, and Lord! Son of man, Son of God, the Son! J. E. Batten. (On the testimony of T. B. Baines.)

S. The cross of Christ

"The cross of Christ." The cross is the place where all that was against us, our transgressions and iniquities — in fact, the things done, and the nature which did them — were laid upon Christ: "our old man is crucified with him." He bore the full judgment of God on their account in His sufferings on the cross. He carried them all down to death, under the wrath which He endured, that He might leave them in the place of ashes, having made atonement by the shedding of His own blood. God has there put an end to man in the flesh, to sin and sins, by the judicial death of Christ as our substitute; and Christ, having brought these things under the eye and hand of God to be thus dealt with, has for ever put them away from before God, and from us, by the sacrifice of Himself. The cross, moreover, is the place where the nature of God has been vindicated; for the full claims of His holiness, and majesty have been met, and His glory established, by what Christ has borne, and the judgment that fell upon Him there. The penalties too, which divine righteousness inflicted on the man who fell, have been met, and endured, and set aside; yea, more than this, for Christ has "taken the cup" from the hand of God and drunk it to the dregs. What was contrary to God is gone for ever, and gone by death. Nothing remains but the blood in the prevalence of its own efficacy, shed where we were, and because of what we were, as sinners in our sins; but carried in where God is, in the supremacy of His holiness; and we are thus "reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

Again, the cross is the place where all that was contrary to us has been taken out of the way; the middle wall of partition, which separated man from his fellow (the Jew and the Gentile), has been there broken down. "Christ has abolished in his flesh the enmity . . . for to make in himself of twain, one new man, so making peace."

Besides this superiority in the flesh, of which the Jew properly boasted against the Gentile previous to the cross, there was also the corresponding "handwriting of ordinances," which maintained this difference, as long as Christ was known according to the flesh. But at the cross this religious superiority is also set aside, and Christ has taken that out of the way, and blotted out what was contrary to us as Gentiles, who were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

Thus, in this threefold aspect of the cross, there is an end made of man in the flesh before God in Christ; and all that once separated a sinner from God has been for ever put away by the sacrifice and death of our Substitute, who was nailed to it. Again, we have seen how Christ destroyed the enmity between flesh and flesh which separated man from man, and broke down the middle wall of partition which Judaism sustained. Lastly, we have traced how religious ordinances, which favoured the Jew and were contrary to the Gentile, have been blotted out, and "taken out of the way, Christ nailing them to his cross."

How plainly may we see thus the breakdown of all that man was in the flesh, whether by his birth, circumcision, or religion, at the cross of Jesus Christ! Truly must God in righteousness judge, and set aside Jew and Gentile, who had thus condemned, cast out, and crucified the Son of His own

love, sent in grace and mercy into their midst. How can He any longer recognize or sustain distinctions in the flesh, when the most distinguished of men were "the betrayers and murderers" of Christ? Where would righteousness be in a scene like the cross, if God did not put down for ever, not only distinctions, but the flesh itself, which had rejected Him in the person of His Son? This He has done in the double form of death by judgment on the old Adam, and by the introduction of another life, declared to be His free gift in the Second man. There is yet a further lesson from the cross for those who by grace can say, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I. but Christ liveth in me;" and it is this. The cross discovers to such what the world is — this busy, active, self-willed world, which has rejected and killed the Saviour, the Prince of glory, that it might be left free to pursue its principles and objects, in its own way. Can there be a link then between it and one who is Christ's? Surely not, if there be any true-heartedness and loyalty according to God and to Christ, as the rejected One! No, the last link is broken, as the spirit of such a one (disentangled once and for ever from all that is of it and in association with it) says, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." If the cross be this, as regards God and Christ — sin and holiness — the flesh and the world — death and Satan — Jew and Gentile, where can we learn the true character and measure of these things, except in the place where all that was our own was judged, condemned, and brought to an end? For example, can we discover the nature and heinousness of sin anywhere else, as we are taught it at the cross, where "he who knew no sin, was made sin for us;" and who could only put it away from the presence of God by the sacrifice of Himself? We may look into ourselves, and see and feel something of what indwelling sin is, as measured and estimated by a guilty conscience, or a terror-stricken heart, and say, "O wretched man that I am!" But is this to be compared for a moment with the cry of Him who said, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" We may think of the punishment of sin "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched;" but can any discovery of the righteous desert of transgression, as borne by those who committed it, be compared with what sin must be to the nature and being of God who could not pass it by when imputed to His only begotten and well-beloved Son, who knew no sin?

We do well, as believers in Christ, to celebrate the triumphs of the cross as regards God and ourselves, and its victories and gain to Christ raised from the dead, and crowned with glory and honour on high; but where shall we learn the lessons it has to teach us respecting all that God has blotted out and cast behind His back for ever? Shall we forget that this same cross which has purchased our liberty, and is the witness of our eternal salvation, tells us that Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works?" How can a Christian practically set himself in correspondence with the thoughts of God since the crucifixion, but by death — his own death — in the true confession of the darkness and death, under which the whole world has brought itself, by the rejection of Christ, and in which He has left it, who is the resurrection and the life? Our way out from under the whole power and range of what once separated us from God is by death. "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." The penalties which are exhausted by Christ on the cross, can no longer shut out and separate us from God; on the contrary, they are the open doors of faith's deliverance, as we follow our ascended Lord to the throne of the majesty in the heavens. "All things are yours, 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." The death which Jesus died enables us now to read without terror, that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" — because we know Him who put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

It is of great moment for the believer to learn that our undisputed passage out of this world is by means of these very penalties which the righteousness of God inflicted on the man who sinned. "The wages of sin is death," and these wages have been paid (not avoided) by our Substitute, and we are free. By man sin entered, death entered, and the law entered into the world; and these held their undisputed title and sway, when we were born into it. Moreover, each of these three mighty powers (being what they are in relation to mankind) had their respective dominions. Besides this, we know that because of what we personally were by nature, and on account of actual transgression we added to their power; but neither of them has a title to pursue us beyond the limit of death's dominions; and this very death has been accepted and paid by Christ, as our only discharge. We are "free" by death (not by life) though a Christian, in virtue of another life communicated, asserts his deliverance by his obedience. These three dominions of sin, death, and the law, are plainly treated in Romans 6:9; Romans 6:14; Romans 8:1, and our deliverance is as fully declared to be from under each, by death. "Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Again, "knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead: dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him."

How different are the lessons from life unto death in the first man, and death unto life in the Second man! The first was a defeat, through the temptations of the devil: the second a victory, through resurrection from the dead "by the glory of the Father." And as to ourselves, "sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace." Finally, the cross is the vindication of the "throne of the majesty in the heavens" to those who dwell there, against all that outraged the government of God in the earth beneath. The great High Priest at "the right hand of God" is the guarantee to faith of the coming glory, which is God's answer to the cross, and of the travail of Christ's soul in death. In the meanwhile, God has sealed us as heirs, joint-heirs with Christ, by the Holy Ghost who dwells in us. Morally as men, and judicially as sinners, we are set right with God by the cross of Christ — "there is no condemnation." Moreover, the reproach of Egypt the world that we came from is rolled away from us," as we pass into the glory by ascension in the image of Him who died to bring us there. A further demonstration will thus be given of what the cross has introduced us to, as we settle in for ever in the mansions which He has gone before to prepare for us in the Father's house.

Here we might close, in the happy acknowledgment of what the cross delivers from, and establishes the believer in, were it not that (during the little while we are waiting for the Lord, and carrying on the testimony of present salvation in the world where the cross of Christ is still preached, through the long-suffering grace of God), the scriptures point out three dangers, where the crafty power of the enemy lies concealed. The first is found in 1 Corinthians 1:17; "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not with wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." It is plain there is a double warning here — putting baptism, which is an ordinance (or, as is now affirmed, a means of sacramental grace) in the place of preaching the word, by demonstration of the Spirit, in saving power to him that believes; the other, pulpit

oratory, as though the cross of Christ could gain anything in its effect on the conscience by excellence of speech. The next danger is pointed out in Galatians 5:11, where Paul asks, "if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased." Here it is equally plain that something good in the flesh and the consequent improvement of the flesh (for this is what circumcision supposed) is the thing which makes the offence of the cross to cease; for the cross is the denial of man in the flesh, with all his pretensions. It is therefore an offence to man as such, by showing him that he is the betrayer and murderer of the Son of God, and that there is no salvation for him as a sinner, except through the blood of Christ, which proves his guilt. The last danger presented is in Galatians 6:12 "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ." What is this fair show in the flesh, but an acceptance of the prevailing and established religion of the day, and so escaping persecution for the cross of Christ, which denies the formalism of mere outward and established pietism? In this instance, persecution (the natural accompaniment of the true confession of the cross) is separated from it; just as in the former examples circumcision did away with the offence of the cross, and excellency of speech made it of none effect. How little the pulpit and the churches of Christendom have attended to these warnings of the apostle is too notorious to require any comment. J. E. Batten.

S. Thoughts on Joh_3:1-36

Thoughts on John 3:1-36.

It is of great moment that the children of God should observe the fact, that we are not only spoken to in the scriptures, according to our actual state, but addressed as standing in the various relations which the Father's counsel has purposed — or else in what the finished work of Christ has set us — or on account of which the Holy Ghost has sealed us. The gospel of John is perhaps one of the most striking instances of this, for with what ease, and how in keeping, are we at once taken up to the heights, when "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God!" We are expected — as belonging to the new creation, as the newly begotten and new born ones — to be as much at home in the mystery of "God manifest in the flesh" and tabernacling in the midst of mankind, as we have been familiar with that far later beginning in time when "God created the heavens and the earth," and when He "breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Indeed we are spoken of by John as having been once born into the world "according to the flesh, and by the will of man," much more as a point of contrast than of interest; far more as marking the state which we have left for ever, than as tracing a history to which any lustre attaches: in truth, to be born out of this condition — to be born of God — to be no longer confined in the circle of what is measured by time and man's defeat; but to pass out of all on the warrant that "as many as received Christ, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." This is the evangelist's new charter, and our title for passing from death unto life, from darkness unto light, and out of the whole scene of Satan's power into the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

What a redemption is ours; but what else could it be, when it is accomplished "by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot?" It is only when the conscience and soul are thus at rest with God, as to His holiness and our sins, that we can at all feel in our proper places, or be led onward to view the Lord Jesus as He was in His own essential being — the eternal Son — the co-equal with God. Into whatever depths He may have descended in time, when He was found in fashion as a man, and up to whatever heights He may have been taken by resurrection, to the right hand of the Majesty on high, the Son of man in the heavens, yet this is not the path by which we are called to know "the Word" in the opening verses of this gospel. We are led to worship and adore Him where the steps which led to His incarnation are not yet in view, any more than the pathway of His present righteous exaltation by ascension glory, which has taken Him back to God. In the stillness of these two unparalleled verses, "the Word was God," and "the same was in the beginning with God," there are no steps, all is equality — "the same." Creative power, in the first chapters of Genesis, is the rising up and going forth of this Son, for "all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." He spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast. It is not, however, as a Creator-God that this gospel occupies us (though His creative power and title are maintained), but as the Saviour-God, come into this very earth He had made, when all was forfeited and ruined, to be known as "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."

What a wreck did the first man make! But what remedies and resources will the Second man establish for God and for the sinner, so that the very God, who once commanded the light to shine out of darkness, is hourly doing a far greater thing! For He it is who "hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ."

Redemption-work by the cross, resurrection-power from death and eternal life in the Son, are the new subjects of our evangelist. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." These give out the character and dimensions of the work at the cross, by which He could bestow that life on others, and dispel the moral darkness which eclipsed Him. "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Besides His own essential and divine glory, and what He was to be in relation to others, there is, further, what He came to reveal, and what He brought as opening out the resources of God's grace and power. As to the first of these He could say, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." What a mission is this! One which in all its parts could only be carried out and made good to us by His own sufferings and death. As to the second of these it is said, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." And how these two ministries are interwoven, as we see the anointed One pursuing His services in successive chapters.

Another great charm of this manifestation of the Word made flesh, when looked at from our own point of view, is that John marks Him out as the "Son of God" after His birth, from the fact (additional) "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." We shall do well to hold fast these parts of the Son's ministry as given us in this gospel, including the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

How precious is it to see, in our turn, that men upon earth find out the value of this Christ. John, looking upon Jesus as He walked, will say, "Behold the Lamb of God;" and now his two disciples will bid farewell to John and "follow Jesus." Jesus on His part will turn Himself round to them and say, "What seek ye?" and upon the enquiry, "Where dwellest thou?" will give them a hearty welcome as He invites them to "come and see." What new intimacies are here! what new links are being formed by this very One who was awhile ago "with God and was God," but has now brought Himself in a human heart to sinful men, who, at His own request, come and see where He now dwells, and are at home enough with Him and in His presence, to "abide with him that day!" Oh! triumph of divine love, for He who brought "grace and truth" is with those who need it, and they will settle it to perfection in each other's company.

Yea, more, the conscious blessedness of being with Jesus in this dwelling-place of love will lead Andrew forth to find his own brother, that he may taste and see what and who this Messiah is, "and he brought him to Jesus" — this new centre on earth between God and His creatures — and a man too! What a reversal of all that separated itself off, and was scattered to the devil, when Adam fell! "And when Jesus saw him coming he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas." Here He begins to write upon us "the new name," and what a name is this, which by interpretation means "a stone!" What a day of all others was this to them and to Him!

"The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me." What grace and truth are come by Jesus Christ we may well say, who see Him, whose "years are throughout all generations," measuring Himself out to us by hours and days, and the day following; and giving Himself forth as "the Lamb of God" at one time, or "the Messiah" at another; apprehended as the "Jesus of Nazareth," the son of Joseph, by Philip; and confessed in the far different glory by Nathanael, as the Son of God, the King of Israel!

What a cluster of ripe fruit is springing up around Him, as He thus discovers Himself, and is thus acknowledged, only to be exceeded by His own assurance, "Thou shalt see greater things than these. Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." "Who is this Son of man?" they may well say in their inmost souls, as some did boldly ask, when speaking afterwards of His resurrection from the dead, "what this rising out of the dead should mean." Here too God has for Himself a "kind of firstfruits of his creatures" — each in his season, and each a proper representation of his class, and all to come out in full, when the latter-day glory shall manifest to sight these living agencies in all their activities between the heavens and the earth — "ascending and descending upon this Son of man — "the man whom God has made strong for himself." In passing onward into this gospel, we shall learn how Jesus will put Himself into the place of all previous types and ordinances, to fulfil them, and supersede them, as indeed we have already observed Him, taking the place of the Paschal Lamb, as pointed out in that character by John. So He will disturb Nathanael from his reveries, under the typical fig-tree, but only to own the Antitype (as an Israelite, in whom there is no guile, must do), and bring him to the confession of the nation's faith at a yet coming day. And now we reach the marriage at Cana, which has its own peculiar objects too; for if the beginning of the first chapter has given out the mystery, and revelation of His person, and relations, to the faith of His elect people, so will the second chapter introduce us to "this beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory."

Here we may observe, that the glory of the first chapter has its pathway through the gospel — His personal glory, as I think ("and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"), and shines brightly in its own peculiar grace at the end. The manifestation of His glory by this beginning of miracles has also its own conspicuous line — His official glory, if we may so say, as well as its own typical meaning for the yet future day of Jehovah's millennial relations with His earthly people when "the land shall be married" and the Lord shall rejoice over Jerusalem like a young man rejoices over his bride. How truly will He in that day turn the water into wine, and how consciously will all own that the finest and the best has been kept till the last! Jesus was then in their very midst, and was doing on a smaller scale what He will do on the larger one, when they shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

What an opportunity this people had of acknowledging their Messiah, as Nathanael had just done! Will they in their turn say, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel?" Here comes in, as always, the dark side of the picture; for man and the nation with its city and its temple are to be put to the test. Jesus may shine forth in His personal and in His official glory, by words and deeds; but are there eyes that can see, and hearts that can understand Him, and faith that will receive Him? "And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." He is ready to give Himself out to the nation and to the world according to "this beginning of miracles," and to manifest forth His glory by acts and deeds, and change all into a marriage scene, with the word

"draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast," if they will accept Him. Is the temple made ready for His reception; or will He say "make not my Father's house a house of merchandise?" He will go up to this beloved Jerusalem, and to its magnificent temple; and present Himself in each, according to promise and prophecy; and now according to the claims and titles of His own person, and wait the issue. What an hour for them and for Him! And He "found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting; and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out." What strange action is this for the Lord of the temple, as His disciples remember that it was written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." The grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ may and will characterize His ministry in the midst of men, as this gospel will fully show us; but He must visit this house, the place of Jehovah's holiness, in another character; righteousness shall go before Him on this errand, and His zeal will vindicate the offended Majesty of, and set aside this outrage on, the Holy One of Israel, by the scourge and the authoritative command, "Take these things hence." "Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing thou doest these things?" What an answer does He give them out of the depths of that zeal which has eaten Him up, as He says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Care and zeal for the majesty, the holiness, and the word of Jehovah, God of Israel, will lead Him to test these builders further as they talk of "forty and six years;" and as He speaks of these "three days," and then a rearing up, "He spake of the temple of his body;" and so will we, and join His disciples who, "when he was risen from the dead," found the key to this temple, as they "believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had said."

What assurances reach the soul in ways like these, and how different from "the many who believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did;" and how unlike again to these of whom it is said, "but Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." The temple and scourge of small cords have told their own story; and now the searcher of hearts, in the exercise of His divine prerogative, will pronounce His judgment on all that man is, and not commit Himself to them. The great centre of light, the temple of Jehovah's glory, has gone out in obscurity long ago. The typical glory hovered over its threshold and then the city, till Ezekiel witnessed its departure; and now the Son of God in His day has come to the city of the great king, and to the house of prayer for all nations; but only in His turn to be grieved away, as He says, "Your house is left unto you desolate, and ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." He must needs supersede the temple and take the place of it by His body, as He had before set aside the Paschal Lamb by being announced as the Lamb of God, or as He will in the next chapter supersede the typical brazen serpent, by saying, "So must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should never perish, but have everlasting life." This must be our one thought as we now pursue our path more rapidly, that Jesus will step into the place of all previous types and ordinances and supersede them; and, in these new relations to God and to men, will enunciate the wondrous doctrines of grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ in contrast with the law which was given by Moses. He will find His first scholar in this new school in a master of Israel, and reveal Himself to a man of the Pharisees in the grace of the cross; and to this ruler of the Jews in the truth of those strange lessons, taught by "the wind bloweth where it listeth," and by being "born of the Spirit," and yet adding, "Marvel not," for these are the new ways, whether of seeing or entering into the kingdom of God. Nicodemus has found himself

the presence of "a teacher come from God" and will suit himself to the occasion, by inquiring as a learner, "How can these things be?" But it is not as a teacher and a scholar that the precious lessons are to be learnt which Jesus came to unfold. No, they must each pass into the deeper place of a Saviour and a sinner, and then settle the upbraidings of a guilty conscience and of a sin-stricken heart, by the ancient shadow of the "serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness," giving Himself out to Nicodemus, if he can receive Him in this then mystery — "even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should never perish, but have eternal life." In passing on one feels constrained to say, Alas, how many are still in the place of the man of the Pharisees and in company with this master of Israel, instead of travelling on with Jesus, to learn Himself and the cross, and prove how the side, and the hands, and the feet put to silence all the "hows" of Nicodemus, and turn to flight the doubts which gave them birth. "And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away." What a rebuke for the present hour! This chapter tells us further of another question which arose between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. The ruler had his questions and the Jews have theirs; and may we not add that these very questionings have been stereotyped to us, whatever their difference, from that day to this? "How can these things be?" is the form in which an unbridled mind will put its difficulties or its objections; and questions about purifying the nature of man by ordinances, or by sacraments, or the value of ritualistic observances between God and the soul, are but the exercises and uncertainties of an uneasy conscience. Let us thank God when simple faith in His word takes the place of our reasonings, and when the blood of Christ at once purges and speaks unbroken peace to the conscience and to the heart of the feeblest believer. J. E. Batten.

S. To Mr. R. P. Smith on "Consecration, Etc

To Mr. R. P. Smith on "Consecration, Etc."

Dear Brother In Christ, A friend at B-d has forwarded me the note you wrote him, in which you say (upon my letter, in the Bible Treasury of January), "I hope you cannot endorse p. 207, Colossians 1:1-29, where consecration and trust are spoken of as turning back to Judaism." A bare extract like this, on such an important subject as consecration and trust misleads, and would be as shocking to me as it can be to you, for nothing is further from my thoughts, and I venture to add from the letter as such. It is due to yourself and the truth in question to connect this bare extract with what precedes and follows it in that column. For myself, I am content on its re-perusal, to leave it without alteration to the candid consideration of all. The letter does treat a kind of consecration, which you put in connection with other things, such as trust in mere promises, a momentary cleansing by blood, and a re-adjustment of nature, and calls this "a turning back to Judaism, and reducing Christians to an inward realization of a lower purity." The letter puts in contrast with this a believer's present position as united to Christ, the second Adam, in life and righteousness, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called. As regards "scriptural holiness," and our separation to God, I suppose christian circumcision to be "the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ;" and further, as to the world, we are unsettled and crucified to it, by nothing less than the death of Christ.

Carried thus outside the flesh and the world by death and resurrection, "our life is hid with Christ in God; and we set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth," and are settled with the Son of man in heaven. A holiness and a consecration which unsettle nobody from their worldly or ecclesiastical surroundings surely go in the face of this Colossian epistle, which says, "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. Is it not a solemn thing to say to those who are inclined to come out, "The worst thing you can do is to leave your church?" What must a person do who follows this advice, but accept for a basis the earth and its national establishments, "after the commandments and doctrines of men," and so give up the distinguishing ground of real Christianity, "not holding the Head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, increaseth with the increase of God." If "scriptural holiness" be a separation from the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, and likewise from the world and its rudiments by the death and resurrection of Christ, how can that be called holiness which unsettles nobody in their ecclesiastical and political surroundings? Will you take this query into the secret of your own soul with God, and judge it according to the light of His word, in the power of the Holy Ghost?

There was, and will be, a consecration and trust in promises, with other things which characterise Judaism, as they are enumerated in the opening verses of Romans 9:1-33 :, but they have a millennium for their display in permanent blessing upon earth. The position in which Paul then stood was one with the ascended Lord, outside all these privileges and covenants which pertained to his "brethren according to the flesh." He was identified with a rejected Christ in his pathway on

the earth, and united to the glorified Son of man in the heavens by death and resurrection, under the anointing of the Holy Ghost." "A man in Christ" has died to all besides, and must be unsettled practically as to himself and all his surroundings below, if he would be in correspondence and communion with Christ as the Head of the new creation of God. "He which stablisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." Moreover, as touching "the promises of God, they are all made yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us." They are made sure to us as a present portion in Christ, and are ours in the title of heirs and joint-heirs with Christ!

Having said this much upon our true christian circumcision, and the unction and anointing of the Holy Ghost which we have received of the Father, and which abideth in us, allow me to make an extract or two from "The Higher Life," simply to show another consecration and trust taught by the author which is something worse than a turning back to Judaism. As to "political surroundings" Mr. Boardman asks, "Is there anything in the office of our civil police, if discharged honestly, prayerfully, boldly, to grieve the Spirit of God, or cause the frown of the most High? No more is there in being a soldier or sailor." (See p. 60.) Again, "Havelock's enlistment was as hearty under the banner of the tribe of Judah as under the lion of Britain." His biographer says "of his second conversion," that "the scriptures opened to him in yet greater fulness, and his consecration to his Master's service assumed yet greater intelligence and force." (Page 62.) As to "holiness and consecration" Mr. B. further writes, "It would be useless for Satan to ply us Protestants with the peculiarities urged on Romanists; we could not be driven into petticoats, dignified as robes," etc. Satan "plies us with notions more Protestant, but not one whit less fictitious and deceptive. Would you be a whole-souled disciple of Christ? He says of your person, You will have to conform all your personal habits to a rigid rule first of all. You must put on the strait-jacket of propriety tight-laced. It would ill-become one wholly consecrated to God to wear ornaments or elegancies. Gold and jewellery and costly array must be wholly eschewed." (Page 122.) Again, "the truth is, we are never really entirely the Lord's freemen until we are free from the trammels of all these trivial questions, and at full liberty to follow the Lord in whatever dress, or position, or business, or company, or circumstances, the providence of God, and our own judgment of proprieties, and our own ability and taste, may dictate or require." (Page 125.) Solemnly, and as followers of Christ, we may well question this range of "consecration" and of "scriptural holiness," whether it be yours which unsettles nobody, or Mr. Boardman's which settles people down in their "gold and jewellery and costly array," and if disturbed in their conscience told to attribute their disquietude to Satan's deceptions upon Protestants! I must ask you in conclusion, Can this kind of teaching be brought into the light of the New Testament, except to be condemned, much less tested by the example and ways of Christ and His disciples, or the formative power and baptism of the Holy Ghost? Is this kind of consecration and holiness what is meant by, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body?" or is it not "a turning back to Judaism" or something worse, and "reducing Christians to an inward realization of a lower purity?"

I will not reply to these questions myself, but in brotherly love, and in confidence in the Lord, leave the answers for you to make to Him whom you are seeking to serve, so that you may be able more skilfully to guide the many souls who look to you into the true way of holiness and personal consecration.

Yours affectionately in Him, J. E. Batten.

S. Watchman, what of the night?

"Watchman, what of the night?"

Isaiah 21:11. The watchman of that early time, and as under the spirit of prophecy, said, "The morning cometh, and also the night; if ye will inquire, inquire ye, return, come." God has never let the night-time of the ruin of creation and of man — no, nor yet of Jerusalem and of His people Israel — pass out of His own hands; and to them that look for Him, all will yet issue in "a morning without a cloud," when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, with healing in His beams.

Another (and he, the anointed apostle for these last times) sent to us from the risen Son of man, exalted above the night of chaos and of ruin, and seated in the glory of God, cries, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." The prophet and the apostle are each right, and in the mind of the Lord, in their respective occupations and seasons, giving out these varied lessons to the people of God.

Isaiah, in the midst of the earthly family, is directing their thoughts as to the night and morning, in relation to the two centres of the earth, Jerusalem and Babylon. Paul, in the midst of the heavenly family, is instructing the elect Gentiles what to do, and what to be, in these present church ruins, and in the night-time of an evil world. Paul writes to those united to the Lord, who has been cast out of it till the morning comes, and the word by this watchman to us is, "Ye are all the children of light, and of the day, we are not of the night, nor of darkness, therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober," etc.

Many of those who are instructed in the school of God, know that the ministry of an Old Testament prophet, and his prophesyings, can only find their opportunity and place, when the people to whom he is sent have failed in the original blessing where God had set them, for, as we have said, God never allows even the ruin to pass out of His own hand. The ministry of "an apostle by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead," is of a different order, and reveals the hidden things which were "kept secret from before the foundation of the world, and which God ordained to our glory," with Christ. The blessing of the church in the heavens, by His divine callings and separations in a risen Lord, and the final prosperity of Israel, and the nations on the earth, by their bounds and divisions, together with the deliverance of a groaning creation, into redemption-light, are alike in the counsels of the living God, and to be manifested in glory. It is equally in His own hands to meet and set aside Babylon and the Gentile nations then, as to establish Jerusalem, and make her a praise in the whole earth, with Christ hereafter. The watchman said, by Isaiah, "The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come;" and these are the alternations which lie before us for inquiry and examination. Originally everything in creation that God saw was good, and there was no evil; but, as in a moment, all was changed, and everywhere there was evil, and no good. Originally too, the blessing of God that maketh rich rested on every creature, but, as in an instant, the blessing was nowhere, and the curse of God lay heavily on all around. In creation the evening and the morning made each day, but in history with man, it is the morning cometh, and also the night, alas! Still, He

has not cast away the heavens and the earth that He created for His own pleasure with the sons of men, nor will He suffer the mighty ruin to pass into the power of the enemy of God and man. But what will He do, in whose hands are the issues of life and of death? Only to think for a moment of God Himself standing in the breach, and acting upon the supremacy of His own goodness, over all the evil and the misery; yea meeting the usurpation of Satan, and the outbreak of sin in the creature, by falling back upon His own sovereign power and electing love. God's only resource was in Himself, nothing could challenge His omnipotence, or escape His omniscience, or go beyond His control. He alone can say, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." How will He, and how can He, bring down His own immensity and infinitude in grace into the circle of morning and night? How connect them with Himself inside the range of men and things, where all is now in ruins and wretchedness, and when all that was morning has become night, and gone down into darkness?

He who said, Let there be light, and there was light, and who made a firmament in the midst of the waters, to divide the waters from the waters, can bring in a sunrise to form a morning where there is none. In the earliest records of His ways, He did it after this creation-pattern of dividing the one from the other, when He acted as the Possessor of the heavens and the earth. For example, "when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." When this supremacy of God, by act and deed, in dividing the nations, is anything more to man than an historical fact, it becomes a very wonderful thing. Marvellous indeed to set their bounds, and, further, that God should come out into the midst of mankind, to divide them, and to act upon His own sovereignty in grace — yea, to begin a register, by which to chronicle an earthly family for Himself in their generations! This supervision and care makes one understand that some purpose of God, which He has ordained for His own glory, and the blessing of His creatures, is to be ultimately reached in the circle of manhood, notwithstanding the expulsion of Adam from paradise. One only begins to discover what this divine secret can be of dividing a nation from all others, and a race from races of men, when we recall the promise that "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." This wonderful registration was therefore strictly maintained till after Jesus, the Immanuel, was born, to whom God pointed, according to the genealogies that went before, and which closed by His incarnation.

It is remarkable, too, that our early progenitors were guided to call their sons by names, not only significant of their own faith in this promise, but that their off-spring were the rightful heirs. The two books of Chronicles, which contain the generations of Israel, and their kingly history, maintain these facts in their general character, and prove likewise that God held that elect nation always in His mind, by starting their genealogies from Adam and Seth. The first of these books is in harmony with the dividings and distinctions in the six days' work of creation, and with God's intention of thus bringing out a seed for the accomplishment of His purposes, and the establishment of covenanted blessings in the midst of Israel and the tribes, as "an elect people" on the earth. The second book opens grandly with the record of this accomplishment, in the typical David and his son Solomon, reigning on God's throne in Jerusalem. The king and his kingdom are established in Israel, and divided off from the nations, as the wonder and admiration of the whole world. Consistently with these objects, the first book begins its genealogy of the family, or household of God, in the elect line of Adam, Seth, and then Enoch. It commences thus the history of the elect tribes, in the

registry of Jehovah and His people, by going back to the man created in the image of God; and closes their antediluvian ancestry with the Enoch who walked with God, and was translated that he should not see death. A precious type this of the heavenly family caught up, on the one hand, and an early intimation that Israel will really be connected with them, and in blessing likewise, in the time of their happy millennium.

It is a point of much interest and significance to notice here, that in this Book of Chronicles, where God is writing up His people, or setting Israel as a firmament to divide the nations from the nations, the Spirit refuses to introduce or make any mention of Cain, that wicked one, and his posterity. I judge this was that the earthly family might be rightly identified by descent, and as born after the flesh, with the promises of Jehovah; and, moreover, distinguished and divided off from all others, as they afterwards were, by circumcision. Indeed we may ask, in passing, how could the man who went away out of the presence of God, and became a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, be a link in the chronicles of an elect people? On the contrary, Seth, or the substituted and appointed one (instead of righteous Abel, whom Cain slew), is the man with whom the generations of men and their genealogies begin anew in Genesis 5:1-32. "And the days of Adam, after he had begotten Seth, were eight hundred years. And Seth lived, after he begat Enos, eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters." Israel's genealogies, which include the birth of the Messiah and finish with it, are on this account full of interest; nor is there any other ancestry or generation worthy of record, save it be "the dukes of Esau, and the dukes of Edom," which stand apart in an unenviable place of their own, and outside.

Succession in the flesh was thus established by God, and became their pride — yea, everything — to a true Israelite. On this account, as "an elect people," it was their only remaining glory and boast, on coming up out of Babylon, that they could be still reckoned by their genealogies and families, because the promises were made to "the Seed" of their father Abraham. Thus "the Tirshatha" says, in Nehemiah 7:1-73 : "My God put it into mine heart to gather together the nobles and the rulers of the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy, and I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first," which identified them with the city of Jerusalem and the first Book of Chronicles. Morally and prophetically, we may add, as well as by adoption and birth, they were the descendants of an elect seed, to be brought out in due time as the ordained family, and an appointed nation, for the introduction of covenanted blessing upon the earth. This was promised through Abraham, the friend of God, as the heir of the world, and confirmed to David, the man after God's own heart, as the anointed king, whose greater Son is yet to rule and reign over it, from the rising to the setting of the sun.

It may be further observed, that the First Book of Chronicles closes its earthly and typical programme with David's charge to Solomon, and with the transfer of all the measurements and patterns which he had received by the Spirit of God, concerning the temple of peace, and rest, and glory that was to be built. For "the palace," as he says, "is not for man, but for the Lord God," who was coming to take up His abode in their midst. Nor can David happily close his eyes upon that day and generation until he, as the head of Israel, unites with the chief of the fathers, and with the princes of their tribes, in offering their gifts of gold, and silver, and precious stones, to make the place of the Lord's feet glorious in that hour of their morning glory. As the sweet psalmist, under the anointing oil, he exceeds them all when he sings or plays upon the harp, touching their bright millennial day; or when, as a worshipper before the ark, he dances on its way to the place of its

rest; or as now joyfully making preparations for the temple to receive it. How excellent is he, too, as the leader of the prayers and praises of the great congregation: "Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name . . . O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thy holy name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own . . . And all the people blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord and the King." The first book of genealogies, and its arrangements of order and service for the throne and the kingdom, together with the magnificent architectural plans and buildings, with its yet costlier gifts and preparations, is in manifest distinction to their accomplishments and construction in the Second Book of Chronicles. Who can measure, for example, the contrariety and the distances between the opening verses in each book? Or who would attempt to fill in the immense gap of time and circumstance between them, by a narration of the historical facts, except as gathered from the word of God? It is like coming up out of the night of chaos into creation again, with a new company, as we open the first book, and read of an "Adam, Seth, and Enoch," who was translated that he should not see death. Nor is this feeling of surprise lessened when we open the Second Book of Chronicles, to read, as in the morning light, "that Solomon, the son of David, was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly." What a tremendous chaos is thus being filled up by God in history! It is like a new beginning in the midst of other and elect creatures, and of a better creation, so that one scarcely knows where we are in this new genealogy, which has given birth, by the letter and order of the first book, to such a man as this Solomon of the second; and yet a man endowed with wisdom such as never had been, or shall be; and invested with honour and power, by the hand of the living God, such as Adam had not before the fall.

Within the beauty of this enclosure, too — "Immanuel's land" — one might ask again, "Watchman, what of the night?" and what has become of the curse on the ground, when all flows with milk and honey? In the presence of this Solomon, inducted into the highest place out of heaven, and invested with royal majesty as a king, before whom all other kings bow and pay tribute, and queens do homage, one may almost think of the fall, and of the man whom God drove out of Eden, as a bygone thing, a dream that is past away with the night, and obliterated in the peace and prosperity of this new centre of the world's jubilee. The earth seems to invite the heavens to come out, and hail the new morning that is come, and make merry and be glad with the elect people whom God is leading into His "rest in Zion." Moreover, Jehovah has left the tent and tabernacle, in which He dwelt and journeyed with the twelve tribes of these genealogies in the wilderness, and is ready to accompany them, and the ark of the covenant, out of the First Book of Chronicles into the Second, and to draw out the staves, when its final resting-place in the temple is completed. The Lord will Himself then appear, and fill the whole house with His glory, so that there shall not be room even for the priests to enter in, because God is in His holy temple. The Second Book of Chronicles introduces us, in its early chapters, to scenes like these, and the whole world is wakened up, on this break of day, to lay bare its treasures, and mines of gold, and all the precious things in the depths of the earth, because God has risen up out of His place, and is coming in with the brightness of the morning into Jerusalem, to make it "the city of the great King." What change — yea, what mighty revolution — in favour of mankind, can have come up before the God of heaven and of earth, that all kings and countries should be tributary to Him on this great occasion of His temple on Mount Moriah? Again, we may say, "Watchman, what of the night?" when Hiram, king of Tyre, is a willing servant, and lays the forests of Lebanon at the feet of Solomon, with

cedar-trees, fir-trees, and algum-trees in abundance. He provides also a cunning man, endued with understanding, who is skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber. In purple also, and in blue, in fine linen, and in crimson; for Jehovah was coming forth into this kingdom and its costly temple. "Likewise men to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device that shall be put to them, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father;" for this sun was to rise upon Solomon without a cloud.

What can such mighty changes mean between God and His creatures? What can they betoken, but that the watchman's morning cometh in?" Is the Creator finding out a rest for Himself once more in the works of His own hands? and are men become so good, that He gives out patterns to them, and calls their cunning ones to be master-builders and artificers for Him? Are the plans and methods of the divine order so enlarging themselves, as that He who built all things above and below should ask men to build Him a house? And such a house! Or, perhaps, wearied in maintaining righteous government in the midst of men upon the earth, is He about to forego the records of the cherubim at the garden-gate? Does He not remember the destructive deluge, when a world that then was perished? or the cities of the plain which were burned with fire and brimstone, because of the exceeding wickedness of its inhabitants? Can He have forgotten Babel, and its city, and its tower; or the day when He confounded men's tongues, and set at naught their speech? But there is no room for any such doubtful inquiries; on the contrary, it is in the full knowledge that Adam and Eden are gone for ever, and that an end of flesh in the world before the flood had come before God, and perished, that He has thus divided a nation from the nations, and separated by genealogy a generation from the families of men; that His own purpose of grace by election might surmount the deluge and the flaming sword. He has therefore brought in promises, and a covenant, and a calling-out, and established these in Abraham and his Seed, which is Christ. He has also set up mediation by Moses, and priesthood in Aaron, so that the dark night of ruin might give place to the morning light, and the great day of atonement. God is adding the glory of kingship to these others, in the person of Solomon, whom He now sets upon the throne of his father David, and establishes him over the kingdom of Israel. No, God is not unmindful of His judgments in the earth, but in the midst of them He remembers mercy, and works for His own glory. Nor is He come forth to repeat Himself, or to inaugurate another beginning, with His creatures; but He is bringing out and completing in Solomon and a theocracy, all the reserves of wisdom and grace, which God had kept in His own power, and still postpones for manifested blessing, till the second coming of Jesus-Immanuel, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Solomon was responsible (like Adam) for maintaining these treasures which had been put into his hands, and for using them to the glory of God. Jehovah had thus given out all He had to bestow (except, last of all, His Son), and set up these resources before their eyes in Moses, and Aaron, and David, and the times that went over them. Now, "kingship" is to be displayed in Solomon, and the watchman's cry is heard again, "the morning cometh, and also the night." And is this what God is doing with the elect king, in the midst of His elect nation? Is He in very deed making one more display of Himself, and one more appeal to them, and this almost the last, before the night, that terrible night, comes again, and He sets the best thing aside that He can do for the welfare of His earthly people? Is all this to share the same fate as Eden, and must God come into it all one day, and profane His sanctuary, and His throne, and His kingdom by casting all down to the ground? Alas! He has done all this, and Jerusalem "is trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." What a lesson does this historical picture present to Judah and Israel, and

the civilised world, in their forgetfulness of God, and in this day of their boasted progress and prosperity, whilst they are in a mistaken defiance, making out histories for themselves by their self-sufficiency. But the judgment of God, by driving out or casting down, plucking up or cutting off, never comes in to take revenge on departure from Himself, and what He creates or bestows, till He can say, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" If we repeat the inquiry in the light of this patient consideration of God, and yet of human responsibility, under such accumulated grace and outward prosperity, as marked the ascent of King Solomon to the throne of his glory, the answer must be plain. And what would this answer be but this — that the moment of his grandest elevation was the one of his greatest danger, and the ripest hour of his vast power and dominion was but the precursor to his declension and downfall. And why? Because, though an elect vessel, like the nation was an elect nation, yet was he but a man in the flesh, and still in a sinful nature, outside Christ and the Holy Ghost. The time was not come for them to stand before God, as we now do, upon the ground of accomplished and eternal redemption by the work of Christ upon the cross. Nor could "they reckon themselves dead unto sin," and to the law, by the body of Christ, and be thus made "free to be married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead, that they might bring forth fruit unto God." However favoured Solomon might be, and was, yet it was by endowment; whilst as the head and king of Israel, he was responsible by his own obedience, in the position he held, for maintaining them in unbroken relationship with Jehovah, their Lord. These great drawbacks, as to his manhood, made him a celebrity by what God had heaped upon him, and not because he had earned them, or was competent to retain them as part of his own being. There is only One — the Son of God — of whom it can personally be said, "Thou art worthy to receive all wisdom, and glory, and riches, and power," and He had not yet come into this world (though promised) by the mystery of the incarnation. A heavy thousand years had to roll round, weighted by the saddening tale of the decline and fall of a theocracy, in the midst of Israel; and made sadder by their rejection of the marvellous ministry of the prophets (even though accompanied by their lamentations and tears), before the fulness of the time came for God to send forth His Son. The Messiah, their only Saviour and Deliverer, will then be the light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. The first man, Adam, in innocency, and in the image of God (before history had begun), was at home in an unspotted creation, with Him who made it; yea, God walked with the creature He had formed for His delight in the cool of that unclouded day. When all this was lost, and marred by Satan and sin, and it repented God that He had made man upon the earth, and the world that then was perished by a flood, God, in His sovereignty, called out one and another to walk with Him, upon promise, and blessing, and future happiness to be established in an elect seed, according to covenant. What else could He do in wisdom and grace, when all present and created good, even a paradise, had been forfeited, and the gates of Eden closed — yea, man driven out; and God had retired into His own place to consider, leaving a curse behind Him, in righteous judgment, upon a groaning creation? Adam's world has been since buried by the waters of a deluge, weighed down, moreover, by the violence and the corruption of the millions who inhabited it. In this world, since the flood (or Noah's world), God formally called out Abraham to begin this new line of His election, as the genealogies of the First Book of Chronicles have taught us. These have given birth to, and perhaps close up, this illustrious line of elect vessels with Solomon, till Matthew and Luke add the generations which bring in the Immanuel.

We have taken this short review of two worlds, in order to give weight, or prominence to Solomon, the man of endowments and attainments, conferred upon him by God, in contrast with all who ever were before, or shall come after him; and it is with this wonderful Solomon, in whom the expectations of the world culminate, the Second Book of Chronicles begins, with its bright morning in Jerusalem, followed by its dark night of captivity in Babylon. He is before the world, and before the heavens, and all who dwell in them, to stand or fall in the place where never man was seen before, in royal majesty and imperial power. He is responsible for their use to Him who bestowed them; and yet, having this unheard-of opportunity of bringing glory to God, and blessing to the ten thousands of Israel and the nations, by their rightful exercise, what a new era in the history of God and mankind is in view, and depending on the fealty and obedience of the only competent man, too, upon the earth, for he has not his fellow! Adam was perfect as a created being, and a creation hung upon his allegiance to the Creator. Solomon is perfect, not as a creature, but set apart as an elect vessel to receive the favour of God, and to be enriched by him in mind, body, and estate, so that, by reason of his endowments and attainments, "he was wiser than all men, and his fame was in all the nations round about." What an unparalleled hour in history! what an opportunity for the wisest of men! what an occasion for the world in its throes, and under the bondage of corruption, if it could be delivered by superhuman wisdom and power!

Nevertheless, in the counsels of the Godhead, this problem had to be wrought out, as to the competency, or incompetency of a fallen man, even when sustained and endowed to the utmost, to hold and to use what was entrusted to his hands for the glory of God, and his own happiness, and the welfare of his fellow-creatures? The great men of successive ages may well be dumb before this greater man of a previous age. The bold men of the nineteenth century may stagger, and bow their heads before the man "whom God magnified exceedingly "three thousand years ago, and respecting whom He said, there never again should be his like. It was God who brought out this problem before the world (of the insufficiency of the creature), and that it might not be left an open question for generations which should come after, but be settled in the life-time, and by the living ways, of no one less than king Solomon and this most favoured nation. If, besides all these endowments, men speak of genius, let them, but they must pale before him who uttered three thousand proverbs, and whose songs were a thousand and five. If they rejoice in the created works around, and think themselves masters of all the eye can see, or the heart desire — let them, but they must give place to him "who withheld not his heart from any joy." He spake of trees, from the cedar in Lebanon, even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

Whether one sees him on the throne in government, and exercising justice and judgment; or in the temple, before the altar of the Lord; or upon the scaffold of brass, as an intercessor and a worshipper, between Jehovah and the commonwealth of Israel — all is as complete and exact as the laws of the sanctuary and of the kingdom demanded. Indeed these were the birth-place and great beginnings of a history, and of a name that rose up in its strength and brightness over the haze and darkness of a vast universal declension — like the sun that dispels the gloom, and drives away the mists, till it mounts into its own supremacy, and rules and makes the day. "Watchman, what of the night? The morning cometh, and also the night." God acknowledged and put His own seal upon all this opening prosperity, by the glory that dwelt in the temple, and filled the land. "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as

the sand which is on the seashore." Who would think of, or dare to repeat, an Adam, sinless and in innocence, with whom God was so close, that there was no room for an intermediate providence, nor any necessity for its exercise? Are God and men still so one as to walk and be together, or have they ever since been separated off by sin in a fallen creation? Nay, not only has He closed up all such direct and immediate intercourse between Himself and the creature, but measured the distance, and maintains it still, as a God superintending all things by His providence. He is sitting in the heavens in His righteousness, and they upon the earth, with the curse and the sweat of the brow upon every child of Adam, and the groaning of a blighted creation all around. Moreover, who would think of, or dare to repeat, a Solomon, not sinless like Adam, but sinful in his nature, as born of the man who fell, yet made illustrious, and made a celebrity, by conferred gifts and endowments which he received of God, and which were commanded in a moment of time to rest upon him, in answer to his prayer?

Men may possess the same faculties, but where and when have any stood forth as he, to be wondered at, not because of their attainments, but some who were not a Solomon one instant, and became one the next, by having had to do distinctly and directly with God? May it not be said, yea, must it not be admitted, that first-class education, and its necessity in the nineteenth century, cannot measure the distance, much less do away with the gulf, between those who are under its high pressure, and an endowed Solomon; just as, for other reasons, a kind and a merciful Providence maintains a distance now between the Creator and His creatures? Did Solomon become one under tutors and governors, and by the slow and measured steps of examinations, and degrees, and honours, as the hardly-won fruit of collegiate study, which are accepted in the present day as the high road to advancement and preferment, for place or power, in the world as it now is? No; he was the wise man, made such out-of-hand, by God, in a moment, just as truly as when He breathed into Adam's nostrils, and he became a living soul — the image representation of God in manhood; but where and what is he? In due time Solomon closed up the progressive history of this elect people according to the flesh, in the generations and genealogies of the First Book of Chronicles. But who and what was he in the Second Book? The morning cometh, it is true, but also the night. Alas! "the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he kept not that which the Lord commanded." The allegiance which was due from the creature to the Creator, in the creation, but which was violated and broken up by Adam's sin; is come to naught a second time in Solomon, who was seated in glory and power upon the throne of God's government in the earth. The crown has fallen from his head, and the sceptre from his hand, and the kingdom from under his feet, and the two staves of beauty and bands has God broken asunder, "for Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites." An important interval, or dispensation, yet remains to be noticed in the history and ways of God with men, between Adam, without any government, before government (like Providence) could have any place; and Solomon, as the representative and administrator of a theocracy in the city of the Great King, where government in righteousness was indispensable, on account of the holiness of God, as well as of sin and the flesh. Intermediately the law was given by Moses, and proclaimed, yea, established the claims of Jehovah upon the elect nation for the worship and devotion which were His due. Besides this, they were morally responsible for obeying and loving Him for all the goodness and mercy which, as the God of providence and the Jehovah of Israel, they had known,

together with their fathers, all the way from the house of bondage to the Canaan of rest, into which He had brought them. At any rate, if this were a problem, it had to be wrought out into proof, like the others; for they had entered into covenant with God, and had returned their answer by Moses, at Sinai, "All that the Lord hath commanded us, we will do." This was, in fact, the time of the world's probation, brought to light, it is true, in a handful of people and a sample nation, but under all the advantages and encouragements to love God, and their neighbour as themselves, which He could introduce by outward prosperity and plenty, and by calling them up to Jerusalem, that they might keep "the feasts of the Lord" with Himself, and find their joy in His presence. But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit, wherefore He was turned against them, and became their enemy; and now, what is become of this highly-favoured and select nation, and when are the feasts of Jehovah kept, or with whom? and where is Jerusalem, the city of the Great King? Alas! Ichabod is the sole epitaph, and the one record of forfeited blessing, and of departed glory — from the drawn sword in the hand of the cherubim at the garden-gate, to the trodden-down Jerusalem by the feet of the Gentiles.

It is time to ask now, what is the solemn result of these trials and tests of such a distinguished man, and what our lessons by God in this history, and of His ways with a nation, in the brief record of his reign? Or rather, what should be the effect of this great proof in such a king, and of an elect people, when gathered round God Himself, with His glory in the temple, and this endowed man upon His throne, as the guarantee (if there could be one outside Christ) of permanent and universal blessing? Ought not the leaders and great men of modern times to allow such an one to challenge them all by the question, even if they do not like to answer him, "What can the man do that cometh after the king?" Nay, is it not presumption, if not a presumptuous sin, for the men of this period to suppose the problem of what man is, and is worth, in his relation to God, and to his neighbour, and to the world, to be an open question still, and left for them to solve? This, too, in the face of the prophecy which challenges all, "What more could have been done for my vine-yard that I have not done?" Do any of them come up to Solomon, or can they excel God? Will the scientists, and the men of mark and renown, say they are at an advantage, because experimenting amongst a non-elect people, instead of an elect one, which was so beloved, and placed under law to God? Will they tell us it is better to begin the problem in the midst of Gentile nations, with whom God does not stand in any relationships of this kind, than with the nation which He chose, and brought to Himself? Do they think it in their favour to make laws of their own, and establish various forms of government, and set up thrones of their devising in their modern cities, rather than to bow their heads, and learn their lesson from the ruins of Jerusalem, and the cast-off people they are treading under their feet? Do they judge it to be in their favour never to have had a Solomon, qualified and endowed as he was, and under the direct guidance of God, that so they may be free of Him, and be left to their own inventions and expedencies, under Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon? If the reigning emperors and kings, with their empires and dynasties, are agitated and perplexed, or sometimes overthrown in the struggle between absolutism and democracy, or betwixt imperialism and a republic, do they think this uncertainty an advance upon the theocracy of the God of Israel? They will do well to remember that the divine form and principles of political economy, and of jurisprudence, were long ago determined by God, and are indelibly written by His finger in the Pentateuch; as well as the patterns and form of the temple, and its priesthood and worship, in the two books of Chronicles. Neither the throne nor the altar has been overlooked. Be it so, that all this greatness and magnificence have come to naught, with an elect people, who had

God in their midst, and as a wall of fire around them; what can those do who come after? Is it better to be without Him, and safer and wiser to take counsel with their own hearts, that their dignity and honour may be publicly, and far more fatally, seen to proceed from themselves?

If it be further said, Yes, but this Second Book of Chronicles ends with the captivity of the people, the carrying away of all the golden vessels into Babylon, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the transfer of governmental power from Israel to the Gentiles, and "the morning cometh, and also the night," is fulfilled in their history; be it so. But what, I repeat, is such a lesson for them "who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, and without God in the world" — who are non-elect, unendowed, and uncovenanted? Will such come out into history at a premium on their predecessors? We shall see. In the meanwhile the elect nation and her kings are set aside by Jehovah.

If we here close up their two books of Chronicles for another and a brighter day in the millennium of their history, and go with the children of the captivity, it will be only to see that God abides faithful to His own, and advances Daniel into a new place in this strange country. He becomes the prophet of woe to Babylon. The captive Israelite is the one who is anointed by Jehovah to reveal to the great king Nebuchadnezzar, as the head of the Gentiles, all the secret of his dynasty, and its destiny and doom. The four grand divisions of the golden image, which troubled the monarch in his night visions, and which include what is now called "the civilised world," but which none of the wise men could divine to their master, are brought to light by this child of the captivity. It is Daniel's hand which thus early writes "Ichabod" upon all the grandeur of the king and his kingdoms. So distinguished is this elect vessel in a strange place. The man who shines brightest among the nobles, and imports a grandeur and a glory into Babylon to which it was a total stranger, is this Israelite; for Daniel stands in a holy lustre, be it in the palace, or at the gate of the king, or when in the lions' den. This is the great charm in their opening history, that Daniel eclipses all. The transfer of power from Jerusalem, or rather the use of it when thus committed to Nebuchadnezzar, put the sentence of death upon his palace and his kingdom, and indeed upon himself. It was but taking Jonah into the ship. God was angry with him for his pride, and sent him into the fields to eat straw like an ox, till his nails became as birds' claws. In like manner the transport of the golden vessels from the temple of Solomon to Babylon, and their profanation at the feast of Belshazzar, brought out the handwriting upon the wall, "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin," which put the sentence of death into him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed. So, again, when the king of Babylon had set up the idol-image, and the fiery furnace was prepared for any who refused to fall down and worship it, the three elect children of the captivity were thrown therein, but only to be joined by another, and that one like unto the Son of God. The sentence of death was transferred from the three elect ones, who were in the flames, but not burnt, and gave birth to the decree, that whosoever spake anything amiss of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, should be cut in pieces. Alas for Babylon and its great idolatrous king at the commencement of this history, and for his non-elect and unchronicled descendants! Thou art this head of gold, and that crowned head driven out of the palace of the kingdom of Babylon, and debased to the level of a beast! But perhaps, as an empire, their future is brighter, though he must be a bold man, and something more, who would stop us to raise such a question upon the four beasts, or the ten toes of Daniel's prophetic image, in this nineteenth century. Such an one must be forgetful of their great iron teeth, devouring much flesh, to which all the newspapers bear witness, and which all the world knows. Only let them look at the

future in the records of Daniel, or in the Apocalyptic visions of John, and demand in their turn, "Watchman, what of the night?" as being their two books of Chronicles — and what are they? The handwriting in detail of that selfsame finger which wrote their history in brief upon the palace-wall of Belshazzar says, their "morning cometh, and also their night." They rise up as a great host of people, "without God," at their beginning in Babylon, and "without hope in the world," at their close. Idolatry, maintained by absolutism, was the rise of the power, in the hand of the great monarch, at the first, and proved by the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar set up, and commanded all people to worship. But perhaps, religiously, their future is different, and they may call on the living and true God, and be better at the latter end — nay, vain is any such expectation, for Revelation 13:1-18 says, "He had power to give life unto the image of the beast; that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Blasphemy and profanity were in the palaces of Babylon at the first, when the finger wrote upon the wall, and at the close, the handwriting in Revelation 13:1-18 declares, "He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." Their last end is even worse than the first. But perhaps, politically, the history of imperial power in the hands of the four great empires, of gold, silver, brass, and iron, may bring up some correctives; not so either, for these metals, in their fourfold character, prove the deterioration of delegated power, and at the close, a "stone, cut out without hands, falls upon the ten toes of this image, and it is destroyed — yea, becomes like chaff upon the summer threshing-floor." But yet again, Babylon and its descendants may have "hope in their end?" Not so either, "for the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning" ascending up. "Without God" at the beginning, and "without hope in the world" at the close, embraces these nineteen centuries of Nebuchadnezzar power, or Gentile greatness. Their doom and utter destruction stand out in contrast with the chronicles and prophecies of the elect nation of Israel, "to whom still pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever."

If we now turn from these prophecies to their present history, it yet remains to see how Israel and the Gentiles answered God, when He woke the world up once more by the light of "the day-spring from on high," and by the songs of the angelic hosts at the coming in of Christ, the Son of the Father, by the mystery of the incarnation. "Last of all he sent to them his son." The question is no longer the competency of Adam to retain a paradise upon the sole condition of allegiance to the Creator; nor of the sufficiency of Solomon to govern the elect nation in Jerusalem, with Jehovah in covenant relation to the throne and the temple; nor of the Gentiles, in their use of power for the glory of God, when transferred to Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar; but will they reverence the Son, and welcome Him as the Saviour, the King of kings, and Lord of lords? "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will to men," was the new song given out from the heavens to the earth when Jesus was born. Another morning is come; must another night succeed this? Deliverance and blessing were to issue forth from heaven, seeing that all hands were incompetent below to keep what God had bestowed, or to retain the place of honour and power in which He had set them for His glory. The groan of creation — the captivity of Israel — the idolatry of Babylon — left no hope in the world. The cry of the oppressed once more went up to God, and so the multitude of the heavenly hosts brought in their melodious anthem, and piped unto them of the

Child born — would they dance? God had yet one Son, and He so loved the world He had made, and the men in it, that He sent Him forth as the Redeemer of Israel, and the Saviour of the world. The innocent first man — the endowed king — the elect nation, on the one hand; or the head of gold, and the image, in its continuation of silver, brass, iron, and clay, on the other; had forfeited their thrones and dominions, their kingdoms, and their sceptres and crowns; — can they appreciate deliverance, or will they yet do worse? Yes, far worse than all, for when they saw the Son, they said, This is the heir, come, let us kill Him, and seize upon His inheritance. And so they cast Him out of the vineyard and the world too, vociferating up to God, We will not have this man to reign over us, and that man the Son of the Highest — yea, God manifest in the flesh. The whole world had grown so old in wickedness, that it could not estimate such an intervention in supreme goodness as God sending forth His Son to save the lost and the undone. Herod, the king, was troubled by tidings of the birth of Jesus the Saviour, and all Jerusalem with him. The high priest, Caiaphas, rent his clothes, and Pilate washed his hands of innocent blood, when his lips had given sentence against Him. The Son of God, the incarnate One, come down to walk with men upon the earth, and to go about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, has been refused, cast out, and crucified. The trial and the test at this time were not, "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thine heart, and thy neighbour as thyself," but will men consent to be loved by Him who has come after them in love? Alas! they refused to be loved by God, and compel even Jesus to say of them, "For my love they are my adversaries."

They take Him out of the manger, and lead Him to the brow of the hill, and then to the cross, where they crucify Him between two thieves; and God has looked down upon all this. Yet the earth moves upon its axis still, and a God in providence makes the sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust. What a God He is! If mankind ever had the sense of what was righteous and true in His sight, they would have accepted the sentence of death in Adam's transgression, when confirmed by the flaming sword at the garden-gate; and if they carried the sense of grace, they would cling to the promise of deliverance through the Seed of the woman, and shadowed forth by the coats of skin which God made, and wherewith He clothed them. But it was not till four thousand years had told their sad tale to the heavens, and all who dwell therein, of the growing distance and enmity below, that the cross bore witness against the world itself by the rejection of Christ as its king, and of Jesus as the Saviour come to seek and save those that are lost. The earth and its inhabitants had long ago broken down, when tried representatively, before the law, and the kingdom of Israel. Then God called it out into His presence, to learn its insufficiency for restoration and re-establishment under such a government as He had set up in Jerusalem. The world itself, and all its pretensions (and at their highest and best too), had suffered collapse, when its representative man and representative nation failed towards God, and wrought no deliverance in the earth.

Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, with the ten toes, may deny this great and summary collapse as conclusive, and expand and inflate themselves and their kingdoms, as they have done, and are still doing, but only to suffer a heavier judgment and doom by their experiment, and break down finally under the responsibility of power in their own hands. Worse than this, far worse; for it was under the power and rule of the fourth beast of the image that Caesar's representative acted, and that the Roman soldier pierced the side of Jesus with his spear. Human enmity came forth, instead of love to God, and wickedness had found its victim at last in the Son of God's grace, and their

common outlet at His cross and in His blood. This was the crisis, and a night of darkness. What must the Judge of the earth do now? Can there ever be a morning again? Will He submerge the world by water a second time, in righteous anger? or will He destroy it by fire? God had a remedy after the deluge, and brought in the law, and an economy by Moses, whom He installed as the mediator between God and men. Has He yet a resource? Besides this, it was the school-time, when the Levites taught the people, and instructed them in the right ways of the Lord. Israel was at school, and under its schoolmaster. After (or rather with) an elaborate and wondrous system of education in this sample and elect nation, He established government by a theocracy in the midst of this experimental people. The best that God could do with men as they were, and the choicest sample of mankind too, came to naught, and they were driven out of Canaan. Neither education nor government availed. After Jerusalem came Babylon and the Gentiles, and their one only point of agreement, as determined by Caiaphas and Pilate, was to condemn Christ, and crucify Him. This was the cross, where the whole world, which had broken down morally, rose up in defiance and rebellion against God, and against His Anointed. Wickedness and hate have overstepped themselves, by reason of Him who was their object and victim. A climax has come, and the whole world is in blood-guiltiness before God; but He will not, yea, cannot, determine this new enormity by water, as He once did, nor by melting fire, as He will do at the last day. And why? Because He had His purposes of grace and redemption to bring to light at the cross, and by means of the precious blood they had shed. That act, which was the outlet of man's hatred of God and of Christ, becomes the door for the inlet of His infinite love to sinners. He will not take up the crucifixion of His Son as a murder at His cross, though it be so horrible, nor be ruled by it in vengeance today, but use it as a door into the acceptable year of the Lord. By means of the cross God can proclaim forgiveness to the betrayers and murderers, in proof that, high as the world's hate rose, His love was yet higher, and overreached it, even to pardon it, through faith in the atoning blood, which was the very proof of their guilt. In this forbearance and grace the Father and the Son are one; for, as when the woman whom the Pharisees brought to Jesus in her sin — in the very act, as they said — to be stoned, and He would not condemn her, but stooped down, and wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not; so has God, in grace, been acting during this long day of patience and long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance. After the blood-guiltiness at the cross God comes out in grace, beginning at Jerusalem; and this is indeed as the light of another morning — "a first day" — and becomes the time of salvation, through the blood and death of Christ, during which God refuses to hear the accusation, or enter into judgment upon this sin with mankind. There is an alternative still between God and man at the cross — salvation or judgment, and herein is wisdom, to be of one mind with Him, and thankfully accept justification by faith in the blood of Christ, and eternal life, through His death and resurrection to the right hand of God as the head of the new creation. Union, by the Holy Ghost, with the Son of man there, and in the glory, is the new position which the gospel of God proclaims and offers to the chief of sinners. Christ is gone! In conclusion, we may and must ask, Is this alternative accepted for "the obedience of faith among all nations?" Are they rejoicing in the glad tidings of God's salvation, and looking for the second coming of Christ, to take all those who believe up to the Father, as redeemed by the blood of His Son, and to be manifested as the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ? The Lord and the glorified saints are the appointed kings and priests unto God, and they will order and put the world all right, when He takes to Himself His great power, and reigns on the throne of His glory, as the greater than Solomon, to establish His interests in

righteousness and peace on the earth.

"The morning cometh, and also the night," and it is at the dawn of another and a new dispensation from above, by the coming of the Lord; and in the face of such an administration as this will be, it is that the antagonistic path completes itself, into which the god of this world has led the counsellors and the great men of these nineteen centuries. Do any inquire, as the watchman bids them, what the night-time is of this nineteenth century? and what is the fatal and final night? The answer is this: "So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." Moreover, "she had a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations, and filthiness of her fornication." Isaiah's watchman cried out in his day, "If ye will inquire, inquire ye, return, come;" and Daniel the prophet, as well as the Apocalyptic apostle, the two watchmen who chronicle the approaching end of this age to us, cry, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear," for the time is at hand! John, who describes the depth of the darkness of this horrible night-time, as well as its coming and closing judgments, cries out, "The ten horns which thou sawest upon [and] the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." Once more, the watchman cries, "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." In the bygone chronicles of God's actings with men, probation and their education were His own care, till they "changed the truth of God into a lie," and then, judicially, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind, because they did not like to retain him in their knowledge." These, as well as the theory and establishment of government and rule over the nations, are things of the past, and on the page of history; and yet these are the very subjects which the senates and parliaments have recommenced, and which occupy them in their midnight sessions, as if they were out upon a voyage of discovery. How tedious and disappointing they find it, none knows so well as themselves, as one premier supplants his fellow and forms another cabinet, or dissolves the existing house of assembly and introduces a different policy; nor will we stop to inquire, for pity's sake. Enough for us to know they are in the darkness of the night, and labouring for very vanity. They have the wrong man in hand to make better, and the wrong world to garnish — the Cain, who went out from the presence of God at first, and, lastly, Barabbas instead of Jesus, when they cast Him out and killed Him — the God who came back into it in the person of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son. Woe be to the world that refused the mystery of the Child born and put Him into a manger, and, when wearied of Him, took Him down from the cross, and offered Him a sepulchre! Life and peace to a world, in which redemption out of its ruins is preached through the death and resurrection of Christ, is God's only remedy, by the Holy Ghost sent down from the Father and the Son in heaven, in the gospel of His grace, and in which world a free pardon is proclaimed through faith in the precious blood of Christ which they shed. This refusal of God's only resource, as the Judge of the whole earth, is like demanding a new trial (if one may thus speak) at the throne of His Majesty, where the rejected Son is sitting, "till his enemies are made his footstool." This demand is boldly maintained, moreover, by a refusal to accept the humbling fact of the worthlessness of man, as proved by his breakdown educationally in the school of Moses, or under the economy in Immanuel's land, when King Solomon reigned over the nations; or, finally, by the enmity and outbreak of the civilised world against God and His Anointed at the cross. In their eyes He is still without form or comeliness, for man and the world and the devil are the same; neither is there any beauty in the Son, or value in His work of redemption, that they should desire Him or it. If any think it may be otherwise now, and that

national Christianity, together with the pretentious Congress in eastern and western Europe, may yet float these nations; or give them favour in the sight of God by the mockery of their established but contradictory religions; one only need point any such to the boasted "union" of the Church and State throughout the Roman earth, to falsify every expectation of "a morning without a cloud" from the mother of harlots and her daughters in these alliances with the beast. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him!" J. E. Batten.

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